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Kosovo Accreditation Agency



Faculty of Islamic Studies Islamic Theology in the European Context

MA

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

25.04.2025 Pristina, Kosovo

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INTRODUCTION

Sources of information for the Report:

- SER of Faculty of Islamic Studies, Islamic Theology in the European Context, MA and its annexes received before the site visit
- FSI website
- Site visit notes
- Additional documents requested and received by ET
- KAA Accreditation manual

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of KAA

Site visit schedule

Programme Accreditation Procedure at Faculty of Islamic Studies	
Program:	Islamic Theology, MA (Re-accreditation)
Site visit on:	25.04.2025
Expert Team:	Prof. Aysegül Kozak Cakir Prof. Canan Unvan Ms Fatimazahra Javadzade, student expert
Coordinators of the KAA:	Leona Kovaçi, KAA Officer

Site Visit Programme

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 - 09:50	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Dean - Islam Hasani Vice-dean - Lulzim Esati Secretary - Vedat Shabani
09:50 - 10:35	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	QA coordinator - Muzaqete Kosumi Administrative officer - Ajet Hoxha IT - Arlind Gajtani
10:40 -	Meeting with the head of	Prof.asoc.dr. Islam Hasani

11:40	the study programme:	
11:40 - 12:30	Meeting with teaching staff	Prof.ass.dr. Zija Abdullahu Prof.ass.dr. Lulzim Esati Prof.asoc.dr. Sadik Mehmeti Prof.ass.dr. Rexhep Suma Dr.Besa Ismaili Prof.ass.dr. Ilmije Kuqi Prof.ass.dr. Valmire Batatina
12:30 - 13:45	Lunch break	
13:45 - 14:00	Visiting Facility	
14:00 - 14:45	Meeting with students	Qahil Ibrahim Muhib Kozhani Mirjeta Beqiri Albion Çerkini Blertonë Kriva Amer Suma Leoneta Duriqi Elma Krasniqi
14:50 - 15:35	Meeting with graduates/alumni	Anisa Hoti Arbnor Sinani Besmir Foniqi Eset Qerimi Flurim Krasniqi Merita Boroci Fetije Gërbeshi
15:35 - 16:15	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	General Secretary - Ahmet Sadriu Head imam – Vedat Sahiti Financial director - Tanseli Rogova
16:15 - 16:25	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
16:25 - 16:35	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

A brief overview of the programme under evaluation

The Faculty of Islamic Studies is an autonomous educational and research institution, established by Decision No. 443 of the “Assembly of the Islamic Community of the Republic

of Kosovo" on August 15, 1992. It offers two academic programs: one at the Bachelor's level and one at the Master's level.

The Faculty of Islamic Studies is located in Prishtina, Bajram Kelmendi Street, No. 174, Prishtina-Kosovo, and it has only one campus. Contact number: +381 (38) 243-884; 038/245-367. Website: www.fsi-edu.net, Email: info@fsi-edu.net

The Faculty currently employs 26 academic staff members and 6 administrative personnel. Approximately 500 students, both full-time and part-time, are enrolled across its undergraduate and graduate programs.

The Faculty's mission is to educate, train, and prepare professional and scientific cadres to meet the needs of the Islamic Community and the society of Kosovo as a whole, and even beyond, in the spirit of scientific principles and contemporary values from the field of Islamic theology. The Faculty of Islamic Studies aims to carry out and develop its educational, scientific, and research activities according to European standards as defined by the Bologna Declaration.

The Faculty of Islamic Studies underwent its initial accreditation in 2012 for the "Bachelor's Degree in Islamic Theology" program, receiving a three-year accreditation through Decision No. 2/423/12 from the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (AKA).

In 2015, the Faculty completed the institutional re-accreditation process and was granted a further three-year accreditation for two programs: the "Bachelor's in Islamic Theology" and the "Master's in Islamic Theology." In 2019, the Faculty was again evaluated by AKA and received institutional and program-level accreditation for a period of three years. The most recent evaluation took place in 2022, resulting in a renewed three-year accreditation for both study programs.

PROGRAMME EVALUATION

The evaluation team acknowledges the institutional response to the draft report and would like to express its appreciation for the positive, clear, and constructive feedback provided. The institution stated that the comments were very helpful for improving the program and that they have always benefited from such input. The evaluation team welcomes this attitude and is pleased to note that the institution found the observations accurate and well understood. Although no substantive objections were raised, the response reflected a strong motivation to further develop the programme and address areas for improvement. The team values this engagement and openness to enhancement, which reflects

a commitment to continuous quality improvement.

1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION

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

The Faculty of Islamic Studies has a clear structure of the study programme, which facilitates the mission objectives of the institution, and the related curricula and syllabus are available on the official website.

a. The faculty understands the geographical position and Islamic nature of Europe, which also aligns its studies accordingly, while having scholars educated in eastern countries. It balances the understanding of the Islamic perspective in Europe or the so-called Euro-Islamic perspective. As the catalogue KATALOGU-FSI_2 indicates: “Faculty of Islamic Studies, during the draft of curricula, is based on the curricula of the faculties of Islamic Studies in the region and those in the Islamic world, adapted to the conditions and circumstances in Kosovo.” And: “Faculty of Islamic Studies aims at realisation of the contemporary university studies in accordance with the Bologna Declaration, with its distinct specifics, crowning it with a diversity of teaching, tradition and various contemporary achievements.”

Objectives of the Faculty of Islamic Studies are to produce graduates who are capable of contributing to Islamic knowledge, research, and community development, aligning with the faculty's mission to promote Islamic values and education — as indicated on their official website in the publication section, catalogue KATALOGU-FSI_2. The faculty considers the demands of topics in their environment and time, aiming to work on programmes and thesis topics that align with social needs, via feedback from alumni students. It aims to raise students as professors, teachers, and imams, all according to the evaluation meeting. For master programmes, professors are working with students on the selection of topics; therefore, the number of students they are considering is rational for the programme they are supervising.

The HEI has a sufficient number of facilities and equipment for students to receive education and use libraries and similar services when needed.

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

The Higher Education Institution (HEI) has established written procedures to address unethical behavior, including plagiarism and academic dishonesty. The Regulation on the Code of Ethics, Article 8.3 and Article 8.4, p. 3, available on the official website, clearly address these issues. As

stated in the regulation: “All publications supported by the faculty, including books, journals, and MA theses, will be subjected to the anti-plagiarism system 'TURNITIN' or a similar tool. If a paper—whether a book, diploma thesis, or scientific article—contains plagiarism or material copied from other works to an extent of 15% or more, the paper will be cancelled.” The Ethics Committee handles these issues (The Regulation on the Code of Ethics, Article 19).

During the evaluation meeting, students shared that if plagiarism is detected in their work, their paper gets rejected or cancelled. This indicates that procedures are not only in place but also actively implemented. The Faculty's official website provides easy access to regulations on various topics, including ethics, ensuring transparency and accessibility. Additionally, based on information gathered in the meeting, students receive guidance at the beginning of the academic year, which includes regulations. The Regulation on the Code of Ethics clearly defines prohibited conduct, such as plagiarism, falsification, and abuse of position (Articles 5–13). It outlines the obligations of faculty members to promote and enforce ethical standards (Article 17). The responsible bodies include the Ethics Committee, Disciplinary Committee, and Ad-hoc Disciplinary Committee (Article 19), with detailed structures and responsibilities described in Articles 20–22. Article 28.4 ensures the Code of Ethics is publicly available on the faculty website, promoting transparency and awareness among all stakeholders.

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

The official website provides updated information regarding the faculty's notifications, news, and social media publications. News is up to date and active, reflecting ongoing matters of the faculty. Conversations during the meeting indicated that students receive notifications and messages regarding new and updated plans related to their education.

There are ethical conduct policies and written regulations that are available on the official website. However, they do not specify regulations regarding privacy and protection of data. From discussions in the meeting, it can be said that each student has a personal platform for grades, requirements, weekly attendance, etc., which indicates that the institution provides a personalized zone for each student.

From the discussion of the panel and the REGULATION Tutorial System at the Faculty, Articles 3, 4, and 9 indicate the involvement of students and staff. Both student tutors and teaching staff (professor tutors) are explicitly involved in supporting students. Student and teaching tutors are required to report monthly to the Tutorial Committee (Articles 8 and 12). Article 14 also mentions professional training for tutors, which qualifies as a planned follow-up based on prior evaluations. Students receive an evaluation questionnaire on a specific date each year for the improvement of the study program.

Standard 1.4 The delivery of the study program is supported by appropriate and

sufficient administrative support to achieve its goals in teaching, learning, research, and community service. (ESG 1.6)

The Faculty of Islamic Studies follows official policies which ensure adequate and efficient administrative staff at the HEI.

On the official website of the HEI, the Students - Regulations section and additional documents provided to the accreditation office offer sufficient information regarding the administration and support services available for students and academic staff in both English and Albanian. However, some sections such as program curricula, syllabus bulletins, and others are not translated into English, which may pose a challenge for international students. The administrative staff engaged in the delivery of the study program are provided with opportunities for professional development through various programs, including the Erasmus program, support from the career office, as well as therapy services.

It is essential for the institution that its students understand languages such as Arabic when studying. Therefore, they are mindful of how many students are learning the language with proper training. For the MA program, it is mandatory to know the language before admission and to present a certificate.

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

The HEI has clear, detailed regulations and monitoring systems. However, it lacks some informative language aspects for foreign students. It is suggested for FSI to add a regulation article about the privacy and confidentiality of students and staff in the Code of Ethics document. At the same time, it would be beneficial to translate published articles, bulletins, magazines, news, and others — as well as curricula and syllabuses — into at least the English language in order to promote access to information and support for foreign students.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Translation of updates, publications, notifications, curricula, etc. on the official website within 1 year.*
- 2. Addition of articles regarding privacy and confidentiality for students in Regulation of Code of Ethics, within 2 years.*

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

According to the Self Evaluation Report and the Meeting/Site Visit held on April 25, 2025; The following findings have been achieved related with the Faculty of Islamic Studies and the Islamic Theology MA Programme.

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

HEI states that in accordance with the Law on Higher Education and the Statute, the FSI develops its system for quality assurance in order to improve quality and ensure the achievement of its objectives. It is understood that HEI established an internal quality assurance system in line with national regulations and ESG. Internal quality assurance procedures for the study program are defined by the internal regulations of higher education institution. The policies and processes of the internal quality assurance system form a cycle for continuous improvement.

When other criteria are also considered, the study program delivery is subject to an established and functional internal quality assurance system, in which all relevant stakeholders are included.

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

HEI states that the Quality Assurance Office has been operational since 2012, following the first accreditation of the institution and within the Faculty, there is the Quality Assurance Commission, responsible for creating policies and strategies for the development of quality in the Faculty. The Faculty of Islamic Studies has built and implemented an internal quality management system based on European standards and guidelines to ensure the institution's sustainability.

HEI states that the faculty systematically collects and analyzes feedback information, which is used to create study programs. The faculty evaluates internal teaching staff and courses each semester. It is understood that continuous improvement of the study programme is planned. The process for the development and approval of the study program is well-defined and includes internal and external stakeholders, including specific subject experts.

When other criteria are also considered, the study program is subject to a process of design and approval established by the HEI.

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

HEI states that according to the results of the quality evaluation questionnaire, expected learning outcomes are defined for each course and the expected learning outcomes are achievable. The knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired by students are assessed with appropriate evaluation methods. The content of the offered courses has been improved after the last curriculum review. The existing study programs in the faculty are continuously updated.

It is understood that the study program undergoes regular monitoring to assess its relevance to the needs of society. The stakeholders, students, staff, alumni, and employers are involved in the monitoring processes of the study program. The HEI conducts regularly stakeholder questionnaires and includes the feedback into regular study program improvement processes. The collected information is analyzed and concrete actions are taken to ensure that the program is up to date. There is a commitment to continuous improvement, demonstrated through regular curriculum reviews and feedback mechanisms.

When other criteria are also considered, the study program is periodically monitored and reviewed to ensure its objectives are achieved. The monitoring of the study program involves stakeholder participation.

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

It is understood that the publicly available information on the study program is accurate, reliable, objective and is updated on regular basis.

When other criteria are also considered, all relevant information about the study program is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and is publicly available.

ET recommendations:

- 1. It is recommended to enhance international collaborations to improve the program's global recognition and research opportunities.*
- 2. It is recommended that in the website, all information including learning outcomes related to programme should be included and updated. Access to information in the website should be fast and easy.*

2. ACADEMIC STAFF

According to the Self Evaluation Report and the Meeting/Site Visit held on April 25, 2025; The following findings have been achieved related with the Faculty of Islamic Studies and the Islamic Theology MA Programme.

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

HEI states that the criteria and procedures for selecting staff are outlined in the FSI Statute and the Regulation on the selection procedures for the appointment, reappointment, and promotion of academic staff at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, which are published on the website.

It is understood that The HEI advertises vacancies on their website. The HEI has clear, objective and transparent processes for staff recruitment and employment conditions. HEI states that the selection of academic staff is based on the needs and development policies of the Faculty and is conducted through a public competition. The higher education institution has adequate procedures for the selection of the best candidates for each position. The request for staff selection is submitted to the Faculty Teaching Council by the Dean, and then it is published in a public competition.

When other criteria are also considered, the study program delivery is supported by teaching staff who are recruited in line with national legislation, and internal regulations in effect, and it is based on objective and transparent procedure.

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

HEI states that the student-to-teacher ratio at the Faculty of Islamic Studies is 1 professor per 29 students. For regular professors, the teaching commitment is 6 hours per week. The academic,

scientific, and administrative staff of the Faculty of Islamic Studies have the relevant qualifications for their positions and engagements.

HEI notes that the procedure for selecting and re-selecting teachers in the same or higher title is initiated by the Dean based on official documentation from the Faculty Secretariat, at least 6 months before the expiration of the term for which the teacher was selected. On the other hand, HEI states that according to the results of the quality evaluation questionnaire, the faculty has recruited many new staff members in the past three years and the workload (engagement) of the academic staff in the faculty is equal. The balance between research and teaching work in the faculty is satisfactory. Faculty members actively engage in research and have a strong presence in the academic community, contributing to the program's credibility.

It is understood that the number and qualifications of academic staff are adequate for the implementation of the study program and for performing scientific/professional activity at the required level. The Academic staff is not overburdened. At least 50% of the academic staff who are involved in delivering the study program are full-time HEI employees. The qualification of the academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is adequate and relevant to the courses they teach. The workload of academic staff aligns with relevant legislation issued by competent bodies.

When other criteria are also considered, the study program is supported by sufficient permanent academic staff who are adequately qualified to deliver the study program.

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

It is understood that the teacher advancement procedures engaged in the study program are transparent and objective. On the other hand, the results of the feedback are considered in the advancement and re-appointment of teaching staff and in the renewal of contracts.

Furthermore, the HEI conducts questionnaires regularly and according to the results of the questionnaires teaching staff and the study program is being renewed and improved for coming students. It is understood that there is a commitment to continuous improvement.

When other criteria are also considered, the study program is supported by teaching staff who are subject to advancement and reappointment based on objective and transparent procedures

which include the evaluation of excellence. The advancement of staff arises from the higher education institution's strategic goals and is in line with the legislation and internal regulations in effect.

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

It is understood that HEI has an annual operational plan for the professional development of the academic staff engaged in the study program and demonstrates their participation in the development activities. The HEI provides support to all academic staff of the study program in the development of skills related to testing and assessment methods.

The HEI proves that all academic staff engaged in the study program participates in international activities like international projects (Erasmus+), international cooperation from other countries which are relevant to the study program, and academic staff are encouraged and supported by their own HEI in these activities. FSI provides evidence that it organizes specific training for its academic staff. The HEI ensures support to the academic staff in the development of their research programs.

When other criteria are also considered, the academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is entitled to institutional support for professional development.

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

The whole institution, as well as the Faculty of FSI, has a positive attitude towards the involvement of external stakeholders. The institution organizes events together with external stakeholders to participate in different activities within the institution, including teaching. They also participate in the process of practice. It is understood that external associates include the latest research, trends and know-how from the labor market in the teaching process. The workload and expectations from the external associates are clearly agreed to ensure that the teaching is performed on high quality.

When other criteria are also considered, external associates who teach at the study program have adequate qualifications and work experience for the delivery of the study program and

achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

ET recommendations:

1. *It is recommended to increase international faculty recruitment to diversify academic perspectives and enhance global awareness in the curriculum.*
2. *It is recommended to encourage more interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty members to broaden the range of perspectives and enrich course offerings.*

3. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT

The FSI Masters program is modelled on qualification objectives. They include subject-related, but context related aspects. What needs to be commended is the efforts of the faculty by managing to get strong involvement of its stakeholders to include contemporary issues and problems of Muslim communities especially in Europe but also throughout the world into its curriculum. This ensures that students would have a chance to develop disciplinary, methodological as well as generic skills and competencies that would be needed when they graduated. The program is focused on preparing the students to be able to work as qualified professionals, practitioners or future educators who are competent in the field of Islamic Studies.

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

The Islamic Theology component of the Master's program is designed to equip students with a deep and comprehensive understanding of core theological principles and doctrines. This aligns with the program's primary goal of developing expertise in Islamic theological studies. The intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the program are clearly formulated and well-structured. They reflect the program's ambition to prepare graduates with advanced knowledge, competencies, research capabilities, and critical thinking aligned with Level 7 descriptors of the Kosovo National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

The program's interdisciplinary approach is evident in its learning outcomes, encouraging students to explore the connections between theology and fields like philosophy, law, and ethics. It emphasizes contextual understanding by examining the historical, cultural, and social dimensions of Islamic thought, enabling graduates to interpret theology within its broader context. Ethical awareness is fostered to support ethical reasoning and the application of Islamic principles to modern issues, promoting leadership within Muslim communities. Additionally, the program focuses on developing strong communication skills for effective academic and public engagement.

The expert panel notes that currently, the intended learning outcomes are not publicly available on the institutional website. However, considering that program has been accredited before and the ET has already been provided with the ILOs the panel assumes that the they will be published.

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

The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework as well as the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual parts of the program are well combined in order to achieve qualification objectives, thus providing adequate forms of teaching and learning.

The curriculum's structure and content reflect its graduate-level focus, emphasizing analytical depth, independent research skills, and the practical application of knowledge acquired. Learning outcomes are carefully framed for a Master's program, highlighting critical evaluation, interpretation, integration of complex ideas, and ethical reasoning. The program separates itself from undergraduate offerings, concentrating on advanced competencies, academic autonomy, and professional decision-making. This distinction is further reinforced through the focus on independent research, thesis work, and interdisciplinary approaches.

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

At the outset, it should be noted that there are inconsistencies in curriculum given in the SER and on the program website. There are mismatches between the course names provided at SER and the website. When asked it was explained it is due to translation. In the future it is advised that the translation of the SER would be controlled by the program holders who are competent in English. There is one course though titled “Contemporary Approaches in the Islamic Finance” could not be located at the website among the list of the course syllabuses posted.

The program’s curriculum is logically structured to ensure the progressive development of knowledge, skills, and competences. It combines foundational theory, methodological training, and applied psychology, addressing both general academic skills and specialized expertise. Course content, titles, and materials are well-aligned with the program’s mission, vision, and intended learning outcomes (ILOs), with clear connections to instructors’ expertise. The curriculum is benchmarked against similar Master’s programs in the EHEA, demonstrating conscious alignment with European standards. A detailed mapping of course- and program-level outcomes confirms coherence, particularly in fostering critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and professional competence. Practical components such as thesis work and applied seminars enhance graduate employability and transferable skills for both national and international settings.

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

Although the SER does not reference any specific EU Directives, as seen in regulated fields like medicine or law, the FSI MA program aligns well with international academic and professional standards. Its curriculum and learning outcomes are informed by European

qualifications frameworks and reflect core competencies in Islamic theology, assessment, and ethics, consistent with similar programs in the EU. The program has been developed in collaboration with local and regional stakeholders to meet professional practice needs, and both the SER and site visit confirm its alignment with international academic pathways and career opportunities in Islamic theology and practice through out the Mosques and Islamic Centers in Kosovo and beyond.

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

Although the SER includes a section on student practice, during the site visit it was clarified that the MA program does not include a practice period. Therefore, this standard is not applicable.

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

A variety of teaching methods are employed to promote interactive, research-based learning, as well as critical and creative thinking, all aligned with the intended learning outcomes. These approaches are carefully tailored to each course, ensuring that teaching methods support the specific objectives of the curriculum. Teaching typically takes place through lectures, exercises, and activities designed to stimulate student engagement in interactive discussions. SER states—and the site visit, particularly the focus group with students and graduates, confirms—that a key feature of instruction at FSI is the active involvement of students, who are encouraged to participate in discussions and express their views on subject-related topics.

According to the SER, FSI regularly evaluates courses and teaching performance through student surveys conducted each semester. The results are analyzed by the management and quality office to inform program improvements. Teaching staff are actively involved in this process, and adjustments to the program are made based on evaluation findings. During the

focus group meeting with faculty, staff confirmed this and shared examples of teaching advancement courses they have undertaken. They also explained there is a meeting organized with the instructors whose teaching evaluations need improvement. In 2023, a dedicated workshop led to further updates in teaching methods. The MA program in Islamic Theology also places strong emphasis on creating an inclusive learning environment, recognizing the diverse backgrounds and needs of its students. Teaching methods are adapted to support part-time, older, and international students, as well as those with learning difficulties or special needs, ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all.

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

Going through the syllabuses of the Islamic Theology MA program an alignment between learning outcomes and the specific objectives of individual courses is clear. Each course's weekly content supports the development of broader knowledge, skills, and competencies, as outlined in the course syllabi.

Assessment methods are diverse, and aims to measure students' achievement across theoretical knowledge, analytical reasoning, and professional practice. Though almost each course always has an exam (written or test), other means such as, papers, presentations, case studies, and research assignments are used. Course syllabi clearly states which assignment will be used for the specific course.

Assessment criteria and grading rubrics are shared with students in advance to clarify expectations and evaluation standards. It is explained that timely feedback is an institutional practice. FSI also provides a formal and accessible student appeals process, regulated under Article 12 of its Regulations for Studies. This ensures fair and transparent procedures for students contesting grades or assessments, in line with best practices in higher education.

Standard 4.8 Learning outcomes are evaluated in terms of student workload and

expressed in ECTS. (ECTS 1.2)

At the Faculty of Islamic Studies, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is used to measure student workload, where 1 ECTS credit corresponds to 25-30 hours of study. Each course in the Islamic Theology MA program is allocated a specific number of ECTS credits based on the total student effort required to achieve the learning outcomes, including lectures, seminars, independent study, assignments, and assessments. The total workload for students is represented by ECTS credits, calculated according to the Student Workload Form. This aligns with the second cycle standard, which typically requires 60 ECTS credits per academic year (30 per semester).

However, while the presentation and calculation of workload through ECTS credits is clearly outlined at both the program and course levels, there is no indication that this calculation has been validated through student surveys, leaving some uncertainty about its accuracy.

ET recommendations:

1. *Maintain alignment regarding course names between the SER and the program website to avoid discrepancies.(for the next review)*
2. *Improve Translation Accuracy by assigning English-proficient staff to review SER translations to ensure clarity and correctness (for the next review)*
3. *Be sure to proofread the SER before sending it out so there would not be repetitions and/or would not say Bachelor level for an MA program SER. (for the next review)*
4. *Review ECTS allocations periodically to ensure consistency with actual student workload.(within a year)*
5. *Consider including pedagogy and psychology courses in the Islamic Theology MA curriculum. This addition would equip graduates—many of whom go on to teach or work in community and religious settings—with essential skills in educational theory, communication, and understanding diverse learner needs. Integrating these subjects would support more effective teaching, counseling, and community engagement, enhancing the practical relevance of the program.(within 2 years or before the next review)*

6. *Assessment transparency is further reinforced by institutional policies requiring course coordinators to include grading breakdowns in each syllabus (before the next review)*

7. STUDENTS

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

The Regulation on Studies at FSI (Article 4) refers to admission criteria defined in Articles 33–35 of the Statute, distinguishing between regular and correspondence students and outlining the main teaching and admission methods. The Academic Mobility Regulation further defines the admission of international students (Article 6) and their documentation requirements. The Regulations on MA Studies at FSI, Article 3, specify admission criteria including eligible degrees (BA in Islamic Studies or related fields), the minimum required ECTS (240) in Article 3.3, selection procedures, appeal mechanisms, supplementary exams for candidates outside the field (Article 3.5), and the public announcement of the competition and its conditions.

The regulation clearly states that students enrolling in the bachelor's program must possess a high school graduation diploma. Article 4.3 of the Regulation on Studies at FSI states: "The academic unit, upon approval of the Scientific Teaching Committee of FSI (STC), may determine other forms of teaching methods, especially in verifying the gained knowledge." This confirms that the documentation aligns with national requirements. These documents support the proposal from the committee for drafting the regulation on studies at FSI. The Scientific Teaching Committee of FSI, in its meeting held on 24.10.2014, proposed the regulation to the Presidency of the Islamic Community of the Republic of Kosovo.

According to The Regulation on MA Studies, Article 3.4 states: "Due to the contents of the programs, the Dean's Office may set relevant criteria/differential exams regarding the right to register for students coming from study programs different from the field of study where they apply." Further, Article 3.5 clarifies: "All candidates who have not completed the relevant

bachelor studies are subject to supplementary exams in the subjects determined by the STC. The supplementary exams are decided by a professional commission according to the field of study, composed of 5 members. The professional commission is selected by the Faculty Council. Candidates undergo differential exams before the admission exam.” Article 3.9 specifies that the selection of candidates, based on defined criteria, is made by a commission of at least three (3) lecturers appointed by the Faculty Council.

In the Regulation on the Code of Ethics, it is clearly stated that no student shall face unjust treatment or discrimination based on religion, race, or other factors. Students on the panel also reported no issues in this regard. Articles 3.6–3.9 of the Regulations on MA Studies provide an objective and structured admissions process, with selection criteria applied by a formal commission. Article 3.11 outlines the appeals process, ensuring transparency and fairness. Article 6 of the Regulation on Studies states that changes in study programs and transfers from other institutions (national/international) are governed by the FSI Statute, offering procedural clarity for recognizing previous academic work.

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

The HEI's student monitoring system helps both students and staff track academic progress and consult the necessary personnel. These standards are supported by the Tutorial System Regulations, where Article 7 outlines the purpose of student tutors:

- a. Informing students about legal and related aspects, especially rights and obligations.
- b. Advising students on overcoming educational challenges.
- c. Keeping records of interactions with supervised students.

Articles 11 and 12 define the responsibilities of teaching tutors and the rules for their reporting. The Booklet ("Rregullore për Sigurimin e Cilësisë në FSI") Article 12 sets deadlines, while Article 14 involves students in evaluation processes. The faculty is

committed to ensuring quality education by monitoring student progression and collecting feedback. Article 8 describes how data is collected, processed, and reported. Article 12 mentions the ongoing evaluation of study programs with regular updates. In discussions with alumni, Article 11 was cited as justification for curricular changes based on feedback, even post-graduation. The SIMS platform is used by students and staff at the Faculty of Islamic Studies for accessing academic records, tracking progression, grades, absences, notifications, and more.

In the Regulation on Quality Assurance and Evaluation at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Article 21 (Public Information) states that FSI publishes details about program content, outcomes, qualifications, and graduate employment. Article 14 emphasizes that students have representation on the quality assurance committee, allowing direct involvement in the evaluation of QA processes.

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

According to The Regulation on Academic Mobility of Students and Academic Staff of FSI, Article 4.1 states that FSI must provide all necessary information and documentation for academic mobility. Article 16 affirms the right of students to request such support. FSI supports both incoming and outgoing students (Articles 4, 11, 16), offering administrative assistance, learning agreements, and access to educational resources. Article 3.3 affirms that credit calculation follows European ECTS guidelines and faculty regulations. Article 4.3 ensures recognition and transfer of credits earned at foreign institutions into the students' respective study programs. FSI regulations and the catalogue are published in both English and Albanian, facilitating the admission process via the official website. However, the student sections on the HEI website are primarily in their original language.

From discussions during the accreditation meeting, it was evident that foreign students receive support regarding their settlement and navigating the faculty system when needed. Articles 6–9 of the Regulation on Academic Mobility outline a clear application, admission, and support process for foreign students, including online portals, deadlines, and equal rights—

demonstrating the institution's dedication to international inclusivity.

Panel discussions indicated that the faculty offers language courses in three languages: Albanian, Arabic, and English. Regarding mobility data reporting, Article 18 of the Regulation on Academic Mobility states: “The number of staff participating in the mobility program is specified in the agreement signed between the partner institutions.”

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

In the Tutorial System Regulation of FSI, Articles 18–19 explain the composition and election process of the committee, indicating that “the committee shall elect a president among its members.” Article 18, the Regulation on Quality Assurance, Article 18, outlines the criteria for hiring and monitoring academic staff, while Article 19 covers the evaluation of administrative staff. This regulation provides clear information about the number of professional administrative and technical staff involved in offering student support for the program. For instance, according to information from the SER FSI Master 2025, “A tutor can be a regular student who is at least in their third academic year, has an average grade above 9.0, and applies to the Commission for selection as a tutor.” This reflects the institution’s dedication to maintaining quality even in seemingly minor aspects. In the Quality Assurance Booklet, Article 21 (Public Information) states: “FSI provides information on institutional activities that are useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders, and the general public.”

Upon reviewing the institution’s website, it is evident that a significant amount of information is available. However, most of this information is in the original language, which poses a challenge for individuals who do not speak it, except for certain regulations and selected documents that are also available in English. From the discussions and the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Regulation, it can be confirmed that students receive supervision and guidance from their teachers and other staff regarding their thesis work, career development, and other

academic matters. By scheduling an appointment, students also have access to two tutors to obtain any necessary information. The relevant regulations — found within the tutorial system and quality monitoring framework — include Article 14, which concerns student evaluations of teaching, and Article 16, which ensures open access to results. Together, they demonstrate that students are effectively guided and supported. Given the availability of regulations on the official website in both Albanian and English, it is clear that the faculty maintains a transparent information policy. In cases involving private matters, the faculty communicates directly with students. Moreover, the faculty actively supports various extracurricular activities such as sports clubs, language courses, and Ramadan-related clubs during the holy month. Students have stated that they receive timely notifications about these activities, keeping them well informed about what is available.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Translation of the student section and publication within 1 year*

8. RESEARCH

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

The Islamic Theology MA program at FSI works with, in the institution's mission and strategic research objectives. The program is designed to address both traditional theological subjects and contemporary societal issues through a research-based academic framework. One clear example of this alignment is the faculty's engagement with research and public discourse on contemporary topics such as women in Islam and the hijab.

Faculty members have presented papers and/or prepared lectures contributing to critical discussions on gender, religious identity, and Islamic practice in modern contexts. These academic activities reflect the program's commitment to tackling relevant societal challenges through academic inquiry, in line with FSI's strategic goal of becoming a leading reference

point in Islamic theological research. Of course these should be followed and encouraged to be turned into a reteach publications.

Such efforts not only reinforce the institution's mission but also demonstrate the relevance and social impact of its research agenda.

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

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) provides an overview of the human and financial resources allocated to research at the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FSI), along with the types of support available to both staff and students. It includes the Regulation on Scientific Research Activity, but this document dates back to 2014 and should be updated to reflect current institutional priorities and practices.

Research is identified as a strategic pillar of FSI. The faculty aims to strengthen the research capacity of academic staff and students alike, offering advisory support and logistical assistance for participation in national and international conferences. In the case of students, the Islamic Theology MA program encourages engagement with research that addresses societal needs and public relevance.

According to SER, in support of higher-quality research outputs, FSI also promotes publishing in SCOPUS and Web of Science-indexed journals, offering financial support of up to €1,000 per publication. Although the research budget has increased since the last external review, this has not yet translated into a visible improvement in staff research profiles, as reflected in their CVs.

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

Academic staff are encouraged and actively participate in national and international

collaborations. Examples include partnerships with faculties in Turkey, Germany, and Austria, participation in TEMPUS and Erasmus+ projects, and joint conferences and publications. The institution promotes networking and exchanges to enhance research quality and visibility.

One major challenge remains the limited foreign language proficiency among faculty members, which restricts their participation in international academic discourse and publishing. During the site visit, the Evaluation Team was informed that, in response to previous recommendations, faculty members are now regularly informed about opportunities for securing external funding for publications and conference participation.

FSI has established numerous Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with universities abroad. While these have led to noticeable benefits in teaching and student exchange, their impact on collaborative research remains limited.

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

There is an alignment between the teaching activities of academic staff and their research outputs in the Islamic Theology MA program. According to the documents reviewed, including staff CVs and course syllabi, most instructors conduct research and publish in areas directly related to the subjects they teach—such as Qur’anic studies, hadith, Islamic law, philosophy, and interreligious dialogue. This consistency ensures that teaching is informed by current research and that students benefit from up-to-date scholarly perspectives.

The syllabi provided and statements in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) indicate that staff are actively encouraged to integrate research into their teaching. This includes involving students in small research tasks (research papers), thereby fostering early research engagement. During focus group discussions with students, staff, alumni, and external stakeholders conducted during the site visit, participants confirmed that the curriculum encourages and supports student-led research at a manageable scale.

However, despite this positive integration of teaching and research, there are limitations in reaching broader academic audiences. Due to language constraints, much of the research and

student engagement remains confined to the local context. Enhancing staff and student linguistic competence would be key to expanding the visibility and impact of research activities beyond the national level.

ET recommendations:

1. *It is recommended that the FSI management consider introducing a sabbatical scheme for academic staff. Allowing teaching staff to take periodic leave from their teaching responsibilities to focus exclusively on research would support deeper scholarly engagement and contribute to higher-quality research outputs. Such a policy could significantly strengthen the research culture and visibility of FSI, both locally and internationally. (no specific timing is needed)*
2. *ET recommends that the Faculty more actively use its existing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with international institutions to initiate joint research projects and collaborative publications. While the MoUs have already contributed to teaching and student exchange, their potential to foster research partnerships remains underutilized. Strategic planning and follow-up actions could help convert these agreements into meaningful research collaborations. (no specific timing is needed)*
3. *It is recommended that FSI invest in language support—particularly in academic English—for both staff and students for increasing participation in international conferences, publishing in indexed journals, and collaborating with global partners. Addressing this gap would enhance the international visibility and impact of research at FSI. (no specific timing is needed)*
4. *The current regulation on scientific research activity dates back to 2014 and no longer fully reflects the institution's strategic goals or the evolving research landscape. It is recommended that this regulation be reviewed and updated to incorporate clearer guidelines on funding, international publishing, collaborative research, and research ethics aligned with contemporary European standards. (within 2 years)*
5. *To align better with its mission and build research capacity, FSI should develop a formal research strategy that includes measurable goals, target areas for thematic research (e.g., contemporary Islamic issues, interfaith dialogue), and plans for interdisciplinary and international collaboration. This would provide a clear roadmap for faculty development and institutional research growth (within a year)*

7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

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

SER stated and the site visit confirmed that The Faculty of Islamic Studies (FSI) has adequate and modern infrastructure to support the delivery of the Islamic Theology MA program. The building is new, centrally located in Pristina, and well maintained. Classrooms are equipped with projectors, computers, and Smart Boards, and each student has a designated desk and chair. The faculty also has an amphitheater, a computer lab library, shop/coffee, student working areas, socialization areas, and dedicated teacher and administrative offices. All facilities have internet access, and spaces are available for students with disabilities, including an elevator and accessible pathways.

The institution conducts annual inventories of equipment and offers ongoing technical support through a designated staff member. However, the SER also notes some limitations, such as the need for updated technology in the conference hall and the absence of smart tables. Although previous ETs recommended smart boards and tablets, this ET team does not see that these technological tools are needed for MA and even for BA level teaching.

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

FSI has a decent library with over 4,400 titles, including academic and scientific literature in both Albanian and foreign languages. During the site visit new books were added to the library. The students and staff stated that the library sources is enough for them. The collection covers major areas relevant to Islamic Theology, such as hadith, fiqh, Qur'an exegesis, and Islamic philosophy. The library is open daily from 08:00 to 22:00 and includes an electronic database to facilitate access and tracking of resources.

In addition, students are guided in the use of relevant online academic resources. An archive for ancient Arabic-Ottoman manuscripts at display adds to the academic value of the library. Borrowing procedures are formalized and managed by a designated librarian.

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

The Islamic Theology MA program is funded through a financial plan approved by the Kosovo Islamic Community (KMSH). The budget covers staff salaries, equipment, library resources, publishing, and research activities. The SER shows a gradual increase in research funding, from €21,500 in 2022 to €23,000 in 2024, indicating a growing institutional commitment to supporting research.

The budget is prepared by the financial officer, monitored by the faculty management, and audited internally and externally. Although the core funding appears stable and sufficient, the SER mentions the need for further diversification of funding sources, including external grants and donations

ET recommendations:

- 1. Expand access to up-to-date digital resources, academic journal subscriptions, and full-text databases*

FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT TEAM

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

OVERALL EVALUATION AND JUDGMENTS OF THE ET

Based on the sources of information provided by the program and site visit and considering the KAA standards and criterion ET has agreed on reaccrediting the program for 3 years for 30 students.

Chair

Expert Team



M. Aysegul Kozak Çakır

09.05.2025

Member

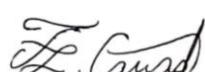


(Signature)

Canan Ünvan

09.05.2025

Member



Fatimazahra Javadzade

09.05.2025