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***UNIVERSITY “UKSHIN HOTI” PRIZREN
FACULTY OF LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
FOREST AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES, BSc.***

RE-ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

19 April 2024, Hohenheim (DE)



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 04.04.2024

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Dr. Hans-Peter Kaul
- Dr. Joachim Müller
- Katerina Klimoska, Student Expert

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- Ilirjana Ademaj Ahmeti, KAA
- Shkelzen Gërxhaliu, KAA

Sources of information for the Report:

- SER
- Syllabus
- Staff CVs
- Annexes

Abbreviations

ET Expert team

FLES Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences

SER Self-evaluation report

UUH University "Ukshin Hoti" Prizren

Criteria used for program evaluation:

CL	Grade	Compliance level	%
A	1	Fully compliant	> 90
B	2	Substantially compliant	70-90
C	3	Partially compliant	30-70 ¹
D	4	Non-compliant	< 30
n.a.	-	not applicable	

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¹ 30-60% according KAA Accreditation Manual, corrected to close the gap

1.2. Site visit schedule

Programme Accreditation Procedure at University "Ukshin Hoti" in Prizren		
Programmes:	Agribusiness, BSc, 180 ECTS (Re-accreditation) Agribusiness Management, MSc, 120 ECTS (Re-accreditation) Forests and Environmental Sciences, BSc, 180 ECTS, (Re-accreditation)	
Site visit on (hybrid):	04 April 2024	
Expert Team:	Dr. Hans Peter Kaul Dr. Joachim Muller Katerina Klimoska, Student Expert	
Coordinators of the KAA:	Ilijana Ademaj Ahmeti, KAA Shkelzen Gërzhaliu, KAA	
Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 10:00	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	1. Albana Plaqiqi-Milaimi (Dean) 2. Skender Kokollari (Secretary) 3. Kushtrim Braha (Chief of the study program)
10.05 – 10.55	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	1. Faruk Bojaxhi (FLES QA Coordinator) 2. Skender Kokollari (FLES Secretary) 3. Nora Rada (University QA Office) 4. Teuta Thaqi (University QA Office) 5. Xhevat Kallaba (University Information Technology office) 6. Hekuran Kabashi (University Library) 7. Zëmira Bresilla Dakaj (Office of Academic Affairs) 8. 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	1. Isuf Lushi 2. Festim Tafolli 3. Nol Krasniqi
11:00 – 12:00	Meeting with the heads of the study program Agribusiness Management, MSc (room 2) Dr. Joachim Muller	1. Sadik Maloku 2. Kushtrim Braha
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch break	
13:00 – 13:30	Visiting Facilities	
13:30 – 14:30	Meeting with the heads of the study program	1. Faruk Bojaxhi

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	Forests and Environmental Sciences, BSc (room 2) Dr. Joachim Muller Katerina Klimoska, Student Expert	2.Yll Kortoçi 3.Albana Milaimi
14:30 – 15:15	Meeting with teaching staff	1.Mirvjena Kellezi (full-time) 2.Arsim Susuri (full-time) 3.Anera Musliu (full-time) 4.Simeana Beshi (full-time) 5.Liridon Buqaj (full-time) 6.Illir Tomorri (part-time) 7.Kadri Krasniqi (part-time) 8.Ekrem Gjokaj (part-time)
15:20 – 16:10	Meeting with students and graduates	1.Blenita Krasniqi (Student, 1st year, AGB BSc) 2.Fatlind Bajraktari (Student, 2nd year, AGB BSc) 3.Hana Kryeziu (Student, 2nd year, FES BSc) 4.Elsa Gashi (Student, 3rd year, AGB BSc) 5.Rrezon Hoxha (Student, 3rd year, FES BSc) 6.Endrit Elezkurtaj (Student, 1st year, MAGB MSc) 7.Yllka Shehdadi (Graduate, FES BSc) 8.Ardian Krasniqi (Graduate, AGB BSc) 9.Fatjona Parallangaj (Graduate, MAGB MSc)
16:15 – 17:00	Meeting with external stakeholders	1.Refki Zogaj (Semenarna) 2.Besim Loshaj (AgroProduct) 3.Labinot Shulina (Labiwine) 4.Ismet Gashi (Frigoterm) 5.Bexhat Bytyqi (KK Prizren) 6.Fitim Hoxha (Forestry Agency) 7.Hartim Gashi (PePeKo) 8.Ariel Shabani (IOWA-project)
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	



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

University “Ukshin Hoti” Prizren was established in 2009, as the second public university in the Republic of Kosovo. The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo on 30.05.2013 approved the Statute of the University. In 2023/2024 there were 2,935 active students (2,060 female students and 875 male students). Students who study at the University come from the Prizren region, other regions of the Republic of Kosovo and Northern Albania. The age structure of the students is largely young. The socio-economic background of University students is of average level, in line with the socio-economic status of the majority of the population. Currently, the University consists of 6 faculties offering 20 study programs, in two study levels, bachelor (BSc) and master (MSc). In addition to study programs in Albanian language, University also offers students study programs in Turkish and Bosnian language. The linguistic diversity of study programs makes the University unique compared to other Universities in Kosovo. There has been an increase in the number of academic staff in the last 3 years. The student/teacher ratio is 40 for full-time staff only and 18 including part-time staff, which is in line with trends in Kosovo. Within the University "Ukshin Hoti" Prizren, operates the Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences, which was founded in 2016. In 2023/2024 there were 482 students in the programs of the Faculty. The Faculty has employed 7 Associate Professors, 1 Assistant Professor and 1 Assistant with PhD degree in full time. Furthermore, there are 19 part time Professors and Assistants resulting in a student/professor ratio of 17.2.



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2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

1 Mission, objectives and administration	CL
<p><i>Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>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).</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	B
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>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</p>	A

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students, regularly also online. The University Senate has recently revised and published a large number of regulations and guidelines.	
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	A
Overall	A

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 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.*

2.2. Quality management

2 Quality management	CL
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<p><i>Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.</i></p> <p>Evaluations and actions for improvement are core parts of a structured planning process.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>All essential steps of program planning and delivery are considered in the quality assurance process as described in the SER.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>According to the SER the quality evaluation of the study program is based on student questionnaires addressing the essential quality aspects. Learning 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.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.</i></p> <p>The evaluation of the achievement of standards and improvement loops are an integral part of the quality assurance system.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	A



<i>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.</i>	A
<i>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.</i> According to the SER, the report of the Quality Assurance Committee at the faculty level is drafted even twice a year.	A
<i>Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.</i> 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.	B
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
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<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>An example of an open call for professor positions is provided in Appendix A3.1. Although the language is not English, it can be seen that here the courses to be taught are listed. However, a further position description (e.g. expected research activities) and conditions of employment (e.g. duration of contract) seem to be not addressed in the call. The SER contains Table 1.3.1 with full-time and part-time academic staff of the study program with names, titles, duration of contracts and teaching load.</p>	B
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>The ET trusts, that the teaching staff comply with the legal requirements since it is not possible to check that for each staff member and all requirements. During the site visit no evidence was found that teaching staff does not fulfil the legal requirements for their positions.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>In the SER full-time and part-time academic staff is listed, but it does not provide evidence whether occupation of teachers at any other institutions are covered. The ET trusts that the university administration is controlling this requirement in its own interest.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>According to Table 1.3.1 and Table 1.4.2 in the SER the requirements of Standard 3.4 are more than fulfilled (70% of the courses are taught by full-time staff).</p>	A



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<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>The requirements of Standard 3.4 are fulfilled by allocating Assoc. Prof. Faruk Bojaxhi, Assoc. Prof. Ylli Kortoçi and Assoc. Prof. Albana Milaimi to the study program.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.</i></p> <p>In 2022/23 all academic staff was trained in the Center of Excellence at the University of Prishtina. Afterwards, a Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET) was established at UUH which offers professional training. The training courses are listed in Table 1.3.3 in the SER. In the meeting during the site visit, additional opportunities for training and further professional development were mentioned. More support for those activities is expected from the Ministry of Education (mentioned as thread in the SER).</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>In the staff meeting during the site visit, various activities of community engagement and services were mentioned. Student consultation hours are transparently announced at the office doors. There was no evidence that responsibilities are disregarded by staff.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>Staff evaluations take place regularly once per year applying an evaluation criteria scheme as presented in Table 1.3.4 in the SER. Results are available to relevant positions, at first to the individual staff members themselves. It must be emphasized that public availability would not be acceptable due to privacy rights.</p>	A

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<p><i>Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.</i></p> <p>The quality assurance system considers improvement of teaching methods and learning material. Teaching staff confirmed in the meeting during the site visit their engagement in updating the courses regularly.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>Age limit is not addressed in the SER. Listed teaching staff in the study program is below the age of 65.</p>	B
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).*

2.4. Educational process content

4 Educational process content	CL
<p><i>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.</i></p>	A



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<p>The study program is based on qualification objectives expressed as a list of 9 learning outcomes comprising disciplinary knowledge, methodological competencies and generic skills. The learning outcome is employment oriented.</p>	
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>According to the SER the study program is in full compliance with the Kosovo National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>The curriculum provides a logical flow of courses and allows the acquisition of general and specific skills. The program is based on best practice examples from Università Politecnica delle Marche (Ancona, Italy), Università degli Studi di Palermo (Palermo, Italy) and University of Ljubljana (Slovenia). A list with 9 learning outcomes is provided in the SER.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>Comprehensive syllabi containing all information mentioned in the Standard are provided for all courses as Annex to the SER.</p>	A



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<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>Language of instruction is Albanian. An obligatory and an elective course in English (English I and English II) are offered in the study program. Both courses are business oriented. Terminology of forest science should also be integrated.</p>	n.a.
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>According to the SER, the student-teacher relationship is a partnership where learning outcomes are discussed in consultations.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>Course activities and teaching methods are described in the syllabus of each course of the study program.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>Assessment methods are transparently described in the syllabi and communicated at the start of a course. The ET trusts that the assessments are conducted fairly. There were no complaints in the meeting with the students during the site visit.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p>	B



<p>Teaching load, progress and completion of students is evaluated in the quality assurance process as described in the SER under Standard 2.</p> <p>Only 4 ECTS are allocated to the Bachelor-Thesis in Semester VI. This is highly disproportionate to the real workload that is expected from the students, as to be read in the SER: “the work on the draft of the thesis takes no less than 3 (three) months”. The number of courses in Semester VI has to be reduced in favor of a well-supervised research-oriented Bachelor-Thesis.</p>	
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>Regulation on the definition of the bachelor study criteria (Annex 1.6) 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 and evaluated by the professor. This complaint must be submitted within 48 hours after the announcement of the exam results.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>The study program has an internship (professional practice) with 5 ECTS during the last semester. Although a list of cooperation agreements for the students’ internship is provided, information about the organisation of the internship is not provided in the SER. That course should also have a syllabus.</p>	C
<p><i>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.</i></p>	A



A list of cooperation agreements for the students' internship is provided as Appendix of the SER.	
Overall	B

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Information about the organisation of the internship (syllabus) has to be provided in future SER.*
- 2. The number of courses in Semester VI has to be reduced in favour of a well-supervised research-oriented Bachelor-Thesis.*

2.5. Students

5 Students	CL
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>Students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.</i></p>	B



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<p>According to the SER (Table 1.5.1) the number of students per group is 30 in obligatory lectures and 10-15 in laboratory exercises. At the same time, UUH applies for a number of 50 study places in the BSc program. This imbalance must be clarified.</p>	
<p><i>Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.</i></p>	B



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<p>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%.</p>	
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	A
Overall	B

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

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1. *The group sizes in lectures and exercises have to be adjusted to the envisaged 50 study places.*
2. *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.*
3. *Rights and procedures of academic appeals have to be considered in future SERs.*

2.6. Research

6 Research	CL
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>The study program itself has no research objectives defined on its own, but the “Strategic Plan” of FLES (Appendix A1.2) is an impressive document with ambitious aims. However, the therein documented research topics (A1.2, p. 6) are an alliteration of individual research subjects of (presumably) individual staff members. The resource situation, however, forces to pool resources for only few integrating future-oriented research fields, which would also help to bring the staff closer together in cooperative, interdisciplinary projects. The strategic objective “Development of scientific-research work” (A1.2, p. 14) is a good starting point for streamlining the research activities.</p>	B
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>There are standards set and checked for teaching staff at yearly evaluations as well as for promotion along the tenure track (s. Standard 3.8). The “teachers annual working plan” is a good tool to support the staff in keeping their performance in view.</p>	A



<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.</i></p> <p>For the last five years, the SER lists 24 publications by academic staff in the study program. However, 50% of the listed publications are in agriculture or in economics. The research output, especially in the field of forestry science has to be considerably improved.</p>	C
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>Beside publications, being already addressed in Standard 6.4, there are also conference presentations at national and international level (but often in neighbour countries, presumably due to visa restrictions). Some conferences were co-organized by UUH. The research interactions with (mainly national) industry and community are commendably intensive. In general, the conference activities should be increased, especially in view of the extended traveling opportunities due to the recent visa facilitation.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>In addition to the facts already mentioned in Standards 6.4 and 6.5, close cooperation with stakeholders from forest administration and municipalities, also for joint research</p>	A



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<p>projects, is credibly demonstrated and was confirmed during the meeting with stakeholders during the site visit.</p>	
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>The SER fails to explicitly state and demonstrate the fulfilment of Standard 6.7. A total of 27 publications referenced in Scopus until December 2023 are shown for academic staff of the study program in Fig. 1.6.1. However, the time period is not specified. Assuming a 5-year period (2019-2023), and assuming that all 19 staff members of the study program are included, the average publication result would be 0.3 publications per staff member per year and the Standard would not be fulfilled. Furthermore, 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.</p>	C
<p><i>Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff.</i></p> <p>Based on a random check, the ET did not find evidence that full-time staff publishes without mentioning UUH as the affiliation.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>In the syllabi, teachers mention that they include recent advances in the teaching subject and also own research work in their courses. In the meeting with staff members during the site visit there was some evidence of such research driven academic teaching.</p>	A
<p><i>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.</i></p>	A



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In the SER the importance of intellectual property rights and prevention of misconduct especially plagiarism, is addressed. Also, in the meetings during the site visit the ET learned that written assignments and final 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.	
<i>Standard 6.11. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.</i> During their BSc thesis, students are typically involved in research in cooperation with forest and municipal administration.	A
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. The research output in the field of forestry science has to be increased.*
- 3. In order to foster research activities and productivity, the faculty should define few integrating research fields and encourage academic staff to initiate cooperative, interdisciplinary projects in these fields.*
- 4. Academic staff should be encouraged to search for partnership in international projects.*



2.7. Infrastructure and resources

7 Infrastructure and resources	CL
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p><u>Premises</u> 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.</p> <p><u>Human resources</u> Teaching staff is allocated in appropriate quantity and quality.</p> <p><u>Equipment</u> 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.</p>	B
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>A financial plan for the study program based on study fees of 30 students is presented in the SER claiming self-sustainability. However, costs for student laboratory work are not included (e.g. cost for program licences in the IT computer lab). The SER claims that despite the presented financial self-sufficiency, the University Senate and Rectorate have planned sufficient financial funding for this study program, from the University budget sources. The amount of additional funding was not reported.</p>	B
<p><i>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:</i></p> <p>a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;</p>	B



<p>Class rooms are available (s. Standard 7.1)</p> <p><i>b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;</i></p> <p>IT computer lab is available for the study program (s. Standard 7.1)</p> <p><i>c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence;</i></p> <p>Software such as STATA, ArcGIS, GPStrackmaker, Garmin Mapsource is used in the courses, licence costs are not addressed</p> <p><i>d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.</i></p> <p>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.</p>	
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>Size of lecture rooms is adequate for the study program. When increasing the number of students to 30 in the study program, it has to be assured that all students will have access to computers and software in the IT computer lab. If necessary, the group must be divided and exercises must be offered twice. Software licences have to be secured for the next three years.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:</i></p> <p><i>a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;</i></p> <p>Working space is available in the library and the anteroom</p> <p><i>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;</i></p> <p>Sufficient working space for envisaged 30 students is available to meet the standard.</p>	A



<p><i>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;</i> 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</p> <p><i>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;</i> s. Standard 7.5c</p> <p><i>e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.</i> s. Standard 7.5c</p>	
<p><i>Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.</i> The premises are accessible for students and staff with disabilities, including separate entrances, elevators and toilets.</p>	A
<p>Overall</p>	B

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. In view of the expected increase in 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.*



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3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program *Forest and Environmental Sciences, BSc* offered by “*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 *3 years* with a number of *50 students* to be enrolled in the program.

4. APPENDICES (*if available*)

1. n.a.



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