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UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCINECES IN FERIZAJ
HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT, BSc
RE-ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

Ferizaj, April 2024



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: March 20, 2024

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Doc. Dr. Sc. Marina Gregoric, University North, Croatia
- Prof. Dr. Sanja Kalambura, University of Applied Science Velika Gorica, *University of zagreb*
- Mr. Domagoj Švigir, Student Expert TBD
- Marija Vasilevska, Student Expert
- Dr. Flavio Canavero (remote)
- Dr. Agnieszka Dardzinska Glebocka (remote)

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- Arianit Krasniqi, KAA Officer
- Ilirjana Ademaj Ahmeti, KAA Officer

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation report, Accreditation, Ferizaj 2024.*
- *Syllabuses*
- *Staff CV (full time and part time)*
- *Accreditation manual*
- *KAA Accreditation Manual 2022*
- *KAA Manual Annex 4.3.*
- *Compliance calculation*
- *Practical informations of the general context of Kosovo*
- *Law on higher education*
- *Meeting Agenda, list of participants and experts of the meeting*
- *Decision of the Senat of the appointment of working groups for SER*
- *Meeting Agenda, list of participants and excerpt of the meeting with Alumni*
- *Meeting Agenda, list of participants and excerpt of the meeting with Business community.*



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- *Meeting Agenda, list of participants and excerpt of the meeting programme comity*
- *Matrix of courses required to meet res. of learning outcomes MSc Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management*
- *Regulation of Quality Assurance*
- *Regulation on the selection procedures regarding the appointment of Academic staff at UASF*
- *Regulation for Master Studies*
- *Student transfer regulations*
- *Regulations for advancement correlation procedures of regular Academic staff at UASF*
- *List of Scientific Publications of the staff engaged in the Program*
- *List of participation of teachers in scientific conferences.*
- *Etc.*

Additionally, Received documents:

- *None*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

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

1.2. Site visit schedule

Date: 20th of March 2024

Expert Team

- Doc. Dr. Sc. Marina Gregoric, University North Croatia
- Prof. Dr. Sanja Kalambura, University of Applied Science Velika Gorica
- Domagoj Švigir, Student Expert
- Marija Vasilevska, Student Expert
- Dr. Flavio Canavero (remote)
- Dr. Agnieszka Dardzinska Glebocka (remote)

Coordinators of KAA

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- Arianit Krasniqi, KAA Officer
- Ilirjane Ademaj, KAA Officer

Site Visit Programme

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:50	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programmes are integrated (Room 1)	Agron Bajraktari-Rector Bujar Pira-Deputy Rector Armend Hysa-General Secretary Sokol Krasniqi-Dean Bashkim Cerchini-Dean Petrit Hasanaj-Dean
09:50 – 10:35	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff (Room 1)	Bujar Pira-Vice Rector for International Relations and Quality Assurance Armend Hysa-General Secretary Fatime Musliu-QA Office Kushtrim Cukaj-Institutional Coordinator Ismail Mehmeti-Faculty coordinator
10:40 – 12:10	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management, MSc (Accreditation) Management of Hospitality and Tourism, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation) Marina Gregoric Sanja Kalambura Domagoj Svirig (Room 1)	Arta Jashari Goga Fari Bushi Gazmend Deda Petrit Hasanaj Idriz Kovaçi Arbëresha Meha Muharrem Salihaj Mimoza Zhubi
10:40 – 12:10	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Applied Informatics, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation) Industrial Engineering with Informatics, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation) Flavio Canavero Agnieszka Dardzinska Glebocka Marija Vasilevska (Room 2)	Fakije Zejnullahu Bashkim Mustafa Bashkim Cerchini Valdete Loku Gjelosh Vataj Milihate Aliu Labinot Topilla
12:10 – 13:10	Lunch break	
13:00 – 14:00	Visiting Facilities	
14:00 – 14:40	Meeting with teaching staff (Room 1) Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management, MSc (Accreditation)	Artan Veseli Agim Thaqi Anyla Shala Bashkim Mustafa

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	Management of Hospitality and Tourism, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation)	Bislim Lekiqi Fakije Zejnullahi Blerina Bytyqi Leonora Rudhani
14:00 – 14:40	Meeting with teaching staff (Room 2) Applied Informatics, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation) Industrial Engineering with Informatics, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation)	Arta Jashari Artan Mazrekaj Arben Terstena Gazmend Deda Ismet Malsiu Muharrem Salihu Etleva Blakaj
14:40 – 15:20	Meeting with students (Room 1) Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management, MSc (Accreditation) Management of Hospitality and Tourism, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation)	Shehvale Beqiri Blerina Gavazi Elma Behluli Kadrije Ramadani Fatbardha Maliqi Ermelin Ibishi Enis Arifi Xhelile Fazlija Xheneta Vladi Pajtim Qeriqi
14:40 – 15:20	Meeting with students (Room 2) Applied Informatics, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation) Industrial Engineering with Informatics, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation)	Valdrin Hasallari Qendrim Qalaj Blerona Duga Brikena Duga Rinesa Çerkini Albina Luri Diar Alidema Rinesa Osmani
15:20 – 16:00	Meeting with graduates (Room 1) Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management, MSc (Accreditation) Management of Hospitality and Tourism, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation)	Leona Jahiri Jehona Rama Dardan Nuhaj Gentrit Elezi Perparim Uruqi Doruntina Azizi
15:20 – 16:00	Meeting with graduates (Room 2) Applied Informatics, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation) Industrial Engineering with Informatics, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation)	Albina Ademaj Donika Guri Arjeta Ramadani Shpetim Hasallari Afrim Berisha Leutime Loku Medina Ymeri
16:05 – 16:45	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Aferdita Hoxha Islam Leka



	(Room 1) Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management, MSc (Accreditation) Management of Hospitality and Tourism, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation)	Alban Turki Arianit Kastrati Egzon Rexhepi Islam Zeka Burim Elezi
16:05 – 16:45	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders (Room 2) Applied Informatics, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation) Industrial Engineering with Informatics, BSc 180 ECTS (Reaccreditation)	Dataprognat – Dardan Sojeva Bonevet – Nafije Berisha Syri i Shqiponjes – Burim Elezi Metaliku – Shpend Imeri Pipe Factory – Fevzi Berisha Fabrika e veglave – Florim Salihu Politek – Shahedin Gojani
16:45 – 16:55	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts (Room 2)	
16:55 – 17:05	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program (Room 2)	

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

The University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (in the following text UASF) was established by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), with Decision Ref. No: 273/01B of July 6, 2015, and was ratified in the Parliament of the Republic of Kosovo with Decision No. 05-V-122 of July 16, 2015. The University has 58 employed staff with regular work relationships, of which 47 are regular teachers, 10 engaged staff, 11 administrative and technical staff from the fields of study offered by the University with experience in higher education and industry.

According to SER, in the last eight years of its establishment, the UASF consolidated the physical infrastructure in the space of about 8.304,27m², in separate spaces for theoretical and practical learning in the workshops and laboratories of the University. The UASF organizes teaching in five faculties with ten accredited study programs:

Faculty of Management

BSc. Industrial Management (accreditation period 2019/22), re-accredited in BSc



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Business Management and Entrepreneurship (accreditation period 2022/25)

Faculty of Engineering and Informatics

BSc in Industrial Engineering with Informatics

BSc in Applied Informatics

MSc. Engineering and Production Management

Faculty of Architecture, Design and Wood Technology

BSc in Interior Architecture and Furniture Design

BA Professional in Design and Construction of Wood Products

MSc. Green Architecture and Interior Design

Faculty of Tourism and Environment

BSc. in Hospitality and Tourism Management SER

MSc. Management and Innovation in Tourism

Faculty of Applied Arts

BA Professional in Graphic Design and Multimedia

According to SER, At the University, 1545 regular students study in ten study programs, of which 1257 are in Bachelor's studies, and 288 are in Master's studies, while of the total number, 946 are female or 61.20% and 599 or 38.80% are male. The University has registered 45.3% of students from the Ferizaj region, 16.8% from Pristina, 13.5% from Kaçanik and 8.7% from Gjilan.



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In accordance with the Law on Higher Education and the UASF Statute, separate responsibilities for the governing bodies of the University and the academic ones are established. The Steering council consists of seven (7) voting members with three-year terms. The Senate of the University elects four members of the SC according to the provisions of the Law on Higher Education or according to the administrative instruction which will be issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), while three members are appointed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). The work of the Steering Council is regulated by a special regulation known as the working regulation of the Steering Council. The Rector is the main leader (main management authority) of the UASF is appointed by the Steering Council.

The UASF has five vice-rectors who are proposed by the Rector and approved by the Steering Council:

- Vice Rector for Teaching, Science and Student Affairs
- Vice Rector for Budget, Finance, Assets and Infrastructure
- Vice Rector for International Cooperation and Quality Assurance
- Vice Rector for Cooperation with Industry, Practical Work and Commercial Activities
- Vice Rector for Digitization, Innovation and Information Technology.

Each academic unit is led by its Dean. The Senate is the highest decision-making institution in the UASF for academic issues. The Senate deals with all academic issues related to the teaching process, academic staff and students. The Program Committee is responsible for the analysis of the educational and scientific process of the program, the analysis of students' pass rates and study dropouts, for revising annually the syllabuses of the subjects in the program, and for implementing the measures and recommendations for quality assurance and improvement. Apart from this, it also proposes changes in the program and takes actions (within its competencies) to address its problems.



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Most students at the UASF come from the Ferizaj region, although there are students from all over Kosovo and Macedonia as well. The University of California, with its offered programs, has increased candidates' interest in enrolling in the study programs. In the last three years, all available slots in most programs have been filled in all the places offered to students.

The UASF defined clear vision:

"A national model of a modern, innovative and integrative education university, where practice complements theory and professional and research skills are developed for the benefit of society".

The UASF defined a clear mission:

"We are committed to providing quality education to prepare qualified professionals, dedicated researchers and educated and responsible citizens to develop professional careers and lead productive lives".

The UASF has clear values:

- "Learning: Valuing education that is employability-oriented, balances theory and practice, focuses on active learning and critical thinking, and fosters responsibility and willingness for lifelong learning.
- Ethics: Treating the dignity of each member with respect, honesty, equality and integrity.
- Cooperation: Building partnerships with students, alumni, businesses and industry, local and international government institutions, the Accreditation Agency and the community the university serves.
- Excellence: Striving to be perfect and excellent in education, scientific creativity and innovation.
- Diversity: Embracing different ideas, beliefs, cultures and ethnicities".

BSc in Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM) as a program under evaluation belongs to the Faculty of Tourism and Environment (FTE).



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According to SER, the head of the faculty is the Dean, who is responsible for the development of the faculty and the organization of the teaching/ scientific process within the faculty's programs. The program has its program director responsible for developing that program and a program committee that consists of all the academic staff who teach within that program.

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGES OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

1. Very Good connection with the local and business community
2. Good opportunity for quality practices implementation
3. Organizational structure open for improvements
4. Clear mission of the program
5. Clear vision of UASF
6. Big motivation of professors and management for study program
7. Nice campus building focused on students work

DISADVANTAGES OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

1. Internationalization aspects are not yet sufficiently developed
2. Limited foreign language proficiency of teaching staff
3. Absence of plagiarism tracking software
4. The small number of staff in the quality assurance office
5. Absence of a flexible QA system which can follow law changes



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EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

1. Collection and analysis of quality data
2. Great integration into the local community
3. The proposed study program is created for the needs of society
4. Good atmosphere and motivated staff ready to learn and teach
5. Excellent good infrastructure used for the teaching process
6. Collaborations between professors and students in joining projects
7. Transparent website with all necessary data
8. U-Share platform for internal-use regulations
9. Very detailed and effective internal regulations and Strategic plan for 2023 – 2026

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives, and administration

According to analyzed documents, Self-evaluation report (SER) and other sources provided by management, University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (UASF), the expert team identifies that the mission of the study program under evaluation, HTM, on the Bachelor level, is in line with the overall mission statement of the institution. The program's mission is to provide contemporary and flexible education by integrating research with practical learning to meet the demands of the job market and support the development of the hospitality and tourism industry. This mission is in harmony with the institution's mission "*...to provide quality education to prepare qualified professionals, dedicated researchers and educated and responsible citizens to develop professional careers and lead productive lives.*" According to SER and objectives of the study program under evaluation HTM, published on the website and available to the



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public, the main objective is to prepare students to professionally perform various activities required in enterprises dealing with tourism and hospitality.

After careful analysis, the ET members found evidence in the elaborated relevant academic and professional advice applied in the definition of the study program HTM learning outcomes. According to the data collected and information provided in SER by management and academic staff, it is evident that the program design takes into account research conducted in the fields of tourism and hospitality, whereby an essential aspect of tourism development today is the sustainability of tourism. The program deals with and anticipates the aspects of sustainable tourism development and includes them in the curriculum. It is recognized as a driver of economic development in many countries. As written in SER (pg. 28), the Kosovo government has identified the advancement of sustainable tourism as a strategic objective in its national development plan for 2024-2026. To meet the strategic objectives of the development plan and the market's demand for experts in tourism and hospitality, the Hospitality and Tourism Management Program aims to fulfill the strategic market needs.

The objectives of the study program under evaluation, HTM, BSc, are:

- To create professionals who understand the aspects of work of the hospitality industry, capable of efficiently organizing, overseeing, and managing operations within a hospitality business;
- To create professions skilled in developing tourist destinations, knowledgeable about local and regional tourist attractions, and familiar with various tourism practices in Kosovo and surrounding areas;
- To foster a research-oriented mindset among students, enabling them to undertake individual research and acquire essential skills for conducting studies that aid



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hospitality and tourism enterprise managers in successfully navigating a dynamic business landscape.

By analyzing the above-listed objectives and the commitment of management, academic and administrative staff, ET members got an impression of the positive and successful implementation of the study programs. According to students, graduates and employers of graduates, it is also evident that all of them (all stakeholders) fully understand objectives and commit to their fulfilment by contributing together to achieving quality.

There are formal policies and regulations which cover critical procedural aspects. These are readily available via different e-platforms or directly through the website. Students and staff have confirmed they know how to refer to them to address relevant matters. Regarding the well-defined overarching study, the academic and scientific research program is oriented to market needs and with active participation in the local, national, and regional tourist sectors. All necessary policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues are publicly available to all staff and students. However, it would be more valuable if they were completely available in English and listed in SER.

The information and data gathered from the meetings with management, students, graduates and employers of graduates make it evident to the ET members that the curriculum of the study program under evaluation, HTM, is designed to meet the needs of both the public and private sectors, taking into consideration the specific challenges and opportunities present in Kosovo's labour market. Students are encouraged to think critically, learn from study cases and workshops, and apply their knowledge, skills and competencies in Hospitality and Tourism in cooperation with local hospitality (hotels, restaurants, etc.) and the tourist sector (tourist



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agencies, tourist boards, etc.). The study program under evaluation, Hospitality and Tourism Management, is the study program on the Bachelor level, which complies with level 6 of NQF, Higher Education Bologna. The program consists of 180 ECTS with a duration of 3 years, and the re-accreditation process requires 80 students, as per the SER.

One of the additional requirements in the study program under evaluation, HTM, related to research aspects when defining program objectives, indicates the relevance of the study program to current needs in Kosovo. Considering that in April 2023, the turnover index for the Hospitality sector experienced a growth of 31.60%, according to data from the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS), and the employment index in the Hospitality sector has an increase of 13.89%, the hospitality and tourism industry is continually evolving, suggesting that contemporary qualifications along with skills that align with market needs, can enhance students' employability and foster the development of an innovative market in this field. The information provided by SER and management concerning the fact that Kosovo will host the Olympic Games in 2030 supports the re-accreditation objectives to continue with the study program under evaluation, HTM, and continuously work on its improvements in different areas. To comply with current market needs in the hospitality and tourism sector in Kosovo, the program under evaluation, HTM, is necessary and a good fit for the overall economic development in Kosovo.

The didactic concept of the study program promotes the implementation of student-centred learning based on followed principles: reflection, diversity, use of the University Management System and new technologies, combining theory with practice, collaboration between staff and students, internationalization, and the use of information technology within various subjects. Academic staff are encouraged to integrate new technologies at the subject level, considering



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the rapid pace of information and communication technology development and that a significant portion of the youth spends considerable time using various electronic devices.

UASF developed an internal communication platform for staff called U-SHARE, and the goal is to provide academic staff access to all regulations, documents, publications, reports, forms, and other relevant information used by academic and administrative staff.

During program committee meetings, the UASF keeps the staff informed of changes in the university's legal infrastructure. The UASF defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at the Program Level:

1. "Alumni Satisfaction: Graduates are contacted and surveyed about their satisfaction with the program, assessing its utility in their employment, whether they acquired the necessary skills required by employers, etc.
2. Employer Satisfaction: Following surveys with graduates, the university conducts research with businesses employing the alumni, querying them about their satisfaction with the program based on their experience with the graduates.
3. Graduate Employment: A study involving program alumni provides information about the employment rate.
4. Student Satisfaction: Annually (once per semester), students are surveyed about their satisfaction with the program, administration, and university staff.
5. Graduation Rate: Generated by the university administration. "

The UASF compiles monthly, semester, and annual reports on the conducted hours and students' pass rates for each exam period. Discussions on syllabi occur during meetings held by the respective program committees, considering expert recommendations or any findings during the teaching process. The UASF has implemented the construction of a comprehensive



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learning process management system, creating and updating files for each program staff member. Each staff member has a personal file (dossier) recording all their activities. The file contains teaching data, assessments (students, colleagues, deans), research, and other activities.

After each exam, statistical data on student assessments are generated and distributed to the leaders of the programs. In situations where students do not meet the predetermined standards in learning outcomes and academic achievements are not satisfactory, the course coordinator (where delays are observed), in coordination with the program management, organizes additional hours (extra lectures), additional consultations, and group discussions with students. The Faculty of Tourism and Environment (FTE), where the study program under evaluation, HTM, belongs, has 254 students, of which **157 are in the Hospitality and Tourism Management (BSc) program**, and 96 in the Management and Innovation in Tourism (Master) Program (SER, pg. 17). According to Table 5: Number of applicants in the programs of the Faculty of Tourism and Environment by years, (SER, pg. 20), ET members conclude that the number of applicants is decreasing in 2023/2024 in comparison to 2022/2023 and 2021/2022 when it comes to the program under evaluation, HTM, although the vast majority of students study at the HTM program under evaluation.

The continuous improvement and promotion of quality and attractiveness of the study program under evaluation, HTM, must be one of the key priorities and academic staff and become a vital component of management goals in the future. The continuous improvement and promotion of quality and attractiveness of the study program under evaluation, HTM, must be one of the key priorities and academic staff and become a vital component of management goals in the future. CVs of the academic staff of the UASF are relatively young, and they should



focus on further research, training, and improving their foreign language skills to be more competitive in the hospitality and tourism industry, which is an international business.

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: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *As the program under evaluation, HTM, is a unique program in the region, it is important to analyze and compare with international study programs continuously*



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2. *Continue well-established cooperation with the hospitality and tourism business sector and include them in the adoption of the study program, its advancements and implementation of current trends in the curriculum*
3. *Continue with the good practice of labour market analysis and preparation of students for jobs in hospitality and tourism*
4. *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*
5. *Continue with the organization and training programme for the academic staff members on the didactic methods, including constructive alignment teaching linked to the learning outcomes.*
6. *Strengthen internationalization and cooperation with faculties in the EU environment by utilizing Erasmus and Erasmus Plus programs*
7. *Establish restaurant facilities where students can practice their hospitality skills in cooperation with external stakeholders*
8. *Improve English language skills of academic and administrative staff to enable more significant internationalization opportunities, attract funds, international students and professors, to increase the number of international students as full-time and exchange students*
9. *Encourage cross-border cooperation projects in hospitality and tourism by learning from foreign practices and implementing them in the study program mission and objectives*

2.2. Quality management



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According to SER, the oversight of the quality assurance process at the University is regulated by the Quality Assurance Regulation, which governs all activities that must be undertaken in this essential field for the proper functioning of education. The assessments carried out are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the Quality Assurance Manual by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), and the University's Strategic Plan 2022/26. The Quality Assurance Regulation provides for establishing the Quality Assurance Commission - QAC - (Article 8) and the Quality Assurance Office - QAO - (Article 10). The academic unit (faculty) within the University applies a wide range of assessment mechanisms: students, academic staff (peer review) and dean. Evaluation of courses is set to true: students, graduates, alumni and industry evaluations. Once a year, assessments are conducted for study programs – by students, Infrastructure – by staff and students, student services – by students, administration – by staff, and the UASF – by the administration. Every semester, assessments are conducted for Courses and academic staff – by students and courses – by the respective academic staff, and once every three years, the program is evaluated by Alumni and industry. During the re-evaluation program process, the faculty involves other actors besides Alumni, such as local government (municipalities), NGOs, etc.

The ET members evaluate positively the re-evaluation of the study program once every three years, and from the data available in SER, there is evidence that past practices have shown that involving businesses in this process not only helps in developing a program that meets their needs for qualified personnel but also makes businesses active participants in the program's development. This collaboration has increased the number of employed graduates from this program.

The UASF has a Vice-Rector for Quality, a Coordinator for quality assurance at the UASF level, a coordinator for quality assurance at the Faculty level, the Quality Assurance Officer, a representative from each academic unit (who is not in the University's leadership structures), an administrative officer, and a student representative.

The results of the internal quality assurance system, reflected in the periodic summary report at the end of the year, are considered by the academic unit management and university management. These data are used to analyze the actual situation and the satisfaction level of



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students, staff, and administration with work in the respective academic unit. The same data serve for analysis and further development of the study program. Information on the activities of the USAF is available on the website in Albanian and English, at a level that meets the standards very well. In addition, communication with stakeholders is maintained in a variety of ways. The USAF is obviously taking its social role seriously. There is evidence that the USAF contribution to the local community is at an advanced level and in line with standards. The university so far has implemented a comprehensive system of evaluation mechanisms including: student assessments of the institution, program, and academic staff, institutional assessments by staff, peer monitoring, and self-assessment. These activities are carried out annually and, in most cases, every semester.

ET members perceived positively the motivation of management and continuous improvements the quality assurance process. The study program under evaluation, HTM, is very important study program not only for USAF but also for the Kosovo economic development. Members of ET distinguish the effort of management of the USAF in terms of acknowledging the importance of quality assurance and identify that the quality assurance arrangements for the study program HTM are themselves regularly evaluated and improved. During the meeting with heads of the management, quality assurance representatives and heads of the study program under evaluation, HTM, ET members observed strong commitment towards students, evaluations, setting clear criteria and following requirements of standards set by KAA, in terms of quality of self-evaluation process, study program delivery, improvements and other key parameters of quality assurance.

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	



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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: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Continue to evaluate, monitor, improve and implement self-evaluations*
2. *The ET recommends that the University of Applied Sciences set up a particular area on the website for quality assurance.*



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3. *The results of the evaluations, the quality manual, the quality indicators and the realization of the goals should be published there.*
4. *The ET recommends that the program evaluate teaching and learning outputs with particular attention to learning outcomes achieved by students.*
5. *At the level of the Hospitality in Tourism Management study program, ET recommends obtaining the specific software for the Tourism and Hospitality field: Galileo, Amadeus, and New Hotel Hospitality Management System (software) to enable students to acquire skills and competencies relevant to the Hospitality sector.*
6. *The ET recommends that the programme introduce formal mechanisms to obtain feedback from graduates to improve the programme's quality at the faculty level.*
7. *Continue strategic partnerships with employers to ensure ongoing and comprehensive collaboration for programme development.*
8. *The ET recommends continuing the open discussion of the course evaluation results with the students.*
9. *The ET recommends continuing the open discussion of the course evaluation results with the teachers.*
10. *The Faculty should continue to develop and implement a quality management system that ensures all stakeholders' proactive involvement following a PDCA-cycle approach.*
11. *The Faculty should make efforts to set functional and operational quality systems with all stakeholders*
12. *Continue good practice in double evaluation to ensure a more objective evaluation of students*

2.3. Academic staff



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According to SER (table 9, pg. 37-38), there is evidence of the number of academic staff and their academic degrees, titles, contract duration, number of courses per semester and teaching number per hour participating in the study program under evaluation, HTM. The study program holders and the entire academic staff engaged in the teaching of this program meet the criteria set forth by the Administrative Instructions for Accreditation regarding the requirement of a PhD for every 60 ECTS. There are six full-time PhD lecturers in the Faculty of Tourism and Environment, to which the study program under evaluation, HTM, belongs. The ET members were informed by management, heads of the study program and academic staff about the policies and requirements related to Higher education in Kosovo. As explained in SER, there is compliance with the number of academic staff required to execute the study program under evaluation, HTM. As a public university, UASF must strictly adhere to staff recruitment procedures regulated by the Higher Education Law, Labor Law, University Statute, and the Regulation for Appointment, Reappointment, and Advancement of Academic Staff at UASF (SER, pg. 38).

Based on declarations from the regular academic staff engaged in the program, none have regular commitments at another university (though they may engage with another educational institution as collaborators). The Kosovo Accreditation Agency hosts an e-accreditation portal where lecturers declare their engagements and sign sworn declarations approved by UASF and the Accreditation Agency. As a result, the teaching staff comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative Instructions on Accreditation.

The University has developed staff development policies, including ongoing monitoring of academic staff performance and their advancements in new teaching methodologies. There is a portfolio containing all annual evaluation reports by students, colleagues, managers, self-evaluations, and improvement plans for each academic staff member, available at USAF and within the Faculty of Tourism and Environment and on the level of the study program under evaluation, HTM. As explained in SER and confirmed by management and academic staff during the meetings with ET members, this policy supports teachers' participation in conferences and study visits, evidencing that the University has supported staff initiatives for conference participation and sent a considerable number of teachers on ERASMUS+ project study visits across Europe (UK, Italy, Austria, Bulgaria, Poland, etc.).



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Evaluation procedures for appointment to academic positions are based on criteria derived from activities such as teaching, scientific and professional research, and service activities. As a public university, UASF respects recruitment procedures regulated by the Higher Education Law, Labor Law, University Statute, and the regulation for the appointment, reappointment, and promotion of academic staff at UASF.

It is evident from the Panel discussion that 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.

It is also evident from the Panel discussion with academic staff and heads of the faculty, as well as formal staff profiles submitted prior to the review, that academic staff can deliver a high-level learning process. All academic staff/teachers are highly motivated, cooperative, and very proud of their HTM study program under evaluation. They cooperate with the practical/business sector and offer students vast opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in the business sector. There are also highly professional and competent external professors and lecturers committed to providing case studies to students from their business and managerial experience. The ET members had meetings with full-time and external lecturers, and there was an excellent opportunity for all of them to present their specializations in the hospitality and business sectors. External stakeholders, such as owners of businesses, managers in hospitality and tourism, owners of tour agencies, restaurants and business representatives, are invited to guest lectures and academic events. All of them support the study program under evaluation, HTM, with remarkable commitment and passion, and they indicate the importance of the program in Kosovo, at the level of the Hospitality and Tourism sector and the level of entire economic development. Their cooperation with academic staff and the whole institution (UASF) is of high value for the future of hospitality and tourism in Kosovo and the HTM program under evaluation.

Concerning the reviewed and analyzed CVs of the teaching staff at the study program under evaluation, HTM, the ET experts can conclude that all of them have the required expertise and competencies to provide quality in the Bachelor study program under evaluation, HTM. The Faculty staff formally consists of associate professors and assistant professors. Educational, scientific, research and service criteria determine staff appointment and ranking.



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Every year, the University conducts evaluations of the lecturers by students and colleagues, managerial assessments, and self-assessments by the academic staff. These reports are documented in their portfolio, which contains all the annual assessment reports. The results of these reports are analyzed by the Deans of the faculties and are used by the university management for overall staff development planning, as well as individual planning for each staff member to improve the quality of teaching. After the initial assessment and the creation of each staff member's portfolio, the Dean of the Faculty, as the primary manager of academic personnel, develops an improvement plan for each staff member. At least twice a year, the Dean meets with the respective personnel to discuss the progress and steps taken to enhance teaching by the academic staff.

According to SER, the USAF organized training about the platform's performance in collaboration with representatives of the Web of Science platform. To fulfill academic obligations, the University supports each teacher with an annual fund of up to 1000 euros for scientific work, international conference participation, and publications in reputable scientific journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science databases, according to the Research Regulation. All academic staff are required to be at the University for 40 hours a week, of which 6-12 hours are dedicated to teaching. Each teacher has an office and technology for educational and scientific work. The contract includes all duties and responsibilities of the teacher, including student consultations, scientific work, and visits to enterprises for student practical work (SER, pg. 39). ET members also perceive the above during the meeting with academic staff and while visiting the USAF premises. Overall, the academic staff is satisfied with the working environment, although there are always budgetary restrictions for scientific research as a result of public ownership, research skills of students where there is a lack of research in the final thesis (due to the study program design, which does not include final bachelor thesis writing). The Bachelor study program under evaluation, HTM, needs to offer more possibilities for students to deal with research methodology. When they enter the MSc level, they have to learn it without having enough experience from the previous study level. It affects professors teaching the research methodology and expectations from students when it comes to writing their final Master's thesis. This topic is elaborated in more detail in standard 4. Educational process content must also be mentioned here because of its impact on academic staff and their efficiency and effectiveness in the research activities of students.



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As explained by management, academic staff and SER, the semester evaluation of the staff by the students and staff is applied. The data from this evaluation is sent to deans to identify and mitigate potential deficiencies. The peer evaluation process was explained to ET members by management, and the reasons behind it are well explained. As the primary manager of academic staff, the Faculty Dean meets with the academic personnel at least twice a year to discuss steps taken to address identified deficiencies, informs the university management and the process results are used for staff development planning to enhance teaching quality.

Training sessions on teaching methodologies are organized within a short timeframe for teachers employed at UASF who need more experience in the educational process. Additionally, training sessions for advancing teaching methods are periodically organized based on the data from the evaluation process. Teachers who reach age 65, following existing laws, are retired, and their engagement can only be in a collaborative capacity.

Some of the strengths of the academic staff, as per SER and information obtained from the meetings with management and academic staff, are seen in the highly motivated staff on the level of the study program under evaluation, HTM, relatively young academic staff, international study experience of the academic staff and competences gained through training organized by the Centre of Excellence in Teaching.

Concerning weaknesses, the English language competencies are still not up to the level that courses can be offered in the English language, there is a lack of innovative teaching methods being applied, and peer evaluation is not entirely free from subjectivity. In terms of the above elaboration, the academic staff, management and SER perceive the SWOT analysis as it is, and they all agreed during the meetings with ET members and are aware that there is room for improvement in this matter. The attitude, commitment, and togetherness of all management and academic staff, led by their rector, are high. This ET and its members anticipate and value the above-mentioned by supporting future development and improvements of the study program under evaluation, HTM, and praise the academic staff as highly committed and ready to face all the challenges within the study program, focusing on the market needs of Hospitality and Tourism sector in Kosovo.

	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	

Compliance level: Fully compliant



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ET recommendations:

1. *Continuously improve the academic performance of academic staff by improving their competencies and skills regarding HTM trends in Kosovo and internationally.*
2. *Increase publishing allowance and research/project budget for academic staff.*
3. *Cooperate with the Erasmus project to ensure more sources and funds.*
4. *Create long-life learning programs in HTM to generate more funds for academic staff and research.*
5. *Improve the English level of HTM teaching staff to be more successful in research, mobility cooperation with international universities*
6. *Teachers should include the latest research, trends, and knowledge on the labour market in the teaching process and their syllabuses to a greater extent.*
7. *7. Improving teachers' pedagogical competencies should be part of regular institutional activities and should be developed annually.*
8. *8. Create and foster a working environment and organizational culture which is less biased and incorporates more objective peer review processes*
9. *Encourage use of innovative teaching techniques and methods amongst all teaching staff by offering training*
10. *Introduce cooperative learning and teaching between junior and senior lecturers in order to manage the transition from traditional to contemporary teaching methods*
11. *Continue to involve external stakeholders in teaching process by inviting them as guest lecturers (including business representatives from the Kosovo Hospitality and Tourism Sector regional and international companies cooperating with the Kosovo Hospitality and Tourism sector)*



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2.4. Educational process content

According to SER and discussion with heads of the study program under evaluation, HTM, members of ET determined that the HTM study program is a 3-year study programme with 180 ECTS credits. The program is organized in 6 semesters. The program under evaluation, HTM, consists of 40 mandatory courses. In the third year, students can choose one of two specialized directions: hospitality or tourism. Each of these profiles offers specific courses that develop skills following the objectives and learning outcomes. Each course describes the objectives, learning outcomes, content, assessment methods, primary literature, and teaching methodology. The program is offered in Albanian. The study program has two specializations: hospitality management and tourism management. After passing all the exams, students get their BSc degrees.

The program has no bachelor's thesis, so students are not obliged to write it. The allocation of ECTS per semester varies from 29 to 31. Considering that in Kosovo high education, students are not obliged to write a bachelor's thesis, there is an impact on the continuation of the studies in terms of lack of research experience in the MSc study programs. During the meeting with heads of the study program, academic staff, students and graduates, it was identified that students would benefit from thesis writing and research process, especially regarding recent research and applied practices in the Hospitality and Tourism sector. It would be beneficial to gain deeper insight into current trends, and more applied cooperation with Kosovo's Hospitality and Tourism sector would be possible. Students would gain competencies and skills in the research process at the bachelor level, which would benefit their further studies at MSc. The

ET members strongly recommend that the management of the UASF reconsider introducing a thesis at the bachelor level in the program under evaluation. The HTM program under evaluation should be compared with EU universities and advanced curriculums in Hospitality and Tourism, where the thesis is an integral part of the curriculum. This approach would benefit the study program, students, and professors in different aspects, such as compliance with societal and business needs and the methodological development of generic skills and competencies. Professors would also benefit from mentorships and would be able to publish research papers and results in co-authorship with students, which would enable them to be more



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cited and present in conferences and professional and scientific journals, nationally and internationally.

Students are offered more general courses during the first two semesters, while during the third to sixth semesters, the courses are more specific in hospitality, tourism, and management. Micro and macroeconomics are not available courses, although they are fundamental courses in economic studies (as hospitality and tourism belong to the field of economics). The study program under evaluation also includes English and German language courses, which is considered positive from the perspective of ET members. The internship is organized as a course provided in the sixth semester and entails 5 ECTS. The internship structure consists of 3 hours per week, and 2 of them are lectures. For the rest of the hours, students work on projects and in companies that offer internship opportunities. The companies and external stakeholders support students and contribute to the quality of HTM, the study program under evaluation and execution. During the meeting with students, there was no evidence that students had to write their daily work reports during their internship. The syllabus covers significant areas and learning outcomes to be achieved during the course. However, it could be improved with more specific guidance in terms of students' tasks to be carried out in companies and reporting, monitoring and controlling them while doing their internship. There needs to be a more straightforward strategy for assessing the learning outcomes concerning internships in companies.

The distribution of ECTS per study course in the overall study program is mostly assigned with 4 to 5 ECTS per study course. This indicates that most courses have similar load, value, and importance. It would be more appropriate to have some courses with a higher number of ECTS and some with fewer, depending on their importance for the study program, contribution to the study program learning objective and learning outcomes, and time needed to accomplish course learning outcomes and pass them.

Following current trends in the Hospitality and Tourism sector, it is important to update the study program with additional elective courses such as Congress Tourism Management of MICE trends, cultural tourism (considering the promotion of Kosovo as a tourism destination), digitalization and corporate social responsibility in hospitality and tourism and Sports tourism or management of sports tourism. Keeping in mind that Kosovo will be hosting the Prishtina



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2030 Mediterranean Games, under the patronage of the Olympic committee. For such reasons, students in the study program under evaluation, HTM, must prepare themselves for professional challenges in Event management and Sports management as a part of large national and international events.

The study program HTM complies with the requirements and standards for training managerial staff and young professionals in Kosovo, and it is in line with the requirements of the national qualification framework and the framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The ET members assess that the program's individual components are combined to achieve the specified qualification objectives to a certain extent and provide adequate forms of teaching and learning. As described above, the disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and mostly 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. However, there is still room for improvement (as described above).

As per the SER and insight into the description of the study program under evaluation, HTM, there are the following overall learning outcomes listed:

1. Develop social and intercultural skills;
2. Practice marketing tools and technical sales skills for hotel and tourism products
3. Use modern technology (applications and software related to information management in Hospitality and Tourism);
4. Demonstrate skills in managing hospitality and tourism businesses;
5. Calculate and analyze business activities to maximize decision-making effects in business;
6. Recognize industry trends and analyze the external and internal business environment to implement business strategies effectively for the Tourism and Hospitality industry;
7. Understand and comprehend the management of hospitality and tourism service operations and their importance in Kosovo's business environment.

There are also specific learning outcomes created for hospitality and tourism specialization.

Specific Hospitality learning outcomes are as follows:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of food safety and beverage management
2. Exhibit communication skills and interpersonal relationship management



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3. Implement asset management processes in hospitality settings (SPA, pools, clubs, etc.).
4. Understand the event management process.

Specific Tourism Learning Outcomes are:

1. Understand different types of tourism and multicultural perspectives
2. Identify tourism potentials;
3. Understand the development flow of rural tourism;
4. Know the process of managing tourist destinations.

After completing their studies, graduates can be employed as:

- a. Manager of hotel companies;
- b. Specialized agent in the hospitality and tourism industry;
- c. Developer/manager of hotel and tourism product/service;
- d. General manager in tourist companies;
- e. Self-employed and entrepreneur;
- f. Project manager;
- g. Tour guide.

The learning outcomes of the study program under evaluation are directly correlated with competencies. However, they do not align with EQF level 6, Bloom's taxonomy of knowledge and the EU framework. Program learning outcomes, together with specific and generic ones, and those in syllabuses require revision and compliance with verbs recommended by Bologna.

The curriculum disciplines have analytical syllabuses that comprise the minimum required according to the standard, such as objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars, and other activities, an assessment system, and a bibliography. The assessment criteria are described in syllabuses, including exams, seminar papers, projects, case studies, and group and individual presentations, and they are different for different study courses in the program under evaluation, HTM. The constructive alignment in syllabuses needs to be included. This implies that there needs to be a clear definition of assessment criteria for each learning outcome. Different assessment methods are present, including different assessment criteria. However, there needs to be evidence of how the academic staff can assess each (specific learning outcome) and how many ECTS are allocated to which exam or assessment method. This part of the syllabuses should be revised and



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improved in all syllabuses, together with the revision of verbs used to describe learning outcomes on level 6.

The formal student assessment mechanisms are described in the course descriptions, and students are aware of them, but it is not clear to students how each learning outcome is assessed in each exam. Students still pass exams or colloquium as such, but not precisely learning outcomes. During the interviews, the expert team received evidence that these mechanisms are communicated to students at the beginning of each course, but those mechanisms are mostly related to types of examinations or methods, including percentages.

The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each is responsible for reaching the learning outcomes. On the level of the study program under evaluation, HTM is partially achieved, anticipating that learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the student's development, but since there is no clear definition of a specific assessment of each learning outcome. This is not fully communicated because it does not exist in the assessment criteria in syllabuses. The same applies to teaching strategies that fit the different learning outcomes programs intend to develop. On the other hand, the assessments set out in the program and course specifications need to comply fully with a clear assessment of learning outcomes.

Consequently, it is not possible to meet the needs of different groups of students. In terms of flexibility, academic staff is flexible, but the relationship between learning outcomes and assessment needs to be clearly defined. Based on the lack of learning outcome assessment criteria, the student assessment mechanisms cannot be conducted fairly and objectively to the fullest. Students need to get feedback on the assessment of each learning outcome. This is an area where revision should be made. As per SER and meeting with management, teaching staff and students, there need to be more objective assessment criteria, and students confirmed that they pass most courses and exams without issues. UASF introduced the assessment process, which includes second examiner, but the project is in the initial trial phase and does not guarantee an unbiased assessment. Academic staff perceived it well and found it as valuable insight and a way to improve, which is another aspect, and ET members consider it as a positive move towards the more transparent evaluation of courses and learning processes for academic staff.



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ET members evaluate the cooperation with external stakeholders with high remarks because UASF has signed over 80 cooperation agreements with enterprises from various industry sectors, enabling opportunities for students to perform practical work and conduct research related to the hospitality and tourism field. The research on the BSc level of the study program under evaluation, HTM, is limited to specific courses only because of the non-inclusion of a bachelor thesis to the study program. The University also has an Industrial Board, an advisory body that makes suggestions for program improvement and identifies opportunities to include new courses that meet market needs and required competencies.

ET members conclude that the Bachelor study program under evaluation, Hospitality and Tourism Management, implements a structured and defined approach to student engagement through a calculated ECTS credit system during an academic year. However, there is room for improvement, as explained above. The program is designed to meet the market needs and economic development of Kosovo in the Hospitality and Tourism sector with excellent cooperation between UASF and the business sector, but there is a lack of practical training opportunities for students at UASF, a lack of the new literature in Albanian language (which could be improved by introducing more literature in English language or other foreign languages). The internship could be improved by adding more structured internship opportunities and adding more ECTS to the course.

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.	X	
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	



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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	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The ET recommends the revision of learning outcomes and syllabuses in terms of compliance with verbs on level 6, Bloom's taxonomy*
2. *Review and improve syllabuses in terms of assessment criteria for each learning outcome*
3. *Implement constructive alignment in a way to design assessment tasks aligned with learning outcomes in all courses and all syllabuses*
4. *As a result of constructive alignment in assessment, students will pass learning outcomes (which will be in line with EU standards, Bologna and EQF)*
5. *After revising syllabuses, the communication and introduction of assessment criteria could be communicated fully to students*
6. *It will enable students to know precisely how many ECTS were assign to which learning outcome, and in case students fail certain learning outcome, they will repeat only that specific learning outcome, not the whole exam*
7. *Distinguish the difference between assessment methods and assessment of learning outcomes*
8. *Continue updating syllabuses with recent literature (even in English or other foreign languages if not available in Albanian)*



9. *Compare USAF and study program HTM syllabuses with similar in the EU institutions of higher education, learn and apply advanced practices in the Hospitality and Tourism sector*
10. *Apply for Erasmus projects and academic exchange in order to advance, exchange and learn EU practices in course development, description and assessment*
11. *Continue improving courses with new technologies and digital tools in HTM practices by acquiring specific software for the Tourism and Hospitality field: Galileo, Amadeus, NewHotel Hospitality Management System, etc.*
12. *Introduce a practical space (students' restaurant or a kitchen at USAF where students could practice internally)*
13. *Revise the study program by including compulsory and elective courses*
14. *Introduce Micro and Macroeconomics in the first year of study program HTM*
15. *Revise the number of ECTS for each study course by increasing the number for core Hospitality and Tourism courses*
16. *Follow new trends in HTM and offer elective courses such as MICE tourism, Congress tourism management, Sports tourism management, Corporate social responsibility in tourism, Specific forms of tourism, Gastro tourism, etc.*
17. *Offer courses in the English language to attract international students (by improving the language skills of academic staff)*
18. *Consider introducing a bachelor thesis as an integral part of the study program HTM and assign an adequate number of ECTS*
19. *Continue good practices of creating models for more objective assessment criteria*
20. *Promote study program HTM locally, regionally and internationally to increase the number of students*
21. *Improve facilities for online learning and teaching in order to retain more students even if there is a high emigration level*
22. *Continue good practices related to cooperation with the business sector, creative and functional infrastructure and facilities, and a positive and motivating learning environment*

2.5. Students



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According to data sourced by SER, the study program under evaluation, HTM, has 157 registered students. The pass rate of students is 47.41% (this data is based on a non-standard term (September 2023 term), SER, pg. 49.

Student admissions are based on a public competition announced in daily newspapers in Kosovo. The criteria for admission and selection of students are defined according to the University Statute and are made public in the competition. To register for this program, students must have completed level IV according to the National Qualifications Framework.

Teaching is organized in different groups. For theoretical subjects, lectures are organized in groups of up to 150 students, numerical subjects of up to 100 students, and professional subjects in groups of no larger than 70 students.

The ET members agree that the teaching methods comply with the standard requirements. Different teaching methods are applied, such as lectures, seminars, theoretical exercises, fieldwork, discussions, professional consultations, and independent student projects. During the meeting with students and academic staff, many reported on case study analysis, discussions, project-based learning and problem-solving. In many subjects, students must work on term papers, too. This approach enables students to gain practical and theoretical skills, knowledge and competencies, and communication skills.

The procedure of examinations is explained in the SER of the study program under evaluation, HTM, and elaborated on by management, teaching staff, and students. There are no procedural deficiencies, but there is a lack of assessment criteria related to learning outcomes and constructive alignment. Students need to be made aware of the concept of taking exams for each learning outcome or passing learning outcomes and, in case of failure, repeating only specific failed learning outcomes. This is explained in previous standards, and after revision of syllabuses and constructive alignment implementations, this deficiency can be solved. Exam results are announced on the SMU (University Management System), and notification of their publication to students is automatic. Students who are unsatisfied with their work's result can reject the SMU grade within 48 hours from the date of their publication. Those students who are not satisfied with the assessment of their work have the right to request an assessment by a commission, as provided by the Bachelor's Study Regulations.



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During the site visit and as per SER, ET members perceived that the academic staff of UASF, on the level of study program under evaluation, HTM, was highly committed to the study program and students. Academic staff supports and motivates students in the overall study process. They are available in sufficient time for counselling with students.

Based on the university's statute and study regulations, the student may have flexibility in organizing the exam based on the requirements when he/she participates in some form of international mobility or even work/practical learning abroad. Information related to the functioning of SMU is provided in SER and confirmed to the ET members during the site visit and meetings with management, heads of the study program, students and academic staff. The SMU is a system through which communication between the university and the student is realized. Through the SMU, exams are presented, elective subjects are chosen, the semester is registered, and the student's academic records are managed.

At the UASF level, an anti-plagiarism mechanism (plagiarism check) is available to ensure the originality of students' work. Since the bachelor thesis is not part of the program's curriculum under evaluation, HTM, the plagiarism system does not apply to the originality of the thesis. It is relevant for the seminars, research projects within courses, etc. The system is imperfect and has limitations when detecting plagiarism in Albanian. This could also motivate the academic staff under the study program to encourage students to research using the English language, too, at least in some study programs.

ET members evaluate the relationship between academic staff and students regarding teaching, supporting and motivating students as very good. During the meetings with students, most students explained and confirmed this. Students and graduates show appreciation to their professors, value their input and contribution to students' competencies growth, and would also recommend the study program HTM to other students. As a result, ET members identify the adequate tutorial assistance provided by academic staff to students to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning. Discussion with students from the HTM study program under evaluation implies that they are well informed on their obligations and

The UASF also promoted the project for "Monitoring Student Attendance in Classes," supported by HERAS+, Austrian Development Cooperation & MASHT through ID cards with



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a chip - Biometric Fingerprint, RFID & PIN Access Control Device, transferring manual work to digital within UASF. This project aims to effectively and in real-time monitor students' engagement in academic activities by collecting and storing data related to the academic staff's level of participation and overall engagement in the teaching process. Both students and alumni confirmed that there are some areas for improvement at the BSc level. However, alumni have some positive activities, such as volunteering to help 1s year students and organizing open-door events, and they claim that they meet regularly. Some would like to provide guest lectures and suggest possibilities of internship semesters abroad in hotels and other hospitality and tourism companies.

Some weaknesses of the study program under evaluation, HTM, elaborated by students during the meeting with ET members, are lack of space for student associations, lack of connection between students and alumni (which contradicts information provided by Alumni), non-active student activities and underdeveloped campus facilities. There is also 1 IT technician available to students who can only meet some of their demands, literature is not available in Albanian language, and students require more travel to visit companies and experience hospitality and tourism.

According to SER, the Career Center is a resource for students and young people aiming to develop a successful career and find employment or training opportunities. Students have student organizations within the university that advocate for students' rights and address potential issues. Each student organization has its statute approved by its members following the general regulations issued by the Governing Council.

When analyzing all information provided by students, management, academic staff, Alumni, heads of the study program and employers of graduates/external stakeholders, and information provided in SER, the ET members identified more strengths than weaknesses of the study program HTM, especially concerning good cooperation and agreement with industry. The ET members fully support the commitment and enthusiasm of all stakeholders and encourage further development of UASF and BSc study program in Hospitality and Tourism Management, to continue maintaining and improving students' satisfaction and enrolment of future students.



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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	



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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: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Create an international study environment by improving English skills and increasing incoming mobility*
2. *Enable a smoother process for transferring between universities and recognizing ECTS*
3. *Introduce additional support for students in career counselling*
4. *Continue best practices and cooperation with external stakeholders*
5. *Increase the number of international students and ensure gender balance in recruitment*
6. *Continue further expansion of the Alumni organization*
7. *Develop Erasmus programs summer or winter schools with regional and international partners*
8. *Promote HTM study program in neighbouring countries to attract regional students*
9. *Continue to improve digital communication platforms to attract more students and improve the learning process*
10. *Acquire improved plagiarism systems for the Albanian language*
11. *Encourage students to participate in more Erasmus programs abroad*
12. *Encourage students to use more English or foreign literature due to insufficient literature in the Albanian language*



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2.6. Research

During the site visit, meetings with management and academic staff, and the data available in SER, the ET members concluded that research is one of the main pillars of the University's 2022-2026 strategic plan. This plan includes the spectrum and quality of research and laboratory work at the University involving staff and students. The plan has identified its objectives, development strategies, and performance measurement indicators. Also, the University is in the process of developing the Institute of Applied Sciences. The UASF has three Erasmus+ projects for the development of the University's capacities in terms of research: Entrepreneurial Universities for Industry Aliens - EUFORIA, Creating Theory to Practice Centers for Innovation and Employment - CTPICE, and Enhancing Research Culture in Higher Education in Kosovo.

Within the framework of the project "Upscaling University-Industry Cooperation through education-knowledge Transfer" funded by HERAS Plus, students graduated from this program, mentored by the academic staff, offered specific solutions to the problems identified in the company chosen by the students. The solutions were presented by the students in front of the company and representatives of the Salzburg University of Applied Sciences and the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (SER, 55).

The UASF has a subscription to the Web of Science platform and EBSCO through which academic staff and students are enabled to join and publish scientific works.

All the staff at UASF are encouraged and enjoy institutional support to engage in research activities and their publication. The Governing Council of the University has decided to support the scientific activities of the academic staff up to a modest amount of 1,000 euros per year for each staff member, which includes research, participation in conferences and compensation for the publication of their works in international journals.

Each member of the academic staff is obliged to carry out scientific research, and that research must be published on one of the platforms with an international character - the regular acts within the University also regulate this matter - so each academic staff must have at least one scientific paper published within the year in an international journal or conference.

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According to SER, pg. 54, academic staff of the BSc program under evaluation, HTM have published 89 papers in journals and many works presented at international conferences as shown in table 12: Table of the scientific journals and Conferences.

Type of publication	2023	2022	2021
Scientific journals	10	23	30
Conferences	26	36	9

Source: SER, pg. 54.

The data provided in SER and other USAF documents, there is also another effort to strengthen the commercialization structure and deepen the partnership between higher education institutions and the public sector is the collaboration of UASF with international partners in the project "Creating Theory to Practice Centres for Innovation and Employment/ CTPCIE" within the ERASMUS+ program.

The project aims to establish Theory to Practice (T2P) centers and staff professional development for the transfer of methodological knowledge and skills. This innovation center also plans to offer commercial services to the industry. UASF is in the process of building the T2P. In the agreements signed between UASF and the enterprises, cooperation in joint research activities is foreseen. This collaboration will be further strengthened with the establishment of the Institute (SER, pg. 56).

The overall assessment of research at the level of USAF, as well as on the level of the HTM study program under evaluation, is perceived as successful by the ET members. In order to continue research and development activities in Hospitality and Tourism, it is essential to improve the language skills of academic staff, especially the English level of proficiency, because international journals and conferences accept research papers written in English. This would increase the visibility of the authors and their citation index.

Although the above-listed strengths and positive achievements in the research activity of academic staff are there, standards are established. It is the obligation of teaching staff (for the elections to the teaching grades, too); there are still obstacles resulting from insufficient funds/budget for research, visiting conferences, participating in projects with or without

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students, etc. This aspect must be improved by obtaining more funds from the government and international cooperations, national partnerships, sponsorships, etc. Life-long learning programs could also be a good source of additional internal income for research purposes, especially on the level of the program under evaluation, Hospitality and Tourism Management.

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: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Continue increasing the quantity and quality of research in the relevant Hospitality and Tourism field topics*
2. *Improve the availability of international resources by broadening international cooperation with universities, libraries and online database access to recent publications for academic staff and students*
3. *Explore the use of research funding from international organizations and increase Erasmus mobility of academic and administrative staff*
4. *Forster international collaboration in scientific research*
5. *Invite more international guest professors*



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6. *Organize summer and winter schools with international universities as a way of exchanging knowledge and experience but also to improve research budgets*
7. *Strengthen networking with international universities in the organization of conferences, especially in the Balkan region (create partnerships)*
8. *Invest in international databases and utilize digital tools to reach more recent research sources*
9. *Organize long-life learning courses and gain extra income for research (local and international cooperation)*
10. *Involve more students in the research activities*
11. *ET recommends setting a clear introduction of research activities on the UASF website.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

According to data available in SER (pg. 57), UASF covers an area of over 7000 m², including spaces for workshops and laboratories. Almost every year, it recruits new teachers equipped with one workshop and expects to equip another for the practical work of students and staff. The University is a public higher education institution. The Medium-Term Expenditure Framework guarantees its financial stability for the next three years. As a public higher education institution and under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), the University owns the space it utilizes, including its laboratories and workshops. It has licenses for using software, either licensed or school-licensed, for free for academic purposes.

The University has two amphitheatres with 150 and 350 seats, 15 classrooms for groups of up to 75 students, two IT labs, two industrial spaces for workshops, four spaces for laboratories, and many other accompanying spaces. The University Library has 1433 different types of publications, some with more than one copy, and 8 reading seats for students. Student access to the library includes a dedicated internet network. The University is accessible to people with disabilities and has an elevator for special needs access on all building floors.

According to its strategic plan, the UASF plans to assess the suitability of spaces regularly. This assessment is conducted annually by a team of three staff members. As part of this assessment, further investments are planned in the library spaces to create opportunities for independent student work by equipping these spaces with computers and tablets (SER, pg. 58). UASF also has agreements with the National Library of Kosovo and the city library in Ferizaj



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for the use of their titles and electronic resources by students and teachers. Based on the agreement with the National Library, the University has also secured access to the electronic resources: ASTM COMPASS Abstract, Edward Elgar Products, IOPSScience, IMFLibrary, and DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

The UASF has announced a tender for enriching the library with literature (journals, books) in English and German languages in addition to Albanian literature. Students can also access electronic libraries and platforms such as the Web of Science. The campus is convenient, clean, and attractive to students and staff in terms of both learning conditions and social spaces. Wi-Fi services are available in 25 areas, including the library, conference room and classrooms. All UASF academic and administrative staff are equipped with personal computers and have Internet access. All administration and management staff offices are also equipped with printers and other equipment necessary for comfortable work. Equipment is efficiently managed and documented regularly. All classrooms are equipped with LCP projectors that are used in teaching. There are two large rooms with computers for students to use. The entire area of the UASF has autonomous central heating.

The UASF has a website, Facebook page, Moodle e-learning platform, and MS Teams. For the management of academic and administrative processes, the UASF uses the University Management System (SMU), which mainly offers a student module, teaching staff module, administration module, and academic manager module. The UASF also has recreational spaces that students and staff use for relaxing activities, such as the lobby -dedicated to staff and students for public discussion and group work separate from the reading section, where students can be part of discussions by various guest lecturers. The sports field (basketball) is part of the UASF campus.

All necessary applications, such as MS Office, AutoCAD (student edition), AZURE, etc., are installed on all computers. UASF employs administrative staff responsible for infrastructure management, including work tools (computers, internet, projector, printer, and other auxiliary equipment).

In summary, while the academic institution has commendable facilities and strategic initiatives, there is scope for refinement and improvement, particularly concerning inclusion, digitalization and resource optimization.



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To improve the infrastructure for the demands of the quality of the HTM study program and its development, an internal restaurant is required, where students can learn hospitality practices.

<i>Standard</i>	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.	X	
Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.	X	
Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years: a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process; b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence; d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.	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; b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years; d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for; e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.	X	
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:



1. *ET recommends further cooperation with research institutes to overcome the lack of research infrastructure*
2. *ET recommends further improving digitalisation and distance learning facilities*
3. *ET recommends opening the Student Centre for Social and Psychological Support or the Student Welfare Support Unit, which should be established to support students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia.*
4. *ET recommends the expansion of the infrastructure through corporate donations, if applicable*
5. *ET recommends the purchase of specific licences and software systems for the Hospitality and Tourism sector*
6. *ET recommends further improvement in infrastructure related to practicing Hospitality (such as restaurant or cafeteria)*
7. *ET recommends continuous cooperation with international higher education institutions to secure more funds for laboratories, equipment, digital tools, software, etc, through Erasmus projects and other partnerships.*

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The Expert team would like to praise the programme development team for proactively engaging with the Panel during the validation event. The programme development team exhibited an extreme sense of teamwork. 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	Fully compliant
Quality management	Fully compliant
Academic Staff	Fully compliant



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Educational Process Content	Substantitally compliant
Students	Fully compliant
Research	Fully compliant
Infrastructure and resources	Fully compliant
Overall Compliance	Fully compliant

The overall compliance is assessed by the experts at the level of **Fully compliant**.

In conclusion, after a thorough review process, the Expert Team is confident in stating that the study program *Hospitality and Tourism Management, BSc* offered by *the University of Applied Sciences Ferizaj* is *Fully compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual*. Therefore, the Expert Team recommends *re-accrediting* the study program for a duration of **5 years**, with a number of **80 students** enrolled in the program.

4. APPENDICES (if available)

None

Expert Team

Chair

(Signature)

(Doc. Dr. Sc. Marina Gregorić)

(15.04.2024.)

Member – Student expert



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(Signature)

(Domagoj Švigir TBA, student expert)

(15.04.2024.)

Member

(Signature)

(Prof. PhD. Sanja Kalambura)

(15.04.2024.)

Member

(Signature)

(Dr. Flavio Canavero)

(15.04.2024.)

Member

(Signature)

(Dr. Agnieszka Dardzinska Glebocka)

(15.04.2024.)

Member



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(Signature)

(Marija Vasilevska, student expert)

(15.04.2024.)