University for Business and Technology (UBT)
Faculty of Political Science

Security Studies (MA)

Accreditation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

MAY 2025, PRISHTINA

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Site visit schedule

Date of site visit: 12/05/2025

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Prof. Dr. Matthew Kitching
- Prof. Dr. Kristijan Kotarski
- Mr. Stefan-Marius Deaconu

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- Arianit Kraniqi, KAA Officer

Time	Meeting	Participants
9:00 - 9:50	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programs are integrated	**Visar Hoxha –** Vice Rector for quality and research, at UBT **Hajdi Xhixha** –Dean of PS Faculty **Arian Kadriu** – Vice Dean of PS Faculty
09:50 - 10:30	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	**Samire Sadiku** -Quality coordinator of Faculty **Artan Tahiri** – Secretary of the UBT **Ngadhnjim Brovina** – Member of quality subcomission **Ermal Lubishtani** – Member of quality subcomission
10:35 - 11:10	Meeting with the program holders of the study program **Political Science, MA**	**Ridvan Peshkopia** **Hajdi Xhixha** **Avni Alidemaj**
11:10 - 11:45	**Security Studies, MA**	**Muazam Halili** **Alban Maliqi**
11:50 - 12:50	Lunch break	
13:00 - 13:30	Visiting Facilities	
13:30 - 14:10	Meeting with teaching staff	**Dritero Arifi** **Alfred Marleku** **Shqipe Mjekiqi** **Blerton Abazi** **Denis Celcima** **Elton Tota** **Llokman Mirtezani** **John Doone** **Florin Aliu** **Bahri Gashi** **Gjon Culaj**
14:10 - 14:40	Meeting with students	**Aja Gashi** **Anila Deliu**

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Time	Meeting	Participants
		Dea Selimi
		Laura Sukliq
		Dionit Kabashi
		Furtune Gubetini
		Jona Maliqi
		Erblina Gashi
		Art Konushevci
		Lina Jusufi
		Arber Cadraku
		Gramos Sejdiu
14:40 - 15:20	Meeting with graduates	-
15:20 - 16:00	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	**Augusto Ferrero** – Florida State University, USA **Marzena Zakowska**- War Studies University, Warsaw **Giuseppe Morabito** –NATO Defence Foundation College, Rome **Giorgio Battisti** – International Institute of Humanitarian Law, Sanremo. **Shaip Osmani**- HR at KSF, Prishtina **Khalid Khalif** – Linchopin University, Sweden **Naim Dedushaj** – Albanian-American association, Vatra **Ylber Kryeziu** – Diplomat of Republic of Kosovo **Besnik Tahiri** – Politician in the Republic of Kosovo **Franz Kok** – Salzburg University, Austria
16:00 - 16:10	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
16:10 - 16:20	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

1.2. A brief overview of the programme under evaluation

UBT College aims to offer competitive programs based on the demands of the national labour market and international practices. The program "MA in Security Studies" is designed to produce highly qualified security policy specialists relevant to Kosovo's national security apparatus, civil service, NGO and local and international developmental agencies. The program is based on similar programs implemented abroad, as explained later in the evaluation report. Still, it corresponds

to the needs of Kosovo, where improvements in how security policies are devised and implemented are needed to achieve high level of national security, as well as better public services to the citizens of Kosovo. Undoubtedly, such a profile of graduates is needed in any country. This program fills this gap and is the only such master's program in Kosovo, according to the students, the UBT management and academic staff. It also strongly emphasizes internationalization, not only through contacts and collaboration with other universities and researchers, but also through student exchange. The program "MA in Security Policy" engages staff from various fields, such as security studies, political science, economics and management, law, technology, and public health. This ensures high level of interdisciplinarity and complementarity. The duration of the program (4 semesters with corresponding 120 ECTS credits) is appropriate for deepening students' knowledge in security studies and leading to their specialization.

2.PROGRAMME EVALUATION

2.1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION

The mission of the MA in Security Studies is to provide advanced education in security in a student-focused, research-oriented, and intellectually stimulating environment. The program aims to prepare professionals who can address local and regional challenges, contribute to democratic development and support effective governance. The UBT College's mission promotes "a dynamic and innovative 21st-century academic environment", which, among others, includes: teaching and research excellence, intellectual interaction and creativity, contribution to increasing skill base, knowledge, and experience, and work on all these goals and activities through the inclusive participation of management, academic staff, students and the community.

UBT views itself as a preeminent intellectual centre in Kosovo and envisages that this programme, having as it does a focus on security studies that encompasses the region, is in a position to serve the area with important contributions to knowledge and research. The panel consider that the work to recruit international students will also support these efforts and recognises that this represents a unique program for the region.

The panel found that the program's learning outcomes align with the institutional mission and strategy. The syllabus demonstrates that there is an emphasis on critically assessing international security phenomena, developing in-depth knowledge of the historical and geopolitical importance of the Balkans in the context of global security and evaluating the contribution of international institutions in addressing security issues. Such learning outcomes align with the institutional mission to educate and prepare professionals capable of meeting modern challenges. There is also a strong focus on learning outcomes concerned with research, which again aligns with the institutional mission to produce impactful research. UBT have benefited from involvement in the TEMPUS project that encouraged the process of curriculum development based on learning outcomes and research guided teaching in the private higher education institutions of Kosovo.

The institution provided the panel with a documented needs analysis pertaining to the program and students from comparable programmes at the institution, including at the bachelor's level, spoke of their intent to study the Master's program subject to successful accreditation. The panel therefore found clear and demonstrable evidence of the need for these programmes. Though it cautions that the projected student numbers (50) are ambitious and may not be easily attained in the initial stages of delivery.

The institution has yet to decide at which campus the program will be delivered. Given the likely profile of the student body, it may be at the city centre campus in Prishtina. While the panel did not visit this site, the facilities that it did see, including auditoriums, the library, computer labs and social learning spaces were high-quality and sufficient for successful delivery of the program.

The MA Security Studies study program at UBT College follows strict procedures to address plagiarism, academic dishonesty, and discrimination, as outlined in UBT's Code of Ethics, which promotes integrity, responsibility, and academic freedom. The Faculty Ethics Sub-Committee handles complaints related to ethical violations, with appeals directed to UBT's central Ethics Committee. Turnitin plagiarism detection software is used to ensure academic originality. The current Code of Ethics does not reference artificial intelligence (AI). However

the use of AI is regulated by the Generative Artificial Intelligence Use Policy Framework that was approved in 2024 and explicit addresses how staff should integrate AI into teaching and learning activities and monitor its use in relation to assessment. Despite the clear and comprehensive Framework, not all staff appeared conversant with its requirements.

In addition to the Code of Ethics, a Plagiarism Prevention Policy is in place with clearly specified penalties that are dependent on the year of study but include repeating the course and expulsion at the more severe end of the spectrum. The program is yet to commence and therefore there have been no instances of academic misconduct to date.

However, the program syllabus makes clear references to the expected ethical standards for each course. For example, the course for Balkans Secuity states that all mid-term and final exams must be completed independently without the use of unauthorized materials or collaboration, and that cheating, such as using external aids, copying from others, or any form of misconduct during the exams, will result in immediate failure of the exam and further disciplinary actions. Students from comparable programs are also familiar with the regulations and penalties, providing the panel with confidence that rules are clearly communicated and enforced.

The roles of the UBT Ethics Committee and Faculty Ethics Sub-Commitee are clear in discharging responsibilities for addressing allegations of academic misconduct. When an issue arises, a formal complaint can be submitted by any member of the academic community. The case is then reviewed by the Sub-Committee, which gathers evidence, hears testimonies, and applies appropriate penalties based on the Code of Ethics.

The program is not yet in operation and as such it does not have data to collate and analyse in relation to program implementation. However, the institution has processes in place to ensure that relevant data is captured and considered by program teams in collaboration by students and, where appropriate made publicly available.

UBT complies with Kosovo's Law No. 06/L-082 on Protection of Personal Data. The law mandates that personal data must be processed lawfully, transparently, and only for specific, legitimate purposes. UBT ensures compliance by implementing a robust data protection framework that protects student privacy during the delivery of its study programs. The institution limits data collection to necessary information, ensures data accuracy, and stores personal data only as long as required. The institution's data processing activities are monitored by a designated Data Protection Officer (DPO) within the Data Protection Office.

UBT has an Administrative and Budgetary Support Policy that the institution considers ensures that the MA Security Studies program has sufficient resources for its operations and growth. It establishes procedures for maintaining adequate staffing (Article 2) and conducting annual staff evaluations (Article 3), while providing ongoing training and development opportunities (Article 4). The policy outlines how the program receives its annual budget (Article 5), the process for conducting a financial review to ensure financial health (Article 6), and the use of contingency funds for unexpected expenses (Article 7). The institution also informed the panel that an annual review of the policy ensures its effectiveness and incorporates feedback from stakeholders. Nevertheless, as discussed above, the panel considers that the projected student numbers are ambitious and that UBT should take this into account when considering the budgetary support required for initial program implementation.

The MA Security Studies program at UBT College is supported by an administrative structure that includes a Dean, Vice-Dean, Program Coordinator, and Quality Officer. This team ensures that the teaching and learning needs of both students and academic staff are fully met. The Dean oversees the strategic direction and ensures alignment with institutional goals, while the

Program Director manages the daily academic operations, including curriculum implementation and faculty support. The Program Coordinator assists in scheduling, student inquiries, and the organization of academic activities. The Quality Officer is responsible for monitoring and maintaining the standards of the program, ensuring continuous improvement through qualty assurance processes. The panel considers that these arrangements, which are supplemented by other institutional support services, are adequate for the intended provision.

Administrative staff benefit from a Professional Development Plan designed to enhance their skills and ensure their effectiveness in supporting the program's delivery. This plan includes annual training sessions on topics such as academic support services, student engagement, and budget management, ensuring that they remain up-to-date with best practices. Staff also receive support to attend relevant workshops and conferences and can access mentoring. Furthermore, staff receive language training from the UBT Institute of Language Studies and have attended sessions on plagiarism detection and emotional intelligence in the last 12 months.

As this is a new accreditation there are no recommendations for quality improvement of the study program from previous internal and external quality assurance procedures to be implemented.

ET recommendations:

1. Ensure that the institution's Code of Ethics and detection systems take account of the risks posed by Artificial Intelligence (AI)
2. Develop budget scenarios in the event that the program fails to secure 50 enrolled students

2.2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

UBT was established over two decades ago and has had a significant period to adapt its institutional framework, which is constantly evolving, in line with national regulations and international standards. Meetings have been held, especially with the faculty management and quality assurance representatives, to ensure that the QA system is comprehensive and complex. Key elements such as the QA manual, internal quality assurance standards and procedures in line with KAA are in place.

A particular aspect of this MA study programme was addressed in multiple meetings during the study visit: it is the first programme of its kind in the Kosovo higher education system.

Concerning *Standard 2.1.*, UBT has established at the level of the Faculty of Political Science an internal QA system which is in line with national regulations and other international standards. This system is structured around a comprehensive Quality Assurance Manual, which outlines the procedures for achieving excellence in teaching, learning, research and institutional management, as described in SER (pp. 30-31). The Faculty's Quality Sub-Committee oversees the continuous evaluation and enhancement of academic programs. Input from stakeholders, including students, alumni, academic staff and industry representatives, is systematically integrated into program updates and quality development strategies. The QA system is further supported by regular self-assessment mechanisms, such as student course evaluations, semester and annual program reviews, and targeted surveys. These contribute to a dynamic and responsive feedback loop for ongoing improvement (*Indicator 2.1.1*).

As outlined above, the study program will follow a QA framework encompassing all facets of program delivery, including instruction, academic support, research activities and administrative services. This framework supports the ongoing enhancement of the program and the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, in line with national and global benchmarks. The Quality Assurance Manual is publicly accessible via the following link, demonstrating a high level of transparency (*Indicator 2.1.2*).

- https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Quality-Assurance-Manual-UBT_branch-included.pdf

Based on the official provisions of UBT on quality assurance, the study program will form part of the internal QA procedures defined in the Quality Assurance Manual. More broadly, the internal quality assurance mechanisms align with ESG 2015, ISO 9001:2015, and the Kosovo Law on Higher Education. Both staff and students are aware of the provisions of the internal QA system that apply daily and will apply to the future MA study program (***Indicator 2.1.3***).

The UBT Quality Assurance Manual states that Quality Assurance Officers are appointed at faculty and branch levels, as well as a central Quality Manager (Articles 6.9 and 6.10). According to the same document, these QA officers are responsible for overseeing the monitoring and evaluation of study programs, preparing self-evaluation reports, ensuring alignment with institutional standards and coordinating with the central QA Office. Furthermore, they work with the Quality Manager on all aspects of quality monitoring and reporting. The MA in Security Studies at UBT is supported by a dedicated Quality Assurance Coordinator, Samire Sadiku. She has been formally appointed to oversee all aspects of the program's quality assurance. Notably, she has no teaching responsibilities, although she is listed as with the grade of assistant within the QA sub-commission for the program, enabling her to focus entirely on quality-related tasks such as monitoring, reporting and coordination (*Indicator 2.1.4*).

The UBT Quality Assurance Manual clarifies what internal QA system must do to follow the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle as it follows:

1. Plan
   - The annual planning process is guided by the strategic goals and involves the setting of performance indicators (Article 3.1).
   - QA activities are embedded in strategic and operational plans at institutional and faculty levels.
2. Do
   - Quality assurance procedures are implemented across program design, teaching, assessment, staff development, student services and infrastructure (Article 5).
   - These are regularly monitored by QA Officers and Sub-Committees (Articles 6.6–6.10).
3. Check
   - Ongoing internal evaluations, student surveys, alumni feedback, course evaluations, annual reports, and periodic institutional audits (Articles 5.3, 5.4, 8, 9).
   - Self-evaluation reports and external assessments are used to measure effectiveness and outcomes.
4. Act
   - Evaluation results are discussed at faculty and institutional levels, leading to the formulation and implementation of improvement measures (Articles 6.6 and 9).
   - QA bodies (the Faculty QA Sub-Committee and the QA Commission) are responsible for proposing and overseeing corrective actions.

In response to our request for additional annexes, the faculty sent us the *Annual Monitoring of Action Plan for Quality Improvement 2024–25* and *Quality Improvement Plan 2024–25*. For instance, the latter document includes some clearly defined objectives and tasks, such as enhancing interactivity, improving teaching clarity and increasing punctuality in terms of planning. In terms of implementation, planned activities are to be carried out through organised workshops, technology integration, enhanced teaching strategies, mentorship structures and revised course practices (e.g. role plays, case studies and assessment reforms). Regarding monitoring, the plan emphasises periodic evaluation and reporting on the completion and effectiveness of actions taken (e.g. syllabus alignment, assessment guideline alignment, and student participation tracking). The QA sub-committee monitors outcomes, with follow-up reporting and verification of impact (e.g. student engagement in research).

Although it seems to be a robust system, we must emphasise that some of the content in the action and improvement plans is rather optimistic. While the documents are in place and references were made during the meetings, the plans do not appear to be fully anchored in the financial and human capital investment of the faculty, or the HEI required for fulfilment. It is of the utmost importance to determine which goals can be achieved through faculty efforts alone and where further institutional support is required (*Indicator 2.1.5*).

Finally, as previously mentioned, the Faculty of Political Science has a monitoring plan in place for the implementation of QA assurance procedures, as outlined in the 2024–2025 Quality Improvement Monitoring Plan. Specific quality areas are to be addressed, along with concrete annual actions and actors. The Faculty Quality Assurance Sub-Committee, chaired by Samire Sadiku, is responsible for coordinating periodic evaluation and reporting mechanisms. However, not all feedback mechanisms were addressed for the MA in Security Studies program, such as alumni surveys and labour market representative feedback. However, it should be noted that, as this is a program undergoing new accreditation, such tools will be considered during future monitoring (*Indicator 2.1.6*).

About Standard 2.2, the study program underwent a thorough quality assurance process, as set out in the UBT Quality Assurance Manual. A program design and development process were in place to ensure the alignment of the MA in Security Studies with UBT's mission and strategic goals. During meetings with UBT management and faculty, as well as with the program holders of the study program, the QA representatives outlined that the program addresses compliance with the institutional mission and clearly identified needs in the local community, public sector, and labour market. The curriculum is explicitly designed to provide students with access, mobility and progression opportunities, while ensuring alignment with available human and physical resources. This is also reflected in SER (pp. 32–34) (*Indicator 2.2.1*).

The here evaluated study program has passed according to the SER (pp. 33-34) through a design and approval process that consisted in:

- A multi-stage internal review led by the Faculty and submitted to the Academic Council.
- Evaluation of the proposed learning outcomes against European frameworks and national standards, ensuring appropriateness in terms of academic depth and professional relevance.

The program does demonstrate a commitment to academic quality and student achievement. Furthermore, according to the HEI's provisions in terms of QA, and based on the aspects addressed in the SER (pp. 33–34) and meetings with various institutional stakeholders, the ongoing monitoring of the program of study will entail:

- regular review of teaching practices and student feedback.

- evaluation of syllabi through blind peer review.
- monitoring of student progression and engagement.
- annual reporting on staff development and research outputs.
- active use of alumni and employer feedback to inform revisions.

In addition, the study program will undergo a comprehensive evaluation every three years as part of the accreditation process. This will include a self-evaluation report prepared by a designated committee comprising faculty members, students, alumni, administrative staff and external stakeholders. The review will address the relevance of the curriculum, student outcomes, graduate employability and societal impact.

As mentioned in SER (p. 34), both UBT and the Faculty of Political Science have demonstrated their institutional maturity by participating in international initiatives, such as the TEMPUS LO@HEI project. Through this project, academic staff received training in designing and evaluating learning outcomes, thereby strengthening UBT's capacity to develop programs based on evidence, reflection and global best practice (*Indicator 2.2.2*).

During the study visit, the QA representatives we met emphasised that they meet with labour market representatives before starting a program. SER also mentioned input from stakeholders, including students, alumni, industry representatives and external experts. Although the discussion with selected employers of graduates and external stakeholders reflected the importance of the study program, it also highlighted that they had not been consulted regarding the design of this MA program. However, they expressed a willingness to cooperate in this respect in future. It should be noted that, due to some schedule changes, not all of the initially invited stakeholders could attend the meeting, so a complete picture cannot be provided. Students do not seem to be actively involved in the process either, but they expressed their willingness to participate in program design and emphasised the need for such an MA study program (*Indicator 2.2.3*).

There is sufficient evidence that KPIs are addressed within the Faculty of Political Science. For example, the 2024–25 Quality Improvement Plan outlines specific KPIs for monitoring the quality of program delivery. These include: (1) engagement metrics, such as a 20% increase in student participation via interactive tools like polls, quizzes and discussion forums; (2) feedback metrics, such as a 15% improvement in student feedback on teaching clarity; (3) punctuality metrics, such as achieving a 90% faculty punctuality rate; and (4) mentorship and peer-review coverage. After accreditation, it expected that the faculty will apply the same system, as indicated within SER (pp. 35) (*Indicator 2.2.4*).

Regarding *Standard 2.3*, it is important to note that the study program will be accredited within a HEI that is committed to quality and relevance. This HEI formally aligns with ESG 1.9 through an internal monitoring and review process. The most important aspect is that the program seems to address the societal needs of BA graduates from the same field of study at UBT; however, it also has the potential to benefit graduates from other HEIs, including those outside Kosovo. While the program appears to address labour market demands, the requested student quota seems excessive given the current labour market situation in Kosovo, where youth unemployment reached 19.5% in 2024 and is gradually increasing, although it remains far below the 2014 peak of 61%. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the stakeholders and staff emphasised the need for specialists trained in Kosovo, as such experts are often invited from abroad.

Furthermore, it is expected that the study program will benefit from the expertise of leading national and international specialists in security studies and public policy. The curriculum was developed with the critical input of experts such as Lieutenant General Giorgio Battisti or

General Giuseppe Morabito (SER pp. 36-37). Their insights will emphasise their competencies in related topics and could be integrated into the final program structure (*Indicator 2.3.1*).

The study program will undergo systematic internal checks to ensure that the estimated student workload, expressed in ECTS credits, and the defined learning outcomes are balanced, realistic and achievable. In line with national and European guidelines, one ECTS credit corresponds to 25 hours of student effort, including all types of learning activity (lectures, reading, assignments, independent study and assessment preparation). No complaints from actual students were made regarding this topic.

According to SER (pp. 37–38), the study program was designed from the outset based on the principle of constructive alignment, as defined by Biggs and Tang (2015), to ensure consistency between the intended learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. The course learning outcomes (CLOs) were vertically aligned with the program learning outcomes (PLOs), and their number and cognitive complexity were calibrated against the total expected workload for each course. This ensures that students can realistically achieve the expected competencies within the assigned timeframe and academic semester. The study program undergoes regular monitoring to assess its relevance to societal needs (for example, surveys of employers on necessary competencies in the labour market, analyses carried out in cooperation with stakeholders, and improvements to the study program based on stakeholder feedback) (*Indicator 2.3.2*).

Based on the SER (p. 38), various annexes and meetings with different stakeholders, we can conclude that the MA in Security Studies at UBT will take an inclusive and participatory approach to quality monitoring. This approach will engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders via structured feedback mechanisms. These mechanisms include questionnaires, focus group discussions, alumni surveys, and employer consultations. One of the most important aspects is that the legal and practical foundations for a genuine participatory model that can facilitate real-time feedback are in place.

While we are confident in this approach, we must caution the faculty representatives that both alumni feedback and employer insights are necessary for updating and improving the study program. A good starting point is that industry and academic leaders such as Augusto Ferrero, Angela Mai, Marzena Zakowska and Khalid Khayati have been involved in developing curriculum content addressing current governance, security and public administration challenges, albeit not for this particular study program. We expect their input to continue contributing to adjustments in the program's orientation towards research, evidence-based policymaking and international political trends (*Indicator 2.3.3.*).

Based on the SER (p. 39) and considering insights from study visit meetings, it can be concluded that UBT has developed a legal framework for structured and recurring stakeholder engagement practices using institutional questionnaires targeting students, academic staff, alumni and employers. These instruments appear to be integral to the university's internal quality assurance system, providing evidence-based insights to inform program development, curriculum updates and teaching practices.

The Annual Faculty Quality Report summarises the results of these questionnaires and forms the basis of the Quality Improvement Plan, which is developed and formally approved by the Faculty's Quality Assurance Sub-Committee. Implementation of the plan is then monitored throughout the academic year, with outcomes published in a monitoring report. Together, these documents ensure that stakeholder feedback is collected and used systematically to enhance the quality and relevance of the study program.

For example, the Faculty of Political Science has provided publicly available evidence of this process:

- Annual Quality Report 2024–2025 - https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Annual-Quaality-PS-Report-2024-2025.pdf
- Quality Improvement Plan 2024–2025: https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Quality-Improvement-Plan-2024-2025.pdf
- Annual Monitoring of Action Plan for Quality Improvement 2024-2025: https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Monitoring-Plan-for-Quality-Improvement-Plan-2024-2023-PS-.pdf

Although the MA in Security Studies is still undergoing accreditation and obviously has not yet completed its first full cycle of surveys, it is fully integrated into the institutional framework and will benefit from it. The necessary mechanisms, templates and personnel are in place to ensure that, from its first full academic year, the program will adhere to the same cycle of data collection, analysis, planning and monitoring (*Indicator 2.3.4, Indicator 2.3.5*).

During the study visit, we observed that both internal structures and faculty staff analysed the collected information and took concrete actions to ensure that the study program could be updated. We will not emphasise again that there are provisions and proof that feedback is systematically collected from various stakeholders. Rather, we would like to emphasise the importance of carrying out these processes as a genuine quality generator rather than simply ticking another QA box (*Indicator 2.3.6*).

At this point, as the study program is not accredited, we shall consider the fact that the monitoring and action plans are publicly available on UBT website to be sufficient. As SER (p. 40) states that these are sent to all stakeholders (*Indicator 2.3.7*).

The first aspect of *Standard 2.4* implies that the HEI makes all policies, regulations and guidelines pertaining to the study program publicly available. Based on the SER (p. 41) and after searching the Faculty of Political Science website (https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/faculties/political-science/), we can conclude that the current provisions regarding the MA in Security Studies program is that it will act transparent, regularly updated and accessible to the public, and is in compliance with ESG 1.8. The institution has made its key academic regulations and quality assurance documentation publicly available in English on its official website, allowing students, staff and external stakeholders to easily access essential information at any time. The following core documents are publicly accessible:

- Regulation on Student assessment - https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/8-41-V2-Rregullore-per-vleresimin-e-studenteve-Eng.pdf
- Quality Assurance Manual - https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/UBT-Quality-Manual.pdf
- Guideline for Syllabus Development and Review - https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Manueli-per-syllabus-2020.pdf

UBT do reflect that policies, regulations and guidelines pertaining to the study program are publicly available (*Indicator 2.4.1*).

At this point, information on admission criteria, recognition of qualifications, enrolment quotas, syllabuses, learning outcomes, credits, assessment methods and final qualifications (*Indicator 2.4.2*) and information on pass rates, dropout rates and graduate employment (*Indicator 2.4.3*) are not publicly available in an objective manner as the study program is undergoing its initial accreditation process.

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Lastly, based on the information provided through SER and after searching UBT and the Faculty of Political Science at UBT, we can conclude that there is enough publicly available information on the study program. It seems that the institution does update it on a regular basis (*Indicator 2.4.4*).

ET recommendations:

1. Take stakeholder involvement into greater consideration when initiating an accreditation or reaccreditation.
2. Create a dedicated section on the faculty website for publishing QA related documents, such as annual reports, improvement plans or monitoring reports.
3. Track and report on the percentage of course syllabuses revised each year and link changes to the source of feedback, where applicable.
4. Conduct detailed studies on the transition to the labour market and propose measures to increase employability rates, with a focus on ensuring that students' skills, knowledge and qualifications are adequate.
5. Develop (or extend) partnerships with national and international institutions to create more work placement opportunities, including those abroad.

2.3. ACADEMIC STAFF

The HEI has clear, objective, and transparent processes for staff recruitment and employment conditions as outlined in the Staff Handbook. Recruitment is initiated through the Program Director or Head of Department, followed by the formation of a Search Committee composed of faculty members and HR representatives. Job vacancies are widely advertised, including on the institution's website, as confirmed by employees. The Search Committee reviews applications and conducts interviews based on predefined criteria. The final decision is made by the Management Board after committee recommendations. The panel found that these arrangements were clear, transparent and well understood by staff.

UBT have established advancement criteria according to academic rank and Search Committees ensure that these are understood and applied, and that new academic staff can meet the requisite milestones associated with promotion. The institution has an active target that 95% of staff will be promoted to Assistant Professor. The self-evaluation report identifies several new hires with appropriate profiles and track records of research publications.

Each role benefits from position descriptions and person specifications. Staff are provided copies of these, together with the Employee Handbook and offered an Orientation Course, as part of their induction, conducted by the General Secretary of UBT.

The panel met several new staff who confirmed that induction was thorough, and they understood their responsibilities.

All courses are assigned a course leader who is a tenured academic with an appropriate academic title. Currently, 10 Assistant Professors are scheduled to teach on the programme. The panel determined that staff have appropriate field expertise with PhDs ranging from political science and international relations to national security and information systems, for the staff leading cybersecurity courses. The program could also consider engaging staff, including visiting staff with degrees in war studies and security studies.

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The panel confirmed that the Assistant Professors teaching the program only have one full-time teaching position at UBT. Staff are clear about their contractual obligations to the institution. UBT restrict teaching hours to a maximum of 8 hours per week per semester or 16 per annum. Data confirms that this limit is adhered to for the MA Security Studies program. Although the institution makes use of part-time, external staff in the delivery of the program, each course is assigned to a full-time employee on an employment contract, so students have a consistent point of reference and visiting staff have support when delivering their part of any course.

The program has a total of 180 ECTS and therefore the established staffing ratio exceeds the required threshold of one full-time staff member with a PhD, or equivalent, per 60 ECTS. The student-staff ratio (SSR) is also more favourable than the required 1:30 threshold. However, even considering the institution's projected intake, attrition modelling and the panel's observations regarding the likelihood of such an intake. The expert panel considers that the institution needs to closely monitor staffing levels and the SSR to ensure that students receive appropriate and equitable access to support, including tutorials.

The Law on Labour Relations of Kosovo specifies that full-time staff should work 40 hours per week. Accordingly, the program staff is full time and according to the contract they must do 40 hours of work (teaching, preparation for teaching, research, administration, and community service).

Notwithstanding the comments above about the possibility to involve more staff in the program with a disciplinary background in security and war studies, according to the courses listed in the syllabi, staff have suitable qualifications and backgrounds according to the subjects they teach. The list of staff publications includes articles relating to the war in Ukraine, the Taliban, comparative articles regarding citizen soldiers, including in Kosovo, NATO intervention. However, staff involved in the program have published more broadly including on business and economics, social policy and education. The panel considers that the volume of recent publications that intrinsically links to security studies should become a focus area for the program.

The program has a workload allocation model that includes suitable distribution of teaching, mentoring, preparation, research, administration and community contribution. Given staff responsibilities, including for other courses and the previous comments regarding the need to ensure appropriate and accessible support and mentoring. The panel encourages the institution to closely monitor the impact of the workload model on the program's inception. Especially since the institution's own modelling indicates that 9 mentors will support 35 students in the final semester and that these mentors have wider institutional responsibilities.

The process for advancing a professor into higher academic titles follows a structured approach, starting with a call for applications approved by the Academic Council, and involves the submission of a comprehensive application that includes personal details, CV, a bibliography of published works, and evidence of pedagogical qualifications. The applications are reviewed by an Academic Staff Election Committee, which is composed of members from both the central and faculty levels. The committee's recommendation is then forwarded to the Academic Council for final approval through a majority vote. These arrangements are codified in the Regulation on Standards for Election into Higher Academic Titles.

The criteria for promoting academic staff to higher grades is clear, structured and documented, including the pathway from lecturer to Senior Lecturer up to Professor with an indefinite term. These criteria reference research publications in WoS and Scopus, teaching and research experience, as well as thesis supervision. The process engages student feedback and external

engagement. In addition to student feedback through course evaluation, UBT use management and peer evaluations to inform promotions.

The institution has an annual operational plan for the professional development of academic staff, which is grounded in the long-term staff development strategy of the faculty. The Faculty of Political Science has a defined strategic goal focused on the advancement and development of its academic staff. This strategic goal emphasizes the importance of elevating full-time academic staff to higher academic titles, enhancing research capacity, and supporting both early and mid-career faculty members. The five-year staff development plan for 2024-2029 outlines a comprehensive approach to achieving these objectives by providing targeted support through mentorship, research opportunities, and leadership training.

The annual professional development plan for 2024-2025 details the specific activities, including language training provided by the Institute of Language Studies,

In addition to involvement in the TEMPUS project, the institution has an operative Guideline for Constructive Alignment of Learning Outcomes with Teaching Activity and Assessment Methods and Guidelines for Student Assessment. These guidelines provide detailed instructions and examples regarding how to design assessments that effectively measure student learning outcomes, including the use of rubrics, multiple assessors, and pair assignment comparisons. UBT delivered a workshop on assessment techniques in March 2024, and again in November 2024. Staff confirmed to the panel that they found the training beneficial. Further to the sessions on assessment and constructive alignment, the institution also delivered a workshop on Effective Mentoring of Theses in May 2024.

Staff are encouraged to participate in international engagement in different forms, and staff provided the panel with examples of collaborative research and participation in various networks pertaining to security. The panel found that although new hires and staff new to teaching in higher education undergo induction prior to teaching, there is a lack of formal preparatory programs or qualifications to ensure staff are effectively prepared to teach at higher education level. Though the panel recognizes that the initial One Day Induction Course provides a helpful general overview about teaching for UBT and this is supplemented by various departmental workshops. In relation to research, staff can access support in writing research proposals from the Project's Office.

The institution provided the panel with a list of external associates it envisaged would teach on the program. However, the panel found that at least one member of staff listed was now on a permanent employment contract and others spoken to during interviews at the site visit were not clear about their likely teaching responsibilities. The panel recommends that the institution address this level of understanding regarding involvement. Nevertheless, the panel found that external associates receive appropriate support, guidance and induction to commence their teaching responsibilities when engaged as visiting lecturers. This includes a training session titled Introduction to Higher Education Teaching Methods and Practices for Industry Associates that was held on 17 September 2024. External associates are responsible primarily for the practical parts of the courses, with a maximum of 2 hours per week dedicated to exercises in the case studies in Security Studies and a further 0.3 hours for thesis supervision. The external associates identified have significant international and security experience, including in Kosovo and the wider region. Although thesis supervision is yet to commence UBT have also identified possible supervisors from among their external associates.

ET recommendations:

1. Consider engaging academic staff, including visiting staff, with PhD in security studies and war studies.
2. Ensure that staff involved in delivery of the program are actively engaged in current research focused on security studies and with relevance to the courses they teach.
3. Closely monitor the impact of staff workload on mentoring and other responsibilities at the onset of the program
4. Establish more formal preparation for teaching programs to supplement induction for staff new to teaching in higher education
5. Ensure that staff identified as external associates teaching on the program are clear about their involvement and adequately prepared.

2.4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT

The curriculum for the MA program "Security Studies" covers a relatively broad range of qualifications and skills required to work in public, private and civil society sector. The study program is modelled on qualification objectives and is truly interdisciplinary. Students can learn key theoretical and practical concepts from political science, in various fields such as public policy, political economy, international relations, political theory, as well as methodology and research. Hence, the program covers all key branches of political science and allows students to simultaneously expand and deepen their knowledge, leading to their future specialization in the chosen scientific field. Besides, students can also build upon their existing transversal skills such as problem solving, communication, interpersonal and organisational skills. During meetings held with students, professors and external stakeholders, on 12th of May, it was stated on multiple occasions by various actors that other programs implemented at the UBT put a lot of emphasis on students-centred learning which revolves around providing them with necessary presentations and communications skills. Organising workshops, topical discussions and individual presentations constitutes an important value-added. Hence, it is logical to expect that the same body of professors and researchers will be able to transfer the best practices from the existing BA programs in the newly launched MA programs.

In terms of Standard 4.1. the program meets and offers multiple Professional Learning Opportunities (PLO). It is rooted in the robust theoretical base of knowledge, upon which necessary empirical and practical research skills are being layered. Students are being prepared to understand complex topics and problems from an interdisciplinary perspective. They are being offered skills which are essential for policy analysis. Course syllabi show that active student engagement is being encouraged and expected, as multiple courses require students to orally present their projects or actively engage with the designated study material. An important aspect of the study process is to foster open and evidence-based debate culture, which prepares students to think critically. There is a clear vision to foster collaborative and leadership-oriented work culture. This can be inferred from the "Annex", page 30 and 33. The document mentions the plan to form Joint Working Groups, to pool resources with other faculties, as well as the intention that Faculty Research Council assists working groups in the Faculty, to create strategies for multiple research projects with external funding that the Faculty aims to attract.

One can agree with the claim that the program offers plenty of comparative knowledge of national political processes and policies in key domains, as well as that it offers critical skills on key issues or political challenges across fields of study. The conducted analysis of course

syllabi shows that multiple fields of security studies are being addressed and covered within the program. We can point out to courses such as: Energy Security, Environmental Security, Migration Security, Critical Infrastructure Protection, Transnational Organized Crime, Information Management and Info Security, Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism, etc. Hence, there is constant emphasis on developing an in-depth view of contemporary security problems, with clear intention to link global security issues with the ones facing Kosovo.

The program's clear goal is to offer students direct and practical experience in the field of security studies through internships. There is a separate and mandatory course "Internship". The course's goal is to put students for 15 weeks in a professional setting which will equip them with strong communicative, collaborative and practical skills. The course Internship has an official mentor – professor Arian Kadriu. The SER claims that the UBT has signed cooperation agreements with over 200 partners. Some of them are: Ministry of Diaspora, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the Agency for Private Sector Development. Municipality of Ferizaj, Municipality of Lipjan, Municipality of Vushtrri, Ministry of Health, Kosovo Centre for Security Studies, Group for Legal and Political Studies, Public Broadcaster, Parliament of Kosovo, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of EU integration, Ministry of Public Administration. The Career Center facilitates the process of coordination between students and partnership institutions.

There is only one illogical spot in the course syllabus, namely, that grading consists of "20% Mid-Term and 20% Final Exam". This is not in line with the ECTS workload, as stipulated in the same syllabus. Students are also required to master relevant courses for conducting independent research. "Statistics and Data Analyses in Security Studies" and "Advanced Research Methods" are two courses that fit this description well. While the course syllabi are satisfactory, we propose some additional recommendations. To enhance the quality of the methodological classes we recommend including "The Fundamentals of Political Science Research" by Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten to the syllabus covering the course „Advanced Research Methods". This book very intuitively and elegantly explains fundamental concepts in political science and pairs them with quantitative methods most frequently used in research. For the course „Statistics and Data Analyses in Political Science" it would be highly recommendable to refresh the literature a bit with newer editions and books, e.g. "R for Political Data Science: A Practical Guide" by Francisco Urdinez and Andres Cruz, which represents a one-stop-shop equipping students with critical knowledge on how to use R software. The great advantage of this book is that it contains practical cases and precise instructions on how to execute code.

Unfortunately, the study program has some weak spots in terms of ensuring reporting accuracy on the program's structure. E.g. pages 96 and 97 of the SER state that methodological courses listed above carry 6 ECTS points. However, when cross-checking this information with the course syllabi, one sees some discrepancies. Namely, the course "Advanced Research Methods" is stated to carry 5 ECTS points in the course syllabus, as opposed to info provided in the SER.

When analysing the course syllabi one can conclude that educational process content meets the following goals: 1. It provides students with an encompassing approach to the study of security studies for the post-graduate level; 2. Supports individual choice and independence in education; 3. Enhances critical thinking and analytical abilities; 4. Develops transnational and comparative perspectives; 5. Promotes interdisciplinary perspective; 6. Advances professional development and implementation; 7. Cultivates Ethical and Civic Accountability

The program is adapted for the development purposes of Kosovo state, while it enables students to better grasp the contemporary security issues beyond borders of the Kosovo state. The course

list incorporates courses dedicated to the security of Kosovo, regional and global security. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on independent learning and professional development There is ample evidence of constructive alignment of program learning outcomes with course learning outcomes.

Nevertheless, there are still several courses which need significant update in terms of bibliography in the coming period, which should be checked during the first re-accreditation. E.g. courses such as "Contemporary Issues in International Security" and "Advanced Concepts in Security Studies", "Arms Control and Non-Proliferation" and "Security and Human Rights" and "Critical Infrastructure Protection", "Defence Policy and Military Strategy", "Migration Security" and "Terrorism and Counterterrorism" have quite outdated books in the syllabi. It is appropriate to use some older books and editions but if all key books are older than a decade, especially for a course which covers a very dynamic field. Additionally, some courses such as "Economic tools of National Security" are very thin on the literature covering key issues in geoeconomics, as well as economy-security nexus.

As this is a program which undergoes the initial accreditation, the PLOs are not publicly available at UBT's website. However, a sister program implemented at UBT, "MA in Public Policy and Management" offers a proof that UBT College can ensure the fulfilment of this indicator. More information can be retrieved from the following hyperlink: https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/faculties/public-policy-and-management/. In sum, the program's structure and its mission clearly align with UBT's strategic focus, the imperatives of the labor market in Kosovo and learning needs of students. Most PLOs are linked with appropriate learning activities, assessment methods, and assessment criteria, ensuring they are practical and aligned with the overall goals of the program. Relevant knowledge, skills and competencies are put on display in the course syllabi. Academic staff CVs also offer sufficient guarantee that the program will be able to deliver on its core promises. One additional caveat is that all course syllabi should have contact address of lecturers and information on who oversees every single course.

The program is comparable with similar study programs at other European Higher Educations Institutions (HEI): Corvinus University (Institute of Social and Political Science); University of Hamburg and University College London. This could be checked by accessing the hyperlinks provided in the SER (pp. 68).

In terms of Standard 4.2. one can agree that the intended learning outcomes comply with the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework, which corresponds to the Level 7, as established by the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The program is composed of 4 semesters and carries in total 120 ECTS points (30 per semester). However, there is one unresolved issue in the SER (pages 96 and 97), and it refers to the inconsistency in the number of hours (lectures and seminars) in the first two semesters, as opposed to the third semester. In the first two semesters the ratio is 2:1, and in the third semester the ratio is 2:2, even though courses carry the same number of ECTS points. This merits an additional need for coordination in preparing for the future SER.

Based on careful checking of the course syllabi there is a reasonable expectation that the study program executed at the graduate level constitutes a significant value-added compared to the existing BA in Security Studies. Intended learning outcomes differ from the learning outcomes achieved at the undergraduate level and more emphasis is being put on developing practical and problem-solving skills, as well as on independent research (especially via internship and two methodological courses). The role of the fourth semester is crucial in that regard and comes as a final milestone to be reached on students' academic journey. In sum, unwelcome redundancy is being avoided with the program's established structure.

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Standard 4.3. make sure that all courses within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies. The expert team agrees on those points, based on all the info provided before, during and after the study visit on 12th of May 2025. The program enables smooth progression through studies for students, regardless of their potential differences in terms of their social science background, as some of the enrolled students won't have prior experience with security studies at BA level. It is praiseworthy that the program offers several course covering geoeconomic and political economy topics that are relevant from the security point of view, such as "Economic tools of National Security" and "Energy Security".

The rules defining students' progression through the program courses ensure that the learning outcomes build upon each other consistently. Core disciplines of the study field are well-aligned with the curriculum of the program. This was ensured by hosting two workshops on Constructive Alignment and Curriculum Mapping (in November and March 2023) for all study programs, including the proposed program "MA in Security Studies". More information can be retrieved by clicking the link: https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-successfully-conducted-a-comprehensive-workshop-on-constructive-alignment-of-learning-outcomes/. In sum, one can agree with the statement that the study program's learning outcomes are formulated clearly, precisely, and comprehensively according to the best practices. They fit with the UBT's stated academic mission and strategic goals, as elaborated clearly in the UBT's Faculty of Political Science Strategy 2022-2027.

Standard 4.4. requires that the study program is compatible with prescribed conditions defined in EU Directives. The SER states on page 74: *Although a portion of the program might help one enter a licensed teaching profession at the preuniversity education level, it does not result in a regulated profession. There is no EU directive relevant to the program in consideration.*

When designing the program's structure, the program's management formally obeyed the indicator which postulates that it must consider and apply the recommendations issued by professional associations and other external stakeholders. There are several state and non-state institutions mentioned in the SER (pp. 74). However, during the meeting with external stakeholders one could infer that lip service had been paid to the issue of formal consultations before the accreditation as one could not identify a specific contribution which was incorporated into the proposed program. In the future one should include concrete examples of opinions solicited on behalf of professional associations and how they are addressed.

When it comes to the Standard 4.5 "The Regulation on Compulsory Practice at UBT College" outlines the expectations and procedures for professional traineeships, emphasizing the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical application. Students with prior experience of working in the security establishment may be exempted from having to undergo internship training. It comes as contradictory that the SER (pp. 75) states that although the "MA program in Security Studies" does not impose a mandatory practical component, while at the same time the syllabus for the course "Internship" labels the course as mandatory. Furthermore, this can be also inferred from the document titled "UBT College Regulations on Compulsory Practice", retrieved from the hyperlink: https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Regulation-on-compulsory-practise-UBT.pdf . All important aspects of practical learning are mentioned in the document: the mentor in charge, responsibility of individual student to seek potential partner institution (facilitated by the College and its networks of professional contacts), internship plan, supervision and final assessment of the work done by a trainee.

In terms of Standard 4.6. the SER states that the study program has a ratio of 60 % to 40 % between theory and practice (pp. 78). This was corroborated during the study visit, in

discussions with the program's management, academic staff and students. The program offers lectures, seminars, workshops, case studies, simulations, field work, and participation in collaborative projects. Finally, the cornerstone of student-centred learning is the final thesis and thesis seminar which carry in total 21 ECTS (15+6).

Various didactic techniques are used to create a stimulating learning environment. All these combined delivers interactive learning, research-based learning encourages the development of problem-solving skills and fosters the emergence of creative and critical thinking, as described in the Guideline for Constructive Alignment of College UBT. The evaluators also cross-checked course syllabi and can confirm that almost all courses put strong emphasis on writing and presentations skills. Besides, many courses require a delivery of concrete research or case studies by enrolled students (e.g. "Balkans Security", "Energy Security"). Several courses such as "Geopolitics and Security in the 21st Century", "Critical Infrastructure Protection" and "Globalization and Intelligence Issues" provide students with the opportunity to engage in role play as an especially stimulating research experience. Overall, great care is taken of the continuous need for adaptation of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). The revisions are scheduled every three years. Meanwhile, annual evaluation and adaptation of teaching methods is conducted every year. However, more written proof of this should be offered in future re-accreditations.

After reviewing the SER for "MA in Security Studies" and conducting multiple meetings with students and members of the academic staff one can generally agree with the statement that 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. All course syllabi are pretty much standardized but still need some additional "polishing". Namely, there is some mess to be found in multiple citation styles covering academic literature, different font sizes even within single syllabus, some literature units do not contain information on the publisher or the year when the book/article was published, etc. There is some room for improvement beyond fulfilling the basic formal criteria. First and foremost, every single syllabus should contain more detailed provisions on how key topics for every week of classes are related to academic literature (mandatory and obligatory). Hence, every week of classes should be paired with corresponding literature on the topics covered for the future re-accreditation. This provides clarity for students on which book chapters or journal articles they are expected to read for a seminar class every week. Finally, all syllabi lack necessary information in the section „Contact". Students should be able to retrieve lecturer's e-mail from the syllabus. Sections "Course Lecturer", "Course Assistant" and "Course Tutor" should not be left blank.

One important distinction between the presented program, in comparison to other programs in Kosovo and wider region, is to be found in strong commitment to ensuring that teaching methods are adapted to support a diverse student population on demand (part time students, mature students, international students, students with learning difficulties and disabilities). This is primarily ensured by a more flexible schedule (afternoon or end of the week lectures). However, the most important part to this objective is the use of the Moodle platform which allows students to stay up to date, even when they are forced by *force majeure* to skip the weekly classes. The program is still in its infancy, and it is too early to judge how well does it caters to the needs of international students, as there are none. However, more courses in English are recommendable in the future.

The delivery of the study program is ensured with modern technology and facilities. Digitization is achieved through Student Management Information System (SMIS) and Moodle

(as elaborated in the Annex). SMIS allows students to track their course completion, choose course electives, make tuition fee payments and apply for examinations. On the other hand, Moodle enables direct and fast communication between professors and students, which is essential for disseminating course materials and conveying crucial information on obligations and examinations.

Page 84 and 85 of the SER stipulates: *The Faculty's facilities include an information desk, offices for academic staff and administrative support, a library dedicated to security studies, a photocopy office, an information technology office, a simulation exercise room, a career centre, a student centre, UBT Stats, UBT Radio Campus, and the Centre for Transfer of Technology (CTT), which is a division of the UBT College's Institute for Innovation and Enterprise Development (RIED).* During online meetings and organized tours through UBT's facilities this statement can be confirmed. EBSCO HOST, IMF, Cambridge Magazines, JSTOR, and other digital e-libraries are mentioned as sources of scientific literature available to students and professors. It is recommended in the coming 2-3 years to expand the coverage with the inclusion cutting-edge sources, such as Taylor Francis, Wiley or SAGE, to expand the range of opportunities put on full display to both students and academic staff.

For the most part, the SER accurately describes the relation between the overall intended learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) and the contribution made by respective courses in the curriculum. Namely, there is a mismatch between PLOs mentioned in the SER (pages 86-88) and PLOs in course syllabi. E.g. on page 86 of the SER for the course "Contemporary Threats to National Security" there is only one PLO identified (PLO4), while the syllabus for the course identifies PLO1, PLO3, PLO4, PLO6 and PLO10.

The document titled "Guideline on Constructive Alignment of Learning Outcomes with Learning Activity and Assessment Methods" ensures that assessment methodologies are systematically designed to assess course learning outcomes. There are also annual workshops for the academic staff, which were held in November 2023 and March 2024 (as documentable per the hyperlink (SER, pp. 88). Pages 88-92 clearly stipulate ECTS points, course learning outcomes, mapped program learning outcomes, teaching methods, required study and assessment hours.

The assessment criteria and methods, as well as grading criteria for the study program, are published in advance and all students are informed about it. Guidelines for Student Assessment of UBT is accessible via the hyperlink: https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Guidelines-for-Student-Assessment-UBT-College.pdf . Grading is organized on a scale from 0-100, whereby 50 constitute the minimum threshold for passing the course. It balances professional autonomy with due process and respectable treatment of assessed counterparties, i.e. students. Table on page 94 of the SER also defines what constitutes the case of a timely feedback from professors when students' work is being assessed. The applications and examination procedure are administered using the Student Management Information System (SMIS). Professors and students are obliged to comply with academic principles and the UBT Code of Ethics. Any violation of the principles is referred to by the Faculty Ethics Sub-Committee, which is composed of three members of the academic staff and one representative of the students (data provided in the Annex).

Students are also granted the right to appeal grading, and the process is structured and streamlined. Vice Dean for Teaching and Learning and Examination Board appointed by the Dean play crucial roles in the process. The workload is properly calculated and ECTS assigned to all learning activities. This ensures that program learning outcomes align with the learning outcomes of the program components. The expert team was able to check the course syllabi

and validate that the indicators were satisfied. It is good practice that students are familiarized with their rights and obligations, as evidenced from the three links to

● The student handbook is available online at: https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Handbook-for-student-alb.pdf

● The regulation for student appeals at HEI UBT College is available online at: https://www.ubt-uni.net/sq/ubt/per-ubt/politikat-rregulloret/

● The disciplinary procedure regulation at UBT College is available online at: https://www.ubt-uni.net/sq/ubt/per-ubt/politikat-rregulloret/

After considering everything which was previously one can conclude that the program under accreditation fulfils 7 out of 7 standards in the section which covers "Educational process content."

ET recommendations:

1.Establish and enable students' full utilization of internship opportunities
2.Ensure high standards of reporting on the signed internship agreements with partner institution and provide concrete evidence of implemented internships on a case-by-case basis
3. Streamline all course syllabi in terms of formal requirements complying with the best standards of academic writing
4. More precision is needed in pinpointing PLOs stated in the SER with PLOs mentioned in course syllabi
5. More accuracy and responsibility in writing the SER (multiple cases when the list of content set at the beginning of the document does not correspond with page numbers at a later stage)
6. Improved documentation delivery (e.g. the UBT delivered on 11 CVs but it states in the SER that the program is implemented by 19 full-time academic staff members)
7. Modernize literature in several courses identified in the assessment above

2.5. STUDENTS

In relation to Standard 5.1, although no admissions were processed for the proposed program of study, the requirements and criteria proposed by UBT for the MA in Security Studies are those that are formally applied to all its programs of study. These reflect Article 29 of the Law on Higher Education, as well as further internal rules set by the Faculty Council.

Based on the provided website (https://www.ubt-uni.net/sq/studimi/programet-master/), it is evident that the criteria for both national and international students are transparent and accessible online. Essentially, applicants must have passed the Matura exam and completed BA studies successfully. The focus is on candidates who possess the appropriate prior academic background and foundational competencies. It remains unclear whether students from unrelated fields are required to demonstrate additional competencies or complete bridging coursework, but it seems that the faculty is open to a broad selection of candidates who demonstrate a willingness to study on this MA program (*Indicator 5.1.1, Indicator 5.1.2.*).

In addition to the above, UBT and the Faculty of Political Science have a clear and structured admissions process for the MA program, which is to be accredited. We would like to emphasise once again that, in theory, it is designed to ensure the selection of candidates with the most suitable academic backgrounds. Admission criteria include a minimum GPA of 8.5 for domestic

applicants, and a GPA equivalence mechanism is in place for international applicants to standardise assessment. Overall, it seems that UBT has accommodated a range of applicant profiles while maintaining academic standards.

The call for enrolment is approved by the Academic Council of UBT and publicly announced, including details of the requirements for each accredited program. Applications are submitted through an online system afterwards. These are reviewed by the program director, who prepares a shortlist of candidates. Final approval is given by the Faculty Council, which introduces an additional layer of institutional oversight and accountability.

Another relevant aspect is the transfer of students. Based on SER (pp. 97–98), UBT has addressed Article 34, Item 5 of the Law on the KAA, which states that at least 70% of the content must be similar between the original and target programs for credit transfer to be permitted. A Faculty Sub-Committee is responsible for evaluating submitted transcripts and course descriptions to ensure alignment with learning outcomes and ECTS (*Indicator 5.1.3*).

Regarding the admission criteria and process, there are several aspects that contribute to fair and non-discriminatory admissions at UBT College. The MA in Security Studies program will follow this institutional framework. The most important admission criteria are a minimum GPA of 3.5 and completion of prior studies, primarily the BA in this case. As mentioned above, there is formal recognition of diplomas and GPA equivalence for international candidates, ensuring that applicants are evaluated based on comparable academic standards regardless of their country of origin (*Indicator 5.1.4*).

According to SER (p. 98), formal legal procedures have been established for recognition and periods of study within UBT. A period has been designated for the recognition of prior studies that will also apply to the MA in Security Studies program. Additionally, it is emphasised that UBT applies Article 34, Item 5 of the Law on the KAA, which stipulates that transfer is permissible only from programs sharing at least 70% content similarity with the destination program. This is also addressed in Article 7 of the UBT Regulation for the second cycle of studies.

In this sense, the Faculty Transfer Sub-Committee, established by the Dean, plays an important role. The committee assesses transcripts and course descriptions to determine their alignment with the program to which the student wishes to transfer. Transfer applicants are informed of the designated application windows: 20–25 September for the winter semester and 23–28 February for the summer semester (*Indicator 5.1.5*).

In relation to Standard 5.2, UBT has established a system for monitoring students' progress, which is described in SER (pp. 99). During various meetings, it was repeatedly emphasised that not only is the educational process student-centred, but additional processes within UBT are too. According to the quoted part in SER, UBT has established a system for monitoring academic progress that seeks to improve retention, performance, and timely graduation. Proof of the presence of continuous assessment tools within HEI is evident, including examinations, assignments and project performance. As previously mentioned, the 2024-25 Quality Improvement Plan includes specific KPIs that monitor engagement, feedback and punctuality metrics.

Both teachers and SER mentioned that signs of academic underperformance are identified early and tackled through the following: (1) one-to-one academic advising; (2) exam preparation sessions; (3) tutoring through course mentors; and (4) peer-to-peer learning programs, where high-performing students help those who struggle. Additional data could not be provided as this is a newly proposed program (*Indicator 5.2.1*).

According to SER (p. 99), UBT aligns with ESG 1.4 regarding monitoring student progression and completion rates. Although a complex system is depicted that includes course pass rates, GPA trends and year-on-year progression, as well as retention after critical transition points such as the first and second years, such a large amount of data is difficult to process. Both academic staff and students referred to the following: (1) tutoring and peer mentoring; (2) reduced course loads; (3) exam preparation sessions; (4) curricular adjustments for courses with high failure rates; and (5) enhanced promotion of student support services. Students also emphasised that the faculty is flexible towards them if they are in employment (*Indicator 5.2.2*).

UBT has the means in place to disseminate the results of the regular monitoring of students' progress. Although accreditation of the MA in Security Studies is pending, UBT representatives emphasised that there are multiple communication channels through which this kind of information can be disseminated, including faculty meetings, email and the Moodle platform. This information can be found in SER (pp. 100). However, we strongly recommend implementing an individualised progress report concerning GPA trends and credit accumulation in relation to their peers. Also, although the PDGA philosophy encourages feedback and improvement loops, it is unclear how the referenced data will be used to make improvements. While faculty staff and teachers have emphasised the importance of student feedback, it is also important to provide feedback to students regarding their academic performance (*Indicator 5.2.3*).

Although the higher education system in Kosovo is relatively new, opportunities to progress to PhD studies are limited. The proposed MA in Security Studies at UBT offers interdisciplinary flexibility, indicating that graduates could undertake further study in advanced fields such as real estate, urban planning, or infrastructure management. Alternatively, they could enter the public, private, or civil society sectors. However, the programme itself seems to be designed to improve the skills of existing professionals in Kosovo. Therefore, for a significant number of applicants, it could represent a further step in their education after completing prior studies. Nevertheless, we would like to express our concerns regarding the mismatch in field alignment. Although interdisciplinary mobility is highly needed, it is yet to be clarified how such graduates could progress to real estate or infrastructure management. We would also recommend providing more clarity regarding the qualification KQF and programme outcomes. Although these issues were addressed in the SER (pp. 17–19), the formal portability of the qualification still need to be clarified (*Indicator 5.2.4*).

The proposed study programme appears to align with policies that facilitate the transfer and recognition of prior qualifications. It includes certified learning experiences from institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo and European Union bodies. This is particularly relevant for students who have received prior training or gained experience in diplomacy, international relations or public administration (*Indicator 5.2.5*).

Based on SER (p. 100) and staff meetings, internationalisation seemed to be addressed as a priority. In addition, it was mentioned that there are mobility opportunities available through structured programmes such as Erasmus+ KA171, as well as a wide network of over 400 partner universities via Memoranda of Understanding. Nevertheless, of the additional information received, only 22 students have participated in study mobility in recent years: 2020/21 (7), 2021/22 (11) and 2022/23 (4). All of them were BA degree students. Although UBT emphasises that calls for applications are regularly published, it is evident that this is a general process where the eligibility criteria are disseminated. There was no evidence of programme-specific promotion, which is reflected in the low number of outgoing students from UBT (*Indicator 5.3.1*).

Furthermore, the SER (p. 101) states that the Office of International Cooperation (OIC) comprises a director and four officers. The office's primary objective is to encourage students to participate in international mobility programmes. The office provides individual guidance and administrative support to students, including assistance with the following: (1) understanding eligibility criteria and deadlines, (2) preparing applications, (3) preparing, facilitating and signing Learning Agreements, and (4) ensuring ECTS recognition and academic reintegration upon return. Despite the positive aspects of such a structure, there is an area for further consideration. For instance, it is unclear how the effectiveness of the support system is measured, or how disaggregated data on student mobility participation or those who wish to attend but do not is collected. The low number of applicants could also be linked to the need for improved academic promotion and encouragement of students to apply for such opportunities (*Indicator 5.3.2*).

UBT has a legal framework for recognising ECTS credits that is consistent with national legislation and the academic standards of higher education institutions (HEIs). This is based on Article 209 of the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo, which states that ECTS credits will be recognised if the corresponding courses demonstrate at least 70% similarity in terms of content, learning outcomes and objectives (*Indicator 5.3.3*).

Although the MA in Security Studies has not yet been launched, UBT generally demonstrates an institutional commitment to multilingual transparency, with key information and admission procedures published in English. For example, UBT has provided a BA programme in Political Science - https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/study/bachelor-programs/political-science/ (*Indicator 5.3.4*).

It is unclear how UBT attracts foreign students and supports them while they are studying in Kosovo. Although UBT and its staff emphasised that there is an institutional commitment to attracting and supporting foreign students, primarily through the activities of its Office for International Cooperation, this was not reflected in the provided documents. While we understand that the OIC has engaged in international cooperation by managing 34 active Erasmus+ K171 mobility projects and maintaining memoranda of understanding with over 400 partner universities, it is unclear how this relates to actively attracting foreign students, particularly given that faculty representatives expressed their hope to attract international students to this particular programme of study (*Indicator 5.3.5*).

UBT offers foreign language courses to international students through its Institute of Language Studies, which is coordinated by Mr. Halil Bashota (*Indicator 5.3.6*).

No clear elements besides the theoretical framework for collecting and analysing feedback from national and international students to improve international exchange were provided. The OIC is responsible for monitoring a Quality Improvement Plan based on the collected data, as this plan differs from the one approved at faculty level. No further evidence was provided (*Indicator 5.3.7*).

UBT cannot provide information on the number of students enrolled in the study programme who participated in international mobility for periods of up to three months or more than three months within the last five years (incoming and outgoing mobility), as the accreditation is new (*Indicator 5.3.8*).

Regarding Standard 5.4, UBT emphasises that it has an adequate number of staff to support students. The main department responsible for this is the Student Support Department, consisting of 20 members who provide daily assistance and guidance to students across all academic units. It is expected to provide further support for MA Security Students students as well. Another designated structure in this respect is the Careers Office, which has a team of

five staff members who address the important issue of preparing students for the labour market. It covers aspects such as career counselling, internship placement support and employability training (SER, p. 102) (*Indicator 5.4.1*).

Based on the information provided in SER (pp. 102–103) and following the meeting with the students, it can be concluded that the students usually receive an information package and have access to orientation services. In addition to these sessions, academic staff seem willing to provide insights on the academic calendar, course structure, assessment system, student rights and responsibilities, and support services. Furthermore, UBT makes some of the most relevant institutional regulations easily accessible on its website:

- **Study Regulation**: https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Regulation-_first-study-cycle.pdf
- **Regulation on Student Assessment**: https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/8-41-V2-Rregullore-per-vleresimin-e-studenteve-Eng.pdf
- **Quality Assurance Manual**:
- https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/UBT-Quality-Manual.pdf
- **Student Handbook (Rights and Obligations)**: https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Handbook-for-student-Eng.pdf
- **Statute of the Student Organization**: https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Statute-of-Students-Union.pdf
- **Convention on Student Rights and Responsibilities** (e.g., Peja Branch Branch):
- https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Convention-on-Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities-Branch-Peja.pdf

The information is accessible, but it is unclear whether all students are systematically guided through these resources or if their engagement with them is monitored. We would like to suggest that it would be beneficial for all students, including those on the MA programme, to receive a structured follow-up after orientation to reinforce their understanding (*Indicator 5.4.2*).

UBT has set up a basic mechanism to support students in their academic journey and career planning. Yet, although the current situation seems functional, there is room for improvement in terms of coherence and programme-level customisation. As the Career Office is the central unit offering job placement support, it seems that the faculty staff deliver more in terms of professional guidance than the office itself. Although there is clearly a strong dialogue between the faculty and relevant stakeholders such as political/administrative institutions or international organisations, more targeted interventions are needed to enforce a more tailored approach and reduce the generic approach (*Indicator 5.4.3*).

UBT has established formal procedures for handling academic appeals and complaints. Designated mechanisms were developed to address disputes on grading and assessment practices, as well as broader academic concerns. Students who believe that they have been given an unfair grade or that institutional regulations have been violated have the right to submit a written objection to the Vice Dean for Teaching and Learning within 36 hours of receiving the grade. The Vice Dean must respond within 24 hours. If the appeal is deemed valid, the student may retake the exam in front of an independent Examination Board comprising three academic staff members. This introduces a degree of impartiality and academic oversight, which is essential to maintaining trust in the process.

In cases where a student fails an exam more than three times, a similar mechanism enables them to take a final attempt before the Examination Board. Unresolved issues can be escalated beyond this to the UBT Appeals Committee, which will issue a final decision on the matter.

Students can submit general academic or institutional complaints (e.g. issues with teaching quality, course delivery or administrative treatment) to the Academic Appeals Sub-Committee, which broadens the scope of redress available (*Indicator 5.4.4*).

Based on SER (pp. 103–104), UBT emphasised that it provides an extracurricular environment that actively encourages student engagement. According to the report, a wide range of cultural, academic and recreational activities, including exhibitions, galleries, concerts, sports clubs, moot court competitions and architectural showcases, are regularly hosted on campus. After an in-depth search of the institutional portal (https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/home/) — especially the news section (only available in English) — we can conclude that there is a strong commitment to hosting events and activities for student development. Although institutional means are clearly available, it is unclear to what extent students are systematically informed about these opportunities, especially incoming or international students, if the case (*Indicator 5.4.5*).

ET recommendations:

1. Develop an internationalisation strategy at faculty level that addresses potential recruitment targets for international students, partnerships with relevant higher education institutions (HEIs) or research institutions, joint actions with the latter, and mobility opportunities within the MA programme, including financial support.
2. Increase extracurricular or academic activities in English (or another international language).
3. Collect and publish data on international student enrolment in the annual quality reports.
4. Facilitate student participation in international conferences, security simulations (e.g. NATO crisis simulations and EU security briefings) and policy competitions focusing on defence, strategic studies and conflict resolution, by providing dedicated funding, academic mentoring and institutional partnerships with relevant international organisations and think tanks.
5. Continue and enhance orientation programmes and maintain strong financial support.
6. Address potential disadvantaged students by considering their individual circumstances and providing appropriate support.

2.6. RESEARCH

The study program has a rather defined set of scientific/applied research objectives, which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution. Pages 27-33 of the Annex provide insight into "The Research Strategy Plan 2024-2028". On page 29 there is a description of key research topics which the UBT College plans to cover in the coming period such as: corruption, international relations, power and conflict, security policies, etc. However, one should provide a more detailed overview of key research priorities per each academic staff member. They are set quite generic and do not ensure necessary coherence and synergy. Finally, there is a document titled „UBT RESEARCH STRATEGY", which can be accessed via the following hyperlink: https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UBT-Research-Strategy-.pdf.

This document is much richer and extensive. It provides more info on the research resources and on internationalization. Hence, when writing a future SER, one must clearly stipulate what is the latest valid strategy and integrate documents in one overarching strategic document which is easy to read and use.

Despite these inconsistencies one can say that each member of the academic staff is obliged to develop individual research plan that must conform with research objectives and research performance indicators foreseen by the Research Strategy Plan of the UBT. They are obliged to do so by The Research Strategy Plan 2022-2027. Research Strategy firmly establishes 12 strategic goals, and several measurable results tied with every strategic goal. Those results cover: research income from international projects, contract research, consulting and grants; number of publications per staff member per year; number of publications in Web of Science per staff member per year; number of publications in SCOPUS per staff member per year; number of publications in EBSCO, WorldCat, and DOAJ per staff member per year; number of professors benefiting from Lead and Young Scholar Program; number of research cooperation projects with the industry.

The implementation of the study program is ensured through sufficient financial, logistic, and human resources. Financial resources cover salary increases when staff members make advancements, support for publications of monographs and special incentives/remuneration for researchers who publish in respectable journals index in Q1 and/or Q2 in Web of Science or Scopus. Remuneration of 1000 EUR for the lead author and 800 EUR for other authors acts as a reasonable financial carrot. Human resources encompass 19 full-time academic staff members engaged in the "MA Program in Political Science", with additional 11 visiting lecturers. All academic staff and visiting lecturers hold PhD degree. Guest lecturers are often invited to deliver their unique perspective outside of the academia. By cross-checking academic staff CVs one can see their publication track record. In total, they display plenty of competences to participate in the program execution.

However, table on page 107 of the SER does not provide basic numerator and denominator for the calculated ratios of publications per staff member, to check for the accuracy of provided data. Furthermore, there is a high likelihood that ratios do not add up, as the figures in table are the same as for the "MA in Security Studies", with a slightly different academic staff set-up. This kind of errors should be strictly avoided in future re-accreditations. A separate, standardized and numerated document should be created with all staff members and their publications over the last three years, to allow for easier monitoring.

Logistic resources bring together efforts to enhance professional development. This is done primarily by workshops focused on research methodology and publication strategies. UBT also offers shared research facilities and support staff to enhance interdisciplinary political science approach. On page 14 and 15 of the UBT Strategy there are several important facilities listed: Institutes, Centres of Excellence and multiple Research Labs (https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UBT-Research-Strategy-.pdf). All of them create an enticing research eco-system. Finally, every single year there is Annual UBT Conference which gathers students and researchers, from both inside and outside the UBT, and serves as a good networking event with positive scientific spillover.

As stated on page 107 of the SER: The program validates research outputs through publications in the UBT Conference, peer-reviewed books, and articles in journals recognized by the Academic Council of UBT. Additionally, publications indexed in Clarivate, Scopus, EBSCO, DOAJ, and World Cat are also recognized. This conforms to the widely used standards at other European HEI, to measure scientific output of researchers. In a discussion with academic staff expert team got the impression how important is to publish in Web of Science or Scopus-indexed journals, as key metrics for successful research internationalization. However, one should update Regulation on Research and Scientific Work of College UBT, which dates to 2019 and includes things written in the SER, The Research Strategy Plan 2024-2028 and other documents.

In sum, despite some reporting issues, one can still conclude that the program conforms to Standard 6.1. which assesses whether the study program aligns with the institution's/academic unit's mission and the research strategic goals

In terms of the following Standard 6.2. there is a Regulation on Standards for Election into Higher Academic Titles at UBT which mandates that: *academic staff must accumulate 80 points through publications in recognized databases such as Web of Science or SCOPUS. This includes being a first or corresponding author on a set number of articles—five publications for Full Professors and three publications for Associate Professors, with a portion of these publications being recent (within the last five years), and one publication in SCOPUS or WoS indexed journal for Assistant Professor* (pp. 109, SER). Furthermore, the remaining 20 points are collected from activities such as: *publishing in non-indexed journals, participating in consultancy projects, or engaging in professional activities. These contribute to the total 100 points required under the quantitative criteria for promotion* (pp. 111, SER). The aforementioned information can be found in the Regulations on Standards to Election into Higher Academic Titles (https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Regulation-on-Standards-to-Election-into-Higher-Academic-Titles-UBT-2.pdf).

The expert team randomly checked available Google Scholar and ORCID profiles and found that all the selected publications are published under the name of the institution under evaluation. There are several iterations of the name but in all of them the name of the UBT is clearly recognizable: UBT Higher Education Institution Kosovo, UBT University of Prishtina or Department of Political Science, University for Business & Technology, Prishtina, Kosovo. However, for the sake of additional clarity one should set in place a policy which obliges all teaching staff members to use the same name for the institution when updating their Google Scholar profiles and publishing future research. There are multiple name versions as of this writing: UBT College, University for Business and Technology, UBT – Higher Education Institution.

Finally, one can notice that research impact of researchers gradually grows (as measured by their Google Scholar citations) but there is still large concentration of citations in one single person, Prof. Ridvan Peshkopia holds more than 50% out of roughly 580 Google Scholar citations, accumulated by all academic members engaged in the implementation of the program under accreditation.

Regarding Standard 6.3. academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program at UBT is for the most part not sufficiently encouraged to participate in different aspects of cooperation with national and international partners, or at least the standards of reporting in the SER do not allow for this conclusion. Explanation for this claim shall be provided in the following passages. The UBT Strategy lists a separate section titled „Research International Cooperation" (pp. 21-26). Unfortunately, projects described in this section were implemented long time ago (some more than 10 years ago). There is dearth of data or evidence which shows participation in recently finished or existing projects.

Some statements such as the one claiming that UBT collaborates with the University of Cambridge within the newly founded Cambridge Public Policy Simulation Lab cannot be verified. The provided hyperlink does not work and does not convey necessary information to be verified, which was also the case during the previous re-accreditation of another study program.

The same can be said of a project which ostensibly secured funding from the Western Balkans Fund. The hyperlink provided does not work and leads to LinkedIn and not the website which contains all the necessary information on the purpose and duration of the project (pp. 111).

According to the formal UBT document "Regulation on Research Work and Publications, all UBT academic staff must participate in research and publish their research work in the UBT journal. In addition, all publications are posted in the platform Knowledge Centre: https://knowledgecenter.ubt-uni.net/ . By clicking upon the provided hyperlink one can observe that conferences have been held since 2012 and proceedings have been posted on the UBT website.

When it comes to academic mobility, there is scant evidence that it is functioning smoothly and at a satisfactory level. Namely, data in the additional document provided after the study visit, as requested on behalf of expert team, are not convincing. Namely, delivered Excel file titled "Outgoing – Incoming Staff and Students" lists many names which are not part of the program (outgoing mobility of academic staff). Besides, there is small likelihood that out of 12 different outgoing mobilities each of them neatly and consecutively aligns with a number on the scale from one week to twelve (weeks of duration). Furthermore, all student mobilities are registered with one university (University of Salzburg) and there is no information on duration. Additionally, there are no incoming student mobilities at all.

In a separate document titled "SHIELD short description", delivered on request of the expert team after the study visit, there is insufficient description of implemented projects and their financial footprint. Already the title of the document raises doubts as the documents should reflect the list of all projects in which the UBT participates (regarding the engagement of Faculty of Political Science). The project titled "SHIELD – United for Cyber Safety" is one of the key projects mentioned there. However, there is no info pertained to it on the UBT's website. Furthermore, there are no data provided on the amount of funding allocated to UBT and expert team members could find info on the project only indirectly, by looking at the website of the partner institution in Latvia, EKA University of Applied Sciences, (https://www.augstskola.lv/?parent=628&lng=eng#gsc.tab=0).

The collaborative research undertakings of academic staff of the program with other colleagues from other HEIs in the country or abroad is demonstrated on pages 113 and 114 of the SER. However, reporting on academic mobility is presented poorly, without precise evidence for both incoming and outgoing mobility, both on behalf of professors and students. Despite the claim on page 112 that *the teaching staff engaged in the study program is supported to cooperate with local business partners through joint research projects, cooperative strategies for development, and shared use of equipment when it is possible* one cannot find concrete set of evidence such as scanned agreements or hyperlinks. The same can be said of the claim that teaching staff engaged in the study program is involved in technology transfer and cooperation to transfer knowledge with the industry and public sector. There are not links and documents added to the accreditation package which would make this claim verifiable.

Standard 6.4. checks whether the teaching staff engaged in the study program has a proven record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity. By looking at their Google Scholar and ORCID profiles one can mostly agree with this claim. The expert team checked whether academic staff members regularly publish scientific papers and arrived at conclusion that this is the case (by looking into academic staff Google Scholar and ORCID profiles). Still, after carefully reviewing delivered documents and triangulating them with publicly available data on Google Scholar and ORCID the expert team is of the opinion that some lecturers do not have enough publications on research topics pertained to courses which they teach (International Political Economy, US Foreign Policy, Foreign Policy of Russia and China, Political Communication in the Digital Area, Political Leadership). One could not do the check for Professor Arian Kadriu and his courses, as he does not have a valid Google Scholar profile.

Students are actively engaged in participating in research projects. The SER provides at least 3 examples of joint scientific publications, written by both academic staff and students and multiple. There are also examples of joint conference participation. Alfred Marleku and Ridvan Peshkopia published research with students in SCOPUS-indexed journals such as "European Politics and Society", "Revista UNISCI/UNISCI Journal" and "The International Journal of Human Rights".

Finally, "Action Plan for Implementation of Strategy of UBT Political Science Faculty 2024-2028" sets very ambitious targets such as to participate in research projects with serious foreign and domestic research institutions (outcome 3.1., pp. 11 of the Annex) with the target of obtaining external funding to the tune of 500.000 EUR. However, those figures are not aligned-well with projected revenues 2025-2028 for the "MA in Security Studies" (pp. 121, SER).

After careful analysis one arrives at conclusion that the program "MA in Security Studies" under accreditation fulfils 3 out of 4 standards in the sections which covers Research.

ET recommendations:

1. Ensure that all members of the teaching staff adhere to the requirement of publishing at least one article per year which is not published in UBT-issued journals
2. Ensure that Google Scholar citations are not so concentrated on one member of the academic staff
3. Ensure that all lecturers publish on topics pertained to their courses as several lecturers do not fit this description
4. Ensure that all faculty members have an academic ID to provide more exposure for the university, and its faculty members (Research Gate, Academia, and LinkedIn). Some still do not have Google Scholar profiles
5. Improve financial planning so that planned amounts specified in programs and Faculty's strategy align
6. Enhance incoming and outgoing academic mobility, especially of longer duration (at least a week), to both disseminate and to pick up best academic practices from abroad
7. Student mobility with only one University and without duration raises doubts about the functioning and reporting on a given issue
8. Improve reporting on the collaborative activities with the industry on your website and ensure that more content is available in English with the goal of internationalization

2.7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

UBT has high quality facilities at its campuses in Lipjan and Prishtina. While the self-evaluation states that Lipjan will be the site of the program delivery, the panel were informed during the site visit that the campus and rooms for delivery of the MA Security Studies has not yet been determined. Nevertheless, the Lipjan Campus has high-quality lecture rooms and auditoriums, computer laps for up to 100 machines, and suitable audio-visual equipment. The institution has licensed software, available for students with the necessary data collection and analysis packages, including SPSS, Microsoft Project and R-Coding. The tour during the site visit, together with student feedback, confirms that the space, equipment, and infrastructure are fully functional and capable to cater for the intended number of students that will be enrolled in the program.

UBT's libraries across its campuses house over 10,000 books, including a dedicated stock of around 560 books related to Political Science, Diplomacy, Security Studies, and Public Policies. These books are supported by access to electronic databases like JSTOR, SAGE Journals, EBSCO, and others, providing students and staff with access to thousands of academic papers and research articles. If the program is run at the Prishtina Campus, students from the MA Security Studies will be able to request that books are delivered to the Prishtina Campus. The library also has 100 reading seats for students to use in a quiet space. In addition, 90 seats are available in group workrooms.

The budget of the program envisages a total +income of 122,500 in 2025, rising to 205,000 in 2027. The budget provides for income from student fees, consulting services, contract research and training related to security studies. Despite this, the panel did not find evidence of an established and credible plan that demonstrates how the program will raise the anticipated income from consulting, contract research and training services. Instead, this requires focus and prioritization from the program team to ensure it is realized.

ET recommendations:

1. Confirm the precise location and facilities from with the program will be delivered
2. Develop a comprehensive and credible plan to realize the anticipated income from consulting, contract research and training services.

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT TEAM

The Expert Team considers that the study program MA in "Security Studies", offered by UBT College in Prishtina is *fully compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual and* Regulation (KAA) No. 04/2024 for the Manual of Accreditation/Reaccreditation and Validation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programs at the Bachelor's and Master's Level. It is assessed that the program is fully compliant in 5 standards and substantially compliant with 2 standards.

Standard	Compliance level
1. Mission, objectives and administration	Fully compliant (100%)
2. Quality management	Fully compliant (100%)
3. Academic staff	Fully compliant (100%)
4. Educational process content	Fully compliant (100%)
5. Students	Substantially compliant (75%)
6. Research	Substantially compliant (75%)
7. Infrastructure and resources	Fully compliant (100%)
Overall compliance	**Fully compliant**

Therefore, the Expert Team recommends accrediting the UBT's MA in "Security Studies" study program (UBT) for a duration of **3 (three) years** and to enroll **50** students.

Expert Team

Member

(Signature)	**Prof. Dr. Matthew Kitching**	(05.06.2025)
	(Print Name)	

Member

(Signature)	**Prof. Dr. Kristijan Kotarski**	(05.06.2024)
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