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Kosovo Accreditation Agency



UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA
“HASAN PRISHTINA”
FACULTY OF MEDICINE

M.Sc. PUBLIC HEALTH
(120 ECTS)

ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

17 March 2025, Kosovo

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

Sources of information for the Report:

- *The Self-Evaluation Report, M.Sc. Public Health with the annexes as follows:*
 - *1. Syllabus of subjects along with Curriculum Vitae of academic staff*
 - *2. Memorandum of understanding with SwissTPH and Internship agreement with Maastricht University*
- *Onsite interviews with personnel, students and stakeholders*
- *Website of the university*
- *Facility Site visit*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *Regulation (KAA) No 04/2024*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of Kosovo Accreditation Agency, 2021
- European Guidelines and Standards

Additional information or documents requested:

ET asked for the following documents and received them:

- a) the number of outgoing students who have gone abroad for study or internships, and the number of incoming foreign students to the Faculty of Medicine over the past five years, and if possible, the ratios for undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels.
- b) Most recent strategic plan
- c) updated CVs of Academic personnel

1.2 Site visit schedule

Programme Accreditation Procedure at University of Prishtina, Faculty of Medicine	
Programmes:	Public Health, MSc- Accreditation
Site visit on:	17 March, 2025
Expert Team:	Imatullah Akyar Anto Čartolovn Nibal Sabri
Coordinators of the KAA:	Milot Hasangjekaj KAA Shpresa Shala KAA

1.3 Site Visit Program

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:40	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Prof. dr. Sefedin Muçaj Prof. asoc. Aurora Bakalli Prof. dr. Naser Ramadani Prof. asst. Miranda Stavileci Prof. asoc. Armond Daci
09:45 – 10:25	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Prof. Dr. Kreshnik Hoti Asst. Dr. Sc. Toskë Kryeziu Ardita Kastrati Shkumbin Tafilaj
10:30 – 11:25	Meeting with the program holders of the study programme	Sanije Gashi Valbona Zhjeqi
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch break	
13:00 – 13:40	Visiting facilities	
13:45 – 14:25	Meeting with teaching staff	Prof.dr. Merita Berisha Prof. dr. Lul Raka Prof. asst. Arijana Kalaveshi Prof. asst. Rina Hoxha Prof. asst. Xhevat Jakupi
14:30 – 15:10	Meeting with students	Amina Kaja Alma Ramushi Dea Kapllani Enida Kavaja Veronika Shala Zana Zajmi
15:15 – 16:00	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Dr. Ardita Baraku -IKShPK Ariana Qerimi – Ministry of Health Milazim Gjocaj Alma Mater Europaea Campus College “Rezonanca” Ms. Jehona Luta – UNICEF Mentor Zejnullahu - QKUK
16:05 – 16:10	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
16:05 – 16:10	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

1.3 A brief overview of the programme under evaluation

The Faculty of Medicine at the University of Prishtina, established on June 17, 1969, has grown significantly over the years. Initially focused on General Medicine, it expanded to include Dentistry in 1975/76, Pharmacy in 1996/97, Physiotherapy (Bachelor’s studies) in 2001/02, Midwifery and Nursing (Bachelor’s studies) in 2003/04, and Health Management (Master's) in collaboration with the University of Vienna.

The Faculty operates as an academic unit in collaboration with Prishtina Hospital and several other institutions, including the University Clinical Center, University Dentistry Clinical Center, National Institute of Public Health, Preclinical Institutes, National Center for Blood Transfusion, Institute for Occupational Medicine, Center for Development of Family Medicine, and Kosovo Agency for Medical Products.

Currently, the Faculty offers six study programs: General Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Nursing, and Midwifery. Additionally, it provides PhD programs in Preclinical Medicine, Clinical Medicine, Dentistry, Experimental Biomedicine, and Public Health. This diverse range of programs highlights the Faculty's commitment to comprehensive medical education and research.

The presented Master of Science in Public Health program is a two-year/four semesters programme with 120 ECTS. The program aims to prepare students for public health careers or further research, focusing on fundamental concepts, scientific research techniques, and population health improvement.

2. PROGRAMME EVALUATION

The programme evaluation consists of 7 standard areas through which the programme is evaluated.

2.1. Mission, objectives and standards

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 University of Prishtina focuses on academic development, scientific and artistic research, and providing higher education through programs of strategic and developmental importance to the Republic of Kosovo. According to the institution's self-evaluation report (SER), the mission of the M.Sc. Public Health study program is to prepare students for careers in public health or further academic pursuits in public health and health-related research. This is achieved by providing foundational knowledge, research techniques, and methods aimed at preserving and improving population health.

The M.Sc. Public Health program aligns with the university's strategic goals, focusing on the promotion and development of education, science, culture, society, and the economy of Kosovo. However, discussions during the site visit and SER emphasized that the main motivation is to enhance and promote public health at the national and regional levels. This focus on workforce needs does not fully align with the university's mission, which emphasizes research. The program, created in cooperation with the National Institute of Public Health, appears to address existing workforce gaps but does not clearly explain other career perspectives outside governmental structures. This was identified as a challenge in the SWOT analysis of quality management, without providing a strategy to address it. While addressing

workforce needs is a core priority, the university and faculty could consider explicitly integrating public health promotion as an institutional strategic goal. This alignment would enhance the program's societal impact and respond to the growing demand for public health expertise.

Another aspect to consider is the contradictory information about the uniqueness of the Public Health Master program at UP, as highlighted in the SER and site visits. The existence of a similar Master program in Public Health and Management at another private university in Kosovo raises concerns about the actual need for another Master's program and whether appropriate feasibility studies and market analyses have been conducted. The SER provides outdated statistics from 2012 about the benefits and advantages of "tertiary education", which may no longer be valid. It is important to determine the actual societal need for another Master's program related to Public Health. Additionally, it is not clear how this program differs from the existing one and what strengths will attract students to choose this program over others.

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)

The University of Prishtina's statute ensures the development of policies regarding the intellectual property rights of staff and students. This is supported by the existing regulatory framework, including the Law on Copyright and Other Related Rights (No. 2004/45, dated 29.06.2006, Decree dated 24.08.2006), the Law on Patents (decreed on February 6, 2007), and the Law on Publishing Activity and Books (No. 02/L-51 dated March 16, 2006, promulgated on April 21, 2006).

Additionally, the University of Prishtina has implemented regulations on prevention and protection from sexual harassment and bullying (2021), as well as disciplinary measures and procedures for academic staff (2017) and students (2021). The University Prishtina has also a Code of Ethics for academic staff since 2013.

The SER emphasizes that all research involving humans and animals must adhere to ethical council regulations and receive ethics approval. All policies and procedures are publicly available. However, the system or program for detecting plagiarism is not clearly defined and certain information is lacking. During site visit discussions, it was mentioned that any work exceeding a 10% similarity threshold would be reviewed by the ethical committee. Nevertheless, the site visit and SER did not provide clear and specific mechanisms or procedures for handling cases of research integrity breach detected by this anti-plagiarism software and ethics committee confirmation, whether for students or academic staff.

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 self-evaluation report (SER) identifies three systems: the Quality Management and Monitoring System (QMSS), the Electronic Management System for Students (EMSS), and the Student Electronic Management Service (SEMS). However, the SER lacks detailed information about these systems, particularly regarding data collection processes, student privacy procedures, and mechanisms for using this data effectively for program management

and improvement. The report does not provide a transparent and clear description of the methods for analysing and applying this data. Currently, only SEMS is implemented and used for tracking progression and assessment measuring also student satisfaction with infrastructure and resources. QMSS and EMSS will be implemented with the new M.Sc. program.

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)

The self-evaluation report (SER) highlights the Office for Academic Development as a central entity providing technical assistance for designing research projects at the University of Pristina. Additionally, the Scientific Research Support Unit (UIA) ensures the continuous implementation of quality assurance criteria in scientific research. However, both units are primarily focused on research and researcher support at the University level rather than the delivery of study programs at the faculty level.

The Faculty of Medicine has established policies to review internal administrative capacities to support the quality of educational services for its programs. The SER's SWOT analysis identifies two major weaknesses: a small administrative structure and departmental financial limitations, which hinder optimal administrative support for programs. Additionally, the SWOT analysis of infrastructure and resources points out the lack of administrative staff to maintain service quality, potentially affecting the achievement of teaching, learning, research, and community service goals.

Recognizing this serious issue, the Faculty of Medicine created policies to review internal administrative capacities and hired one person for the office of master's and doctoral studies in 2023. However, there is no clear indication of subsequent evaluations to determine whether improvements in quality have been observed. The previously identified weaknesses in the SWOT analysis suggest that these issues have not been adequately addressed by the university or faculty.

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)

Since this is the first study accreditation, the study program has successfully passed all internal quality assurance procedures and steps at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" (UP). However, the self-evaluation report (SER) does not provide details about any internal recommendations for quality improvement that have been implemented in the final version of the program. Additionally, no external quality assurance recommendations have been provided so far.

ET recommendations:

- 1. A clearer, data-driven, and evidence-based approach is necessary to accurately define labour market needs and the demand for the study program.*
- 2. Clear policies, procedures, and mechanisms should be established to address breaches of research integrity.*
- 3. Details and information on the specific changes implemented after internal quality recommendations have been provided should be clearly demonstrated.*
- 4. Learning outcomes for the study program should be defined in terms of knowledge,*

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skills, and competencies.

5. *Adequately address the lack of administrative support and personnel for the program's implementation and delivery.*

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)

The University of Prishtina operates an internal quality assurance system as defined by the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo, the Strategy for the Development of Higher Education, and the University's Statute. This system is managed by the Office for Academic Development and involves quality control through three questionnaires tailored for students, academic staff, and administrative staff. Additionally, student evaluations of teaching and learning are conducted each semester using anonymous course evaluation questionnaires. However, the SER and site visit do not clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of this quality assurance mechanism. Heads of departments lead the quality assurance process, but there are no dedicated personnel for coordinating and monitoring the entire process. Furthermore, there is a lack of explicit detail regarding the involvement of external stakeholders, such as industry representatives or employers, in the quality assurance processes. This omission could hinder the comprehensive inclusion of stakeholders, which is essential for meeting the standards' requirements.

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

The development of the Master's program was one of the strategic goals outlined in the Strategy for Research and Research Development 2013-2016. The "Regulation for Master Studies" (dated 31.05.2023, no. 1/334) governs these programs, covering aspects such as organization, registration, and thesis procedures, thereby providing a formal framework for program design and approval.

The SER describes a tiered approval process that begins with the study program or curriculum development idea initiated by academic staff, in line with international standards and subject objectives. The curriculum is developed under the supervision of the Coordinator for Academic Development and the Accreditation Commission of the Faculty of Medicine. Proposals for curriculum development are then referred to the Study Commission, followed by the Scientific-Learning Council of the Faculty of Medicine, the Study Commission of the university, and finally, the Senate for approval.

This routine process was also followed for the Public Health master's program, which was initiated based on the institutional and partner or collaborator needs. However, this bottom-up approach has certain flaws, as highlighted in the SER. There is a lack of clear market needs analysis and further refinement of the program to avoid replicating the existing undergraduate curriculum offered by Fehmi Agani. Additionally, the program does not acknowledge the possibility of a Prior Learning path in the first semester by offering a Credit Path to these students as some of the courses will repeat the same content, despite relying heavily on students from this Bachelor program as a target group of their future students.

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)

The study program review is conducted by the Office for Academic Development using three surveys for students, academic staff, and administrative staff, along with course evaluation questionnaires administered on a semester or annual basis. However, this approach may not efficiently monitor the program's effectiveness or the knowledge and skills students gain during their studies.

Additionally, the SER lacks explicit details about a formal, scheduled review process for the entire program, such as annual or biennial reviews. While individual components like staff performance and student progress are monitored, there is no clear evidence of a comprehensive, cyclical review of the program as a whole. This suggests that monitoring may not be as systematic or periodic as required. For instance, there are no mentions of key performance indicators (KPIs), formal reports, or outcomes assessments that directly measure objective achievement. Furthermore, there is a lack of clear evidence regarding external stakeholder participation—such as employers or professional bodies—in the monitoring and review process, representing a significant shortfall. Finally, none of the previous monitoring processes or resulting action plans for any of the faculty programs are publicly available on their website.

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

The curriculum, learning objectives, content of courses and matrix table was presented in SER, however the alignment of the program learning objectives have not been successfully aligned with the matrix at the end of the report. Relationship between purpose and theoretical and practical part (esp. laboratory practice) is unclear. The content of study and need for laboratory practice, and the content of lab practice needs to be clarified (e.g. Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Reproductive Health and Rights). In syllabus courses have practical skill purpose and expected results and clinical practice, but forms of teaching and learning are missing related to the educational strategy (e.g. Sociology of health and illness). References given in the syllabus need to be revised, to be up to date. Some of the courses have been copy pasted from the Existing Medical curriculum such as Medical Ethics where the entire course have not been adapted to Public Health but more towards Clinical Medical Ethics as can be seen from the literature and references. Even in some courses digital learning was named with SEMS, limited opportunities within digital learning are offered. There's no explicit evidence that all relevant information is publicly available on an ongoing basis (e.g., via the university website) such as employment rates, pass or dropout rates, beyond the accreditation process.

ET recommendations:

- 1. The program monitoring process should be detailed to emphasize relevant feedback and stakeholder participation.*
- 2. Involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance procedures.*
- 3. Offer students from related undergraduate programs a credit recognition path to avoid unnecessary repetitions and enhance the quality and reputation of the program.*
- 4. Establish a concise relation among teaching and learning forms and course content in syllabi.*
- 5. References given in syllabi should be up-to-date references.*

6. *Conduct comprehensive, systematic, and cyclical program reviews to ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness of academic programs.*
7. *Make quality assurance monitoring and cyclical program review reports accessible to the broader public and various stakeholders through your website.*

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)

The study program's teaching staff is composed of experts in public health, epidemiology, medical statistics, human ecology, and microbiology, who are also employed at the National Institute of Public Health Kosovo (NIPHK). The university has publicly documented regulations for the selection, appointment, reappointment, and promotion of academic staff. However, the report does not explicitly detail how these internal regulations govern the recruitment process for the M.Sc. program specifically. While the existence of a statute and regulations implies a formal framework, the absence of a clear description of recruitment procedures (e.g., steps for hiring, roles of selection committees) limits the evidence of full compliance with internal rules. The SER claims that the recruitment process is "transparent, public, and competitive," suggesting openness in how staff are selected. However, the report does not elaborate on the mechanisms ensuring transparency, such as public job postings, open application processes, or documented selection stages (e.g., interviews, shortlisting). Without specific examples of how transparency is implemented, the evidence remains incomplete. While the claim of a "public" process is promising, the lack of procedural detail prevents a definitive confirmation of full transparency. The promotion of teaching staff was done by clear policies (basically performance in research activities) through the Office for Academic Development. The SER does not outline a specific recruitment procedure for the M.Sc. in Public Health program. It mentions that staff are employed at NIPHK and other institutions, implying that hiring may follow those entities' established processes. The SWOT analysis also notes ongoing "capacity building of the academic staff," hinting at continuous recruitment or development efforts. However, there is no clear description of how staff are recruited specifically for this program—whether through university-wide processes, NIPHK protocols, or a program-specific approach.

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 program is planned to be delivered by 15 full-time academic staff, all with PhD degrees, six of whom have permanent contracts. There are inconsistencies in the reported number of academic staff (15 and 16) on pages 18 and 19, and in contract duration on pages 19 and 24. The staff listed for the master's program already hold positions in various departments such as Epidemiology, Hygiene and Microbiology, Social Medicine, Occupational Medicine, Family Medicine, and Pharmacology, with additional educational, clinical, research, and administrative roles. During the site visit, it was clarified that the teaching load is capped at 10 hours per week. This somewhat contradicts the SWOT analysis in the SER, which identifies "Overload of academic staff with teaching duties due to institutional regulations" as a

challenge. This suggests that, despite having enough staff, they may be stretched thin across multiple programs or responsibilities, potentially limiting their capacity to support the M.Sc. program effectively. While the program has a substantial number of permanent staff, their commitments to partnering institutions (NIPHK), workload overload, and the possible need for part-time hires (retired personnel) indicate that their dedication and availability to the M.Sc. program may be insufficient. Additionally, the site visit highlighted for the staff employed by the Faculty a certain flexibility in balancing teaching, research, and administrative duties based on individual preferences and institutional needs.

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)

The evaluation of academic staff, as explained in the SER, involves assessments by students, peers, and management staff, conducted annually. The results are reviewed individually by the Faculty of Medicine's management, who provide guidance on performance improvement. However, the report does not clarify how these evaluations impact promotions or contract renewals, lacking details on criteria, timelines, or decision-making bodies, which are crucial for transparency. The SWOT analysis highlights "Delay in the promotion of academic staff" as a challenge, indicating potential inefficiencies in the advancement process and raising concerns about its objectivity and transparency. While an evaluation system exists, the absence of clear procedures linking it to advancement and reappointment decisions, combined with noted delays, suggests the processes are not fully transparent.

Annual evaluations likely cover teaching quality and other competencies, but the report does not specify if "excellence" is a distinct criterion or how it is defined and measured. The program has mechanisms to evaluate staff, but it does not clearly demonstrate that "excellence" is integral to advancement and reappointment processes.

The SER emphasizes goals like research development and international recognition, indicating that staff development is valued. Academic staff are encouraged to participate in training and workshops to improve teaching strategies and materials. The SWOT analysis identifies capacity building as a strength, aligning with institutional aims. However, there is no direct evidence that advancement or reappointment decisions support these strategic goals, such as prioritizing staff who enhance research output or teaching quality. While staff development aligns with the program's mission, the advancement and reappointment processes are not explicitly shown to arise from the institution's strategic goals.

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)

The SER shows a commitment to professional development through capacity building, training expectations, and research support. However, the report indicates that the institution endorses grant applications, conference participation, and publishing in scientific journals without detailing the exact support provided, such as frequency, scope, or examples of these activities. This lack of detail makes it unclear how robust or consistent the support is. The SWOT analysis identifies "Insufficient financial support for research development" and "Limited national budget dedicated to science" as weaknesses, suggesting that financial limitations could restrict

development opportunities in practice. While some support exists, the absence of clear policies and the presence of resource and administrative constraints raise doubts about whether all staff are consistently entitled to it. Entitlement implies a systematic guarantee, which is not fully evidenced here.

Although staff are expected to participate in training, there is no information on how these opportunities are communicated, scheduled, or tailored to individual needs. The existence of the Scientific Research Support Unit (UIA) and the Advisory Group for Scientific Research and Innovation suggests institutional backing for research. However, it is unclear how this support is practically extended to individual staff members. "Increasing international cooperation" is listed as an opportunity, but the report does not specify how staff are informed of or supported to pursue these opportunities.

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)

No external associates have been presented in the SER report.

ET recommendations:

1. *Clarification is needed in academic staff listed as teaching staff.*
2. *Reduce staff overload by adjusting institutional regulations or redistributing responsibilities to ensure staff can prioritize the program.*
3. *Clearly outline the steps, criteria, and decision-making processes for advancement and reappointment.*
4. *Specify how excellence is evaluated (e.g., through teaching awards, research output) and ensure it influences career progression.*
5. *Show how advancement decisions support strategic objectives, such as improving research or teaching quality.*
6. *Establish and document clear policies guaranteeing all academic staff access to professional development opportunities, regardless of role or department.*
7. *Address financial and administrative limitations by allocating sufficient funding and personnel to support development activities.*

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 study program has 11 intended learning outcomes (ILOs) covering competencies like theoretical knowledge, research skills, practical application, and communication, indicating a well-rounded program. However, some ILOs lack specificity. For example, "Analyse and treat the determinants of health problems from the perspective of the population" is vague—does "treat" mean addressing health issues practically or studying them analytically? Similarly, "Have the ability to communicate professionally" does not specify the forms or contexts of

communication (e.g., academic writing, public outreach). Best practices require ILOs to be specific, measurable, and actionable, and these examples fall short in precision.

The program's focus on research and professional practice aligns with the faculty's mission of excellence in research and practice. The emphasis on preparing "highly qualified experts" supports capacity building, a broader institutional aim. While the mission alignment is evident, the SER does not explicitly connect the ILOs to specific strategic goals (e.g., increasing research output, fostering international collaboration). The faculty's commitment to academic and scientific capacity is mentioned, but detailed strategic objectives are not clearly linked to the program's outcomes. Additionally, the learning outcomes need to be improved to cover innovation and technology (e.g., AI & data analytics), policy advocacy and leadership, sustainability, and detailed data science (e.g., big data).

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 ILOs align to some extent with the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework level descriptors. Most ILOs related to research, policy development, and clinical decision-making align with Level 7, while those involving clinical practice and communication are more aligned with Level 6 (Bachelor's). To enhance alignment with Level 7, outcomes currently at Level 6 should be revised (e.g., clinical decision-making is more foundational for Level 6, whereas leadership is more advanced).

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)

The program offers a wide range of courses, including Introduction to Public Health, Biostatistics, Ethics in Public Health, Sociology of Health and Illness, Epidemiology, Introduction to Statistical Packages, Qualitative Research, Design and Analysis, Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Reproductive Health and Rights, Nutrition and Epidemiological Aspects, Ageing and Public Health, Research Methods in Public Health, Determinants of Health, Health Care Strategies and Health Care Systems, Governance, Leadership, Management, and Legislation in Public Health, Environmental Health, Public Health Communication, Introduction to Knowledge Synthesis, Systematic Reviews, and Meta-Analysis, Public Health Microbiology, Disaster and Emergency Management, Project Development and Change Management, Intervention in Early Childhood - Transdisciplinary Approach, Field Epidemiology, Health Promotion, Advanced Statistics and Research in the Medical Sciences, One Health Concept, Occupational Health, and Global Health.

Overall, these courses are sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes. However, adding a course on health economics could help students understand the economic dimensions of public health interventions and policies. The layout of courses is not provided, so the vertical integration of the curriculum is unclear. Additionally, as the digital sphere becomes recognized as a new determinant of health, a course on digital health would be a valuable innovation

compared to other programs, as there is currently only a brief mention in the context of Health Literacy.

During the site visit, it was mentioned that the curriculum is set to comply 80% with European standards and 20% with local needs, but it was not clear how this was measured or adapted. There is no specific course dedicated to preparing students for the thesis, which could challenge the transition to independent research. While the program is research-oriented and aligns with many ILOs, it may not fully prepare students for practical or policy-focused public health roles, potentially misaligning with some employment-related outcomes.

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)

The study program spans two years (4 semesters), with three semesters dedicated to teaching and one semester for master thesis preparation. Each semester comprises 30 ECTS, totalling 120 ECTS upon completion. The program is modelled after the European Master's program in Public Health.

Standard 4.5 The intended learning outcomes of the student practice 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 M.Sc. in Public Health program does not seem to include a specific student practice period, as the SER does not mention internships, placements, or structured fieldwork beyond regular coursework and the research-focused thesis.

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

The curriculum incorporates Problem-Based Learning (PBL), where students actively solve problems, fostering critical thinking and engagement. It emphasizes a constructivist approach, placing students at the centre by encouraging them to build their own understanding. Courses like Health Literacy feature group work and practical discussions, promoting collaboration and peer learning. However, the extent of these practices across all courses is not well-documented, and traditional lectures remain a significant component, potentially limiting the shift away from teacher-centred delivery.

Academic staff provide consultation and advice, with set times for individualized support. The Health Literacy course uses diverse assessment methods (e.g., seminar work, presentations, quizzes), accommodating different strengths. The program offers "flexible treatment" for students in special situations, indicating some adaptability. Despite these efforts, there is little evidence of specific strategies (e.g., differentiated instruction or accommodations for disabilities) to fully address diverse needs, and the reliance on conventional lectures and exercises suggests a traditional approach still dominates.

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 SER indicates that student evaluations combine theoretical and practical components, with final grades reflecting performance in both areas. Additionally, the university uses the Electronic Student Management System (SEMS) for assessments, suggesting a standardized platform that supports objectivity.

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

The principle that 1 ECTS credit corresponds to 25 hours of student workload is clear. However, the lack of explicit documentation on how this workload is calculated for each course and how it aligns with the ILOs is concerning. The curriculum design process should ideally provide detailed evidence, such as specific hours of study, assignments, and practical work tied to each credit, to ensure transparency and clarity.

During the site visit, the issue was raised regarding the *Sociology of Health & Illness* (45T+15S= 4 ECTS) and *Ethics in Public Health* (45T+15S= 5 ECTS) courses. The explanation that the latter involves more reading was unconvincing and not substantiated by the SER report.

To address this, it would be beneficial for the institution to provide a more detailed breakdown of the student workload calculation, including specific hours for different activities and how they correspond to the ILOs. This transparency can help ensure that the workload is fair and accurately reflects the demands of each course.

ET recommendations:

1. *Revise the ILOs to be more specific and measurable (e.g., clarify ambiguous terms like "treat" and define communication contexts).*
2. *Learning outcomes can be revised to cover innovation and technology, policy advocacy and leadership, sustainability.*
3. *Learning outcomes should be standardized and levelled up to Level 7.*
4. *The details of clinical and laboratory practices can be given.*
5. *The workload calculations can be revised to cover all activities.*
6. *Introduce a research seminar or preparatory module in Semester 3 to ease the transition to the thesis.*

5. STUDENTS

Despite the absence of current students, we were able to meet with students from various disciplines. This allowed us to draw some conclusions on how the institute generally complies with this standard.

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)

The SER report states that the general criteria for registration in this program are at least a Bachelor's degree (180 ECTS) or certified equivalent. This establishes a clear baseline requirement for admission, indicating that applicants must hold a relevant undergraduate degree. The admission process is regulated by the Statute of the University of Pristina and the call for applications. Additionally, the SER mentions that the faculty can enroll students from other countries under quotas set by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST), with external candidates requiring recognized educational documentation. This suggests a structured process for both domestic and international applicants, although specific criteria beyond the degree requirement (e.g., GPA, language proficiency, or prerequisites) are not detailed in the report itself. It is likely that such details are included in the call for applications referenced in the report. The proposed number of students to be enrolled in this program is 30. In the SWOT analysis within section 2.5, a key strength listed is "the process of transparent, public and competitive open calls for selection, admission and enrolment of students." The use of "public" here strongly suggests that the admission requirements, criteria, and processes are disseminated in a way that prospective students can access them, likely through official university channels such as websites. However, in reality, their website generally doesn't offer information on admission criteria for any of their programs, which raises concerns on transparency and clarity for external candidates.

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)

The program utilizes the Electronic Management System for Students (EMSS), integrated into its quality management system, to track student performance data such as grades and course progress. A structured monitoring system is in place, involving mentors, the Coordinator of Master Studies, and the Committee for Master Studies, which tracks student work and progress. Since 2012, the Student Electronic Management System (SEMS) has been functional and used for student evaluations, further supporting data collection on academic results. However, the SER does not specify the frequency of data collection (e.g., per semester or annually) or the exact metrics tracked (e.g., pass rates, thesis completion), limiting a full confirmation of regularity and scope.

The SER mentions student evaluations of teaching and a monitoring system but does not explicitly confirm that progression data are systematically analysed. The SWOT analysis acknowledges issues like high student interest versus limited admission spots but does not connect this to a broader analysis of progression data (e.g., dropout rates or completion trends). No specific examples are provided of data-driven reviews or their outcomes. While monitoring occurs, there is no clear evidence of regular, systematic analysis of progression data to understand student performance patterns or challenges.

The program offers consultation and advice through set consultation hours and a program coordinator who oversees teaching team coordination, providing general academic support. Mentors and coordinators monitor progress, suggesting potential for intervention when issues arise. The SWOT analysis identifies barriers to completion, such as full-time work impacting attendance and success, but no specific actions (e.g., tutoring, flexible schedules) are outlined to address these challenges. General support is available, but there is no evidence of targeted, data-informed interventions for at-risk students. The link between monitoring and actionable steps to ensure completion is not demonstrated.

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

While this standard can't be assessed for the specific study program yet, the site visit and conversations with existing students revealed a common need among students for international exchange programs and opportunities. The students present were from undergraduate and graduate studies. Since all attendees were affiliated with the faculty of medicine at UP, this seems to be an organizational issue at the faculty level rather than specific to a particular program. During the site visit, the issue of outgoing and incoming student numbers was raised, and the expert team requested additional information. Unfortunately, the number of outgoing students per semester is rather low, considering the size of the faculty. The situation is even more concerning for incoming students, with only one visiting PhD student from Macedonia confirmed. The international mobility of students should be more strongly endorsed by the faculty leadership. Enhancing these opportunities can significantly benefit students by exposing them to diverse educational environments and fostering global collaboration.

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)

Students have shared positive feedback about the overall academic support and other services available at the faculty. They expressed satisfaction with their tutors' guidance and availability, confirming that tutors and program heads are approachable and willing to listen to their concerns. However, despite this open-door policy, a formal system for submitting complaints and preserving rights is not effectively utilized.

The SER report acknowledges challenges faced by full-time working students, which can impact their academic progression and successful program completion. Additionally, the program identifies the risk of student dropout due to limited financial resources, particularly the lack of scholarships and reliance on self-financing. Given that this is a newly established program, proactive measures should be considered to mitigate these threats and address the identified weaknesses.

During interviews, students mentioned using several platforms for their studies. They suggested that synchronizing these multiple platforms into a single, main platform would be a better practice. This unified platform could be used for learning, assessments, communication, and other needs, such as accessing the e-library.

The Career Office at the university primarily advertises job opportunities but does not currently provide structured career guidance or counseling services to support students' professional development. Enhancing these services could significantly benefit students by offering more comprehensive support for their career aspirations.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Admission criteria and the decision-making process should be clearly defined and publicly shared to address the high demand expected for the program.*
- 2. The Faculty of Medicine should explore and expand international exchange opportunities to meet the clear student demand. Coordination at the organizational level could enhance access and visibility of these initiatives*

3. *The program should explore financial support mechanisms, such as scholarships or flexible payment options, to reduce dropout risks and support student retention, or allow for flexible study plans, timings, and modes of learning to accommodate working students.*
4. *The Career Office should expand its services to include structured career guidance and counseling to better support students' professional development.*
5. *Encouraging the effective use of existing structures and processes for appeals and complaints can promote transparency, empower students, and strengthen quality assurance.*
6. *Establish and document a regular process (e.g., semesterly reviews) to analyze progression data, such as dropout rates or course completion trends.*
7. *Use data insights to develop specific support mechanisms, like tutoring or flexible study options, for students at risk.*
8. *Clearly outline in future reports how data analysis leads to actions that improve student completion rates.*

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's learning outcomes and curriculum support the university's mission and research strategic goals. The Faculty of Medicine aims to enhance research capacities and double its research output, as outlined in Kosovo's National Research Program. The program aligns with the National Research Program 2010-2015 and the strategic plan of education in Kosovo 2011-2016, connecting research institutions within higher education to market needs through the curriculum. Despite being designed to meet Kosovo's labor market needs, the program maintains a strong research orientation, ensuring alignment with the faculty's goals. Resource constraints, such as limited funding and infrastructure, are acknowledged but affect implementation rather than the program's inherent alignment with the mission and strategic goals.

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 SER notes that staff are "continuously working and publishing in different research fields of public health," demonstrating ongoing dedication to research that is also seen from their CVs. The program emphasizes a research-oriented approach, suggesting that staff actively incorporate their research into the curriculum. The university allocates "1% for research," providing some financial backing, though this is a modest amount. The Faculty of Medicine aims to "double the FM research output within the four-year period," reflecting an institutional priority on research. The teaching staff are involved in active national and international projects.

The academic staff are highly qualified and actively engaged in research, fulfilling the commitment requirement. Some institutional support is provided through capacity building, limited funding, and international collaborations. However, insufficient financial resources and excessive teaching responsibilities limit the staff's ability to fully realize high-quality research work, despite their dedication. Promotion delays further compound these issues.

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.

The program is modeled on European standards, and the faculty is a member of the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER). It mentions collaborations with international organizations like WHO and UNICEF, providing a platform for potential international engagement. Despite these affiliations, the SER does not specify whether staff are actively encouraged to participate in international networks, joint research, or exchange programs. The SWOT analysis identifies "increasing international cooperation" as an opportunity but also notes "insufficient international cooperation" as a weakness, suggesting that current efforts are limited.

Furthermore, the SER acknowledges challenges such as "limited opportunities to participate in many international conferences due to political and financial obstacles," indicating that while there may be a desire for international engagement, practical barriers hinder staff participation. The faculty is in partnership with the pharmaceutical and medical industry and collaborates on joint research projects.

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.

Indeed, the SER highlights that the teaching staff of the faculty has produced 869 publications, with 735 authored or co-authored by staff as first or corresponding authors. In 2017 alone, 106 papers were published. These publications appear in high-impact platforms such as Web of Science, PubMed, and Scopus, which are widely recognized in academia as evidence of a "proven record." However, obtaining recent publication numbers from the past three years would provide a more precise and adequate picture.

ET recommendations:

1. *Provide more financial support for research, incentivize excellence*
2. *Define precise forms of participation in different aspects of cooperation with national and international partners*

7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

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

The program utilizes facilities at the National Institute of Public Health (NIPHK) and the University Clinical Center (UCCK), with the Faculty of Medicine located on the UCCK campus. These spaces support teaching activities, such as lectures and seminars. However, the self-assessment report describes the physical infrastructure as "relatively modest," suggesting that while teaching spaces are available, they may lack modern updates or sufficient capacity. The SER lists equipment available for teaching, including 16 laptops, 4 LCD projectors, 4 halls for learning development, and 3 platforms, along with IT resources like video projectors, whiteboards, and flipcharts. These tools support basic educational activities such as presentations and group work. However, the SWOT analysis notes that while classrooms are

"sufficiently equipped with the necessary technological equipment," the term "sufficiently" implies a baseline rather than an optimal level.

For research, the program lacks mention of specialized equipment, such as laboratory tools or advanced data analysis software, which are essential for public health research. The SWOT analysis explicitly highlights a "lack of optimal capacities for new data analysis software," underscoring this gap.

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

The libraries within the Faculty of Medicine offer a rich collection of literature, primarily in English, but also in Albanian and other languages, covering more than 50% of the subjects in the study program. Additionally, these libraries provide reading rooms with seating capacity for over 10% of the students.

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

The Faculty of Medicine reviews and forecasts its financial plan annually to ensure the sustainability of the study program. Official long-term and short-term plans are developed for the provision and improvement of infrastructure and resources, with their applicability and effectiveness monitored each year.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Investing more in new data analysis software is crucial to enhance research capabilities and support high-quality public health research.*
- 2. Explore funding possibilities to renew specialized equipment to enhance research capabilities and support high-quality public health research.*

FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT TEAM

1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION	Partially compliant
2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT	Partially compliant
3. ACADEMIC STAFF *Mandatory	Partially compliant
4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT	Substantially compliant
5. STUDENTS	Fully compliant
6. RESEARCH	Fully compliant
7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES *Mandatory	Fully compliant
Overall Compliance	Partially compliant


OVERALL EVALUATION AND JUDGMENTS OF THE ET

Recommendation:

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the MSc Public Health study program is overall partially compliant with the standards in the KAA Accreditation manual and recommends additional refinement based on the provided recommendations, encouraging its revised resubmission.

Expert Team

Chair



(Signature)

(Akbar Imatullah)

(17.3.2025)

Member



(Signature)

(Nibal Sabri)

(17.3.2025)

Member



(Signature)

(Anto Čartolovni)

(17.3.2025)