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Kosovo Accreditation Agency



UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES IN FERIZAJ

Management and Innovation in Tourism, MSc, 120 ECTS

Reaccreditation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

28th April 2025, Ferizaj

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INTRODUCTION

Date of site visit: 08th April 2025

Expert Team (ET) members:

Prof. dr. Marina Gregoric

Dr. Tornike Khoshtaria

Christoph Back, PhD Student

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

Leona Kovaçi, KAA Officer

Ilirjane Ademaj, KAA Officer

Sources of information for the Report:

- Self-Evaluation Report
- Appendix 1 - Minutes of the meeting with industry and list of participants
- Appendix 2 - Minutes of the meeting with Alumni and list of participants
- Appendix 3 – MoU Salzburg – Ferizaj signed
- Appendix 4 - Report on the student participation on practical work
- Appendix 5 - Regulation on the protection of personal data
- Appendix 6 - Professional development plan for the administrative staff
- Appendix 7 - Agenda of the workshops and list of participants
- Appendix 8 - Agenda of the training on the use of SPSS
- Appendix 9 - Report on the student participation on practical work
- Appendix 10 - Regulation on Governing Council Work
- Appendix 11 - Quality assessment report (program, courses, instructors)
- Appendix 12 - Questionnaire for Businesses

- Appendix 13 - Development Plan of Academic Staff - Faculty of Tourism and Environment
- Appendix 14 - List of scientific publications 2021-2025
- Appendix 15 - Syllabuses
- Regulation of the Code of Ethics,
- Quality Assurance Regulation,
- Strategic plan 2022-26
- Regulation for student practice,
- Student's Handbook
- Regulation for scientific research, subsidizing work and research, research - scientific and applied projects
- List of scientific publications of the staff engaged in the Program
- Comparison with other study programs at other universities (local and international)
- Alignment of study program LO with course LO - table
- Thesis examples, different grades
- Seminar examples
- Alignment of LO with the mission, vision and strategic goals of the UASF and the Faculty of tourism and environment
- Implementation of the recommendations from previous recommendations (if possible, in a table with indicated level of accomplishment)
- All survey forms which are used in the QA procedures
- Data about students enrolled in the Management & Innovation in Tourism MSc program who participated in an Erasmus+ exchange in the last 5 years (how many, where did they go, for how long?)
- Dissertation samples
- Evidence of faculty promotion
- Evidence of incentives
- Evidence of information destination of the information from returning faculty (exchange)
- Programme committee meeting minutes
- CVs of academic staff
- List of teachers' participation in scientific conferences.
- Evidence of data management plan.
- Professional Development Plan designed in the last 3 years.

- Evidence of course evaluation
- Evidence of quality committee meetings.
- Evidence of participation in online questionnaires
- Evidence of evaluation of the academic staff by students, academic staff (peer review) and management.

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

The expert team conducted the program accreditation assessment based on the evaluation areas and corresponding performance indicators established by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA). These criteria are outlined in Regulation (KAA) No. 04/2024, which governs the Manual for Accreditation, Reaccreditation, and Validation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programs at the Bachelor's and Master's levels. The program's compliance assessment was determined by KAA.

Site visit schedule

Programme Accreditation Procedure at University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj	
Programmes:	Management and Innovation in Tourism, MSc, 120 ECTS (Re-accreditation)
Site visit on:	08 April 2025
Expert Team:	Dr. Marina Gregoric Dr. Tornike Khoshtaria Christoph Back, PhD Student
Coordinators of the KAA:	Leona Kovaçi Ahmeti, KAA Officer Ilirjane Ademaj, KAA Officer

Site Visit Program

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:40	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Agron Bajraktari - Rector Blerina Bytyçi - Dean Kushtim Cukaj - Vice Rector Flamur Salihu - Vice Rector Etleva Blakaj – Vice Rector Fakije Zejnullahu - Vice Rector Armend Hysa – General Secretary
09:40 – 10:20	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Kushtirm Cukaj/ Vice Rector Petrit Hasanaj/ QA Coordinator

		Armend Hysa/General Secretary Fatime Musliu Shala SC Pajtim Rustemi Diellza Misini Administration
10:25 – 11:25	Meeting with the program holders of the study programme	Artan Veseli Afrim Loku
11:25 – 12:10	Lunch break	
12:10 – 12:55	Visiting facilities	
12:55 – 13:35	Meeting with teaching staff	Leonora Rudhani Agim Thaqi Bislim Lekiqi Idriz Kovaqi Arta Jashari
13:35 – 14:15	Meeting with students	Doruntinë Azizi Hajrije Sylejmani Kadrije Ramadani Enis Arifi Maldrit Kyçyku Alma Murati Aurora Grainca
14:20 – 15:00	Meeting with graduates	Manjola Salihu Dardan Nuhaj Leona Jahiri Ermirë Halili Urim Salihu Enduena Halimi Lavdim Bajrami
15:00 – 15:40	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Pajtim Qeriqi Islam Leka Hysen Sogojeva Mehmet Biba Sadik Gashi Burim Sallauka Alban Turku
15:40 – 15:50	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
15:50 – 16:00	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

A brief overview of the programme under evaluation

The University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj - UASF (hereafter referred to as “the University”) was established by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) through Decision Ref. No. 273/01B dated July 6, 2015, and was ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Kosovo with Decision No. 05-V-122 on July 16, 2015.

Although the University is relatively new, the tradition of academic and scientific work in Ferizaj dates back to 1976, when the Assembly of Kosovo established the Center for Higher Education through Decision No. 692-2. The Center operated with two sections: Machinery and Woodworking Industries, each lasting five semesters, and a Workers' Section, which lasted four semesters.

In the 1988-89 academic year, the Center for Higher Education was discontinued, and the Technical High School was established, maintaining the Machinery and Woodworking Industry sections, while the Workers' Section was entirely eliminated. During the 2002/03 academic year, new curricula were approved in alignment with the Bologna system for undergraduate studies (Bachelor's level) in the Department of Machinery with a specialization in Processing Artificial Materials and the Department of Woodworking Industry with a specialization in Wood Processing.

Through Decision No. 5/230 dated September 5, 2005, issued by the Governing Council of the University of Prishtina, the Technical High School was transformed into the Faculty of Applied Technical Sciences (FATS), maintaining the same departments and specializations. Later, it evolved into the Faculty of Applied Sciences (FAS), enabling the faculty to develop programs beyond the technical fields. The University employs 58 regular staff members, of whom 47 are full-time academic staff, 10 are engaged staff, and 11 are administrative and technical staff. These professionals bring expertise from the fields of study offered by the University, with experience in higher education and industry. Within nine years of its establishment, the University consolidated its physical infrastructure across a space of approximately 8,304.27 m², providing separate facilities for theoretical learning, practical work, workshops, and university laboratories.

The Master of Science (MSc) in Management and Innovation in Tourism is a two-year graduate program offered by the Faculty of Tourism and Environment at the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (UASF), located at the Main Campus. The program is aligned with Level VII of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and awards the academic degree of Master of Science (MSc) in Management and Innovation in Tourism upon successful completion of studies

This study program follows the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and comprises a total of 120 ECTS credits distributed across four semesters, with each semester lasting 15 weeks of academic instruction. The academic calendar begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th of the following year. The program is designed to provide students with advanced theoretical knowledge and practical competencies in the fields of tourism management and innovation. Teaching is delivered through full-time studies, combining lectures, seminars, and applied learning components. The teaching methodology emphasizes a balance between academic theory and professional practice, incorporating lectures, case studies, project work, workshops, and research-oriented activities. From the beginning of each

course, students are provided with detailed information on course content, learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods, and the roles and responsibilities of both lecturers and students. Students are encouraged to actively participate in the learning process through interactive discussions, collaborative work, and critical reflection. Independent research and the development of analytical and problem-solving skills are central to the curriculum, preparing graduates for leadership roles in the tourism and hospitality industry and innovation-driven environments.

PROGRAMME EVALUATION

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

1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION

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

The study program under evaluation, Master of Science (MSc) in Management and Innovation in Tourism is in line with the mission and strategic goals of the higher institution, covering needs of society and it is publicly available on the website (www.ushaf.net) of the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (UASF). The MSc program in Management and Innovation in Tourism at the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj aligns directly with the institution's mission to provide innovative, practice-oriented education aimed at producing highly qualified professionals. This mission emphasizes the integration of theoretical and practical learning, fostering critical thinking and professional skills that contribute to societal well-being. Management and other stakeholders of UASF are very committed and they do deliver the quality of education where the program contributes to the societal goals offering students well structured courses. The content and structure of the program fulfill USHAF's Strategic Objective 1: Advancement of the Learning Process, Objective 2: Capacity Building in Science and Innovation, Objective 3: Strengthening of Strategic-Level Collaboration with the Community, Objective 4: Institutional Capacity Building and Objective 5: Continuous Quality Improvement. The evidence is provided in SER, strategic goals and structure of the study program, and during the site visit discussions with management, academic staff, heads of the study program, students, external stakeholders, quality assurance representatives and alumni. All stakeholders, internal and external, are strongly motivated and proud of the strong

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relationships between the study program under evaluation and the business sector. This is evident through involvement of academic staff and external stakeholders, by providing not only internship and cooperation with industry, but also student centered learning during the courses emphasizing on the practical case studies, research projects and cooperation with the business sector, which corresponds with the overall development of society. The curriculum of the study program under evaluation is regularly updated and developed in collaboration with industry partners and alumni to ensure meeting market demand for professionals in the industry sector and satisfy needs in the current job market, especially in Ferizaj as a fast growing industrial and commercial part of Kosovo. The program emphasizes a student-centered learning approach by applying different learning methods and incorporating research methodologies useful for the business sector in Tourism, Hospitality and other industries which require innovative knowledge and skills of the labour market. As described in SER and data collected during the site visit it is evident that students work closely with Academic staff on research projects that address current industry challenges, and through partnerships with both local businesses and international entities, the program fosters an environment that supports collaborative research. The program involves community members through collaborative projects and events which proves also the UASF's contribution and high importance in building regional tourism development. The alumni network plays an essential role in program development by actively participating in the industry sector as employees and entrepreneurs, and providing feedback to program holders on the current needs of the business sector, which is regularly updated and applied in curricular activities. UASF's infrastructure supports commercial and practical activities, such as workshops and internships, giving students practical experience that bridges the gap between academic knowledge and industry expectations. Quality assurance is an ongoing process within the MSc program, involving regular evaluations and feedback loops to enhance program effectiveness and relevance continually. The program committee frequently reviews and updates curricula based on stakeholder feedback, ensuring sustained quality in academic delivery. Digital tools are integrated into the program to support efficient, transparent quality assessments at all levels. During the meeting with student, alumni and external representatives, the expert panel was convinced that they all expressed the need for the program under evaluation and their long-term orientation towards employment opportunities of graduates, internship and project opportunities with students and professors. The program is very important regionally and locally and students find employment opportunities because the program is designed according to the market needs. According to SER and data collected during the expert team visit, all stakeholder groups confirmed high satisfaction with a study program concept, especially their relationship with the business sector. The value offered to students is high involvement of academic staff and business sector in enabling students to gain competitive knowledge, skills and learn business practices required locally, regionally and internationally. As per SER and

opinion of students, academic staff and heads of the study programs, special attention is given to research projects and thesis where students relate their thesis to topics and problem statements related to their work or internship, or the case studies and project based learning. Students are highly encouraged to work on the field and market research and external stakeholders are very satisfied with their performance. The program is important for Ferizaj because it is a fast growing industrial and commercial area of Kosovo with growth of business opportunities. The intended learning outcomes of the MSc program are fully aligned with UASF's mission and strategic goals. These outcomes emphasize the development of both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in tourism management and innovation, preparing students to contribute effectively to Kosovo's tourism industry. The learning outcomes are clearly articulated in the program curriculum and accessible to students and stakeholders, ensuring transparency and alignment with the institution's mission (<https://ushaf.net/mit-2/?lang=en>). The data provided in SER and site visit meetings offer detailed information. During the curriculum development process, the program committee engaged closely with external stakeholders, including businesses and industry representatives. Meetings with local employers underscored the urgent need for managers skilled in tourism management and innovation. Employers emphasized the importance of competencies such as understanding core functions of the tourism industry, leveraging information technology to manage industry processes, and recognizing key tourism destinations and potentials (Appendix 2 - Minutes of the Meeting (MoM) with the Industry Representatives and list of participants). Alumni feedback is also crucial in creation and revision of the study program under evaluation, especially to avoid overlap between undergraduate and graduate courses, which the committee addressed as per the evidence provided in Appendix 2 – MoM with the Alumni and list of participants. The study program under evaluation is compared similar study programs (University of Applied Sciences in Salzburg, Appendix 3 – MoU between USHAF and FH Salzburg), and aligns with reports by organizations such as Riinvest Institute, GIZ, ADA, and USAID (<https://www.riinvestinstitute.org/En/raportet-kerkimore/?fage=2>; <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/298.html>; <https://alled.eu/en/project>; <https://www.worldlearning.org/story/world-learning-supports-private-sector-solutions-to-the-skills-gap-in-kosovo/>). Each semester, academic staff review and approve syllabuses to ensure that the program continues to meet market needs and there are workshops and trainings, for academic staff further enhance the program's alignment with the tourism sector's evolving demands, preparing students and graduates to conduct scientific and applied research that benefits the industry and supports regional development, available. USAF justifies the program's enrollment numbers based on a rational argumentation reflecting both the institution's capacity and the demand for tourism professionals, planning to enrol 40 students at the program under evaluation, Master of Science (MSc) in Management and Innovation in Tourism. The facilities to support the MSc program in Management and Innovation in Tourism

are adequate and enable students to go through the educational process smoothly. The facilities consist of the Ferizaj campus at 7,000 m², including teaching spaces, two amphitheatres, 15 classrooms, two industrial workshops, and four laboratories. Key facilities include the InLab for 3D scanning and VR, the Renewable Energy Laboratory, and the Innovation Center, all equipped with modern tools that provide hands-on experiences relevant to tourism. The detailed information is provided in SER and shown to expert panel members during the site visit in Ferizaj. The atmosphere on the campus is very positive, with indoor and outdoor areas for students and study premises that satisfy the needs of students, academic and administrative staff.

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

As presented to expert team during the site visit and elaborated in the SER, supported with additional documents as evidences, the UASF has a comprehensive legal framework that ensures academic freedom, which is guaranteed by the Higher Education Law and the Statute of the University, other regulations that establish the foundations for ethical conduct of staff and students in research, teaching, and assessment within all academic and administrative activities. The Ethical Code Regulation applies to academic staff, administrative staff, and students. Additionally, there is a Regulation on Disciplinary Procedures. MSc program in Management and Innovation uses plagiarism detection software system "Plagiarism Check". Academic staff and students confirmed that they pay strong attention to academic integrity by using the software in research projects, seminars and written reports of students, and thesis. The process is transparent and available to both academic staff and students, ensuring that all parties understand the importance of academic integrity and the consequences of violating these standards. This clear protocol helps maintain the integrity of the study program and instills accountability among students and staff (<https://ushaf.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Regulation-on-Disciplinary-Measures-and-Procedures-for-Academic-and-Non-Academic-Staff-and-Students-of-the-UASF.pdf>). If there is a high percentage of plagiarism, academic staff follow the prescribed procedures to address this issue, including the possibility of requesting a revision of the paper, applying disciplinary measures (such as a warning, lowering the grade, or expulsion from the program). During the meeting with students it is observed that students are aware of the need to comply with the requirements of academic integrity and academic staff would discuss it with students in cases of higher percentage of plagiarism. Once plagiarism is detected, academic staff are obliged to report the

identified plagiarism case to the relevant authorities at the institution, according to the procedures outlined for managing such issues. The bodies responsible for enforcing the Ethical Code at UASF are: the Ethics Council, which is elected by the UASF Senate upon the Rector's proposal, the Disciplinary Committee elected by the UASF Teaching/Scientific Council, and the Ad-Hoc Disciplinary Committee, appointed by the UASF Rector. The Ethical Code regulates the ethical behavior and work activity for academic staff (Article 4) for students in Article 17, and in Article 14 for administrative staff. Students also have access to "Student Handbook" where they get acquainted with their rights and obligations. Any violation of these standards has legal and disciplinary consequences as specified in the Ethical Code Regulation, and the case is submitted to the ethical commission. The elaboration of the procedure is explained in SER and the expert team discussed it with all stakeholders groups. They are aware of the importance of ethical behavior and academic integrity. Overall impression of the expert team is that the UASF pays lots of attention to ethical issues and assurance of quality, research and academic integrity and prevention of plagiarism, including prevention of all kinds of unethical behavior. During the meeting with all stakeholder groups there was a clear proof of their professionalism and awareness of the importance of ethical behavior. There are no specific cases elaborated to the extent that would cause any serious obstacles for the delivery of the study program and learning process against ethical norms and standards.

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

The study program under evaluation, MSc program in Management and Innovation in Tourism complies with the standard requirement to include relevant, updated and reliable information. The program uses an advanced information management system to collect, process and distribute relevant and reliable information. As evident in the SER, The University uses the University Management System (UMS) for students, academic staff, and administration to collect accurate and important data related to the academic progress of students, curricula, teaching planning, engagement of academic and administrative staff, student assessments, and tracking registration and graduation conditions. Amongst data collected, the UMS provides student demographic profile, data on student success, progress, and dropout rates, as well as data on student satisfaction, identifies learning resources (literature) for students and includes the identification of career profiling for each student. The program ensures full transparency regarding data protection policies and practices where students are regularly informed of these policies through the university's official website, and during new student orientations. The expert team discussed this topic with students during the site visit and asked if there were any

disputes or issues within this matter, but all students confirmed that they never experienced any issue with the protection of their rights. Academic staff and students are actively involved in information analysis and they do participate in the follow up activities. The management, heads of the study program and academic staff are aware of the importance of participation in continuous improvement of the program and its development based on continuous quality monitoring, anticipating internal evaluation processes and feedback from external stakeholders. According to SER and discussion with academic staff, students and quality assurance representatives it is confirmed that the system defines measurable indicators to monitor the progress of the study program including the percentage of students passing exams, the number of students graduating, the qualifications and professional development of academic staff, and student feedback on their educational experience, data on student satisfaction with academic staff, administration, infrastructure, and the study program. Based on the data, it is possible to create action plans for further improvement of the study program and different elements of monitoring and controlling the implementation of the study program, helping academic staff and management in decisions, improvements and teaching quality. It is evident that the Data Privacy Regulation is applied at the UASF. Through student surveys UASF receives feedback and takes corrective measures if required. During the meeting with students the expert team was informed that they are satisfied with the relationship between academic staff, administration and students, and feedback provided by students is taken seriously into account in the next semesters, study courses and syllabuses as follow up activities aiming to contribute to the further quality improvement of the study program. These insights enable the MSc program to maintain high academic standards and align with institutional goals. Relevant data and program information collected through SMU is selectively shared with stakeholders, including students, academic staff, and the public, via USHAF's website and regular reports. The MSc program continuously evolves in response to academic and industry needs. Through SMU, USHAF can effectively manage the MSc program by consolidating critical data, supporting informed decision-making, and enhancing both administrative and educational processes. This system not only promotes efficient program management but also aligns with USHAF's commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. (<https://ushaf.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Rregullo-re-per-SMU.pdf>). Data protection regulation is guided by Law No. 03/L-172, outlines the responsible use of student data (Appendix 5 - Regulation on the protection of personal data). All information stored and processed in SMU is managed transparently and securely, with clear guidelines on data retention and disposal, further aligning with Kosovo's legal framework. USHAF actively communicates data protection policies to both staff and students. The information is provided in SER and elaborated by management, quality assurance representatives and holders of the study program. The MSc program actively involves students and staff in evaluating and improving program quality.

Regular surveys, focus groups, and feedback sessions are conducted to collect input on various aspects of the program, including curriculum effectiveness, teaching quality, and resource availability. Both students and academic staff participate in annual meetings where results from these evaluations are reviewed, and follow-up actions are planned. This collaborative approach not only enhances program responsiveness to participant needs but also fosters a shared commitment to continuous improvement within the academic community.

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

The MSc program in Management and Innovation in Tourism is supported by policies that allocate adequate administrative and budgetary resources for teaching, learning, research and community service. As a public university, UASF is funded by the Ministry of Education and has stable budgetary funding for teaching activities. It ensures the availability of sufficient learning resources and student support by offering physical resources such as libraries, equipment for the process, and IT infrastructure. There are regulations and policies related to administrative and support aspects, including aspects of student registration, academic performance evaluation, student support processes, and the duties and responsibilities of both academic and administrative staff. The evaluation process includes the assessment of teaching quality, analysis of student academic outcomes, feedback from students and staff, and monitoring the use of financial resources. Performance review also includes analyzing the effectiveness and capacities of administrative staff. UASF has ensured qualified administrative personnel to support the program's activities. This staff has the skills and expertise to manage administrative processes and ensure that the institution operates efficiently and students are very satisfied with them. During the meeting with students everyone expressed the high satisfaction level in all aspects of support they need. There is also evidence that administrative staff receive training to enhance their skills in document management, the use of information technology systems (such as the Student Management System and other administrative platforms). They have also participated in conferences and seminars related to educational management and university administration, they visit other universities to learn good practices and attend workshops, language training and different learning programs. The professors also have the opportunity to get a budget for attending conferences, Erasmus programs and publishing research papers, and they get awarded when publishing in highly ranked journals such as Scopus or WoS. UASF is committed to the continuous professional development of its administrative staff. Each administrative staff member is provided with access to a structured professional development plan that includes training sessions, workshops, and opportunities to enhance skills in areas such as academic management, student services, and technology

(Appendix 6 – Professional Development Plan for the Administrative staff). Staff members involved in the MSc program participate in a variety of development initiatives, including language training and specialized courses in educational administration. These programs help staff enhance their competencies and contribute more effectively to the academic community. This emphasis on professional development reinforces a culture of excellence within the administrative team, aligning with the institution's strategic goals and enhancing support for the program's delivery. All above elaborated standards show the commitment of management, academic and administrative staff in achieving excellence and providing support to students from different academic, research and administrative perspectives. During the meeting with students, the satisfaction with staff was also noted. It is evident that at UASF very positive, motivated and inspiring atmosphere is created, achieved and maintained with strong support by dedicated and visionary rector followed by all staff members which is acknowledged and highly appreciated by students.

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

According to requirements and recommendations from previous reaccreditation, there is an action plan created and implementation stages are defined. The data related to recommendation implementations from previous accreditation is available in SER and elaborated by management, academic staff, heads of the study programs and external stakeholders, because they also participate in many activities related to projects, advisory and providing feedback during the internship of students, project based learning, creation of Handbook for students and other recommendations implemented already. USAF implemented a majority of quality improvement recommendations from external evaluations, focusing on enhancing quality assurance, academic practices, student services, research, and infrastructure based on expert feedback. Detailed elaboration of the improvements are related to the increase of the resources and support for the Quality Office, appointment of one coordinator for academic development and quality assurance for the faculty, digitalization of QA functions where the UASF has implemented a digital system (SMU) for quality monitoring, enabling efficient data collection and analysis, development of a formal structure to coordinate and monitor quality processes, including benchmarking against similar institutions, implementation of training sessions for academic staff on new teaching methods and digital tools (Appendix 7 - Agenda of the workshops and list of participants), adoption of modern, student-centered pedagogies that enhance engagement and learning outcomes, participation of academic staff in self-assessment exercises as part of their professional development, fostering a culture of reflection and

continuous improvement, the use of digital tools, such as SMU, to improve teaching efficiency and student engagement, workshops and training sessions are conducted as a regular support to staff in integrating these tools effectively, design of professional development courses focusing on modern pedagogical techniques and digital tool use (Appendix 8 - Agenda of the training on the use of SPSS), increased opportunities for students to engage with practical work through partnerships with tourism enterprises, involvement of students in real-world case studies and industry projects, particularly in their seminar papers, enhancing their practical knowledge and employability, expansion of the administrative team dedicated to handling student issues, strengthening of relationships with local tourism businesses offering more employment opportunities to post-graduates together with networking possibilities through internships and industry events (Appendix 9 - Report on the student participation on practical work), allocation of additional funding to support research activities within the program under evaluation (Appendix 10 -Regulation on Governing Council Work), expansion of library resources, specifically electronic ones in tourism-related fields (journals, books, and databases) enhancing research and learning opportunities (<https://ushaf.net/?lang=en#>), increased partnerships with industry stakeholders, in the tourism and hospitality field, especially in the Ferizaj area of Kosovo. The expert team anticipated the appreciation of the rector and all academic and administrative staff in regards to re-accreditation procedures and recommendations emphasizing how important they are for the further development of the study program and USAF as a University. Their willingness to cooperate and respect the expert team and their recommendations is on a very high level. It is important to take into consideration that for the public university it is challenging to obtain funds depending on the governmental budget, but the UASF is a well organised, well equipped institution providing quality education and facilities for staff and students, improving constantly. The whole UASF team, together with students, alumni and business representatives creates an excellent environment for learning applied sciences.

ET recommendations:

1. *Continue to effectively monitor and improve ethical behavior*
2. *Continue publishing all relevant documents on the official website*
3. *Consider offering lifelong learning programs / summer or winter schools to ensure internal funds and generate additional income for UASF and staff involved in delivery process*

2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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

The University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (USHAF) has established a comprehensive internal quality assurance (QA) system to ensure the effective delivery and continuous improvement of the MSc program in Management and Innovation in Tourism.

SHAF's internal QA system is robust and aligns fully with national regulations, the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), and recognized international best practices. Established in 2019, the system is overseen by the University Senate's Quality Assurance Committee, chaired by the Vice Rector for International Cooperation and Quality Assurance. This committee manages a comprehensive evaluation framework that includes student evaluations, peer reviews, self-assessment by academic staff, and feedback from graduates and employers.

USHAF has developed and published a comprehensive quality assurance policy that covers all aspects of the MSc program, from curriculum design to teaching and assessment practices. This policy is publicly accessible on the USHAF website, ensuring transparency and clarity regarding quality standards and stakeholder responsibilities.

Quality assurance coordinators within the academic unit play a key role in supporting the MSc program. These coordinators are responsible for monitoring program quality and effectiveness, gathering data, overseeing assessments, and ensuring that identified issues are addressed promptly. Important to mention is that the Quality assurance coordinators at USHAF also have teaching obligations.

USHAF's QA system is grounded in the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, which drives continuous improvement across all facets of program delivery. The cycle involves setting quality objectives, implementing actions, evaluating outcomes, and making necessary adjustments. This process ensures that the MSc program remains responsive to evolving educational standards, industry needs, and stakeholder feedback.

A structured monitoring plan guides the implementation of QA procedures for the MSc program. This plan is subject to regular review and revision, with input from all relevant stakeholders, including students, academic staff, and industry representatives. By involving these groups in the evaluation and revision processes, USHAF ensures that QA procedures are aligned with the expectations and needs of both the academic community and the industry.

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

The development of the MSc program is fully aligned with USHAF's mission and strategic objectives, which prioritize practical, industry-relevant education and the cultivation of employability skills.

The MSc program underwent a rigorous and transparent internal quality assurance process. This included comprehensive internal reviews and the collection of feedback from relevant stakeholders, ensuring that the program met established academic and industry standards. The formal approval was granted by USHAF's designated strategic management bodies, confirming the program's compliance with institutional quality benchmarks. Furthermore, a framework for continuous improvement has been established, incorporating periodic evaluations and structured feedback cycles.

The process for developing and approving the MSc program is clearly defined and inclusive, engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Internal stakeholders, such as academic staff and the program committee, collaborated with external experts, industry partners, and alumni. This input ensured that the program's curriculum and structure are both rigorous and relevant to current industry demands.

USHAF has established a comprehensive set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to systematically monitor the quality and effectiveness of the MSc program. These KPIs include: Graduate Satisfaction: Regular surveys of graduates assess the program's effectiveness in equipping them with relevant skills for employment.

Employer Satisfaction: Employers of USHAF graduates are surveyed to evaluate their satisfaction with the competencies and performance of alumni.

Graduate Employability: Alumni studies track employability rates, providing data on the program's success in preparing students for the job market.

Student Satisfaction: Semester-based surveys gather feedback on program content, administration, and staff, ensuring that student needs are continuously addressed.

Course Pass Rate: Completion rates are analyzed each semester using data from the university's management system, allowing for targeted support and intervention.

Graduation Rate: Annual analysis of graduation rates offers insights into the program's effectiveness in supporting students through to completion.

In the interviews, USHAF was unable to consistently explain the extent to which the KPI data collected is used for the further development of the study program.

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

The program undergoes regular monitoring to ensure its continued relevance to the needs of society and the labor market. This process involves conducting employer surveys and engaging

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in consultations with industry partners to identify the competencies most valued in the tourism sector (see Appendix 12 - Questionnaire for Businesses). The program committee collaborates closely with stakeholders to analyze labor market trends and the evolving requirements for tourism professionals. Adjustments to the curriculum are made based on this input; for example, recent employer feedback prompted the integration of additional practical training components aimed at enhancing graduates' employability in tourism and hospitality.

USHAF regularly reviews the allocation of ECTS credits and the achievement of defined learning outcomes to ensure they are realistic, achievable, and aligned with both academic and professional objectives. Learning outcomes for each course are structured according to Bloom's Taxonomy, facilitating a progression from foundational understanding to advanced analytical skills. ECTS credits are assigned based on the estimated workload required to achieve these outcomes. The academic staff and program committee periodically assess whether students are able to meet the learning outcomes within the given ECTS framework. During the Interviews the Students did not mention any Issues regarding this topic.

A broad range of stakeholders, including students, academic staff, alumni, and employers, are actively involved in the program's monitoring processes. USHAF regularly conducts questionnaires, organizes focus groups, and holds feedback sessions with these groups to gather comprehensive insights on student workload, academic success, resource adequacy, and graduate employment rates.

The institution demonstrates commitment to continuous program improvement by systematically collecting and incorporating feedback from students, alumni, employers, and staff. Insights gathered through surveys and consultations are used to inform program revisions. For example, feedback from alumni regarding skills required in the job market led to the introduction of new courses focused on emerging trends in tourism management. A more comprehensive use of the KPI's could be implemented at this point as well.

Student practice is integral to the MSc program, with its quality continuously monitored through stakeholder feedback. Students undertake research projects related to their master's thesis or coursework, often involving practical case studies or consultancy with partner businesses. Professors serve as mentors, guiding students to ensure their projects address real industry challenges and meet academic standards. Feedback from students, mentors, and partner businesses is collected through post-practice evaluations.

All feedback and data collected from various channels are systematically analyzed to identify areas for improvement. Based on these analyses, concrete actions, such as curriculum updates and adjustments to resources, are implemented to ensure the program remains current and aligned with both academic expectations and industry standards. USHAF was able to name

some examples for this practice, but a more systemic approach to use the collected data to ensure that all rooms for improvement are found could be implemented.

USHAF ensures transparency by communicating the outcomes of monitoring processes and subsequent action plans to all stakeholders. Results and updates are disseminated through institutional meetings, feedback sessions, and are published on the university website

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

USHAF ensures that all policies, regulations, and guidelines pertaining to the MSc program are readily accessible to the public. Key documents, including the Quality Assurance Policy, Code of Ethics, and Student Guidelines, are published on the university's official website and are also available in printed form at the administrative office.

Essential information about the MSc program-such as admission criteria, recognition of qualifications, enrollment quotas, syllabuses, learning outcomes, credits, assessment methods, and final qualification is clearly presented and accessible to both prospective and current students. This information is disseminated through multiple channels, including the USHAF website, informational brochures, and student orientation sessions.

USHAF is publishing objective data on pass rates, dropout rates, and graduate employment outcomes for the MSc program. This information is made available in annual program reports and on the university website.

All publicly available information regarding the MSc program is subject to regular review and updates to ensure its accuracy, reliability, and objectivity. Program details, including curriculum updates, course descriptions, and assessment methods, are periodically reviewed and revised by the program committee and administrative staff.

ET recommendations:

1. *The ET recommends implementing a systemic approach to use the collected data regarding the KPI's. The further development of the study program would benefit from this approach. (1 year)*
2. *The ET recommends hiring at least one QA Coordinator without teaching obligations. (1 years)*

3. ACADEMIC STAFF

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

The ET learned that USHAF advertises teaching vacancies widely, including on its official website, national media, and through academic job platforms. This ensures visibility both within Kosovo and internationally, attracting qualified applicants from diverse backgrounds. The aim is to reach a broad audience and increase transparency in recruitment. All postings are accessible to the public and include application deadlines and qualification requirements. After reviewing the documents and during the interviews with the HIE management and academic personnel, the ET confirmed that USHAF has a clear and documented recruitment procedure. Selection committees are formed with relevant academic staff who review and assess applications based on publicly shared criteria. Vacancy announcements and final decisions are archived, and selection reports are accessible to ensure accountability. The process is well-regulated and complies with internal recruitment regulations and national frameworks. These practices reflect a fair, transparent, and structured approach.

The ET observed that the selection of teaching staff aligns with USHAF's long-term academic goals and program-specific needs. Each selection process is guided by a regulation that ensures alignment with national legislation and internal quality assurance requirements. This approach ensures relevance to the field of study and long-term program development. The process is designed to ensure that only highly qualified and strategically suitable candidates are hired. During the interviews with the academic staff the ET learned that applicants receive full position descriptions, including details on job responsibilities, codes of conduct, and employment conditions. Contract templates and responsibilities are standardised and accessible. Candidates understand their duties, hours, and performance expectations from the beginning. This improves onboarding and accountability while supporting fair and legal employment practices.

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

The evaluation team observed that USHAF has enough qualified staff to support the delivery of the MSc program. The teaching team includes professors with doctoral degrees and long-standing experience in tourism and management. The qualifications of teaching staff are relevant to their course content and are documented in CVs. The academic staff are also actively involved in academic and applied research. This ensures that program delivery is supported by high-level expertise.

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During the interviews with the faculty, it became clear that the academic staff is not overcommitted across institutions. Academic program lecturers at USHAF do not exceed one full-time and one part-time position across institutions. This control ensures compliance with national norms and maintains academic integrity. It also allows staff to focus on their teaching and mentoring responsibilities at USHAF. The internal tracking system supports transparency and workload control.

According to the SER, the ET learned that teaching obligations do not exceed standard norms. Each staff member teaches a manageable number of courses per semester and has scheduled consultation hours with students. This balance leaves time for research, development, and quality assurance duties.

The ET learned that more than 50% of the academic staff involved in the MSc program are full-time employees. This ensures teaching continuity, availability of student support, and strong program ownership. These full-time staff members are involved in mentoring, assessments, and internal curriculum reviews. Part-time and visiting staff are only brought in to cover specific expertise areas. This setup reflects a stable academic environment for students. For every 60 ECTS and per student group, USHAF employs at least one full-time academic staff member holding a PhD. This ratio exceeds the minimum requirement and supports the academic supervision of research projects. The presence of doctoral-level academics ensures strong integration of research into teaching. Their guidance is particularly important during thesis supervision. The staff list confirms their qualifications and responsibilities. The student-to-staff ratio is appropriate and meets the standard 1:30 requirement. The program is not overcrowded, and students receive personal attention in both teaching and mentoring settings. The ratio allows for active learning and regular feedback sessions. It also improves student satisfaction and learning outcomes. USHAF continuously monitors this ratio through internal quality assurance tools.

The ET confirmed that each academic staff member teaches courses within their area of academic and professional expertise. CVs show direct alignment between qualifications and course responsibilities. Staff members also have publication records and industry experience in tourism and innovation. The evaluation team observed that staff workload is in line with national legislation and HEI regulations. Staff work under defined hour limits, and teaching, administrative, and mentoring responsibilities are clearly distributed. The Quality Office monitors staff schedules each semester. This helps avoid overloading and maintains fair academic conditions. The structure supports a healthy and productive work environment. Academic staff have time allocated for teaching, research, mentoring, development, and community service. This is built into the job description and monitored by department heads. Mentoring activities are recorded, and staff contribute to curriculum development and QA activities. USHAF employs a sufficient number of qualified mentors for thesis supervision and

academic advising. Mentors are assigned based on expertise, and students are supported from the start of their final projects.

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

According to SER, promotion and reappointment processes at USHAF are transparent and follow approved regulations. All procedures are publicly documented and based on criteria outlined in internal regulations. Committees assess applications based on qualifications, teaching performance, and research. The evaluation team observed that academic promotions are merit-based and focus on excellence. Criteria include publications in Scopus and WoS, participation in funded projects, thesis supervision, and student feedback.

After reviewing documents, the ET found that feedback from students, peers, and management is part of contract renewals and staff reviews. Standardised evaluation forms are used and stored for performance tracking. This feedback loop supports informed reappointment decisions.

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

The ET learned that USHAF includes professional development in its annual planning. All academic staff are encouraged to participate in activities such as training, workshops, and conferences. The operational plan is updated each year and tracks participation. Reports confirm that training sessions are held regularly. These activities support continuous academic improvement.

All academic staff are encouraged to participate in professional development activities, including language training and soft skills enhancement. The Erasmus+ and ResearchCult projects offer development opportunities and fund international workshops. The administration monitors participation in training, ensuring consistency across departments and supporting academic mobility.

USHAF supports skill development in assessment and testing methods. Academic staff receive guidance on how to design fair and transparent evaluations. Training sessions cover formative

and summative assessment strategies. These are aligned with learning outcomes and the ECTS framework. Such support ensures consistency and fairness in student grading.

The evaluation team observed that staff are supported to participate in international activities such as mobility programs, projects, and academic networks. USHAF has strategic partnerships with HEIs across Europe. The institution funds travel and participation costs. Academic mobility is encouraged and documented in staff development plans. These activities improve teaching and research quality.

The ET confirmed that USHAF provides training on teaching methods, course delivery, and student assessment. These sessions help staff understand higher education regulations such as ECTS, learning outcomes, and the supervision process. New and existing staff are included in the training cycle. This contributes to better teaching practices and compliance with academic standards. Newly employed staff undergo structured onboarding and training before starting their teaching duties. The onboarding includes QA policies, ethics, and expectations of academic behaviour.

USHAF supports staff research through mentoring, assistance in proposal writing, and internal funding. Early-career staff are paired with experienced colleagues for research guidance. There are also incentives for publishing and participating in projects.

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

During the interviews with the external associates clarified that the teaching in the MSc program brings recent and relevant industry knowledge into the classroom. They actively draw on current labour market practices and innovations in tourism and service management. These insights enrich student understanding and contribute to practical skill development. Course content is aligned with real-world applications, making the teaching more dynamic. It was confirmed during the interviews with the students and is reflected in the feedback highlights of appreciation for this practice-oriented input.

According to the SER, the ET confirmed that USHAF organises orientation sessions for external associates. These sessions introduce them to higher education regulations and academic practices such as ECTS, learning outcomes, and assessment methods. Training is adapted to the specific needs of practitioners, ensuring they can translate industry experience into academic delivery.

The ET learned that external associates are encouraged to participate in thesis supervision. Co-supervision arrangements are in place and formally recorded.

ET recommendations:

1. *Ensure that academic staff are clearly informed about the available promotion pathways and criteria*
2. *Establish measurable KPIs for teaching and research, and communicate them clearly and regularly to all academic staff*
3. *Increase staff participation in international networks by securing funding and formalizing mobility partnerships*
4. *Encourage external staff to engage in co-supervision and research collaboration to strengthen integration into the academic community.*

4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT

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

According to information available in SER and during the meeting with stakeholders it is evident that the program under evaluation's intended learning outcomes are formulated clearly, precisely and comprehensively following the best practices. The learning outcomes of the programs are aligned with the published mission and strategic goals of UASF and Faculty of Tourism and Environment. The MSc program in Management and Innovation in Tourism aligns directly with UASF's mission to provide quality, practice-oriented education that addresses industry needs and fosters societal impact. Through carefully designed learning outcomes, the program emphasizes industry-relevant skills, critical thinking, and community service, equipping graduates to contribute effectively to Kosovo's tourism sector. The program's curriculum reflects current trends, includes substantial practical training, and leverages partnerships with industry stakeholders to ensure relevance and employability, in line with UASF's strategic goals for advancing learning, building scientific capacity, and strengthening community collaboration. Each learning outcome supports these objectives by enabling students to analyze industry trends, manage complex tourism projects, and evaluate

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investments. The intended learning outcomes include aspects of critical and analytical problem solving skills, academic research or further studies if students decide to continue to enroll to doctoral study programs. The goal and objectives of the study program under evaluation are to develop professionals who apply contemporary management methods to address continuous changes in the business environment to improve the competitive position of the tourism and hospitality companies in Kosovo and Ferizaj area, including innovative approaches and technologies in the field of tourism and hospitality, which was missing in the business sector. These outcomes are publicly accessible on the UASF's website, providing transparency for prospective and current students regarding the competencies they will acquire (<https://ushaf.net/mit-2/?lang=en>). This clarity helps students make informed choices and understand the program's expectations. UASF follows best practices in defining the intended learning outcomes, aligning with the guidelines outlined in the ECTS Guide (2015), ensuring that outcomes are measurable, achievable, and reflective of high academic standards. By structuring outcomes around actionable skills and relevant knowledge areas, such as finance, customer service quality management, and digital business promotion, the program meets both national and international benchmarks, creating a structured curriculum that addresses industry standards. The intended learning outcomes encompass both general and specific development for knowledge, skills/competencies, and abilities necessary to be competitive in the job market. The program's intended learning outcomes are crafted at a master's level (VII). Outcomes are organized into categories of knowledge (e.g., analyzing visitor motives), skills (e.g., leadership and conflict management), and competencies (e.g., entrepreneurship and project management, equipping graduates with a comprehensive skill set. By targeting both generic and industry-specific competencies, the program ensures graduates are prepared to meet the diverse challenges within the tourism and hospitality industry, both in Ferizaj, Kosovo and internationally. The program is comparable and operates within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the Bologna Process and learning outcomes are compatible and comparable with those of institutions in the EHEA.

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

The study program and curriculum of the study program complies with the national framework of qualifications. Indicators are well explained during meetings with management, quality assurance representatives, academic staff and students, elaborated in the SER and supported with additional documents. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which is an

important component within the reforms of the education and professional training system in Kosovo, is taken into account when developing the curriculum of the study program together with European Qualifications Framework (EQF). It is evident that UASF and the study program under evaluation do anticipate all important regulations, concepts and recommendations for delivering a quality for bachelor students and equip them with competencies for the real sector and market needs. The strong relationship with the industrial board, business sector, private and public institutions operating in Kosovo, also participated in the creation of the study program, syllabuses and specific requirements are incorporated in the intended learning outcome of the courses. The intended learning outcomes at the level of the master study program do not overlap with other study programs. The outcomes focus on advanced knowledge, critical analysis, and specialized skills in tourism management, setting a clear progression from undergraduate studies. This differentiation is reflected in the curriculum structure, which emphasizes higher-order skills such as independent research, strategic thinking, and leadership, ensuring that students achieve a depth of understanding appropriate for postgraduate education. The information is provided in SER and elaborated by academic staff, quality assurance representatives and holders of the study program under evaluation. It is clear that the study program on the MSc level is well structured and enables students to acquire research skills and competences which do not overlap with other study programs. One of the major advantages of the study program under evaluation is its focus on applied sciences and problem-solving orientations of the students supported by academic staff who apply student center learning methods. The learning outcomes of the MSc program are specifically tailored to the qualification level and profile of a master's degree in Management and Innovation in Tourism. The learning outcomes are adapted and aligned with the level and qualification profile obtained – upon completion of studies, the student earns the title of Master in Management and Innovation in Tourism, accomplishing 120 ECTS within 2 years.

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

The curriculum of the MSc program in Management and Innovation in Tourism at USHAF follows a logical course sequence designed to facilitate the progressive development of both general and specific competencies. The curriculum structure was developed in close collaboration with our strategic partner, the University of Applied Sciences in Salzburg, specifically referencing their MSc program in Innovation and Management in Tourism (<https://www.fh-salzburg.ac.at/en/study/bt/innovation-management-in-tourism-master>). The

study program under evaluation complies with Standard 4.3, as it demonstrates a logical flow and competency alignment throughout the curriculum, where the intended learning outcomes are achieved by students and they can smoothly progress through their studies. The structured course flow builds foundational knowledge before advancing to more complex topics, enabling students to systematically meet each learning outcome and reinforcing the program's credibility and relevance in the tourism sector. During the first year of studies students focus on the following courses: Strategic Management, Marketing and Globalization, Risk Management in Tourism, Management Theory and Practice, Strategic Human Resource Management, Innovation Management in Tourism, Change Management, Service Operations Management, Management of Projects and Investments in Tourism, Business Development and Entrepreneurship in Tourism, Customer Behavior Management and e-Marketing. In the year two of the study program, students study and learn more specific knowledge and focus on the core competences required in the tourism and hospitality sector such as: Rural Economic Development and Tourism, Research Methods, Cultural Tourism and Communication, e-Tourism, Customer Relationship Management, Sustainable Environmental Management and finally in the last semester of the 2nd year, students write a master thesis. Thesis consists of 30 ECTS, providing students with enough hours and opportunities to employ different research methods and accomplish final research results related to their topic of interest (with approval of thesis supervisor/mentor) or topic related to the industry sector in tourism and hospitality where students are employed or do their internship. All courses at the level of the study program under evaluation are mandatory, and there are no elective courses. The allocation of ECTS is the same for all study courses (5 ECTS). According to information provided in SER and during the meetings with academic staff and holders of the study program, it is clear that the study program is in line with their strategic partner, This curriculum structure is structured in alignment with USAF's strategic partner institution, the University of Applied Sciences in Salzburg and UNISS - University of Sassari (MSc in Innovation Management for Sustainable Tourism) in Italy. The evidence is provided in the additionally provided document, pg. 2/8. The observation of the expert panel members goes to the direction of the allocation of ECTS for different study courses. It was not clear why all courses have the same number of ECTS, because the expert panel identifies that some courses are core courses for the tourism and hospitality industry and they should be allocated with a higher number of ECTS than those which are not core courses. The expert panel member would strongly recommend to consider differentiation of core courses and appropriate differentiation of ECTS for different courses. In addition, the study program should implement some elective courses following trends in tourism and hospitality. The reason for not implementing elective courses is seen in the fear of academic staff that students might select some of the courses based on the factors that make them easier to pass or per preferred professors. This is not a valid reason and there are mechanisms that can

ensure that students will be motivated to choose courses that are more attractive as elective courses based on the quality of courses, professors expertise and strict and clear evaluation criteria. Elective courses would add value to the program because they would focus on the current needs of the tourism industry in Ferizaj and Kosovo and offer students to additionally specialize in certain specific forms of tourism which could be developed in Kosovo. They could also integrate artificial intelligence, augmented and virtual reality aspects to different tourism and hospitality services, destination and hotel management, etc. The scope of electives is broad and can contribute to better research potential of students, too. The university management and heads of the study program under evaluation has all necessary competencies in designing such a quality program, especially considering fast growing business development of Ferizaj and its community. During the meeting with external stakeholders, students and graduates, it was noted that such competencies contribute to easy job placements, finding good opportunities to work in a real sector and faster success of students in their career. Kosovo as a business area with its regional surroundings, requires such competencies by the labor force and future managers. As explained during the meeting with stakeholders in the site, UASF and Faculty of Tourism and Environment, have agreements with industry representatives which gives many opportunities to students to participate in the research process and current market trend research areas. Different evaluation methods and corresponding requirements for exams are available at the level of the study program under evaluation. Students are encouraged to engage in interactive discussions with the professor and peers to maximize the educational impact of the lecture. In specific cases, students are encouraged to seek additional clarification from professors during the class sessions. Professors are available for additional consultations. Students are expected to complete assignments given by the professor, which may include seminar papers, tasks, research, and debates on the topics covered during the lectures. These assignments align with the intended learning outcomes, which are continuously assessed throughout the semester using various methods, such as written tests, exercises, tasks, research projects, etc. The course learning outcomes are aligned with program learning outcomes and are presented in the additional document requested by expert panel members (Appendix 2.1 Matrix for alignment of study program LO with courses LO.pdf). The study program is comparable with similar accredited study programs in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The program's alignment with European Higher Education standards ensures that students are prepared to participate in the Erasmus mobility program, where they can integrate into similar academic programs at partner institutions. During the meeting with students and Alumni, they confirmed their awareness of possibilities to study within the ERASMUS program and some of them had experienced it. UASF graduates have secured employment in European countries following their graduation, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in fostering competencies that meet the demands of the international tourism industry which is also an

added value of the study program at Master level, because some students seek for international job opportunities due to the economic situation in Kosovo. Each course has a detailed syllabus that includes all necessary information about the courses, learning outcomes, course descriptions, objectives, content and expected learning outcomes, teaching methodology, methods of evaluation, literature, number of ECTS and lesson plan. In addition to already structured syllabuses it is recommended to revise evaluation/examination concepts to determine how students pass each learning outcome (not only type of exam but also type of the relationship between exams and specific learning outcomes). This is constructive alignment which allows students to pass learning outcomes within the course. In case of failing any, they could retake only learning outcomes they fail, instead of repeating the whole exam.

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

The study program is in harmony with the conditions set by EU Directives in terms of the content and issuing diplomas are aligned with the Bologna system and, from an international perspective, are harmonized with EU Directives. This compliance with EU Directives supports graduates in obtaining qualifications recognized and respected across EU member states, facilitating their professional mobility and career opportunities within the broader European tourism sector. The cooperation agreements with professional associations such as the Industrial Board, the Chamber of Commerce of Kosovo, international organizations for educational supervision, and other non-governmental organizations are taken into consideration in creation and improvement of the study program under evaluation. Formal and informal meetings with external stakeholders are kept regularly with management and staff of the UA, with a great support of the industrial board, which represents the business sector and market needs. Additionally, UASF cooperates with economic chambers and other organizations from the education sector to obtain more information and feedback related to the study program, data on graduates who continue working and interning in these businesses, and discussions about potential positive changes to the program in response to market demands. There is international cooperation at the level of the Faculty of Tourism and Environment and study program under evaluation, with all kinds of international collaborations via the office for international research in the rectorate office, publications, mobility, conferences, etc. Such collaborations have an impact on curriculum updates, particularly in areas such as sustainable tourism practices, customer relationship management, and innovation in tourism services. Professors also have experience in editorial

boards in journals, and a very high publishing index in Scopus, Wos, and research is a very important activity for the faculty and students are also involved. Such collaborations provide students with more international experience and can be used in the students careers in Kosovo, in the region and internationally. Since the study program under evaluation does not lead to a degree in regulated professions, this area of evaluation is not applicable.

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

The ET learned that USHAF has a formalised approach to student internships that clearly outlines learning outcomes, roles, and documentation requirements. This includes templates for agreements, mentor feedback, and student self-reflections. The guidelines are accessible to students and mentors. At the interview with students and industry representatives, it was apparent that the students are assigned academic mentors for their internship, and placements take place in companies within the tourism and service sectors. The ET confirmed that partnerships are based on formal agreements. The HEI collaborates with local businesses and institutions to ensure relevant learning environments. Academic mentors maintain regular contact with students and collect feedback from host institutions.

Each internship is awarded ECTS credits based on workload, in accordance with national and European standards. The ET observed that practical work is assessed through a combination of internal and external feedback. This approach fosters transparency and objective evaluation. The practice component is bolstered by long-term cooperation agreements with employers. These agreements are regularly reviewed and incorporate feedback mechanisms from both employers and students. The ET noted that input from practice supervisors helps enhance the program. Employers express high satisfaction with student preparation and engagement. These partnerships improve the employability and real-world readiness of graduates.

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

After reviewing the curriculum, the ET confirmed that the program has a clear didactic concept that supports the achievement of intended learning outcomes. The approach focuses on student activity, critical thinking, and the integration of theory and practice. Teaching and learning are

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guided by clear learning objectives at both module and program levels. Staff are trained to align instruction with these objectives. This ensures coherence across the program. The program uses multiple pedagogical approaches, including simulations, case studies, and project-based learning. These methods match the academic level of the MSc and promote active engagement. The ET learned that each method is linked to specific course outcomes. Teachers explain their choices in syllabi and adjust based on feedback. These varied methods support deep learning and skill development. The evaluation team observed that instruction encourages interactive and research-based learning. Students are involved in problem-solving, debates, and fieldwork activities. Assignments often require analysis and critical reflection. Clear instructions and rubrics ensure students understand what is expected. This approach fosters independent learning and confidence in academic performance.

Teaching methods are regularly reviewed based on student evaluations and staff reflections. Adjustments are made to better meet student needs and learning outcomes. The ET learned that innovation is encouraged and piloted when necessary. USHAF adapts delivery modes to support a diverse student population. Modern technology is fully integrated into program delivery. Tools like Moodle, MS Teams, and Zoom are used to support interaction and resource sharing.

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

The evaluation team observed that each module of the MSc Management and Innovation in Tourism is aligned with the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the program. Course syllabi include specific references to the knowledge, skills, and competencies targeted, ensuring students understand the broader relevance of each unit.

The ET learned that assessment methods are designed to address a range of cognitive levels in line with Bloom's taxonomy and are mapped to module and program-level outcomes. The program uses diverse approaches to exams, case studies, presentations, and written assignments, to assess knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

After reviewing the course documentation, the ET confirmed that assessment criteria and grading rubrics are shared with students at the beginning of each module. These materials are also uploaded to the institutional e-learning platform. Students are briefed on expectations and allowed to ask questions.

The ET observed that assessment procedures at USHAF are guided by institutional regulations that emphasise fairness and objectivity. Peer moderation is in place for key assessments, and the Quality Office conducts periodic reviews.

The ET learned that students receive written and verbal feedback within two weeks of assessment submission. Feedback highlights both achievements and areas for improvement and includes suggestions for future performance. Some modules also include peer feedback and formative activities that prepare students for summative assessments.

During the interview with students, it became clear that a formal appeals procedure is in place at the institutional level. Students may contest grades by submitting a written appeal, which is reviewed by an independent academic committee. The interviews indicated that students are informed about the process during induction and through the student handbook. Most appeals are resolved quickly, and outcomes are shared transparently. Records are maintained for quality monitoring purposes.

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

According to the SER, the assessment criteria clearly describe what students are expected to know and do by the end of each course. Rubrics are detailed and include descriptors that match learning outcomes. Course coordinators ensure assessments are fair and consistent with expected outcomes. After reviewing the documents, the ET confirmed that workload is calculated using the standard of 25–30 hours per ECTS credit. This includes lectures, readings, independent research, and assessment preparation. The calculation is validated through student feedback surveys, which assess workload perception. If needed, adjustments are made at the module level to maintain fairness. This ensures that ECTS accurately reflects effort and learning time.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Continue good practices of local and international collaboration, enabling students to engage in joint research projects, exchange programs, and virtual learning experiences with other universities.*
- 2. Continue market research with the aim to keep curriculum of the study program up to date with the market requirements*

3. *Revise syllabuses in terms of evaluation of specific learning outcomes to offer students opportunity to pass specific learning outcomes within the courses by implementing constructive alignment instead of passing exams by achieving percentages of the total exam*
4. *Revise syllabuses to clearly allocate specific number of ECTS to specific learning outcome in study courses*
5. *Revise number of ECTS per study course to differentiate core courses and the number of hours required to acquire each*
6. *Consider adding elective courses to enable students to gain more up to date competencies in tourism, hospitality, destination management, specific forms of tourism such as heritage tourism, memorial tourism, MICE or congress and event, or sports tourism, medical tourism, post covid trends in tourism, use of AI, AR and VR in tourism and hospitality*

5. STUDENTS

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

USHAF has established transparent and comprehensive admission requirements, criteria, and processes for the MSc program in Management and Innovation in Tourism. These are made publicly available through the university's official website and printed materials, ensuring that all prospective students have access to the necessary information. The published criteria detail specific and outline any additional assessments that may be required. This clarity enables applicants to understand the entry requirements and adequately prepare for the admission process.

Admission to the MSc program is contingent upon compliance with national regulations regarding minimum academic qualifications. Applicants must possess a bachelor's degree diploma or an equivalent qualification.

The MSc program's admission process is structured to select candidates who demonstrate appropriate prior knowledge and competencies. A formal decision-making procedure, regulated by the Statute of USHAF, is employed to assess applicants against the established admission criteria. This ensures that only candidates with relevant academic and professional backgrounds are accepted.

USHAF applies its admission criteria and processes consistently and fairly to all applicants. The university has established policies to prevent discrimination and bias during the selection process. All candidates are evaluated solely on their qualifications and potential.

USHAF has implemented procedures for the recognition of prior study periods, allowing students to transfer credits or qualifications from other institutions where applicable. These procedures are clearly outlined in the university's regulations and adhere to national standards.

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

USHAF has implemented a functional system, facilitated by the Student Management Unit (SMU), to monitor the academic progress of students enrolled in the MSc program. This system tracks performance metrics such as course completion, grades, and attendance. Students who are identified as facing academic challenges are proactively offered support through academic counseling and targeted assistance programs.

Student progression and completion rates are systematically monitored as part of USHAF's quality assurance framework. Each semester, data on pass rates and academic achievement are collected and analyzed to identify trends and potential areas of concern. When specific courses or modules exhibit lower pass rates, faculty members review the curriculum and teaching methods to determine if adjustments or additional resources are necessary.

The outcomes of student progression monitoring are regularly shared with both academic staff and students. Faculty receive detailed updates, equipping them to provide targeted support and refine instructional practices as needed. Students are informed about their individual progress as well as the overall success rates of the program.

The MSc program in Management and Innovation in Tourism clearly defines the progression routes available to students, including opportunities for further study or transitions to related fields. Information regarding the qualifications awarded upon completion, as well as potential career paths and further academic options, is communicated to students at the outset and throughout their studies.

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

USHAF informs students enrolled in the MSc program about international exchange and mobility opportunities. Unfortunately, there are currently no students on the program who have taken part in an international mobility program in the Master's program. USHAF should take measures to increase students' motivation for international mobility.

USHAF's Office for International Cooperation plays a central role in supporting students interested in mobility programs. The office provides guidance on available opportunities, assists with application processes, and offers logistical support.

To ensure academic continuity, USHAF has established clear regulations for the recognition of ECTS credits earned during international exchanges. These regulations guarantee that credits obtained abroad can be seamlessly transferred and counted towards students' MSc degree requirements.

USHAF actively recruits foreign students, primarily from neighboring regions with Albanian-speaking communities such as Albania, North Macedonia, the Presheva Valley in Serbia, and Montenegro. The university provides targeted support, including orientation sessions and assistance with administrative procedures, to help these students integrate academically and culturally.

USHAF states that the language of instruction is exclusively Albanian, and that international students are primarily from Albanian-speaking regions, there is no current need to provide additional foreign language courses. But the implementation of courses in English would be beneficial for all students. In addition, students from other regions would be attracted to study at USHAF.

USHAF collects and analyzes feedback from both national and international students regarding their experiences with mobility programs. How this feedback is used to improve the international approach could not be demonstrated.

Currently, the Faculty of Tourism and Environment at USHAF has not had international students participate in exchange programs, aside from regular students from neighboring Albanian-speaking countries.

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

USHAF ensures that the MSc program is supported by a sufficient number of professional, administrative, and technical staff. These staff members are not only adequate in number but also possess the necessary qualifications to deliver comprehensive support services. Their expertise spans academic guidance, administrative assistance, and technical support, which collectively address the varied needs of all students.

Students enrolled in the MSc program receive clear and detailed information about all available support services. This includes comprehensive information packages for new students, study regulations, and guidelines on internal organization. Such information is made publicly accessible through multiple channels, most notably the USHAF website.

USHAF provides structured guidance to MSc students on both academic and career-related matters. Dedicated tutors, supervisors, and advisors are available to support students' academic progress and offer insights into career opportunities within the tourism and hospitality sector. This guidance system is designed to help students make informed decisions about their studies and future career paths, thereby enhancing their employability and professional readiness upon graduation.

Clear and transparent structures are established for handling student appeals and complaints related to the MSc program. These procedures are easily accessible and well-communicated to all students, ensuring that any concerns or grievances can be addressed in a fair and structured manner. During the interviews, the students did not mention any Issues regarding this topic.

USHAF actively promotes student engagement beyond the classroom by supporting a wide range of extracurricular activities. The university allocates funds and provides dedicated spaces for events such as exhibitions, job fairs, excursions, and other student-led initiatives. This support encourages participation in cultural, recreational, and voluntary activities, enabling students to explore their interests, build professional networks, and contribute to the university community.

ET recommendations:

- 1. The ET encourages USHAF to consider the internationalization of the Study Program as more important. The number of students in the program who go abroad must increase. The proportion of incoming students is also too low. Some mechanisms, such as offering courses in English or conveying the importance of international experience in the job market, need to be integrated. The Statement "our students do not want to go abroad during their studies" cannot be an excuse. With the Kosovo-EU visa liberalization of 2024, a huge opportunity for HEI's in Kosovo arises. This opportunity should not be neglected by USHAF. (2 years)*

6. RESEARCH

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

The ET learned that the MSc program's research aims align with USAF's research strategy and mission. Key research themes include tourism innovation, sustainability, and regional development. These goals are reflected in course content and staff activities. The institution

promotes research that contributes to local development and EU integration priorities. This alignment gives the program both relevance and direction.

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

From the interviews, it became apparent that the academic staff engaged in the MSc in Management and Innovation in Tourism contribute to applied and academic research. Research outputs include articles, conference presentations, and case studies linked to the tourism and service industries. Staff regularly participate in national and international research forums. These contributions are documented in staff CVs and institutional reports. The research is aligned with the program's applied focus and industry relevance.

The ET learned that academic staff are publishing in peer-reviewed journals, some indexed in international databases like Scopus and Web of Science. The institution promotes visibility through co-authorship, project collaboration, and dissemination events.

After reviewing staff profiles, the ET confirmed that all lecturers involved in delivering the MSc program meet the minimum qualification standards. Each staff member holds at least a master's degree and has over five years of experience in academia or the tourism sector. Their professional backgrounds include consultancy, tourism development, and entrepreneurship.

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

Academic staff at UASF are actively involved in knowledge transfer and community development activities. At the interviews with the management and the faculty, The ET learned that staff contribute to public consultations, policy briefs, and tourism strategy development at the local level.

The evaluation team observed that academic staff regularly collaborate with colleagues from other HEIs both in Kosovo and abroad. Partnerships are established through Erasmus+ projects, study visits, and joint publications.

The ET confirmed that UASF supports teaching staff in developing joint projects with local businesses and tourism operators. These collaborations often involve co-designed research or workshops focused on innovation and market development.

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

The ET learned that academic staff are encouraged to integrate their research findings into their teaching. Syllabi and course materials are regularly updated to include recent research and publications. Case studies and examples from staff projects are used in class discussions. However, after revision of the syllabi, the ET was not able to identify such practices. Students enrolled in the MSc program are engaged in applied research activities in cooperation with staff. Students work in groups on field-based projects and may contribute to staff publications. Research-based learning is promoted from the first semester through methods courses and project assignments.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Encourage academic staff to publish in high-ranking, peer-reviewed journals to enhance research quality and institutional visibility*
- 2. Encourage faculty to integrate their research findings into teaching to enrich course content and enhance student learning.*

7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

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

The HEI ensures adequate premises and equipment for performing education processes and research. ESG (1.6). As per the data available in the SER and during the site visit it is evident that the premise and equipment are adequate and progressive in regular improvements of current facilities. It enables the performance of the education processes and research. UASF ensures advanced infrastructure and resources that fully support the development of academic and research activities for the MSc program in Management and Innovation in Tourism, to accomplish the objectives of the study program, focusing on advancing knowledge in tourism

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management, fostering innovation, and addressing regional and national needs in Ferizaj and Kosovo's tourism sector. As a public higher education institution under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), the University is:

- the owner of the space used for teaching and other activities, including the rectorate, classrooms, offices, lobby, etc.
- the owner of the space for laboratories and workshops used for educational activities.
- the owner of software for the university management system (UMS), Office 365 (licensed), and.
- the owner of a library with a satisfactory number of books for students and the staff involved in the accreditation program

Equipped specialized laboratories that integrate advanced Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are available and enable practical modules execution. They are fully equipped with computers and licensed software that meet the specific needs of the respective disciplines, including complete applications such as MS Office, AutoCAD (Student Edition), Azure, and the University Management System (UMS). This integrated technological system enables students to develop practical skills, providing an interactive learning experience that aligns with the demands of the modern job market. UASF owns the space it uses, including its laboratories and workshops, and holds licenses for the use of software, whether licensed or educationally licensed for academic purposes. Wi-Fi services are available in 25 zones, including the library, conference halls, and classrooms. The University has a website, a Facebook page, and an e-learning platform (Moodle, MS Teams). For managing academic and administrative processes, the University uses the University Management System (UMS), primarily offering a student module, a teaching staff module, an administration module, and an academic manager module. As elaborated in SER and inspected during the site visit, the UASF is a modern campus, since 2014, with 8,304.27 m² of dedicated space, meeting the standards of a contemporary academic environment. The University building consists of:

- 14 classrooms (1347.68 m²), with each classroom having around 55 seats on average.
- 1 large amphitheater (400 seats),
- 1 small amphitheater (150 seats),
- Computer science classrooms equipped with computers,
- 5 laboratories (1440.23 m²),
- 1 library (67.10 m²),
- A restaurant for staff and students (223 m²),
- A research/innovation office (42.65 m²),
- Office spaces (2113.13 m²); and
- Other spaces (1474 m² for the Rectorate and administration + 69 m² for student activity areas, including reading areas).

Overall impression of expert panel members during the site visit and inspection of infrastructure is very positive and there is a good working and learning environment offered to students and all staff. The classrooms and amphitheaters are equipped with projectors, computers, internet, and all necessary teaching conditions. All academic and administrative staff are provided with personal computers and everyone has internet access. All administrative offices and management staff are also equipped with printers and other necessary devices for comfortable work. The equipment is managed efficiently and is regularly documented. All teaching rooms are equipped with LCP projectors used in teaching. There are also two large computer labs used by students. When it comes to facilities for students with special needs, UASF has also fulfilled this criteria by taking special measures to ensure full and easy access for all students, including those with special needs by installing an appropriate elevator system that covers all floors of the campus, enabling inclusive access and equal opportunities for student engagement in all educational and research activities, eliminating physical barriers and creating an accessible educational environment for all. Conclusively, the UASF is a well designed and organized campus with sufficient infrastructure for implementation of the study program under evaluation, but also a good working place for its staff. The area around the campus and its garden is also well maintained, clean and offers a healthy natural environment for all stakeholders. Indoor decoration of the walls and corridors is filled with students' work, pictures, art and it can also serve as a good example of creating safe and friendly learning facilities where students' projects are appreciated and the creative results of the student and professor's work is promoted. Commitment of rector, vice rectors and all academic and administrative staff is also infused in the overall UASF infrastructural capacity as a soft infrastructural element of quality offering positive and motivating learning and working environment.

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

The HEI ensures adequate library resources for the MSc study program under evaluation. University library is equipped with a main reading room (20 seats) and dedicated group work spaces (40 seats), ensuring a quiet, structured environment for students. The library collection includes over 1,433 specialized book titles, aligned with the MSc curriculum. Books are available in Albanian and English, covering tourism management, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Students are offered sufficient spaces for studying with scientific literature, scientific and academic journals for the needs of completing the study program. According to SER and as per the site visit, the library offers well-structured and rich sources enabling the research and study activities of the MSc study program under evaluation. The library is available outside of regular teaching hours, supporting the academic and research needs of

students by an available collection that includes over 1,433 titles from specialized literature, with updated publications selected from well-known local and international authors. This diverse and extensive collection fully covers the curriculum requirements, providing sufficient resources for all courses in the program and offering students access to the most advanced literature in the fields of tourism. As evident in the SER and during the site visit, the library is equipped with a main reading room with a capacity of 20 seats, as well as dedicated spaces for group studies, providing an additional 40 seats. These areas are designed to meet the accreditation standards and offer a quiet and suitable environment for learning and research. The spaces are accessible to students during the library's operating hours, providing a comprehensive and inclusive study experience. The reading rooms provide 20 seats, sufficient for the students enrolled in the accredited program. The group study spaces offer over 40 seats. There are enough books related to the study field corresponding to the accredited program. Reserved books are available in correlation with the number of students projected in the accredited program. There are enough publications by Albanian authors, many of which are available in electronic format, corresponding to the accredited program. In the reading room, the library is equipped with an internet network, allowing students access to various platforms to access both local and international literature, depending on the professor's instructions and the student's interests. The access to electronic resources for staff and students, including those from Cambridge University Press (<https://www.cambridge.org/core/>) and MSP - Mathematical Sciences Publishers (<https://www.msp.org>) are available and based on an agreement with the National Library, the University also provides access to the following electronic resources: ASTM COMPASS Abstract, Edward Elgar Products, IO Science, IMF Library, DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS. One of the outcomes of the Research CULT project is the support of project partners (including UASF) in providing access to the EBSCO electronic platform for all staff and students.

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

The study program under evaluation, MSc in Management and Innovation in Tourism, is appropriately funded to deliver its intended educational activities and research. (ESG 1.6) as UAFS is a public higher education institution and is financed by the state budget (Ministry of Education). There is a structured and balanced financial plan that ensures the sustainability of the MSc program in Management and Innovation in Tourism for the next five years. This plan includes budget allocations for academic staff salaries, facility maintenance, technology upgrades, and student support services which guarantees that the program can consistently meet its educational and research objectives. According to the statute, UASF is a legal entity and the sole employer for all academic units operating within the University. Academic units participate in budget planning, investments, payments, and expenditures, which are made

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according to the needs and requirements presented by each academic unit, harmonized for each fiscal year within the University. Additionally, UASF benefits from additional funding through international collaborations and agreements with the local community, strengthening its capacity to meet program standards in alignment with strategic objectives. This financial support enables the University to make continuous improvements in infrastructure and the academic environment, meeting the highest standards required for re-accreditation and ensuring a stable and comprehensive environment for the academic and professional development of students. This guarantees that students and staff have access to advanced equipment and resources that meet the demands of the job market and contemporary academic standards. The information is provided in SER and elaborated during the meeting with management. There is a system implemented for monitoring and maintaining infrastructure, ensuring continuous development and meeting the highest academic standards.

Vice Rector for Budget, Finance, and Infrastructure, supervises and coordinates all processes related to the management and development of physical and financial resources. Equipment and infrastructure are regularly monitored and maintained to ensure full functionality and high quality in the learning environment. Any new investment in infrastructure is made with the aim of optimally meeting the needs of students and the academic program. Periodic assessments are conducted to analyze student and staff satisfaction with the use of infrastructure and supporting resources with the aim to identify improvement possibilities and needs, to support the development of a sustainable action plan to meet the quality standards required for re-accreditation, ensuring a suitable and sustainable academic environment for all users. During the site visit and as per the explanation of management the panel expert members understood that the centralization of Finances may create delays in meeting infrastructure and resource requirements, which is difficult to manage and influence due to the strong financial dependence of UASF on the government and Ministry of Education. Consequently, the limited financial independence of academic units for budget management related to infrastructure and resources are also seen as obstacles in further development of infrastructure, resources, students and academic support. Therefore it is advised by members of panel experts to create programs for the open market with organized training for the public, institutions and business sector, long-life learning concepts that could increase independence of UASF and internal income. It is also highly recommended that the Ministry of Education finds ways to support further development in the UASF, especially in the development of dedicated tourism labs and simulation environments with the aim to strengthen practical competencies and align with industry trends.

ET recommendations:

1. *Keep improving digital access to journals and research papers, books and other literature by subscribing to databases and give access to academic staff and*

students

2. *Continue to increase library sources in all aspects and follow up with digital trends in research and study facilities*
3. *Continue searching for internal and external funding by offering programs of lifelong learning, summer and winter schools, and increased participation in local, regional and international projects, all in order to increase internal budget for the faculty and study program under evaluation.*
4. *Collaborate with the Ministry of Education in finding solutions to develop and build tourism labs and simulation environments to stay up to date with recent trends in the tourism sector (as a very important and fast growing sector of Kosovo economy).*

FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT TEAM

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

OVERALL EVALUATION AND JUDGMENTS OF THE ET

University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj, Management of Innovation and Tourism, MSc, demonstrated an overall Fully Compliant, with 6 Fully Compliant area and 1 Substantially compliant standards of evaluation including the mandatory areas. According to the Manual requirements, the Expert Team recommends to accredit the study programme Management of Innovation and Tourism, MSc at University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj, for 5 years, with 40 students.

Expert Team

Member



Marina Gregoric

28/04/2025

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member



Tornike Khostaria

28/04/2025

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(Print Name)

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