UNIVERSITY "UKSHIN HOTI" PRIZREN
FACULTY OF LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Agribusiness, BSc, 180 ECTS

Re-accreditation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

23 April 2024, Vienna (Austria)

1

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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2

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 04 April 2024

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Univ.Prof. Dr. Hans Peter Kaul (BOKU University, Vienna, AT)*
- *Prof. Dr. Joachim Müller (Hohenheim University, Stuttgart, DE)*
- *Katerina Klimoska, Student Expert*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Ilirjana Ademaj Ahmeti, KAA*
- *Shkelzen Gërxhaliu, KAA*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *KAA Accreditation manual (dated 2021)*
- *SER*
- *Syllabi*
- *Staff CVs*
- *Several Annexes (partly in Albanian language)*
- *On-site interviews*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *KAA Accreditation Manual - standards & performance indicators (dated 2021)*
- *Four-level compliance scale:*

CL	Compliance level	%
A	Fully compliant	> 90
B	Substantially compliant	70-90
C	Partially compliant	30-70
D	Non-compliant	< 30
n.a.	not applicable	

1.2. Site visit schedule

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 10:00	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Albana Plakiqi-Milaimi (Dean) Skender Kokollari (Secretary) Kushtrim Braha (Chief of the study program)
10.05 – 10.55	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Faruk Bojaxhi (FLES QA Coordinator) Skender Kokollari (FLES Secretary) Nora Rada (University QA Office) Teuta Thaqi (University QA Office) Xhevat Kallaba (University Information Technology office) Hekuran Kabashi (University Library) Zëmira Bresilla Dakaj (Office of Academic Affairs) Blerta Ferati (Head of the Student Affairs Division)
11:00 – 12:00	Meeting with the heads of the study program **Agribusiness, BSc, (room 1)** Dr. Hans Peter Kaul Katerina Klimoska, Student Expert	Isuf Lushi Festim Tafolli Nol Krasniqi
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch break	
13:00 – 13:30	Visiting Facilities	
14:30 – 15:15	Meeting with teaching staff	Mirvjena Kellezi (full-time) Arsim Susuri (full-time) Anera Musliu (full-time) Simeana Beshi (full-time) Liridon Buqaj (full-time) Ilir Tomorri (part-time)
15:20 – 16:10	Meeting with students and graduates	Blenita Krasniqi (Student, 1st year, AGB BSc) Fatlind Bajraktari (Student, 2nd year, AGB BSc) Hana Kryeziu (Student, 2nd year, FES BSc) Elsa Gashi (Student, 3rd year, AGB BSc) Rrezon Hoxha (Student, 3rd year, FES BSc) Endrit Elezkurtaj (Student, 1st year, MAGB MSc) Yllka Shehdadi (Graduate, FES BSc) Fatjona Parallangaj (Graduate, MAGB MSc)
16:15 – 17:00	Meeting with external stakeholders	Refki Zogaj (Semenarna) Besim Loshaj (AgroProduct) Labinot Shulina (Labiwine) Bexhat Bytyqi (KK Prizren) Hartim Gashi (PePeKo) Ariel Shabani (IOWA-project) Mr. Kastrati
17:00 – 17:05	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
17:05 – 17:10	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

The University "Ukshin Hoti" Prizren was founded as a state university and first accredited in 2010. The headquarter is in the city of Prizren. Currently in the academic year 2022/23 there are about 3,032 active students in 20 study programs. The university has adopted a strategic plan 2020-2024 with seven distinct strategic objectives. It sees its mission as "an academic and competitive institution oriented towards the provision of quality education by conducting scientific research and contributing to innovation, in accordance with the labour market demand and the contribution to community where it operates locally, nationally and beyond". Academic fields are ICT, business administration and international management, agribusiness, forestry and environmental science, primary and secondary education, linguistics, law and related fields.

Within the University, the Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences (FLES) was founded in 2016. Its mission is "to provide quality education and scientific research in the fields of Agribusiness and Forest and Environmental Sciences, as well as to contribute to the local national and beyond community." The initial objective was to satisfy a market demand for specialists in the field of agribusiness management. Today FLES builds on the foundations of a macro environment with rich business, craft, scientific, cultural and historical heritage of the region. Thus, consultancy services play an important role for FLES.

The full time BSc study program "Agribusiness" was started in 2016 as one out of two initial programs. In the academic year 2023/24 255 mostly young students are enrolled in the BSc program of Agribusiness. The granted maximum number of yearly new enrolled students is 80. Admission requires a successful completion of an entry exam. Most of the students originate from the region, some also from northern Albania. The teaching staff strives for quality teaching and professional training, which makes students highly competitive on the labour market. Besides, scientific research is conducted in different fields of individual specialization.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

Overall, we would like to congratulate the dean and her faculty to the very comprehensive and elaborate report as well as the very open and constructive discussions during our on-site visit.

2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

1 Mission, objectives and administration	CL
Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution. There is evidence presented that the study program is aligned with the objectives of the university as stated in the University Strategic Plan 2020-2024 as well as with those of the FLES strategy.	A
Standard 1.2. Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. For all courses, learning outcomes are defined that fit to a large degree with the defined objectives. Also, the course organization and examination procedures are clearly defined. The requirements of national (Education Strategy in Kosovo 2022-2026) and European qualification frameworks (EHEA) are considered. Internal support is provided by the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE).	A
Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept. The program was developed based on best-practice examples from established universities, which facilitates the development of a well-planned and adjusted course framework. Teaching is still much focused on the individual's own course, but team teaching and interdisciplinary course design is an issue for some younger staff members.	B
Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students. The policies and regulations of the university and of FLES with regard to teaching, research and administration issues are clearly defined and available to all staff and students, regularly also online. The University Senate has recently revised and published a large number of regulations and guidelines (cf. p. 33).	A
Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	A

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6

The ET is not in a position to judge on the complete compliance of all staff and students with proper ethical behavior in all teaching, learning and research situations. During our site visit, however, we found no suspicion or even evidence of any misconduct.	
Standard 1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances. There are obviously regular reviewing and revising procedures in place for policies and regulations that are relevant for the proper management and delivery of the program. A check on a sample of the provided Annex documents showed that all documents that are under the control of the faculty were not older than 2 years.	A
Overall	**A**

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *The management should encourage teachers to have the common objectives and learning outcomes of the whole program more in view, and to use increasingly team teaching and interdisciplinary teaching approaches.*
2. *We suggest to revise the declared claim to confer "comprehensive knowledge in plant and animal production", as own research facilities for agricultural sciences are not available.*
3. *The faculty should develop a strategic plan to foster high potential staff in attaining PhD supervision experience in order to reach the goal to establish a PhD program.*

2.2. Quality Management

2 Quality management	CL
Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity. UUH has established a quality assurance system based on University Quality Assurance Regulation. The process is comprehensively described in the SER. It was confirmed to the ET at the meeting with the quality assurance officers during the site visit that teaching staff regularly participate in the process.	A
Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.	A

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7

Evaluations and actions for improvement are core parts of a structured planning process.	
Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution. All essential steps of program planning and delivery are considered in the quality assurance process as described in the SER.	A
Standard 2.4. Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students. According to the SER the quality evaluation of the study program is based on student questionnaires addressing the essential quality aspects. Leaning outcomes are explicitly considered in the syllabus revision. This was also confirmed to the ET during the meetings with teaching staff and students during the site visit.	A
Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance. The evaluation of the achievement of standards and improvement loops are an integral part of the quality assurance system.	A
Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available. Survey data are collected from students, graduates and employers (organized in an advisory board). The results are aggregated and compiled in the report of the Quality Assurance Committee at the faculty level and are publicly available and included in the SER.	A
Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates. Improvement loops are an integral part of the quality assurance system.	A
Standard 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses. According to the SER, the report of the Quality Assurance Committee at the faculty level is drafted even twice a year.	A
Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.	B

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8

According to the SER, the Quality Assurance Regulation and QA instruments used for internal quality assurance undergo the revision process on a regular basis. Policies, regulations, procedures and instruments, as a package are published at the University's website. Since the link in the SER is not working, it is not clear to the ET how and how frequently the Quality Assurance System is revised.	
Overall	**A**

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The quality assurance process is structured in an exemplary manner. However, number and frequency of surveys and reporting is above the usual measure. This could jeopardise the respondents' commitment and creates unnecessary workload. Streamlining of the process is recommended.*

2.3. Academic Staff

3 Academic staff	CL
Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation. Job vacancies are obviously announced and offered in a proper way, and fortunately some new staff could be recently recruited. The required table is presented, but details like exams, consulting, administrative activities, research must be extracted from the CVs. (It would be difficult to include them in a table like Table 1.3.1.)	A
Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation. We found no evidence that teaching staff does not fulfil the legal requirements for their positions, however it would be hardly possible to check that for each individual and each individual requirement.	A
Standard 3.3. Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.	A

The SER shows the complete full-time and part-time academic staff, but it does not provide evidence of possible occupation of teachers at any other institutions. However, we rely on the university administration and the dean, who must control this requirement officially.	
Standard 3.4. At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program. These quota are obviously fulfilled, as proven by Table 1.3.1.	A
Standard 3.5. For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions. These requirements are obviously fulfilled, as proven by Table 1.3.1. Table 1.3.2, in addition, lists three professors with PhD title, who are explicitly responsible for the program.	A
Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties. During the academic year 2022/23 all academic staff was trained in the Center of Excellence at the University of Prishtina. Then, an own Center was established and offers even "Training for Trainers". The training courses are listed in Table 1.3.3 in the SER. In the interviews there were additional possibilities for training and further professional development mentioned, but the limited support by the Ministry of Education is seen as threat in SER.	A
Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service. There was no evidence that these responsibilities are disregarded by staff. Student consultation hours are transparently announced at the office doors. During the interview hour with staff, several activities of community engagement and service were mentioned.	A
Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available. Staff evaluations take place regularly once per year and include all the mentioned aspects. The faculty developed an evaluation criteria scheme (cf. Table 1.3.4), and results are available to relevant positions, at first to the individual staff themselves. It	A

must be emphasized that an availability to the "open public" would not be acceptable due to privacy rights.	
Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials. The quality management works on a strategic level on improvement of teaching methods, however the resources are limited. Also, individual teachers confirmed their engagement in updating the syllabi regularly. The supply with up-to-date textbooks and contemporary literature is explicitly mentioned as a weakness.	B
Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers. Age limit is not addressed in the SER. Listed teaching staff in the study program is below the age of 65.	A
Overall	A

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *With view to international practice, we suggest to develop a strategy for the appointment of a few full professors for pivotal subjects and affiliate young staff members to them as assistants, thus creating academic groups (Chair, Department).*
2. *We encourage the academic staff to think about their attitude towards the teaching process as a team effort, including team teaching and development of interdisciplinary subjects.*

2.4. Educational Process Content

4 Educational process content	CL
Standard 4.1. The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality. The program defines distinct qualification objectives and 11 explicit learning outcomes. These include also interdisciplinary, methodological and personal/soft skill aspects. The contents, however, are much focused on socio-economic contents, while agricultural production/Life Sciences are less emphasized.	B

Standard 4.2. The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning. Cf. Standard 1.2. The program was developed based on best-practice examples from established universities in Germany, Albania and Slovakia, which is a solid basis for a well-planned and combined course framework. The curriculum is well shaped to attain the claimed qualifications of graduates. Only the credits (12 ECTS) granted for the thesis seem insufficient for the preparation of a bachelor thesis, which was supported by the comprehensive, well-structured and well-written theses that we got as examples for inspection. Students suggested in the meeting during the site visit an increase in excursions/field work within the courses.	B
Standard 4.3. The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation. Cf. Standard 4.2. The curriculum provides a logical flow of courses and allows the acquisition of general and specific skills. For the program in total 11 learning outcomes are defined.	A
Standard 4.4. The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation. For all courses syllabi are presented, which include the items mentioned above and are in general well elaborated.	A
Standard 4.5. If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program. Any language training in advance was not mentioned, but English is obviously not a familiar language for several students as well as teachers. We were glad to see that the "English Language" course in the 2nd semester was converted to "English for Agribusiness". We want to add that translation of English textbooks to Albanian is a	B

12

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12

quite inefficient approach. It would be much better to confront students increasingly with academic English, first maybe in individual classes, later in completely English taught courses.	
Standard 4.6. The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development. According to the SER, the student-teacher relationship is a partnership where learning outcomes are discussed in consultations. The workload for students in relation to the granted ECTS, however, is not evaluated, e.g. in the questionnaires for students.	A
Standard 4.7. Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students. Course activities and teaching methods are described in the syllabus of each course of the study program.	A
Standard 4.8. Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses. Teaching load, progress and completion of students is evaluated in the quality assurance process as described in the SER under Standard 2.	A
Standard 4.9. Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions. Teaching load, progress and completion of students is evaluated in the quality assurance process as described in the SER under Standard 2. The workload for students in relation to the granted ECTS, however, is not evaluated, e.g. in the questionnaires for students.	B
Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed. Regulation on the definition of the bachelor study criteria specifies the procedure for cases when the student is not satisfied with the exam grade. The student may file a written complaint at the Dean's office and request a review of the exam test submitted	A

and evaluated by the professor. This complaint must be submitted within 48 hours after the announcement of the exam results.	
Standard 4.11. If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program. The study program includes "professional practice" with 12 ECTS during the last semester. The internship is comprehensively described in the course syllabus. The students are drafting an internship diary. A member of the teaching staff is appointed as coordinator of the internship. The syllabus indicates that the internship shall last for 12 weeks, which would count for more than 12 ECTS (with 25 hours of work each).	B
Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units. A list of cooperation agreements for the students' internships is provided as Appendix of the SER, and the stakeholders confirmed during the interview session their willingness to accept students for an internship in their enterprises.	A
Overall	A

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *The faculty might reflect on the importance of natural/life sciences for the study program. At the moment these subjects are on an acceptable, but minimum level present in the curriculum.*
2. *The amount of ECTS granted for the thesis should be increased, and generally more attention should be paid to the workload for students per ECTS.*
3. *Confronting students by and by with academic English first in individual classes and later in complete courses should be fostered.*

2.5. Students

5 Students	CL
Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students. According to the SER, the student admission process is formally organized at the University level, based on the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo and the University Statute, both provided as Annex. This process is transparent and open to all interested students, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, residence or religion.	A
Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements. Students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma and beyond, a bachelor degree of a 180 ECTS study program.	A
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process. According to the SER (Table 1.5.1) the number of students per group is up to 50 in obligatory lectures as well as all exercises and 10-50 in elective lectures. The group size appears to the ET for exercises at the upper end of acceptable sizes. At the same time, UUH applies for a number of 80 study places in the BSc program. There is an imbalance that must be clarified.	B
Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed. UUH has established an electronic platform called University Management System (UMS) as a "one stop student service" where the students can find all the necessary information on one webpage, from admission to the graduation of the student. The results of the student assessments are published within 3 days after the exam through the UMS. In cases of poor performance, students may ask for additional consultation, as well as personal psychological consultation services.	A
Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record. Student results are certified by the official of the Student Service Office. The records for the grades are available both electronically as well as in hard-copy. The results obtained throughout the study cycle, for each subject, are certified in the transcript of grades which is accessible through the UMS.	A

15

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15

Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations. Since many of the students are employed, there is flexibility in organizing tasks and deadlines. This was also confirmed to the ET in the meetings with staff and students during the site visit.	A
Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators. Student records are archived in the UMS. Statistics such as number of enrolled students, grades, drop-outs can be generated any time and are used in the quality assurance system. Examples of the statistics are shown in the SER.	A
Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original. UUH is operating antiplagiarism software (SAP), which is used to control plagiarism at all levels of the university (the link to SAP in the SER is not working). According to the SER, each supervisor controls the originality of the students' work continuously, but we cannot verify that. A threshold value for similarity was set to 20%.	B
Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals. According to the SER, students within each faculty are organized in the Student Organization as well as in a Student Parliament in order to guarantee student rights. The members of student parliament are visible on UMS webpage. Furthermore, students are an active part of the governing bodies of the UUH, such as the Senate and Faculty Council. The SER fails to explicitly describe rights and procedure of academic appeals.	B
Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents. Transfer from other universities is defined in the University Statute as well as according to the Regulation of the transfer of students (Annex A5.12). Transfer between programs within UUH is organized twice a year. In the meeting with students during the site visit, the ET was told about the positive experience of students that transferred from University of Prishtina to UUH.	A
Standard 5.11. Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.	A

In the meeting with students during the site visit, the ET was convinced that students are satisfied with the process for consultation and that they can reach professors online or at scheduled hours in the office.	
Overall	**A**

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *The antiplagiarism software should be specified in future SERs. Instead of applying fixed threshold values for the similarities, the quality of the similarities must be checked by supervisors.*

2.6. Research

In advance we want to point to a problem in evaluating the research performance in relation to the study program. The SER reports research efforts and results on the level of the faculty without breaking it down to the teaching staff of the individual program. Specifically for a BSc program this is acceptable, as research is not so much required on that qualification level. Additionally, the faculty runs only three programs and thus the faculty results are expected to allow for a valid evaluation also for the individual program. This is confirmed by some sample CV evaluations of staff who are teaching intensively in the present program.

6 Research	**CL**
Standard 6.1. The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives. The study program itself has no research objectives defined, but the "Strategic Plan" of FLES (Appendix A1.2) is an impressive document with ambitious aims. However, the therein (p. 6) documented research plan is a collection of individual research subjects of (presumably) individual staff members. The resource situation, however, forces to pool resources for only few integrating research fields, which would also help to bring the staff closer together in cooperative, interdisciplinary projects. The "development of scientific-research work" (p. 14) is a good starting point to focus the activities.	B

Standard 6.2. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria. There are standards set and checked for teaching staff at yearly evaluations as well as for promotion along the tenure track (cf. Standard 3.8). The "teachers annual working plan" is a good tool to support the staff in keeping their performance in view.	A
Standard 6.3. Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program. Especially for publications, which are the main output of research, the rules for recognition are clearly defined (SCI/SSCI or SCOPUS listed journals). Participation in conferences is also recognized.	A
Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity. The titles of papers listed in the SER prove that the research subjects of the publications are widely in line with the contents of the study program. The number of papers improved clearly compared with the previous evaluation period and also the number of staff actively publishing their work is larger than before. The list of papers in the SER does not show whether papers are included in SCI/SSCI/SCOPUS. From a rough screening I assume that by far most of them (but not all) comply with that quality standard.	B
Standard 6.5. The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad. For publications cf. Standard 6.4. There are also conference presentations indicated nationally and abroad (often in neighbour countries, but the visa restrictions are acknowledged), but in total the activities should be increased, especially in view of the visa facilitation. Nine conferences were also co-organized. The interactions with (mainly national) industry and stakeholders are intensive.	A
Standard 6.6. Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.	A

Cf. Standards 6.4 and 6.5. The close cooperation with stakeholders from the agrobusiness industry, also for joint research projects, is credibly demonstrated and was confirmed during the interview hour with stakeholders.	
Standard 6.7. Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years. The SER lists 45 scientific publications for three years (2021-2023) and 14 full-time academic staff. On average, the standard was met if we do not include part-time staff. The publication activity of individual staff members is quite heterogeneous, yet. When breaking down publications to individuals, we found only 5 out of 21 staff members, who published three or more papers in three years. 10 out of 21 published no paper, and several scientists are highlighted in the publication list, who are – at least recently – not members of the academic staff within the study program. In future SERs, the publication list should be elaborated more carefully. Many references are not complete. The Impact Factor (IF Clarivate) of the journals should be added. The list should be split for full-time and part-time staff, because part-time professors might come from other universities where they do their research.	C
Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff. Based on a random check, there is no evidence that full-time staff publishes without mentioning the affiliation to the university.	A
Standard 6.9. Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field. In the syllabi, teachers mention that they include recent advances in the teaching subject and also own research work in their courses. During the interviews with staff there was some evidence of such research driven academic teaching.	A
Standard 6.10. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students. The SER mentions the importance of intellectual property rights and prevention of misconduct, especially plagiarism. Also during the interviews, we learned that theses are regularly and seriously checked for plagiarism. Patent filing or commercialization seem not to be an issue in the present research situation of the faculty.	A
Standard 6.11. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.	A

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19

Students are involved in mainly applied research in cooperation with industry partners. There is an increasing trend that students are also confronted with more fundamental research, which is substantially supported by new laboratory equipment. For a BSc program, the engagement of students in research is definitely sufficient.	
Overall	B

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *The publication list in future SERs should be elaborated more carefully. References have to be complete. The Impact Factor (IF Clarivate) of the journals should be added. The list should be split for full-time and part-time staff.*
2. *In order to foster research activities and productivity, the faculty might define few integrating research fields and encourage academic staff to initiate cooperative, interdisciplinary projects in these fields.*
3. *Academic staff should be encouraged to search for partnership in international projects.*
4. *When cooperating on joint projects with the agrobusiness industry, the scientific staff should try to design studies in a way that eventually a scientific publication of results is feasible.*
5. *The incentives for scientific publications, which are now paid "ad personam" to the authors, might be substituted/amended by payments for research purposes (e.g. equipment, student workers) given to academic units (we mentioned Chair or Department already above).*

2.7. Infrastructure and Resources

7 Infrastructure and resources	**CL**
Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account. Premises FLES owns an infrastructure comprising 1 auditorium, 6 class rooms, 1 IT computer lab, 5 laboratories, 1 herbarium hall, 1 library and office space for administrative and technical staff in a total of 1,809 m² which appears appropriate for the 500 students in the various programs. Human resources Teaching staff is allocated in appropriate quantity and quality.	B

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20

Equipment Students are supported by presence and electronic library and a student platform (One Stop Student Service, link in SER is not working). Laboratories are equipped with basic equipment. Beside microscopes, number of equipment is not sufficient for student laboratory work. In the study program Agribusiness management, laboratory work in the IT computer lab appears to be sufficient.	
Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years. The SER does not present figures of a financial plan at the level of the study program. It is just stated, that "FLES has sufficient academic, administrative and financial resources to enable successful and sustainable implementation of the study program".	C
Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years: *a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;* Class rooms are available (s. Standard 7.1) *b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;* IT computer lab is available for the study program (s. Standard 7.1) *c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence;* Software such as STATA, ArcGIS, GPStrackmaker, Garmin Mapsource is used in the courses, licence costs are not addressed *d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.* Presence library with own book stock is available. Electronic library is accessible for staff and students since the university is member of the Kosovo Electronic Library Association.	B
Standard 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment. Size of lecture rooms is adequate for the study program, but is questionable whether all the (80) students will have access to computers and software in the IT computer	B

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21

lab. If necessary, the group must be divided and exercises must be offered twice. Software licences have to be secured for the future.	
Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: *a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;* Working space is available in the library and the anteroom. *b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;* Sufficient working space for envisaged 80 students is available to meet the standard. *c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years;* The ET trusts that relevant and recent literature is available, especially because there is access to electronic libraries. In view of the rapid growth in knowledge, more importance should be attached to access to online libraries than to traditional reference libraries. *d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for;* cf. Standard 7.5c *e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.* cf. Standard 7.5c	A
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs. The premises are accessible for students and staff with disabilities, including separate entrances, elevators and toilets.	A
Overall	**B**

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *In future SERs, an explicit financial plan for the program has to be included.*

2. *In view of the comparatively large student numbers and the transition to interactive teaching methods, investments must be made in the expansion of group study rooms and electronic learning facilities. In public universities, the state has a duty here.*

3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program *Agribusiness, BSc, 180 ECTS* offered by *University "Ukshin Hoti" Prizren, Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences* is *Substantially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *to accredit* the study program for a duration of *5 years* with a number of *80 students* to be enrolled in the program.

Expert Team

Member

	Univ.Prof. Dr. Hans-Peter Kaul	**28 April 2024**
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)
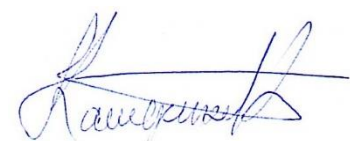
Member

	Prof. Dr. Joachim Müller	**28 April 2024**
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	Katerina Klimoska	**28 April 2024**
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