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UNIVERSITY HAXHI ZEKA
Faculty of Agribusiness

Sustainable Food Production Systems, Msc.

REACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM



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March, 2024, Peja

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit:

29.02.2024 on-site visit

Expert Team (ET) members:

- o Dr. Jasna Novak*
- o Jadranka Pelikan, Student Expert*
- o Dr.KyriakiZinoviadou*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- o IlirjanaAdemaj Ahmeti, KAA Officer*
- o Arianit Krasniqi, KAA Officer*

Sources of information for the Report:

- o Self-evaluating report (SER) Information obtained during meetings with a) the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated, b) quality assurance representatives and administrative staff, c) the heads of the study programme, d) teaching staff, e) students, f) graduates and g) employers of graduates and external stakeholders*
- o Syllabus*
- o Staff CVs*
- o Annexes*
- o The KAA (re)accreditation manual*

Criteria used for program evaluation:



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

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

Abbreviations

EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ET	Expert team
HEI	Higher Education Institution
KAA	Kosovo Accreditation Agency
OFQA	Office for Quality Assurance
SER	Self-evaluation report
SWOT	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
UHZ	University "Haxhi Zeka"

1.2. Site visit schedule

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:30 – 10:15	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	
10.15 – 10.55	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	
11:00 – 12:00	Meeting with the heads of the study programme	Agim Rysha Kastriot Pehlivani Astrit Bilalli
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch break	-
13:00 – 13.40	Visiting Facilities	
13:40 – 14:20	Meeting with teaching staff	
14:25 – 15:05	Meeting with students	
15:10 – 15:50	Meeting with graduates	

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15:55 – 16:35	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	
16:35 – 16:45	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
16:45 – 16:55	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

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

University "Haxhi Zeka" (UHZ) was formally established in 2011 during a period when Kosovo aimed to advance higher education and expand study opportunities for students in Kosovo and the region. Haxhi Zeka University, a public institution in Kosovo, currently boasts 2857 students, 5 faculties, and 16 study programs.

The study programs follow the Bologna system, with three-year programs totaling 180 ECTS, four-year programs with 240 ECTS at the Bachelor level, and two-year programs with 120 ECTS, along with one-year programs comprising 60 ECTS. The institution's mission emphasizes UHZ's role as an academic entity dedicated to transferring knowledge, realizing students' potential for the dynamic labor market, fostering scientific research, artistic activity, internationalization, and contributing to the economic development of the Peja region and the country.

Since 2012, the Faculty of Agribusiness (FAB) is a unit of "Haxhi Zeka" University and currently is organized in three departments offering study programs on bachelor and master.

Since 2012, the Faculty of Agribusiness (FAB) has been an integral part of Haxhi Zeka University, featuring three departments that offer bachelor and master's study programs. The "Sustainable Food Production Systems" program, accredited in 2021 was carefully designed to align with [Law no.04/L-037 on Higher Education in the Republic Kosovo](#) (annex 1), [Administrative instruction \(mest\) No. 15/2018 for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions In The Republic of Kosovo](#) (annex 2), [KAA Manual on Accreditation](#) (annex 3), the Bologna declaration, the University's [Statute](#) (annex 4), and the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan of University "Haxhi Zeka"](#) in Peja (annex 5),

This program, drafted in collaboration with local, regional, and international experts during the "STEPS - MSc. in Sustainable Food Production Systems" project funded by the EU through Erasmus+, emphasizes sustainability principles in food production systems. The curriculum aims to address universal challenges such as food scarcity, sustainable development, climate change impacts, and economic factors affecting food distribution.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

1 Mission, objectives and administration	CL
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<p><i>Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.</i></p> <p>The missions the study program in line with the missions of Haxhi Zeka University as stated in the SER.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 1.2. Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.</i></p> <p>The program is structured according to the Bologna Declaration on vocational education and training with a duration of (2 years) and a work load of (120 ECTS). This program is based on the National Qualifications Framework which includes the preparation of students for such study levels, specializing in the field of Sustainable Food Production. Also, this field of study is in line with Erasmus Subject Area Codes (ESAC) points; 01.3.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.</i></p> <p>The SER claims that the program has a clearly defined didactic and research-related concept and succeeds in making this overarching concept explicit.</p>	A



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<p><i>Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.</i></p> <p>As presented in the SER the academic and scientific activities of the Faculty of Agribusiness are organized in alignment with the Strategic Plan, regulations, and guidelines publicly available on the University's website. Progress for each student is concretized and presented by the academic staff at the end of the semester, ensuring transparency and accountability. Formal policies, guidelines, and regulations pertaining to procedural or academic matters are communicated on the Haxhi Zeka University website, accessible to all staff and students.</p> <p>Despite the fact that all the information is provided in the Albanian there is some information lacking in the English version of the web site and this issue has to be solved. It is important to reassure that any changes/ modifications to the schedules are made public on time and that the students and all staff involved are informed accordingly.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.</i></p> <p>University statutes and a Code of Ethics are in place and referenced in the SER. The ET trusts that staff and students are acting accordingly.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.</i></p> <p>It is claimed in the SER that ‘The management of the Faculty, along with its academic staff, conducts regular meetings to assess the progress of program management and activities within the faculty. During these meetings, thorough reviews take place, and notes are taken to identify potential areas for improvement or changes. The objective is to enhance the overall effectiveness and quality of the programs offered. However, there is no fixed schedule for a regular review.</p>	B
<p>Overall</p>	B



Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. It is essential to reassure that all students are informed about their rights prior to the beginning of the year. This could be done via the Student Council.
2. It is advised to add more information on the website in English in order to enhance International spirit of the Faculty

2.2. Quality management

2 Quality management	CL
<p><i>Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.</i></p> <p>The overall Quality management of FAB is centralised and managed at the level of UHZ. SER outlines that the quality assurance system is an integral part of UHZ and that it adheres to the provisions of the <i>Statute of UHZ</i> particular, articles 206–217 and specifically the <i>Regulation on quality assurance and quality assessment system at the University “Haxhi Zeka”</i> in Peja and <i>Quality Assurance Guide</i>. According to SER, all staff members are actively participating in self-evaluations in collaboration with all stakeholders, primarily students and industry partners represented by own alumni or collaborators, either from private or public sector, as confirmed during session meetings.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.</i></p> <p>Several university bodies, operating in the domain of quality management, are mentioned in the SER, including the University Quality Assurance Office (QAO), Central Committees for Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Coordinator Offices (QCO), however, their role further through SER is not shown in detail. Quality office reports, as specified in SER, are provided to the head of the program for the delivery of each course, to assist them in undertaking planned strategies for continuous program improvement based on the necessary recommendations to increase the</p>	B



quality and performance of the programme. However, the SER should provide an example of the report.	
<p><i>Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.</i></p> <p>SER specifies a multiple evaluation strategy, which includes the evaluation of all activities, at the University level and in accordance with Article 2 of the Regulation on the system of assurance and quality assessment at the University "HaxhiZeka". The list of the quality assurance areas being evaluated covers a comprehensive range of aspects within the University's activities, however more recent evidence should be provided in future as presented report of the University includes evaluation of the results performed in academic year 2019./2020.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 2.4. Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.</i></p> <p>The SER states that the output of quality evaluations is continuously implemented to address proposed recommendations. No specific information is provided on how much attention is dedicated to the student learning outcomes.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.</i></p> <p>According SER, the Dean of the Faculty of Agribusiness and the Quality and Valuation Officer have a key role in the implementation of the action plan as a core component of quality assurance. Following the University Statute, Article 209, the results obtained from quality assurance processes significant influence on decision-making processes and contribute to strategic planning within the University.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.</i></p> <p>Survey data obtained through standardised questionnaires generated for students (through the SEVC system and physical forms on a semester basis), academic staff, graduates, employees, administration and Dean are systematically collected and</p>	B



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gathered inside the evaluation reports which are publicly available at the link https://unhz.eu/raportet-e-vleresimit/ .	
<p><i>Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.</i></p> <p>According to SER, feedback from employers, graduates and internal evaluation questionnaires plays a key role in developing the study programme through assessments of the quality of teaching, learning, student engagement in practical teaching, employment etc. The Faculty also established Advisory Body in cooperation with representatives from relevant institutions, including public entities, private institutions, and non-governmental organizations. Conversations with graduates and employers during the on-site visit showed that the study program is highly needed and is well-matched to the labour market. Data on the employment rate should be submitted in the upcoming period since the study programme was recently established.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.</i></p> <p>Comprehensive self-evaluation reports on study programme is prepared by FAB every three years (s. Standard 2.7). A SWOT analysis is included in the SERs.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.</i></p> <p>According to SER, The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which are assigned to the listed subjects within the curriculum, have been revised according to the experts' recommendations and following the labour market needs. Besides, the study programme was recently introduced and needs time to observe the impact of the implementation at the regional/national level. However, during the conversations with alumni, both employers or partners and students, it seems that this kind of profile is recognised as a need in the region. The quality assurance is regularly evaluated by the KAA and updated according to KAA requirements. The ET trusts</p>	A

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that the quality assurance arrangements for the program are monitored by Quality Coordinator Office (QCO) within Faculty of Agribusiness (FAB) and dedicated member of the academic staff who is having a role of Quality Officer as well as the Faculty management.	
Overall	B

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. A quality assurance system is established, and its documents are well organized. However, the availability of all the information considering their activities should be better ensured and presented by SER so each activity is supported with an annex and a clear reference to specific documentation or evidence.*
- 2. The ET suggests that the roles of particular established governing bodies responsible for quality management, whether at the FAB or UHZ level, should be precisely demonstrated, to better monitor the responsibilities.*
- 3. Quality parameters of the study program such as number of applications, enrolment, completion rate, duration of the study and grade overview should be included as the QA mechanism and also provided in the SER.*

2.3. Academic staff

Academic staff	CL
<i>Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.</i>	B
SER contains Table 2. <i>Academic staff to be involved for implementation of the program under evaluation – full time.</i> (employed full time) including 18 members of	



<p>academic staff and Table 3. <i>Academic staff to be involved for implementation of the program under evaluation – part time</i> includes 3 members of the academic staff. As a supportive document the CVs of the 21 employees, among 19 professors with the title of PhD, were submitted. Some CVs are written in Albanian, and this should be avoided in future evaluations. During the session meetings teaching staff reported that regular competition procedures become applied, including provision of full position descriptions and conditions of employment.</p>	
<p><i>Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.</i></p> <p>According to SER, the employment of academic staff at the Faculty of Agribusiness is based on publicly available documents: Law no.04/L-037 on Higher Education in the Republic Kosovo (annex 1), Statute of the University (annex 4), Regulation on selection procedures relating to the appointment, removal and advancement of regular academic staff at the UHZ (annex 13) as well as Regulation of Evaluation Procedures for engaging external collaborators at “HaxhiZeka” University in Peja (Albanian and English, annex 20). It is also pointed out in the SER that the recruitment procedures at the Faculty of Agribusiness are carried out in a transparent and principled manner, implying that each representative of the teaching staff complies with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation, following legal requirements as declared in Administrative instruction (MEST) No. 15/2018 for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions In The Republic of Kosovo (annex 2), Article 26.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 3.3. Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.</i></p> <p>According to SER, the number of teaching positions within an academic year is defined Article 166 of the Statute of University "HaxhiZeka". The ET trusts that academic staff are acting accordingly.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 3.4. At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.</i></p>	A



<p>SER reports that over 80% of the academic staff teaching in the Sustainable Food Production Systems program are regular staff (85%) perform for more than 50% of the classes of the study program.</p>	
<p><i>Standard 3.5. For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.</i></p> <p>According to SER, this Standard is regulated by Administrative instruction (mest) No. 15/2018 for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in The Republic of Kosovo. Also, SER explicitly states that the study program accordingly appoints at least one full-time academic staff member with a PhD title for every 60 ECTS credits. Given that the program comprises 120 ECTS credits, compliance is ensured so that three professors of the study programme (one Assoc.Prof.Dr. and two Assist. Prof.) are appointed as persons responsible for the performance of the study programme as confirmed in a conversation with the head of the program.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.</i></p> <p>According to SER, the Faculty supports the continuous professional development of the academic staff following Article 164 of the UHZ Statute. In doing so, SER highlights the possibilities for long-term professional development and distinguishes the conditions for regular academic staff in the frame of postdoctoral research and specializations, after the end of the five-year contract period, and those with less than five years of experience. According to SER, the faculty respects the development of pedagogical and didactic skills in courses, seminars and other training. As an example of good practice, SER points out the Basic Course of Pedagogy, Didactics and Methodology intended for doctoral students, focused on the importance of preparing the future generation of teachers. SER states that the professional development of teaching staff is visible through their participation in various conferences and trainings, organized in partnership with the support of other institutions, primarily the University of Iowa, HERAS+, MESTI, which was also</p>	B



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<p>confirmed during interviews with stakeholders. Evidence of training, i.e. certificates indicating time, place, organization details, should be presented in future evaluations for each member of the academic staff who attended the training.</p>	
<p><i>Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.</i></p> <p>Full-time academic staff at the Faculty of Agribusiness adhere to a 40-hour work week in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Article 182 of the HaxhiZeka University Statute. According to SER, within this time frame academic staff fulfils various responsibilities to ensure the efficient functioning of the Faculty. It is mandatory for every academic staff member to dedicate a minimum of two (2) hours towards addressing student queries and providing guidance and support beyond the formal classroom setting. In addition to their academic responsibilities, staff members are expected to fulfil a variety of administrative tasks. During the ET’s visit to FAB, the topic of the mentoring Master’s thesis was discussed and in conclusion, it emerged that an initiative to ensure that each academic staff supervises at least 1 master's theses during academic year is highly welcomed.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors’ evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.</i></p> <p>SER reports that the University of HaxhiZeka (UHZ) implements a system of evaluation of academic staff, which is realized by conducting questionnaires throughout the academic year. These include mostly university-wide surveys and surveys within faculty, Teacher evaluation by students is conducted on a semester basis and is completed by students through the SEVC platform before taking the exam. Further surveys include an evaluation by the dean or head of the teaching unit which is carried out at the end of the academic year, self-evaluation by academic staff members; and evaluation by colleagues (Questionnaire - Peer on Peer). As stated in SER, general data from the evaluation are visible on the University's website in the form of Evaluation Reports.</p>	B



<p><i>Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.</i></p> <p>According to SER, the Quality Assurance Strategy at HaxhiZeka University (UHZ) 2023-2026 includes the goal that teaching and learning experiences follow European standards and expectations, as STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 - Advancement in the quality of teaching and learning. However, it is hard for ET to assess more precisely the strategies at the faculty level.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.</i></p> <p>According to the Labor Law (Annex 22) the retirement age for academic staff is 65 years old. The SER indicated that there is a lack of professionals in certain narrow fields within the Kosovo labour market, and therefore Faculty of Agribusiness, could face challenges in maintaining the necessary profile of experts. To address this issue, Article 177 of the UHZ Statute outlines a provision allowing a member of the academic staff to retire at the age limits but with the option of part-time engagement in the teaching process after retirement until the age of 70.</p>	B
Overall	B

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Specific budget allocation to additional professional development of teaching staff is recommended*
2. *Intensified exchange with comparable programs in international level is recommended*
3. *More extended mobility for post(doctoral) students in a foreign country is recommended, which will allow them to establish collaborations with other international institutions that can result in joint projects.*
4. *The ET recommends that the list related to the additional professional development of teaching staff must be presented in tabular form. In addition, examples of the evidence such as certificates of attendance should be provided as an appendix.*



5. *Considering the number of faculty members, the HE institution should increase the number of teaching assistants and young researches*

2.4. Educational process content

4 Educational process content	CL
<p><i>Standard 4.1. The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.</i></p> <p>The Learning outcomes of the program are clearly stated and indeed include different subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects. Additionally, the study program has clearly employment-oriented qualification objectives.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 4.2. The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.</i></p> <p>As mentioned in the SER the study program is in compliance with the European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Area and the National Qualifications Framework, according to which this study program belongs to its 7th level, which includes the preparation of students for such levels of study. Also, this field of study is also in compliance with Erasmus Subject Area Codes (ESAC) points 01.3.</p>	A



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<p><i>Standard 4.3. The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.</i></p> <p>The leaning outcomes of the program are very clear and well defined. Additionally the courses are offered in a logical order and the more specific ones such as the technologies are offered as optional. However it would be beneficial to offer a course on Quality as obligatory since this crucial topic is not covered by the other courses. Moreover, since the courses are level 7 titles including the word Fundamentals re not appropriate and should be replaces by Advances, Current trends etc.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 4.4. The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.</i></p> <p>All required course information is provided in a well-arranged format in the syllabus found in Annex of the SER, comprising course objectives, learning outcomes, thematic content, teaching methods, students' assessment system and bibliography. However, the format of the descriptors is not homogeneous. The number of the learning objectives for each course of 5 ECTS should range between 4-6. More importantly the verbs that are used are not always appropriate for level 7. In Level 7 students are expected to develop analytical skills and critical thinking so the use of verbs such as describe, list etc should be avoided.</p>	B



<p><i>Standard 4.5. If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.</i></p> <p>The official language of instruction is Albanian. However, it is mentioned in the SER in cases where professors are from foreign countries, provisions are made for students to receive translations in the language of instruction, ensuring accessibility to the curriculum. Based on our visit, it seems that delivery of courses in English can only be applied for the dissertation since not all faculty and students are proficient in the use of English.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 4.6. The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.</i></p> <p>In the SER it is mentioned that ‘the relationship between students and professors is regulated based on the course syllabus provided by the professor. The syllabus outlines the frameworks required for the course, and students are expected to make progress through their commitments throughout the semester. This collaborative approach between students and professors is designed to positively impact student development’.</p> <p>Indeed, the visit allowed us to see the continuous support of the teaching team to the students</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 4.7. Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.</i></p> <p>As described in the provided syllabus a variety of assessment methods are used and they are well defined.</p>	A



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<p><i>Standard 4.8. Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.</i></p> <p>As presented in the SER Evaluation mechanisms are based on the Bologna Charter. The syllabus serves as a comprehensive guiding document that outlines the structure and content of the course. It provides a roadmap for students, detailing what topics will be covered and the overall trajectory of the learning experience.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 4.9. Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.</i></p> <p>As stated in the SER The total requirement of 120 ECTS credits for the Master's degree is well-structured, comprising 90 ECTS credits from courses and 30 ECTS credits from the Master Thesis. The workload required to achieve a passing grade is consistent, as grades in this study program are evaluated and are built throughout the semester and as such are applied within subject syllabi.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.</i></p> <p>As stated in the SER ‘the faculty is taking proactive measures to address insufficient standards of student achievement. Offering additional activities, such as tutoring, can provide valuable support to students and contribute to their academic success’. The ET trusts that the faculty follows all these measures when required</p>	A



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<p><i>Standard 4.11. If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.</i></p> <p>Although it is stated in the SER that the integration of internships into the program is a valuable component, providing students with practical experience and linking theoretical knowledge to real-world applications there is no internship course in this MSc program.</p>	n/a
<p><i>Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.</i></p> <p>There are numerous signed agreements with various companies as well as Institutions and this can be considered as an excellent practice.</p>	A
Overall: B	



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Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET Recommendations:

- o Revision of course descriptors regarding the titles, the number and the levelness of learning outcomes. It is suggested to use the BLOOM taxonomy in order to use the appropriate wording for level 7.*
- o It is advised to add an internship course as an elective too the program*
- o Presentation of the bibliography in a consistent form and addition of the DOI number to the readings.*
- o Since nowadays the use of AI is increasing it is recommended to increase the number of oral presentation as a means of assessment in order to enhance students soft skills and critical thinking a well as to indirectly evaluate the originality of the work.*



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Chapter 5: Students	
<p><i>Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.</i></p> <p>There is a public announcement for admission contest published through national media and on the University's web site. The FAB follows the UHZ regulations and procedures developed according to the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo (2011). The Regulation for Master Studies (2022) Articles 3 and 8 define the admission and selection of the candidates which is based on the public call criteria, respectively while the preliminary list is made public on the web sites of the academic units. The same defines the admission procedure for candidates who finished their studies abroad.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.</i></p> <p>Conditions for application and registration in studies are proscribed in the Regulation for Master Studies (2022) at the University level states. All candidates who have completed the basic studies (bachelor) with credit 180 or 240 have the right to apply for the master level studies. The public call for new academic year enrolment contains this obligatory condition.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.</i></p> <p>The number of registered students at MSc level is 22 which is well dimensioned for an effective and interactive teaching.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.</i></p> <p>The study programme syllabi have defined fashion of examination. The SER claims that the students can participate in the exams three times per academic year. The feedback is provided soon after the exams. The assistance is in a</p>	A



<p>form of consultation meetings with the teachers available twice per week. In case of dissatisfaction students can take exam in front of a special commission.</p>	
<p><i>Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.</i></p> <p>The student grades are kept in the electronic data base. There are effective processes in place to collect and analyse reliable data referring to the profile of the student population, student progression, success and drop-out rates, students' satisfaction with their programs, learning resources and student support available, career paths of graduates. The Student Affairs Office and administration collect data and keep all records at the HZU.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.</i></p> <p>Students who fail to complete their studies in the study program may apply to the Faculty for an additional exam.</p> <p>The support mentioned as flexible treatment of students in special situations is three examinations period and a possibility for extension of the study programme for one year.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.</i></p> <p>According to the information provided, there are processes in place to collect and analyse data referring to the student progression and drop-out rates. The institution collects also data on students' satisfaction with their programmes, the learning resources, and administration and support services.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original</i></p> <p>The UHZ established different regulations to deal with academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating. The Regulation on anti-plagiarism procedures and anti-plagiarism software (2022) defines the methods and procedures for implementation to secure the originality of submitted papers. The students' work is obliged for anti-plagiarism check by the UHZ's software.</p>	A



<p><i>Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.</i></p> <p>The Statute of the University defines clearly student rights and obligations. The document is publicly available.</p> <p>The students have an access to the Guide for students along with other regulatory documents related to student rights and obligations.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.</i></p> <p>Regarding the student mobility, the University clearly describes available possibilities and procedures.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.11. Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.</i></p> <p>The SERexplicitly that the academic staff publishes materials and information related to the teaching process. During the interviews it has been confirmed that the academic staff is obligated to publish the consultation schedule at least twice a week. The mentoring system peer-to-peer does not exist.</p>	A
Overall	A

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Students don't have feedback on their comments in the student survey. The faculty should take the responsibility for disseminating the questionnaire results with the suggestions for the improvement.*
- 2. The FAB should put more effort in motivating and support for students to participate in exchange and/or mobility programmes including participation on international events.*



2.6. Research

Chapter 6: Research	CL
<p><i>Standard 6.1. The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.</i></p> <p>The FAB follows the University's Strategy and Regulation on scientific research.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 6.2. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.</i></p> <p>The SER (p.61) states that the FAB researchers design and implement the individual research plan.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 6.3. Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.</i></p> <p>The UHZ developed and enforced the Strategy on scientific research as well as the Regulation on scientific research.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.</i></p> <p>The track record for each academic is present in the FABs data base, individual's CVs and internationally recognised bases such as WOS, SCOPUS and similar.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 6.5. The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.</i></p> <p>The researchers' production is accessible and verified.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 6.6. Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.</i></p> <p>The criterion is confirmed.</p>	A



<p><i>Standard 6.7. Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.</i></p> <p>According to the CVs attached to the SER, each of the study programmes' researchers met the criterion in the period (2021-2024).</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.</i></p> <p>SCOPUS data base confirms this criterion.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 6.8. Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.</i></p> <p>The SER (p.82) states that the researchers are obliged to include their research results and methods in the teaching. Quote: This approach helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical applications, offering students a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of the subject matter.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 6.9. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.</i></p> <p>The UHZ's Statute and the Code of Ethics define intellectual property rights.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 6.10. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities</i></p> <p>The FAB provided 2 published papers with the students as co-authors.</p>	A

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The FAB should put more effort in internationalisation of research results and participation in international teams. It should be included into individual research plans and a subject of monitoring after implementation.*



2.7. Infrastructure and resources

7 Infrastructure and resources	CL
<p><i>Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.</i></p> <p><u>Premises (B)</u> Currently, the building where the Faculty of Agribusiness is located has the following workspaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- An amphitheater;- Two classrooms;- 4 laboratories (15 seats each) <p>Since 25 students are enrolled in the program each year it is important to increase the number of laboratories and classrooms in order to serve all needs.</p> <p><u>Human resources (B)</u> Permanent teaching staff is available and accomplished by some of temporary staff members. The number of permanent assistant staff members should be increased to ensure long-term continuity of the programs.</p> <p><u>Equipment (B)</u> In general, the laboratories have basic equipment that is suitable for training students. In general state-of-the-art analysers is missing but the needs can be covered by using equipment that is placed in the facilities of partners.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.</i></p> <p>The SER contains a financial plan at the level of the study program. it is indicated in the SER and confirmed during the site visit that budget allocated is sufficient for delivering the study program.</p>	A



<p><i>Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years:</i></p> <p><i>a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;</i> s. Standard 7.1 (Premises)</p> <p><i>b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;</i> s. Standard 7.1 (Equipment)</p> <p><i>c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence;</i> Reference to the SEMS software is made but information is lacking regarding statistical or other relevant software.</p> <p><i>d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.</i> As stated, while the library space is currently sufficient for students, there is an ongoing effort to enhance the available literature. it is important that efforts are made to the right direction</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.</i></p> <p>There is marginally sufficient number of classrooms and seating places for students, as well as faculty and management offices. Although the minimal requirements are met for teaching purposes more advanced equipment should be available in order to give the faculty and the students the ability to perform research and allow them to publish their results in peer-review journals of high impact factor.</p>	B



<p><i>Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:</i></p> <p><i>a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;</i></p> <p><i>b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;</i></p> <p><i>c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years;</i></p> <p><i>d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for;</i></p> <p><i>e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.</i></p> <p>The library situation is only briefly addressed in the SER. The time scheduled for the site visit did not allow to verify the standard of the libraries. Furthermore, the ET does not see it as its task to verify the quality of the library according to the listed in-depth criteria. This would be a task for librarians.</p>	n.a.
<p><i>Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.</i></p> <p>In terms of infrastructure and facilities, the program is designed to accommodate students with special needs. The faculty building ensures accessibility for individuals in these categories.</p>	A
Overall	B

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Laboratory equipment as well as library holdings has to be improved
2. The financial plan does not provide information about income from projects. It is recommended to start increasing the incomes from research projects since it is the only source of revenues despite the National support.



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3. HEI could develop a job-related exchange or experience for their graduates/Allumni, such as career office. In that way they will be more attractive on the job market.
4. The facilities should be enhanced with ore specious laboratories and additional classrooms and offices.

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

4. **In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program Sustainable Food Production Systems MSc by UNIVERSITY HAXHI ZEKA, Faculty of Agribusiness, is substantially compliant with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation manual and, therefore, recommends to accredit the study program for a duration of 3 years with a number of 25 students to be enrolled in the program every year**

5. APPENDICES *(if available)*

1. A
2. B
3. C

Expert Team

Chair

(Signature)

Prof. Dr. Kyriaki Zinoviadou
(Print Name)

04/04/2024
(Date)



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Member

Prof. Dr. Jasna Novak

6/04/2024

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Member

Jadranka Pelikan, Student Expert

6/04/2024

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