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***Rochester Institute of Technology Kosovo***

**INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION**

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*11<sup>th</sup> of June 2025, Prishtina,*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	2
INTRODUCTION .....	3
Site visit schedule.....	5
A brief overview of the institution under evaluation .....	7
INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION.....	8
1. PUBLIC MISSION AND INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES (ESG 1.1).....	8
2. STRATEGIC PLANNING, GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION (ESG 1.1, ESG 1.6).....	9
3. FINANCIAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT (ESG 1.6) .....	13
4. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, RESPONSIBILITY, AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY (ESG 1.1,ESG1.8) .....	17
5. QUALITY MANAGEMENT (ESG 1.1, ESG 1.2, ESG 1.7, ESG 1.9) .....	19
6. LEARNING AND TEACHING (ESG 1.2, ESG 1.3) .....	23
7. RESEARCH .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
8. STAF, EMPLOYMENT PROCESSES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ESG 15.) .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
9. STUDENT ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES (ESG 1.4, ESG 1.6) .	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
10. LEARNING RESOURCES AND FACILITIES (ESG 1.6) *Mandatory .....	42
11. INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION.....	44

## INTRODUCTION

### Sources of information for the Report:

- *A self-evaluation RITK*
- *B annexes*
  - IE Map REV April 2023
  - Determinants of Youth Entrepreneurship in Kosovo\_Dren Hima
  - RITK Policy Handbook
  - Master Capstone
  - Undergraduate Capstone Project
  - Strategic Plan 2025-2030
  - Honors Capstone to be published
  - Undergraduate Honors Capstone published in 2024
  - Compliance Policy and Code of Ethical Conduct
  - Program Quality Assurance.
  - Online Course Evaluation
  - Faculty Appointments & Promotions
  - Public Benefit Status Certificate
  - Rochester Institute of Technology - Statement of Accreditation Status
  - FT Faculty Contract
  - PT Faculty Contract
  - Principles of Academic Freedom \_ University Policies \_ RIT
  - RIT Kosovo - RIT Contract
  - 50 year lease agreement Municipality of Prishtina
  - AUK-RIT Contract
  - AUK-RIT Marreveshja
  - Policy on Academic Appointment and Promotion RITK
  - Survey results\_2024
  - MOU Erasmus + IBU - RITK
  - MOU Inter-Institutional Mobility Windesheim University Agreement
  - Mou - Montana State University
  - MOU - North Texas
  - MOU DeMoins Community College Iowa
  - MOU Embry Riddle
  - MOU Hamk University
  - MOU International Balkan University

- MOU METU-RITK
- Student Travel Policy
- RITK Organizational Chart AY 2023 2024
- Code of Conduct
- Annual Conflict of Interest Policy Statement-Admin Staff
- Annual Conflict of Interest Policy Statement – Faculty
- SOP-Equal Employment Opportunities
- SOP-Hiring Procedures
- GATF (General Approval Transmittal Form) v2
- Request to Fill a Staff Faculty Form
- Job Application Form
- Employee File Form (1)
- Employee File Form
- Health Insurance Form
- Health Insurance Claim for Reimbursement Form Siguria
- A.U.K Staff Salary Policy
- SOP-Attendance Procedure (1)
- Leave Request Form (1)
- Leave of Absence Request Form (1)
- Overtime Authorization Form (1)
- SOP-Performance Management (1)
- A.U.K Staff Performance Appraisal Form (1)
- SOP-Disciplinary Action Procedure (1)
- SOP-Disciplinary Action Procedure (2)
- 41.a. Disciplinary Action Notice Form (1)
- SOP-Grievance Procedure (1)
- 42.a. Employee Grievance Form (1)
- SOP-Employment Termination Procedure (1)
- Employee Leaving Form (1)
- Employee Exit Checklist (1)
- Employee Exit Interview Form (1)
- SOP\_Ex-employee Tuition Discount (1)
- SOP\_Employee Tuition Discount (1)
- SOP-Dress Code (1)
- Dress Code Memo (1)
- SOP-Use of Social Media (1)
- SOP-Employee Compensation for Involvement in Projects HR (1)
- Salary Compensation through Sponsored Project
- Sample Syllabus (1)
- ANEX A
- Curriculum development

- Dashboard table tracking trend in development of KPIs since last accreditation- RIT K 23 MAY 23- 2025
- Research Strategy of the Faculty
- R.I.T. Kosovo College\_FS\_& Audit Report\_30 June 2024\_FINAL
- Strategies for continuous improvement.
- RUBRIC Express oneself effectively in written forms REV 2023
- RUBRIC Revise and improve written products REV 2019
- RUBRIC Express oneself effectively in presentations REV 2023 fillable
- RUBRIC Demonstrate comprehension accessed through reading REV 2019
- RUBRIC Use Relevant Evidence REV 2019
- Rubric Book FINAL - General Education Framework Outcomes
- RUBRIC Analyze or Construct Arguments REV 2019\_0
- RUBRIC Reach Sound Conclusions REV 2019
- RUBRIC Demonstrate Creative Innovative REV 2019
- RUBRIC Identify Contemporary Ethical Questions REV 2019 01.27.2020
- RUBRIC Interpret and Evaluate Artistic Expression REV 2019
- RUBRIC Examine Connections among World Populations REV 10.2019
- RUBRIC Analyze Human Similarities and Differences REV 2019
- RUBRIC Demonstrate Knowledge of Science REV 2019
- RUBRIC Apply Methods of Scientific Inquiry REV 2019
- RUBRIC Comprehend and Evaluate Math REV 2019
- RUBRIC Perform College Level Math REV 2019

### **Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations**

- *Standards of KAA*
- *Dublin descriptors EHEA*

### **Site visit schedule**

*Insert site visit schedule (as provided by KAA)*

Institutional Re-accreditation Procedure at RIT College	
On site evaluation:	<b>19 May 2025</b>

Expert Team:	Prof. Dr. Pavo Barisic Prof. Dr. Joke Denekens Mrs. Nadia Manzoni
Coordinators of the KAA:	Shpresa Shala Milot Hasanxhekaj

Time	Meeting	Participants/Comments
09:00 – 09:50	Meeting with the management of the institution ( <i>no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion</i> )	Mike Hess, Dr. Albina Balidemaj, Lavon Bajrami, Dr. Edmond Muhamxheri, Lendita Rugova, Xhavit Gashi, Dr. Fadil Sahiti
09:50 – 10:30	Meeting with Quality assurance representatives and administrative services	Medina Orana, Shqiponje Bislimi, Avenda Rexhaj, Doruntine Demiri, Hana Hasimja
10:30 – 11:10	Meeting with Deans of Faculties (Head of programmes in case of smaller colleges)	Dr. Albina Balidemaj, Dr. Leandrit Mehmeti, Dr. Debabrata Samanta
11:10 – 12.10	Lunch break	-
12:20 – 13:20	Visiting tour of the facilities, infrastructure on the main campus and hospitals and clinics	Lavon Bajrami
13:30 – 14:10	Meeting with teaching staff	Dr. Mimoza Polloshka, Dr. Mariel Leclere, Dr. Linda Ziberi, Dr. Venera Demukaj, Dr. Blerta Prevalla Etemi, Dr. Gent Carrabregu, Dr. Krenar Kepuska, Dr. Muzafer Shala, Dr. Mrika Kotorri
14:10 – 15:50	Meeting with students	Rina Hasani, Amela Kajtazi, Indrit Boshnjaku, Xheneta Zeqiri, Nezir Morina, Rilind Kastrati
14:50 – 15:30	Meeting with graduates	Mjellma Doli, Zyfije Mucolli, Drilon Hasani, Aurora Jusufi, Pellumb Hajdari, Rineta Hoxha, Liridon Latifi

15:30 – 16:20	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Astrit Leti, TIVE Inc.; Hana Bacaj, UBO Consulting; Eris Cunaku, KODE Labs; Lavdrim Recica, Gjirafa; Drita Sylejmani, Kosovo Women's Network; Fitim Rama, PECB; Albina Metaj & Kaltrina Haxha, ProCredit Bank.
16:20 – 16:30	Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA	-
16:30 – 16:40	Closing meeting with the management of the institution	Mike Hess, Dr. Albina Balidemaj, Lavon Bajrami, Dr. Edmond Muhamxheri, Lendita Rugova, Xhavit Gashi, Dr. Fadil Sahiti

### **A brief overview of the institution under evaluation**

*Insert general information about the institution, its legal status, its mission, the study programs it is offering, and others.*

RITK is part /member of the network of international higher education institutions of the Rochester Institute of Technology New York, a private research university in the United States of America, which provides undergraduate and graduate degrees, including doctoral and professional degrees and online masters as well.

The cooperation with RIT New York is very strong with often the same tools, procedures, processes, financial system etc. The institution has a robust management system inclusive the quality assurance system.

The mission is well defined in the 3 pillars of higher education: teaching, research and social outreach. The strategic plan is aligned with the mission and worked out in annual plans with defined goals, allocated budget and responsible persons and structures. The aim is to educate youngsters to become leaders in society to make a positive societal impact.

Ethical values are core business and staff as well as students are well informed about the expectations about ethical conduct and values as respect, integrity, honesty, inclusiveness, responsibility.

RIT Kosovo offers three (3) study programmes, two at the undergraduate level and one at the master's level. Students in all Bachelor of Science degree programs are required to complete 60 credit hours in General Education, in the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree programs 30 credit hours are required.

This general education framework gives students the opportunity to "taste" introductions of liberal arts and sciences in a way they can better decide to go in depth in more advanced courses and clusters of related courses.

The institution wants to go for more research-based education and for optimal societal outreach in order to deliver graduates fit for purpose in the workplaces and to take leaderships roles in society.

## **INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION**

*The institutional evaluation consists of 11 standard areas through which the institution is evaluated.*

### **1. PUBLIC MISSION AND INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES (ESG 1.1)**

*(Please insert detailed comments, observations, commendations, and suggestions for improvement regarding the general area and its corresponding standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation Manual. The evaluation must take into account the adequacy of the processes and the results achieved under each standard, considering both their individual impact and their cumulative effect on the general area.*

*In order to assess the level of compliance (non-compliance, partial, substantial or full, for each general area, you must evaluate the standards outlined within that area. Indicators are essential in determining whether a standard is fulfilled. Therefore, the evaluation should include a detailed review of each standard, considering its respective indicators, followed by a general assessment of how the standards collectively address the overall general area. The expert team must ensure that each indicator is elaborated within the report in two to three sentences).*

**Standard 1.1 The higher education institution has a well-defined mission statement that comprises three main pillars: teaching, research, and community service and it is publicly available.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

RIT Kosovo has a well-defined mission statement. The institution aims to deliver “comprehensive and future-oriented educational experience that equips students with the critical thinking, creative, and problem-solving skills necessary to navigate an increasingly complex global environment”. (SER)

Furthermore, there is a commitment to research excellence as a cornerstone of institutional identity, with a focus also on interdisciplinary research.

The institution wants to engage in community service initiatives and social responsibility in order to make a positive social impact. They want to promote “social cohesion, economic development, and cultural understanding. By instilling a sense of civic duty and fostering community engagement among our students, we prepare them to serve as agents of positive change within their communities and beyond”.

During interviews the expert team has been convinced of a participatory process to build the mission and vision not only with internal stakeholders (teachers, administrative staff and students), but also with external stakeholders.

**Standard 1.2 The institutional mission is clearly reflected in the strategic plan, decision making and long-term institutional objectives.**

Evidence for alignment of the mission with the strategies to steer is found in the strategic plan 2025, research plan and in the Statute-2030. Implementation is well elaborated over the 5 years and is ambitious but also realistic. The institution is already under way to realize the defined goals, and the expert team has established that there is continuity in the mission and vision of developing new programs and in the operation of the quality assurance system.

Several examples of the action plan were highlighted during interviews. The challenge will be the integration of the 3 pillars, teaching, research and societal outreach, in well-defined research-based projects for “all” students in cooperation with external partners and community.

**ET recommendations:** *no recommendations*

**2. STRATEGIC PLANNING, GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION (ESG 1.1, ESG 1.6)**

*(Please insert detailed comments, observations, commendations, and suggestions for improvement regarding the general area and its corresponding standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation Manual. The evaluation must take into account the adequacy of the processes and the results achieved under each standard, considering both their individual impact and their cumulative effect on the general area.*

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**Standard 2.1 The HEI has developed a comprehensive strategic plan that covers all aspects of its operations for a minimum of five years. This plan includes teaching, learning, research, artistic work, quality assurance, student services, investment in infrastructure, and community service initiatives, leadership, HR, internationalization etc. The plan was created in consultation with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure it meets the needs of all parties involved.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

A comprehensive (teaching, research, social services, infrastructure, HR, management, financing etc..) Strategic Plan 2025–2030 has been developed and adopted focusing on global partnerships, interdisciplinary research, quality education, and digital transformation.

The SER and the dashboard table with KPI's show evidence for development of the revised goals over the coming 5 years with yearly action plans and allocation of budget, KPI's aligned with the goals to follow progress and linked with the information management system to be able to remediate in case of new challenges.

**Standard 2.2 Strategic planning is supported by the annual and long-term budgeting process, allowing for frequent updates and adjustments.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

The institution works constantly on the basis of the information and feedback of the information management system in order to realize progress in the defined goals.

11 new committees and boards to steer the defined goals are installed.

During the interviews, the expert team is convinced of a systematic and well-established approach of the strategic plan. The dashboard gives a summary of the goals and the respective actions and foreseen outcomes and gives the possibility to adapt and review the strategies to tackle possible threats as demonstrated by the abrupt stop of the USAIDs programs.

The institution has made the transition to the RIT New York financial model. Risk assessment is implemented. 3 externally audited reports (2022, 2023, 2024) are published. Annual fundraising events in New York and Prishtina raised funds for 40+ scholarship. Major investments in STEM labs, AI tools, TDI projects and training programs are made.

**Standard 2.3 The HEI has established a responsible, efficient, and effective internal organization structure, procedures and policies, with the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

The self-evaluation report and the annexes show the transparency of policies, procedures, responsibilities of staff and top management and the organigram with all structures, committees and boards with their respective responsibilities. All documents and policies are publicly available. The expert team has found evidence of efficiency and effectiveness of the internal organization in the documents (HEI statute, regulations on job descriptions) and during interviews during the site visit. Students and staff are represented in consultative and decision-making bodies. During interviews it was obvious that students have opportunities to be active members of different bodies and committees with the right to vote. The procedures and processes to elect student representatives on committees and boards are transparent, fair and free from discrimination. The organigram shows that structures are in place to give students enough opportunities to be involved in decision-making processes. Although the external stakeholders were very positive about the cooperation with the institution and especially of the quality of the graduates, they didn't have the impression they are actively involved in the decision-making processes whereas the expert team has seen and heard that decisions are taken according to and aligned with the information of the external stakeholders. More consistent information needs to be communicated in the future.

The institution ensures distinct roles for management and academic staff. Policies and decision-making procedures for both are well defined. Academic freedom is guaranteed.

**Standard 2.4 The HEI has appropriate and sufficient administration that demonstrates effectiveness and supports the HEI in daily operations.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

During interviews the expert team was convinced that support of the administration in learning processes is ensured. Each staff member has a clearly defined job description that outlines their major tasks and the required qualifications, ensuring they are well-equipped and specialized in fulfilling their duties.

A set of policies and regulations is developed in the Employee Policy Handbook. A faculty handbook includes policies related to faculty employment, processes, performance, promotion, etc. All HR Procedures and related forms are accessible to all employees through the shared drive in campus server and through online access on the website.

The administration extensively utilizes digital platforms to facilitate efficient internal and external communication regarding administrative and academic affairs: outlook for email communication, teams for virtual meetings and collaboration, OneDrive for cloud storage and file sharing, the website and various social media channels for broader communication and engagement.

Training programs are provided by the Faculty Development Center and through the Training and Development Institute (TDI), which provides an extensive array of training programs.

All these services are available for all employees free of charge. At the beginning of each year, a formal request is sent to all staff members to identify and list the training programs they wish to undertake.

Strategies for demonstrating continuous improvement are defined in order to find evidence of implementation of the content of the training courses. No results on an aggregated level have been seen by the expert team.

In order to reach the ambitious goals of the strategic plan, the expert team recommends offering a set of training courses aligned with the strategic goals to ensure implementation of innovative processes with efficiency and effectiveness. This will be necessary, for example, for implementation of the nexus between teaching, research and societal outreach into transformational learning.

Administrative staff undergo semi-annual performance evaluations. There are standardized forms used for these evaluations from students and academic staff, and all completed forms are made available. These evaluations are used for decision-making and planning processes, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement within the administration. RIT Kosovo has developed a set of policies and regulations in the Employee Policy Handbook approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2015. Furthermore, a faculty handbook includes policies related to faculty employment, processes, performance, promotion, etc. All HR Procedures and related forms are accessible to all employees through the shared drive in campus server and through online access on the website.

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. In order to reach the ambitious goals of the strategic plan, the expert team recommends offering a set of training courses aligned with the strategic goals to ensure implementation of innovative processes with efficiency and effectiveness. This will be necessary, for example, for implementation of the nexus teaching, research and social outreach as transformational learning.*

**3. FINANCIAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT (ESG 1.6)**

*(Please insert detailed comments, observations, commendations, and suggestions for improvement regarding the general area and its corresponding standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation Manual. The evaluation must take into account the adequacy of the processes and the results achieved under each standard, considering both their individual impact and their cumulative effect on the general area.*

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**Standard 3.1 The HEI demonstrates that it has sufficient financial resources in the short and medium term to reach its mission and objectives set out in the strategic plan and can demonstrate financial sustainability.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

3.1.1. The Expert Team (ET) was able to verify during the onsite visit of the RIT Kosovo, as it is elaborated in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), that the institution possesses considerable financial resources which provide income from various streams. In addition to income from tuition fees, significant funds are secured from research and project grants, training revenues, and donations.

3.1.2. The annual budget is detailed and realistic. It is aligned with strategic goals. A comprehensive five-year budget plan has been carefully developed, explaining financial needs and projected revenues. Long-term planning and a realistic annual plan enable satisfactory

financial sustainability of the institution. The financial plan is reviewed and updated annually. The SER presents the budget for the five fiscal years 2024/25 – 2028/29. The budget includes the Income Statement, as well as Capital Expenses and Retained Earnings over the years. Retained earnings are invested in merit scholarships and financial aid. As of June 2023, RIT Kosovo's reserves (equity) amounted to EUR 3.107 million. The institution maintains a favourable level of liquidity, with a current ratio of 2.51, indicating its operational efficiency and financial sustainability.

3.1.3. The ET confirms that RIT Kosovo demonstrates financial sustainability and efficiency in all its operations and levels in line with its mission. The budgeting and forecasting process is applied to all operational and non-operational types of funds in RIT Kosovo. There is a well-developed procedure for ensuring and monitoring the implementation of the financial management of the institution.

3.1.4. The ET notes that the funding sources and funding conditions are transparent and do not limit institutional autonomy and encourage flexibility to adapt to all planned activities in line with the strategic plan. RIT Kosovo publicly discloses its funding sources in its annual financial report, including the amount received from each source, such as donations. During the on-site visit, the ET members inspected the impressive laboratories for physics, electrical engineering/robotics, and chemistry and biology, which are funded by donations from American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

### **Standard 3.2 The HEI ensures appropriate funding for educational activities.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

3.2.1. The ET finds that all three existing RIT Kosovo degree programmes have solid financial plans that guarantee their sustainability for at least the next five years. For each programme, there is a detailed financial plan that covers projected revenues from tuition, faculty salaries, laboratory maintenance, technology upgrades, and other supporting requirements. The financial plan is reviewed annually and demonstrates that the programmes will remain financially sustainable for at least the next five years.

3.2.2. According to SER, as the ET was able to ascertain during the interviews with representatives of RIT Kosovo, the institution receives additional funding for its study programmes through partnerships with local communities, business partners, and participation in national and international projects. Staff and faculty are actively encouraged to participate in projects such as ERASMUS+, US-sponsored scholarships, such as Fulbright and other university scholarships. Academic partnerships and project funds supplement the institution's budget, providing additional funds to enhance study programmes without relying solely on tuition fees.

3.2.3. RIT Kosovo allocates additional financial resources to the development and improvement of its study programmes and especially external collaborations. An

interdisciplinary project has been launched in which students from different study programmes collaborate with industry experts on real-practical problems. As part of the studies, students are required to accept paid employment, which brings students into direct communication with industry experts. These projects include guest lectures by experts, specialised workshops and international exchange opportunities.

3.2.4. Adequate funds are allocated for the acquisition, cataloguing and development of equipment, services and systems to improve teaching and learning resources. As part of the annual budget, teaching staff are asked to submit a request for laboratory equipment, art tools, computer software, etc. Available research funds are also included.

**Standard 3.3. The HEI has officially approved a research budget that is sufficient to support its institutional research objectives, including funds for research equipment and facilities.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

3.3.1. The ET was impressed during the on site visit by the modern laboratories, lecture rooms and library, which were equipped with USAID funds. See evaluation of standard 10.1. and 10.2. RIT Kosovo has an appropriate process for properly verifying funds allocated for specific research purposes through accounting systems to ensure that they are used accordingly. A financial tracking system is implemented that follows research funds from the time they are allocated to the time they are spent. Reports are generated that show detailed expenditures against the allocated budget. Discrepancies are flagged for review, ensuring that all research funds are used as intended. In addition, the institution uses an external auditor who conducts regular audits.

3.3.2. RIT Kosovo continuously improves the conditions for education and research. There is an annual review of research infrastructure needs, which leads to regular investments in state-of-the-art equipment and facilities. For example, the institution recently allocated funds for the construction of a new research laboratory equipped with the latest technology for environmental science research. In addition, funding is provided to support faculty participation in international conferences, workshops and training programmes, ensuring they remain up to date with the latest research methodologies and educational practices.

**Standard 3.4 A senior governing body (or Specialized Office) is responsible for overseeing and managing the institution's budgeting and accounting functions. They ensure that financial auditing reports are regularly prepared and published.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

3.4.1. RIT Kosovo has established a separate Finance Committee for internal audit purposes, which provides quarterly internal reports to review the current financial status. These audits include verifying that funds allocated to departments, research projects, and other initiatives are being spent in accordance with approved budgets. Non-conformities are reported to senior management and corrective action is taken as necessary. Findings are compiled into a report that is shared with the Board of Directors and made available to external auditors, ensuring transparency and accountability.

3.4.2. As explained in the SER, RIT Kosovo is audited by external auditors twice a year, in the calendar year and in the fiscal year from 1 July to 30 June. Financial statements are prepared based on International Financial Accounting Standards. All recommendations are reviewed by management. The Finance Office of RIT Kosovo, managed by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), prepares a detailed annual financial report comparing actual expenditures with the approved budget for each department and project. The report also includes an analysis of how these variances affect the overall financial health of the institution, with recommendations for adjustments in the budget for the following fiscal year. The reports are submitted to the Board of Directors and are essential for maintaining financial discipline and planning for future financial needs.

#### **ET recommendations:**

- 1. Acknowledging the progress resulting from RIT Kosovo's significant investments in laboratories, artificial intelligence tools, and training programmes, the ET recommends that these good practices be sustained and further developed to support the institution's mission and strategic goals.*
- 2. The ET commends the substantial donations RIT Kosovo has received for laboratories and lecture facilities, with special recognition of the contributions from the USAID. In anticipation of any potential reduction in support from this foundation, the ET recommends that RIT Kosovo proactively pursue alternative funding sources in the United States, Europe, and Kosovo.*
- 3. During its conversation with alumni, the ET was impressed by their support for the institution and recommends the establishment of an RIT Kosovo Alumni Association. Among other functions, this association could play a key role in raising funds for scholarships and institutional development.*
- 4. The ET recommends the continued expansion of RIT Kosovo's fundraising network, particularly to support scholarships aimed at increasing of international students.*

#### **4. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, RESPONSIBILITY, AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY (ESG 1.1 ESG1.8)**

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##### **Standard 4.1 The HEI has policies and effective mechanisms for monitoring unethical behaviour and all the employees and students are informed thereof.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

Five important areas of academic discipline are defined: (1) academic freedom, (2) transparent employment procedures, (3) core essentials for teaching, scholarship, and service, (4) maintenance of high-quality faculty instructors, and (5) faculty and student integrity.

Documents such as “Principles of Academic Freedom and Compliance Policy” and “Code of Ethical Conduct” act as safeguards in the maintenance of ethical standards. These documents are available on the website and at the start of the academic year students are informed about the content of the Code of Ethics.

During interview with top management, the expert team was convinced of the efforts that have been made and are made to inform all existing staff members (yearly signing the statement about the ethical conduct), and all new employees are required to read and sign the policies when they sign their employment contract. Detailed procedures for detecting and addressing academic dishonesty are outlined in the Academic Bulletin 2023-2024, providing clear guidance on the consequences of such behavior. A training program aimed at raising awareness among all employees on the content of the policy of ethical conduct will be offered. The Academic Bulletin 2024-2025 provides detailed examples of procedures, including documented cases, where students have faced consequences for academic dishonesty, such as failing grades or academic suspension.

The monitoring of cases is done by the RITK Compliance Officer, who ensures proper implementation of the Code of Conduct. The committee of conduct has a pivotal role in the

process in resolving disputes and enforcing disciplinary measures. A student Ombudsman is in place.

During interviews the expert team was impressed with the strong emphasis on upholding academic integrity and freedom as fundamental principles of educational philosophy. This commitment is reflected in the institution's continuous efforts to uphold the integrity of both faculty and students, ensuring a trustworthy and ethically sound academic community. Mechanisms for detection are in place and systematically used by staff and students, communication about the code of conduct is a continuous effort, mechanisms for prevention are in place, reporting mechanisms and responsible people are in place in order to manage conflicts and resolve irregularities by Disciplinary Regulations.

Procedures are defined for detecting plagiarism, academic cheating, and the forging of results. Turnitin program is used for detecting plagiarism.

A clear procedure for intellectual property ownership from the commercialization of ideas developed by academic staff and students is in place.

**Standard 4.2. The HEI ensures the availability of information on important aspects of its activities (teaching, scientific/artistic and social activities).**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

The institution provides comprehensive information on its academic staff, their research activities and interests, teaching programs with intended learning outcomes, student enrollment, awarded qualifications, assessment procedures, student rights and responsibilities, available services and facilities, program pass rates, diverse learning opportunities, graduate employment prospects, scholarships, options, ongoing research projects, tuition and administrative fees and social engagements on the institutional website. This information is also available through various communication channels such as social media, brochures, flyers, and open days. The Faculty Development Center page elaborates on the professional development opportunities available to academic staff.

Only the theses of honor students are published in a publicly accessible repository, which is managed by the main RIT campus in New York. This policy is consistent across all global campuses of RIT, ensuring that the highest quality work is showcased and accessible to a broader audience. This approach not only highlights the exceptional work of honor students but also aligns with the institution's commitment to academic excellence and transparency.

The institution informs stakeholders about the outcomes of previous evaluations, for example, the results of the internal audits done by external parties to ensure objectivity and integrity. The audit findings and recommendations are reviewed, and actions are taken to address any issues. In this way the institution gives insight into its performance and areas for improvement.

The creation of the Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) in September 2022 has further enhanced transparency. The IAC, comprising industry professionals, meets each semester to discuss activities and program evaluations, providing valuable feedback and input on how to better align the programs with market needs. The creation of the Industry Advisory Committee is a good practice in the opinion of the expert committee.

**ET recommendations:**

1. *The expert team recommends that all theses must be made publicly accessible after a public defence.*

## **5. QUALITY MANAGEMENT (ESG 1.1, ESG 1.2, ESG 1.7, ESG 1.9)**

*(Please insert detailed comments, observations, commendations, and suggestions for improvement regarding the general area and its corresponding standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation Manual. The evaluation must take into account the adequacy of the processes and the results achieved under each standard, considering both their individual impact and their cumulative effect on the general area.*

*In order to assess the level of compliance (non-compliance, partial, substantial or full, for each general area, you must evaluate the standards outlined within that area. Indicators are essential in determining whether a standard is fulfilled. Therefore, the evaluation should include a detailed review of each standard, considering its respective indicators, followed by a general assessment of how the standards collectively address the overall general area).*

### **Standard 5.1 The HEI has established and implemented a highly structured and efficient quality assurance and improvement system, which is continuously being improved.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

The institution has a quality assurance and improvement system in place. The PDCA methodology is used to implement a continuous process of quality assurance and improvement. 5 areas of academic discipline are defined: academic freedom, transparent employment procedures, core essentials for teaching, scholarship and service, maintenance of high-quality faculty instructors and faculty and student integrity. According to the SER collective responsibility is achieved through involvement in departmental meetings, faculty councils, and various sub-committees and working groups at institutional and departmental levels. Multiple measures are used to monitor the quality of teaching, such as peer reviews, student evaluations, and classroom observations. The expert team recommends proving the effectiveness of teaching processes more explicitly by the results of mastering the intended learning outcomes by graduates. The expert team recommends a validation of assessment methods and choices of different tools to judge overall knowledge, skills and attitudes, and, especially to evaluate more on competence level. The quality of the thesis is one of the most important tools to realize that graduates are indeed social change agents.

Also, for the effectiveness of the training courses for teachers more attention can be paid to the implementation of the intended learning outcomes of the training courses. Following training is not a guarantee to implement changes in teaching habits or to work with new didactic methods.

Research activities are evaluated by the number of publications in journals with peer review and by significant research contributions.

Measures for effectiveness and efficiency of outcomes of societal engagement is not yet in place, not for teachers and not for students.

The institution has established a dedicated Quality Committee and Quality Management. These units include representatives from faculty, administration, and other stakeholders, ensuring diverse perspectives and expertise in decision-making. The Quality Committee and Quality Management have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, including the oversight of teaching evaluations, scholarly assessments, and service contributions within the institution.

The responsibilities of these units extend to monitoring the effectiveness of teaching methods and curricular innovations, evaluating scholarly contributions such as publications and research projects, and assessing the impact of service activities on both the university community and broader society. This structured approach ensures that quality assurance practices at RIT Kosovo are comprehensive, consistent, and aligned with institutional goals and standards.

Financial resources are allocated for conducting evaluations of teaching practices, scholarly activities, and service contributions. Technological infrastructure supports data collection, analysis, and reporting, facilitating evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement initiatives. Human resources are dedicated to overseeing quality assurance processes, including faculty members and administrative staff responsible for conducting evaluations, documenting outcomes, and implementing necessary improvements.

Feedback from external reviews and the Industry Advisory Committee informs strategic planning and decision-making processes at RIT Kosovo, guiding efforts to align with international standards and best practices in higher education.

**Standard 5.2 The HEI has quality policies and procedures that include the collection and analysis of relevant data, with the purpose of ensuring and improving the quality of all institutional activities (academic activity, student services, administration, etc.). These procedures include all stakeholders of the higher education institution (students and external stakeholders - employers, alumni, representatives of professional organizations, civil society organizations and internal stakeholders).**

The institution systematically collects data about the 5 domains defined in the quality system. The PDVA cycle is well followed and mostly the loop is closed. The focus could be stronger on the effectiveness and efficiency of the processes.

The expert team recommends giving students more feedback about what has changed according to their remarks in the student evaluations.

The expert team recommends defining learning outcomes for social services activities and to focus on the outcome for society. In this way transformational learning will become a realistic highlight of the programs.

The institution collects, analyses and compares data about numbers and profile of student population, graduation rates, GPA distribution for students, about quality of teachers by graduates, about job placement and career services, experiences with facilities, educational experience (satisfaction). The institution works with a central database under the umbrella of RIT main and with the system of KPI to follow progress of quality and to define areas for improvement. Annual reports are written with analysis of data and conclusions to steer the changes that have to be made. The responsibilities of the management (top and middle) are well defined in specific roles and responsibilities.

Students are encouraged to actively participate in quality assurance processes.

Student evaluations have to be filled in order for students to be accepted for regular assessment.

**Standard 5.3 The HEI established a formal process for the design and approval of its study programs.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

Evidence is found in the self evaluation and during interviews of the implementation of a continuous process of quality enhancement as daily practice. Students are actively involved in quality assurance processes as are academic and administrative staff. Special attention is dedicated to the implementation of good ideas and expectations of external stakeholders.

The expert team is enthusiastic about the implementation of the Sixteen General Education Student Learning outcomes. The table with corresponding rubrics for measuring the outcome is outstanding.

The possibility for at least a semester or a year to go to another RIT institution is very positive, to experience internationalization, which is not self-evident in Kosovo.

Furthermore, the School of individualized study deserves great attention, because this is an evolution in higher education that has to be supported more and more. It is about alignment of study programs with demands on the labor market and with desires and expectations of the students.

**Standard 5.4 The HEI periodically monitors and reviews the study programs to ensure that the programs are in line with mission and the institutional strategy. The monitoring of the study programs involves active stakeholder participation.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

Necessary information from stakeholders is systematically collected and used to enhance the study programs.

The SER and the annexes give evidence that information is collected about student workload, academic success, resources, achievement of learning outcomes and employment of graduates. Also, for closing the loop of the PDCA evidence is found in several examples in the SER. Results of questionnaires are systematically analysed and conclusions serve to define action to be taken. With the KPI dashboard, follow-up is guaranteed, and progress can be measured. The ET recommends putting more systematically attention to effectiveness and efficiency of the defined actions, especially in domains that are more difficult to measure as for example the outcome of societal outreach activities and the realization of intended learning outcomes of the activities. More transparency about ECTS allocation is desirable.

The quality of student internships is clearly defined with intended learning outcomes and highly motivated mentors from external stakeholders, who are also involved in judging the competencies of the students. Feedback from the mentor is essential as the ET heard during the interview with external stakeholders. Results of the monitoring processes are communicated to all stakeholders on the website. More can be done to give more explicit information about the results of questionnaires and what has been done with those results, especially to students and external stakeholders. All programs are published on the website.

**ET recommendations:**

1. *The expert team recommends proving the effectiveness of teaching processes more explicitly through assessing the mastery of intended learning outcomes on competence level for each course.*
2. *To improve the effectiveness of the training courses for teachers, more attention should be paid to the mastering of the intended learning outcomes of the training courses. Following a training is not a guarantee that changes will be implemented into teaching habits or that teachers will work with new didactic methods.*
3. *Research activities should not only be evaluated according to the number of publications in peer reviewed journals and by significant research contributions, but also by the monitoring of acquired grants, and all sources of financial support brought in by the academic staff.*
4. *More can be done to evaluate effectiveness and efficiency of quality assurance processes. The quality of the quality system has to be monitored on tools level, process level, outcome level.*
5. *Measures for effectiveness and efficiency of outcomes of societal engagement are not yet in place, not for teachers and not for students.*
6. *The expert team recommends to give students more feedback about what has changed as a result of their remarks in the student evaluations.*
7. *The expert team recommends to define learning outcomes for societal engagement activities and to focus on the outcome for society. In this way transformational learning will become a realistic outcome of the programs as to educate the leaders of the future.*

**6. LEARNING AND TEACHING (ESG 1.2, ESG 1.3)**

*(Please insert detailed comments, observations, commendations, and suggestions for improvement regarding the general area and its corresponding standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation Manual. The evaluation must take into account the adequacy of the processes and the results achieved under each standard, considering both their individual impact and their cumulative effect on the general area.*

*In order to assess the level of compliance (non-compliance, partial, substantial or full, for each general area, you must evaluate the standards outlined within that area. Indicators are essential in determining whether a standard is fulfilled. Therefore, the evaluation should include a detailed review of each standard, considering its respective indicators, followed by a general assessment of how the standards collectively address the overall general area).*

**Standard 6.1 The HEI has established policies and procedures that apply to all study programs. The institution actively monitors the implementation of these policies and procedures to ensure their effective realization.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

6.1.1. As described in the SER and confirmed by members of the ET during the on-site visit, RIT Kosovo has established an appropriate framework for quality assurance and key performance indicators (KPIs) for its study programmes. This corresponds to the framework implemented by RIT's main campus in Rochester. The performance of each programme is evaluated using these KPIs, which are reviewed annually by senior administrator staff, the institution's quality committee, and the senior academic committee. The results of the evaluations are formally reported to RIT Kosovo's governing bodies, including the Board of Trustees, ensuring transparency and accountability in academic performance. All programmes offered at RIT Kosovo adhere to RIT's sixteen general educational outcomes for students aligned with the General Education Framework. A list of these outcomes and the corresponding rubric for measuring the outcomes is provided in the Appendix to the SER.

6.1.2. The SER describes that RIT Kosovo's academic programmes are carefully monitored and supported by internal structures. They are aligned with institutional academic standards. The ET confirms that the institution implements a robust campus-wide process to support student learning and continuous programme improvement. The process includes the collection and analysis of an annual academic programme improvement progress report, which provides a comprehensive overview of academic quality and student achievement. The reports are used to make informed decisions and implement changes that improve student learning and programme effectiveness. Academic programme outcomes available through RIT's School of Individualised Study are included in the SER.

6.1.3. The ET notes that RIT Kosovo has established appropriate internal structures which foster the development of effective and innovative pedagogical technologies. The institution continuously reviews teaching methodologies and curriculum innovations to ensure their effectiveness. The Office of Educational Effectiveness Assessment at RIT Main New York plays a key role in this process by evaluating submissions to determine how data-driven changes are being implemented to improve student learning, pedagogy, curriculum, programmes, services, and assessment processes. The annual review process ensures that student achievement criteria are being met and that necessary adjustments are being made to maintain high educational standards. RIT Kosovo demonstrates a meaningful campus-wide process to support student learning and programme improvement as set forth by RIT Main.

**Standard 6.2 The study programs' intended learning outcomes are formulated clearly, precisely, and comprehensively according to the best practices; they are aligned with the**

**published mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution, and they are publicly available. \*Mandatory**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

6.2.1. The ET verified during the onsite visit that all three-degree programmes offered by RIT Kosovo have well-developed learning outcomes. Information is also elaborated in the SER for each programme.

6.2.2. In the detailed descriptions of the learning outcomes attached to the SER RIT Kosovo proves that they are aligned with the general goals and objectives of the study programmes. Undergraduate Program Learning Outcomes. RIT's General Education Framework provides students with courses that meet specific general education learning outcomes approved by the university and the requirements of the New York State Department of Education for the Liberal Arts and Sciences. Students in all Bachelor of Science programmes must complete a minimum of 60 credit hours in general education; students in all Bachelor of Fine Arts programmes must complete a minimum of 30 credit hours in general education. The Master of Science in Professional Studies Learning Outcomes describe what would be expected to attain within a few years of graduation. Learning Objectives are based on the needs of the programme's constituencies.

6.2.3. The ET is pleased to confirm that the intended learning outcomes of the study programs are written from the student's perspective and distinguish between knowledge, skills and competences. They are published and explained on the RIT Kosovo's website.

6.2.4. The ET hereby confirms that RIT Kosovo demonstrates that it used examples of good practice in defining intended learning outcomes. However, it was basically oriented towards the American higher education system and secondary to the European system.

6.2.5. In SER, the intended learning outcomes are exemplarily presented, including appropriately the development of generic and specific competencies. They are elaborated according to skills, knowledge and values.

6.2.6. The SER explains that the expected learning outcomes of the RIT Kosovo study programmes are comparable to similar study programmes in the EHEA. However, the programme offered at RIT Kosovo is a US-based degree and does not fall within the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework. Credits are transferable within the QF-EHEA. The RIT Kosovo programme falls within the framework set out in the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo, which recognises the Commission on Higher Education in Secondary Education as part of the US CHEA, and is in line with the National Qualifications Framework.

**Standard 6.3 The HEI demonstrates that each study program is designed considering the correlations between learning outcomes, teaching methodology and assessment. \*Mandatory**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

6.3.1. RIT Kosovo offers three (3) study programmes, two (2) at the undergraduate level and one at the master's level. The study programmes are presented in the form of a series of documents that include: general and specific programme objectives; curriculum, with subject weight expressed in ECTS credits and courses distributed over the study period; thematic programs and syllabi that express learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and values achieved by the course; assessment methods for each course taking into account the intended learning outcomes.

6.3.2. RIT Kosovo has a very well-developed collaborative approach between departments. The ET was able to verify during the onsite visit that the successful implementation of interdisciplinary study programmes is ensured. Student mobility within the institution is facilitated through credit transfer and accumulation of ETCS credits. In addition to credit transfer between departments within the institution, all courses offered by RIT are transferable within all other universities in the United States and abroad, but not automatically within the EU. Students are guaranteed a place of at least one semester to one year at any other RIT campus in the world at the same tuition rate. RIT Kosovo has articulated agreements with several other universities in the United States, Europe, Asia, and the region to increase student mobility.

6.3.3. As evident from the SER, the structure of the degree programs is flexible and allows each student to choose a course of study that matches their interests and skills. Students work closely with Faculty and professional advisors to design unique, multidisciplinary plans of study that combine several areas of academic knowledge and interest. The Applied Arts and Sciences programme is particularly well-suited for individuals who wish to prepare for a career that requires skills and expertise from several disciplines.

6.3.4. During the onsite visit, the ET obtained evidence that the content of the study programmes at RIT Kosovo is regularly updated with the latest scientific research findings, which are also carried out by the teachers themselves. The content of the study programmes is continuously updated to adapt to all new knowledge, changes in the field of study arising from scientific research and changes in the environment.

#### **Standard 6.4 The HEI ensures that ECTS allocation is appropriate.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

6.4.1. The study programmes at RIT Kosovo are American based degrees that do not fall under the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework. However, they are

harmonised with it and the credits are transferable within the QF-EHEA following a case-by-case assessment by receiving institutions (not automatically)

6.4.2. Courses at RIT Kosovo have ECTS credits calculated in accordance with the actual student workload, based on feedback analyses from teaching stakeholders.

**Standard 6.5 The study program's intended learning outcomes comply with the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework level descriptors.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

6.5.1. RIT Kosovo proves that its study programmes' learning outcomes comply with the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework level descriptors.

6.5.2. RIT Kosovo proves that the learning outcomes for graduate-level study programmes differ from the learning outcomes achieved at undergraduate-level study programmes.

6.5.3. RIT Kosovo proves that the study programme's learning outcomes are aligned with the level and profile of qualifications gained.

**Standard 6.6 If the HEI study programs lead to degrees in regulated professions, they are aligned with the national and EU Directives and recommendations issued by the national and international professional associations.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

6.6.1. RIT Kosovo states that the study programmes are harmonised with the prescribed conditions defined in EU directives. However, the ECTS points are not clearly defined for the courses.

6.6.2. RIT Kosovo proves that it takes into account and applies the recommendations issued by the professional associations. RIT Kosovo has established an Industry Advisory Board consisting of 9 industry members who meet regularly every semester. The role of the Industry Advisory Board is to assist RIT Kosovo in producing graduates that are needed in the labour market. The advisory board participates in the validation of program outcomes and learning outcomes of the programme and in the evaluation of the overall success of the programme.

**Standard 6.7 The higher education institution ensures student-centred teaching and learning.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

6.7.1. The ET gained insight during the onsite visit that RIT Kosovo encourages diverse pedagogical methods in delivering study programmes in line with learning outcomes. The Centre for Teacher Development promotes best practices in pedagogical teaching and is used to ensure that all academic staff are involved in training activities on the latest available resources and teaching aids.

6.7.2. At RIT Kosovo, students experience a variety of the latest learning methods, which stimulate interactive and inquiry-based learning, problem solving, and creative and critical thinking. SER describes examples of flipped teaching, the use of the latest technology or the use of Pearson Education web platforms, in an environment where student engagement is encouraged to develop a more critical and analytical approach to thinking.

6.7.3. By attending a graduation ceremony rehearsal and visiting several lecture halls during the on-site visit, the ET confirms that RIT Kosovo employs student-centred learning methods and fosters a supportive environment that encourages motivation, self-reflection, and active engagement in the learning process.

6.7.4. At RIT Kosovo, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the programme are continuously measured through online course evaluations. Graduate surveys at the end of studies, alumni surveys, and employer surveys during student internships are conducted. The results of the surveys are evaluated by the head of the relevant department.

6.7.5 At RIT Kosovo, teaching methods are appropriately adapted to the diverse student population.

6.7.6. The ET visited the laboratories and teaching premises of RIT Kosovo and can confirm that the institution does indeed enable the delivery of study programmes using up-to-date technology. Employees are also encouraged to take advantage of all courses and training provided through TDI to assist them in their professional development.

**Standard 6.8 The HEI ensures that evaluation and assessment are objective and consistent and ensures that intended learning outcomes are achieved. (ESG 1.3.)**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

6.8.1. RIT Kosovo applies elaborate assessment methods, as well as grading criteria. These are published in advance and communicated to all students. The standard of work required is consistent across courses and aligned with the same standards used at RIT's main campus as a benchmark.

6.8.2. RIT Kosovo supports academic staff in developing skills related to testing and assessment methods. My-Courses learning management system provides comprehensive

support for weighted and point-based grading systems that facilitate a variety of methods for aggregating scores for individual student assessments into a final numerical grade from 0 to 100 and allows for the definition of multiple grading schemes for mapping from a numerical scale from 0 to achievement levels, which can be used for both individual assignment and final course grades.

6.8.3. The thoroughly elaborated numerical assessment methods at RIT Kosovo ensure objectivity and reliability associated with the applied evaluation and monitoring system.

6.8.4. The SER does not explain in more detail whether and how students receive feedback on the results of the evaluation that identifies their strengths and weaknesses.

**Standard 6.9 The HEI ensures that a functional procedure and mechanism for student appeals is in place. (ESG 1.3.)**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

6.9.1. At RIT Kosovo, students are informed in a timely manner about a clearly defined appeals procedure that is consistently implemented. All information is publicly available on the website. Students are provided with access to all information in the Academic Bulletin, which is published annually. The appeals procedure is presented in detail in the SER.

**ET recommendations:**

1. *The ET recommends that RIT Kosovo fully align its credit system with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) to facilitate greater student mobility within the European Higher Education Area.*
2. *The ET recommends that RIT Kosovo further develop its evaluation processes to ensure that students receive constructive feedback identifying their strengths and areas for improvement.*
3. *The ET recommends that study programme coordinators establish a structured forum for staff and students to exchange ideas, share best practices, and discuss challenges related to programme implementation.*
4. *The ET recommends that issues raised in student evaluations be systematically monitored and addressed during programme review meetings.*

**7. RESEARCH**

*(Please insert detailed comments, observations, commendations, and suggestions for improvement regarding the general area and its corresponding standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation Manual. The evaluation must take into account the adequacy of the processes and the results achieved under each standard, considering both their individual impact and their cumulative effect on the general area.*

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**Standard 7.1 The HEI has developed a research strategy which is integrated within the institutional strategy and aligns with its institutional mission. This strategy is reflected in a detailed action plan, which includes clearly specified performance indicators and is made publicly available.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

7.1.1. RIT Kosovo has developed a research strategy aligned with the institution's mission and vision. In the SER, the plan envisages the establishment of a Research Office by 2026, the integration of research into 50% of courses, securing €2 million in external funding, and encouraging faculty publications. Together, these goals are supported by a five-year budget of €707,500, positioning the institution as a model for inclusiveness and scientific excellence by 2030. The Office of Research, Innovation and Development plans 5 faculty research projects by 2030. In addition, it plans to secure external funding partnerships for 2027-2030. Annual research support and faculty training plans for research scholarships and faculty support: €20,000 per year for a total of €100,000 over 5 years.

7.1.2. The research strategy for providing research and development services to the community is not specified in the SER. However, from the institution's strategic transformation to improving research integration, key initiatives aim to increase diversity, improve shared governance and broaden student engagement, with specific goals such as anonymous feedback systems, leadership training and local partnerships.

7.1.3. RIT Kosovo has the appropriate number and profile of researchers to implement its strategic research programme. Although it is essentially a teaching higher education institution, its goal is to become a fully-fledged research institution. This is in line with RIT's direction towards a research-intensive institution. The RIT Kosovo Strategic Development Plan foresees that all faculty members are involved in research activities with an average output of one publication or research activity per year.

7.1.4. The strategic plan of RIT Kosovo prescribes the establishment of a research and development unit that can identify and promote institutional expertise, commercial development opportunities and assist in the preparation of proposals and business plans. It follows from the SER that this Office for Research and Innovation will offer assistance in the preparation of research proposals and contracts. Spin-off companies are not mentioned in particular.

7.1.5. RIT Kosovo research performance reports are published periodically and include records of research activities carried out by individuals and departments. A selection of the faculty's research activities is presented in the appropriate section on the RIT Kosovo website. All regular teachers of RIT Kosovo are published under the name of the institution. The list of publications extends to conferences, journal articles and other projects.

**Standard 7.2 The HEI ensures that academic staff are committed to the achievement of high-quality research work and/or professional activity.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

7.2.1. In the SER it is described that the internal policy that regulates the research work and professional activities of the academic staff of RIT Kosovo has established a Faculty Development Centre that maintains a series of academic activities to encourage the self-development of the academic staff. The mission and activities of the Faculty Development Centre are publicly available through the RIT Kosovo website.

7.2.2. The research and professional activities of academic staff at RIT Kosovo are recognised through their contribution to scientific and applied research publications, artistic creations, technology transfer, consultancy services, science parks and professional achievements. Research is an integral part, and teachers are required to show evidence of professional development which may include, but is not limited to, publication in peer-reviewed journals and through recognised publishing houses, presentations at professional meetings, juried and invited exhibitions or recitals.

7.2.3. According to the SER, researchers are required to show evidence of professional development. It is expected that all future publications of the academic staff will be in journals listed in the SCOPUS and Web of Science databases. But the current situation is not explained in the SER. It is stated only that, as part of their annual review, all faculty are required to submit a yearly plan, that includes research.

7.2.4. According to provisions in the strategic plan, each member of the academic staff will be obliged to publish their work in high-quality scientific and professional publications in compliance with national requirements and criteria for the publication and promotion of academic staff. More detailed evidence for the previous work of the institution was not attached.

7.2.5. At RIT Kosovo, academic staff actively promotes research and professional achievements at national and international conferences. Professional development of academic staff includes participation in national and international meetings, workshops, conferences or other activities where research and achievements are promoted.

7.2.6. The greatest strategic strength of the entire RIT academic structure in the United States and elsewhere in the world, including RIT Kosovo, is to encourage and promote applied research work or projects by its academic staff in collaboration with students as part of an integral education-research process. RIT Kosovo has invested in Innovation Lab which provides opportunities to conduct various research, such as web-apps development, and modelling using 3D printing technology. RIT Kosovo faculty have full access to RIT grants and research facilities. RIT Kosovo is engaged with RIT Main Campus, RIT Dubai, and RIT Croatia, where faculty are engaged in cross-collaboration on various issues, including research.

**Standard 7.3 The HEI ensures that the academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

7.3.1. In the RIT Kosovo's Faculty Professional Development Programme plan, research is defined to include "Applied Scholarship," which asks how knowledge can be applied to the social issues of the time in a dynamic process that generates and tests new theory and knowledge. "Engaged Scholarship" also connects any of the dimensions of scholarship to understanding and solving pressing social, civic, and ethical problems. The academic staff are encouraged to apply their research in their courses to improve the quality of the courses and ensure the transfer of knowledge. The requirement for research engagement ensures that teaching staff incorporate the most up to date information into the courses they teach.

7.3.2. RIT Kosovo applies general mechanisms to recognise and encourage excellence among its academic staff. All faculty staff at RIT Kosovo are evaluated during the annual performance review based on the criteria outlined in the Faculty Professional Development Programme plan. A reward system based on research and professional productivity is not described in detail in the SER.

7.3.3. The Expert Team particularly highlights that RIT Kosovo is an excellent example of how students are involved in research activities with academic staff. Students enrolled in the CIT program, for example, have published more than 20 research papers with mentorship from RIT Kosovo professors in finalising their papers. The SER provides a list and access to the papers at the attached link.

7.3.4. RIT Kosovo provides support to junior faculty staff in developing their research programmes through a variety of measures. The SER does not detail mechanisms for

mentoring by senior colleagues, project teams, assistance in developing research proposals, and seed funding.

**ET recommendations:**

1. *The ET recommends that RIT Kosovo further develop measures to encourage the publication of research results in appropriate publications.*
2. *The ET recommends that RIT Kosovo define a more precise and transparent reward system based on research output and professional contributions.*
3. *The ET recommends that RIT Kosovo introduce targeted incentives to support and motivate early-career researchers in applying for their first research projects.*
4. *The ET recommends that RIT Kosovo establish a strategic research fund to provide academic staff with start-up capital for launching and developing research projects.*

**8. STAFF, EMPLOYMENT PROCESSES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ESG 15.)**

*(Please insert detailed comments, observations, commendations, and suggestions for improvement regarding the general area and its corresponding standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation Manual. The evaluation must take into account the adequacy of the processes and the results achieved under each standard, considering both their individual impact and their cumulative effect on the general area.*

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**Standard 8.1 Teacher recruitment is in line with national legislation, internal regulations in effect and it is based on objective and transparent procedure.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

8.1.1. The SER states that the recruitment process at RIT Kosovo ensures a well-coordinated, professional, competitive, transparent and fair recruitment and selection process at all levels. Every member of the RIT Kosovo community is informed about the recruitment procedures that must be strictly followed and ensures that all human resource recruitment activities comply with the requirements of the applicable laws and regulations of the Republic of Kosovo and RIT. Human resource documentation, including employment contracts, job descriptions,

confidentiality agreements and other human resource documents related to the terms of employment, is provided in advance. Candidates for employment are provided with detailed descriptions of what the relevant positions entail. Vacancies are advertised on the kosovajob portal and online on the RIT Kosovo website.

8.1.2. The SER and documents of academic staff recruitment procedures indicate that RIT Kosovo implements a recruitment process that ensures a well-coordinated, professional, competitive, transparent and fair recruitment and selection process at all levels. The established recruitment practices confirm compliance with applicable laws and regulations of the Republic of Kosovo and RIT.

8.1.3. At RIT Kosovo, academic vacancies are properly advertised to the appropriate community and other sources of likely candidates. Academic staff appointments are made through the appointment committees upon recommendation of the President of the Academic Senate to the Dean of the Faculty of RIT Kosovo. The contracts of locally employed faculty candidates are the responsibility of the Dean of the Faculty of RIT Kosovo, while the contracts of all faculty candidates appointed by RIT are the responsibility of RIT. According to the SER, RIT Kosovo has established a comprehensive set of regulations to ensure the selection of the best candidates for each position. These procedures are detailed in the Employee Policy and Handbook, approved by the Board of Directors in May 2015, and in the Faculty Handbook, which includes policies related to faculty recruitment, processes, performance, and advancement.

8.1.4. According to SER, candidates for employment at RIT Kosovo are provided with full job descriptions and terms and conditions of employment before receiving a contract for review. This includes detailed descriptions of the relevant job positions, job responsibilities and all related HR documents, such as an employment contract, job description, confidentiality agreement and other terms and conditions of employment.

8.1.5. RIT Kosovo ensures that both academic and administrative staff have access to a comprehensive set of policies and regulations outlined in the Employee Policy Handbook. It includes policies related to faculty recruitment, processes, performance, advancement, and more. HR procedures and associated forms are available to employees via a shared drive on the campus server and in the Human Resources office, and some policies are also available online.

**Standard 8.2 The higher education institution has enough permanent academic staff adequately qualified for the delivery of the study programs.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

8.2.1. The ET gained insight during the on-site visit, and this was supported by the statements in the SER, that RIT Kosovo has sufficient qualified academics to deliver study programmes and conduct scientific and professional activities at the required level.

8.2.2. At RIT Kosovo, the Dean ensures that the current and planned workload of each staff member is assessed during the annual development planning process. This systematic approach ensures compliance with the requirement that academic staff have a maximum of one full-time and one part-time teaching position in any educational institution.

8.2.3. The SER states that RIT Kosovo ensures compliance with a policy that limits full-time faculty to a maximum of four courses of 3 semester hours per semester (fall/spring) and part-time faculty to a maximum of three courses of 3 semester hours per semester (fall/spring). This policy is strictly enforced to maintain the quality of teaching and prevent faculty members from being overburdened. The academic staff workload is regularly monitored by the Dean's Office, Heads of Programmes, and the Academic Affairs Office to ensure adherence to this standard.

8.2.4. A detailed diagram is presented in the SER showing that 55% of teaching classes at RIT Kosovo are provided by full time academics with a PhD.

8.2.5. The SER contains tables under No. 36, 37 and 38 which display in detail that for each student group and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study programme, RIT Kosovo employs at least one full-time staff member with a PhD or equivalent title.

8.2.6. At RIT Kosovo, the maximum classroom capacity ranges from 15 to 35 students, depending on the type of course. This ensures that the student-to-faculty ratio is in line with the benchmark of 1:30, as seen at other RIT campuses.

8.2.7. RIT Kosovo proves in the SER that the distribution of the academic load is in accordance with the Law on Higher Education of Kosovo and other valid regulations. The institution implements a comprehensive workload policy that promotes transparency and fairness. This policy ensures that academic staff responsibilities include teaching responsibilities, research, student mentoring and community engagement.

8.2.8. At RIT Kosovo, the President and Deans ensure that mechanisms for the distribution of academic workload are implemented in accordance with the Faculty Council Workload Policy. The overall individual workload distribution follows best practices, with teaching responsibilities: 40-60%. This includes classroom teaching, course preparation, assessment and supervision of students. Research activities: 20-40%, include conducting research, publishing results, applying for scholarships and mentoring students in research projects. Service responsibilities: 10-20%, include participation in faculty meetings, serving on committees, community service and other forms of service to the institution and the wider community.

8.2.9. SER provides table 39 which demonstrates that RIT Kosovo has a sufficient number of qualified academic staff to mentor students for their final thesis. 7 teachers are available and qualified to mentor students for their final undergraduate thesis. Each can teach up to two sections with a maximum of 20 students per class.

8.2.10. The SER provides two lists of teachers who taught in the academic year 2023/2024 and 2024/2025. These lists prove that all teachers and staff employed by RIT Kosovo are qualified for their scope of work. All lecturers are vetted by the relevant departments to ensure that only the accredited academic staff participate in teaching at RIT Kosovo.

**Standard 8.3 The promotion and re-appointment of teaching staff is based on objective and transparent procedures and policies which are publicly available, which include the evaluation of excellence, and they arise from the higher education institution's mission and strategic plan.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

8.3.1. RIT Kosovo has established a long-term operational plan for academic staff development that is aligned with the institution's mission and strategic plan. The process is subject to the institution's strategic plan and budget constraints, ensuring that development initiatives are sustainable and aligned with long-term goals.

8.3.2. Based on the attached documentation and during the onsite visit, the ET concludes that RIT Kosovo ensures the transparency and objectivity of teacher promotion procedures through several mechanisms. Advancement of academic staff at RITK is based on excellence and significant achievement, with rigorous criteria specified for each academic title.

8.3.3. RIT Kosovo proves that the promotion of academic staff to higher grades is based on excellence and significant achievements in accordance with national criteria and legislation. The SER details the procedures for academic appointments and promotions.

8.3.4. RIT Kosovo ensures that the promotion process is carried out promptly after the necessary conditions are met. The SER describes the timeframe for the board evaluation: The ad-hoc evaluation board must complete its evaluation and submit a report within 30 days of its establishment. If the deadline is missed, a new board is appointed with an additional 30 days to complete the evaluation. Final promotion decisions are communicated to candidates within 10 days of receiving the board's recommendation, ensuring a prompt completion of the promotion process.

8.3.5. RIT Kosovo has implemented a comprehensive staff performance appraisal system that incorporates feedback from a variety of sources. The appraisal system includes feedback from students, supervisors, colleagues and self-assessment. The appraisal results are taken into account when promoting and reappointing teaching staff and renewing their contracts, ensuring that decisions are based on comprehensive performance data. For reappointment and promotion, candidates must receive positive peer ratings and positive ratings based on the Student Teaching Performance Rating System, which emphasises the importance of high-quality teaching and professional conduct.

**Standard 8.4 The higher education institution ensures and supports academic staff in their professional development.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

8.4.1. RIT Kosovo implements a structured plan for the professional development of its academic staff. Training sessions are organised by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and supported by key departments such as the Faculty Development Centre, IT Office, and Library Services. New faculty members undergo specialised orientation sessions that familiarise them with RIT's learning standards and institutional expectations, ensuring that they begin their roles well-prepared and aligned with the academic goals of the institution. The employee and supervisor work together to develop a development plan that will contribute to the individual's improvement and growth in the workplace or career. All employees are encouraged to utilise all courses and training provided through TDI to assist them in their professional development.

8.4.2. According to the description in the SER, RIT Kosovo encourages all staff members to participate in various courses and training sessions offered by the Training and Development Institute (TDI). These programmes cover a wide range of professional areas, including language training, digital skills, and other relevant competencies. The institution bears the costs, demonstrating its commitment to fostering continuous learning and growth among its academic staff.

8.4.3. During the on-site visit, the ET gained insight from academic staff that RIT Kosovo actively supports and encourages its academic staff to participate in international mobility programmes, study visits to foreign institutions, and involvement in international projects and networks. The institutional strategy includes a faculty promotion policy that encourages increased faculty mobility and promotes international research collaboration. RIT Kosovo regularly monitors and reports on the participation of its academic staff in such programmes.

8.4.4. The ET confirms that RIT Kosovo prepares academic staff for excellence in teaching and navigating higher education regulations. It organises training sessions covering essential topics such as teaching methodologies, assessment practices, and compliance with higher education standards such as ECTS credits and learning outcomes. The most common materials used for faculty orientation are RIT's myCourse and SIS user guides.

8.4.5. Faculty and staff at RIT Kosovo receive an effective orientation during their first week of employment, which includes a meeting with all internal service providers as well as other stakeholders at the faculty. The RIT Kosovo Office of the Vice Chancellor organises an additional orientation for new faculty members to familiarise them with RIT's learning standards.

8.4.6. RIT Kosovo conducts a comprehensive induction process for all newly hired staff members to familiarise them with the institution's strategic goals, research priorities, ethical standards and operational procedures. This process is facilitated by organised orientation sessions conducted by the faculty dean and other key departments.

**Standard 8.5 The HEI ensures that its external associates have adequate qualifications and work experience to deliver study programs in line with the program's objectives and intended learning outcomes.**

*(Elaborate standards using the indicators. Each indicator should be elaborated by 2-3 sentences)*

8.5.1. During the onsite visit and based on the SER, the ET gained insight that external associates at RIT Kosovo bring the latest research, trends and knowledge of the lab or market to the teaching process. During their effective orientation in the first week of engagement, they meet with internal service providers and stakeholders to align their expertise with the academic standards of the institution.

8.5.2. According to the SER, RIT Kosovo organises specific training for external associates from the business sector and abroad to ensure that they are well-versed in higher education regulations and practices. The Dean of the Faculty coordinates additional orientation sessions to familiarise new faculty members with RIT's learning standards, including ECTS credits, learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment procedures. The Faculty Development Centre, IT Office, and Library Services also support this initiative, providing resources and guidance to help external collaborators adapt to the academic environment and improve their teaching effectiveness.

8.5.3. As explained in the SER, RIT Kosovo actively encourages the formal participation of external associates in the mentoring of final and graduate theses. Through structured induction and orientation programmes, external associates are introduced to the research standards and mentoring practices of the institution. By leveraging their industry expertise, it is ensured that students gain diverse perspectives and practical insights into their research projects.

#### **ET recommendations:**

- 1. The ET recommends that RIT Kosovo continue to expand funding opportunities for the professional development of academic staff, particularly in the areas of teaching and research.*
- 2. The ET recommends that programme managers and relevant course instructors provide comprehensive guidance and support to externally recruited staff involved in internships, ensuring they understand the programme and course learning outcomes, and how the internships align with these outcomes.*
- 3. The ET recommends further development of a structured programme to provide academic staff with financial and organisational support for participation in international scientific research and training activities.*
- 4. The ET recommends continued encouragement and financial support for academic staff to participate in international projects, conferences and scientific events.*

## **9. STUDENT ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES (ESG 1.4, ESG 1.6)**

### **Standard 9.1 An admission policy is clearly defined and is made publicly available.**

RIT Kosovo is a highly selective institution. It is an English-speaking institution offering degree programmes exclusively in English and therefore the admission criteria for the Bachelor programmes require sitting entrance exams in English language as well as mathematics. The entrance exams for both subjects take place on a rolling basis between April and June and the dates for exams are published on the RIT Kosovo website. In addition, students need to provide proof of high grades at the end of secondary school education and provide a number of documents to support their application (an online application, an admissions essay, two recommendation letters). Depending on the entrance exam results, there are two admission options offered to students, one of which allows them to take remedial classes in English and Algebra. The difference in the two admission options is transparently explained on the website.

The admission criteria for the Masters programme are also published on the RIT Kosovo website transparently. They include holding a bachelor's degree (or equivalent) from an accredited university or college, submitting official transcripts and holding a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (or equivalent), having completed one or more statistics classes in bachelor studies and submitting a personal statement, a resume and 2 letters of recommendation. Applicants whose native language is not English must submit scores from the TOEFL, IEST, or PTE and minimum scores are transparently communicated on the website.

The tuition fees are reaching up to 7000 EUR a year for the Bachelor programmes and 7500 per year for the Masters programme, but a number of scholarships are offered to students who meet the academic requirements but cannot afford the fees. The threshold for being accepted into the programmes (min high school diploma grades or min entrance exam results) presumably varies from year to year, however, it is not publicised. From the data provided to ET, the acceptance rate for the Bachelor in CIT is around 30%, for SOIS it is around 50-60% and for the Masters nearly 50%.

Conditions of transfer admission is not defined online and it appears that the recognition of periods of study from other institutions or from abroad takes place on an ad hoc case-by-case basis.

The SER confirms that all applicants are treated equally and fairly and that information is provided to prospective students transparently, which the ET has no reason to doubt.

**Standard 9.2 The HEI collects and analyses information on student progression and takes appropriate actions to ensure students completion of the study program.**

While SER claims that student progression rates from one year to the next are regularly monitored through the digital tools used at RIT, no concrete data is provided to the ET in the SER or during the interviews in order to verify this process. Retention rates (i.e. dropout rates) are monitored and stand, as per 22 May 2025 Annual Academic Committee Report to the Board of Trustees, at around 90%. Data from the overview provided to ET (in additional documents, dashboard table) shows that within 4 years from enrolment, between 70 and 80% of Bachelor students graduate. The master programme only exists since 2022 so the graduation data is not yet reliable. The average graduation time overall is not known to the ET.

**Standard 9.3 The HEI ensures appropriate conditions and support to outgoing and incoming students (national and international students).**

The numbers of incoming and outgoing mobilities at RIT Kosovo are still very modest. The dominant mobility flows are between RIT Kosovo and other RIT campuses (23 outgoing students in 2024/2025 and 2 incoming) whereas there are no incoming Erasmus+ mobilities and some 11 outgoing in the current academic year (with a demonstrable upward trend from previous years). RIT Kosovo has received an Erasmus+ Charter for Higher Education only in June 2024 so the Erasmus+ mobilities are due to increase. There is a dedicated employee at RIT in charge of facilitating mobility of students and staff members and communicating about opportunities, the Exchange Coordinator Officer. They are currently updating the data collection system in place in order to collect feedback from national and international students and better tailor their services.

The university has signed several MoUs with universities that take incoming Erasmus+ students and in 2024/2025, 5 destinations were available to RIT students - Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK) in Finland, Linnaeus University in Sweden, Windesheim University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, METU-Middle East Technical University in Turkey and Ludwigshafen University of Business and Society in Germany. The ET was not provided with MOUs for all of these universities, and the RIT Kosovo website also does not include a list of partnership agreements, which should be remedied. Some MOUs provided to the ET (International Balkan University in Macedonia, Windesheim university, HAMK, METU) have expired several years ago (unless extensions have been signed that were not shared with ET) and one is not signed by the counterpart (Montana State University-Billings).

The most significant numbers of international mobile incoming students attend RIT Kosovo during the Peace and Conflict Summer Programme which is commendable, but does not necessarily contribute to the whole-institution internationalisation strategy of RIT Kosovo.

**Standard 9.4 The higher education institution ensures 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.**

Students at RIT Kosovo have access to a broad range of student support services, including a person in charge of advising students on matters related to their employment and career goals, in-house psychological counselling including psychotherapy, particularly Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for students suffering from anxiety, depression, and mood disorders, student life coordinators' services of campus life and event management, academic tutoring services and academic advisors. One of the distinct features of studying at RIT Kosovo is the self-directed study and a lot of autonomy given to students for choosing the courses. This makes it even more important to have academic advisers who can help students navigate both academic and administrative challenges. RIT Kosovo employs three academic advisors and one supervisor and because their role is hugely respected and needed, according to the student surveys, they are struggling to keep up with the workload.

An important student service is also the so called “Co-op and Career Service Office” which helps students and alumni identify and apply for internships with employers, which are a compulsory part of their degree. Two advisors employed in this office (one in charge of students of BSc in Individualized Program and the other for students in the BSc in CIT program) also offer assistance with CV writing, job search, professionalisation skills and access to career and networking opportunities. RIT Kosovo relies heavily on its alumni for internship and job placements of its current students. These relationships are mainly informal and while they work well and students are satisfied with their (normally) paid work-experience during studies, no credits are awarded for this part of their degree and the informal relationship with employers may not be a guarantee of high quality and consistent supply of internships. There were complaints by students that some job opportunities were not aligned with students' fields of study or that available internships did not match their needs, therefore academic advisors need institutional support and training to be able to meet the complex needs of students.

Students are kept regularly informed about the academic programs, course curricula, policies, standards, and student support via the Academic Bulletin updated every year - a comprehensive source of information for students. It also includes the student complaint procedures.

A large number of scholarships are provided for students, some based on merit and others on need, as well as loans to support the studies of students. A common concern expressed by students, however, was that generous scholarships are available in the first year but decrease significantly in subsequent years, leaving students feeling financially unsupported and reliant on side jobs, which dilutes their focus on studies.

**ET recommendations:**

1. *The data on student progression from semester to semester and from year to year needs to be regularly monitored and analysed in relation to the most challenging courses/subjects/assignments and underlying reasons for delay/dropout/lack of engagement in order to detect quality issues and provide target support to struggling students.*
2. *Intensify the cooperation and signing of new MOUs and update existing MOUs with universities abroad (outside of the RIT family) in order to provide more varied opportunities for international mobility to RIT students and transparently publish the list of active interinstitutional agreements on the website.*
3. *Increase capacity of academic advisors in order to give students more and higher quality support in their academic journey by considering hiring more staff and regularly investing in training of current academic advisors.*
4. *Establish formal agreements with employers who can each year offer a renumerated co-op (internship) in the field of studies relevant to students of different RIT degree programmes and consider awarding credits to students for their work experience.*

## **10. LEARNING RESOURCES AND FACILITIES (ESG 1.6) \*Mandatory**

**Standard 10.1 The HEI ensures adequate premises and equipment for performing education processes and research.**

**\*Mandatory**

RIT Kosovo has adequate premises and dedicated equipment for supporting teaching and learning. It has signed in 2013 a 50-year lease with the Municipality of Prishtina. The university is located in an attractive green area and has a campus-feel to it, with classrooms, research facilities, library, teaching staff and administrative offices, auditorium, canteen, cafe and other recreational spaces all concentrated in one area, which is excellent for fostering a sense of community and belonging. The main building was renovated in 2005 and offers very modern, clean, brightly-lit and spacious areas of learning, teaching and laboratory work.

Thanks to a generous USAID grant, several state-of-the-art laboratories can be used for teaching biology, chemistry, physics, ICT, electrical engineering, robotics, renewable energies and ecology. The amount and quality of available equipment surpasses the level at which these courses are taught in the framework of the two Bachelor programmes at RIT and could be utilised more efficiently by opening access to them to outside parties. The rooms and equipment are managed by the members of teaching staff in charge of the respective courses/disciplines and no teaching or lab assistants are hired by the institution to take over this task. In addition, there are specialised classrooms for visual arts, an open space for student clubs and activities, a sport field for football, a basketball court and outdoor recreational areas.

A small student dormitory (seven apartments equipped with 21 single beds) is also onsite for a limited number of students with biggest needs, whereas the rest of students commute on a daily basis and parking spaces are provided for those who come by personal cars. The IT department and the maintenance department take care of the smooth functioning of the rooms and equipment.

The infrastructure of RIT Kosovo is shared with the profit-making arm of the institution - A.U.K. Training and Development Institute which offers continuous professional development to private companies and their employees, but whose resources and trainings also benefit employees and students of RIT Kosovo. The relationship is synergetic. Three computer labs are at the exclusive disposal of RIT students with overall 122 computers connected to the network, 6 smart boards, 9 video projectors and 4 TV monitors. On top of that, all students at RIT Kosovo are given a top of the range laptop during their first week of studies, which is preloaded with all necessary software, such as the student information system and the learning management system that RITm ain campus mandates.

### **Standard 10.2 The HEI ensures adequate library resources for their study programs.**

#### **\*Mandatory**

The library has adequate resources for students, both electronic resources and physical resources. Importantly, the library's book stock is updated every year with 80-100 new titles. Using RIT libraries webpage, students can access efficiently relevant materials for their research. Students have access to 230+ databases that offer full text articles and books (including JSTOR, EBSCO, Science Direct, Wiley, but also film databases and LinkedIn Learning), offering access to over 98,000 electronic journal subscriptions, over 300 print journal titles and more than 550,000 electronic books. Everything is available for browsing via a discovery tool (Summon), catalog search, or by the title of database or journal. No statistical information is provided to ET on the actual use of these electronic materials by students and staff members.

The library's opening hours are adequate and adapt to student needs during exam periods. However, the space designated as reading rooms is very limited. The reading room in the library is fairly cosy and can get overcrowded at busy times, whereas the additional labs/ classroom assigned as reading rooms are an inadequate substitute, engineered to meet the needs of an expanding student body while a more permanent solution is found. While this does not seem to pose a problem for students, many of whom commute and some of whom (in particular Master students) only attend block classes and do not use the space in the campus for independent learning or use other spaces around the campus to study, it does not fully support the idea of self-directed and independent learning and critical thinking.

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Utilise more efficiently the donated lab equipment and books while it is not out of date by collaborating with secondary schools, public universities that are less well-endowed or outside partners and companies who may benefit from that.*
- 2. Expand the reading room spaces in the library so that students do not need to use temporarily assigned lab spaces for learning as they are not adequate.*

## **11. INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION**

**Standard 11.1 The HEI has formulated and implemented a proactive institutional collaboration plan that aligns with its mission institutional strategy. This plan is clearly reflected in the institution's decision-making and resource allocation in this field.**

While the SER states that the institutional strategy contains a section on internationalisation, ET was unable to verify this document. The Strategic 5-year plan until 2030 defines institutional collaboration plans in the sense of potential sources of alternative revenue through partnerships with corporate partners, potential source of new students through partnerships with 3 new secondary schools and potential source of skills development for students by engaging with local community organisations in projects. The Strategic plan does not offer a roadmap for better inter-institutional collaboration in the sense of international collaboration with universities, in the country or abroad.

The achievements of students and staff are acknowledged in competitions, festivals and symposia but mainly inside the family of RIT universities and branch campuses. RITK is part of the RIT Global Campuses mobility scheme in which RIT Kosovo campus faculty work closely with faculty from other RIT campuses in New York, Dubai, China and Croatia on research or teaching projects.

**Standard 11.2 The HEI has implemented mechanisms to facilitate collaboration with national and/or international higher education institutions, networks and organizations. The HEI provides support to teaching staff to establish partnerships with the academic community, locally and/or globally.**

The Erasmus+ projects (Capacity Building in Higher Education or CBHE) that staff members have been coordinating or participating in as partners provide excellent opportunities for collaboration, international exchange and peer learning. In 2022, RIT Kosovo has been awarded its first Erasmus grant for a project called STEFORA as a lead partner of 6 total partner institutions, valued at 400,000.00EUR. STEFORA began in January 2023 and concluded in December 2024. From January 2023 to December 2024, RITK was also participating -as a partner, in two more Erasmus CBHE Strand 1 projects: ROAMING and WEBJOU. SER states that incentives are provided to faculty members for participating in such international projects. Aside from lowering their teaching load, academic staff participating in international projects should be acknowledged, recognised for their efforts and rewarded and this should be taken into account in their promotion processes.

Organisationaly, the exchange coordinator (a student-facing role) and the Head of Academic Services are in charge of international cooperation and responsible for facilitating partnerships with foreign universities, managing international exchange programs, and providing logistical and administrative support to staff involved in international activities. In many universities this role is given to a dedicated Vice-rector for internationalisation, ensuring that internationalisation remains strategically relevant, institutionally visible and important. Establishing international partnerships entails an investment in the administrative support as well, capacity building in grant-writing and financial skills, intercultural communication and relationship management. The announced opening of the RIT Tirana may benefit cross-campus collaboration with RIT Kosovo but it may also deter students and staff from going further afield. See also evaluation of standard 9.3 for further information.

**Standard 11.3 The HEI established and maintain relationships with local industry, public sector, employers and local community.**

Through the mandatory traineeships (2x400hrs each) and the Industrial Advisory Board, the university maintains links with the labour market. Some collaborations lead to research projects, which benefit both staff and students, but SER gives no concrete examples.

There are no concrete details on leveraging academic expertise or student skills for the benefit of the community, however the Strategic plan does have some objectives in the area of community engagement. The collaboration with schools seems to be flourishing, with students invited to Open days and schools visited throughout the winter for promotional purposes. There

is less emphasis on collaborative projects with school students and more emphasis on building a pipeline of prospective students to enroll into the programmes or apply for scholarships, which is of course important for a private university.

#### **Standard 11.4 The HEI has established and maintains relationships with its alumni.**

Organisationaly, it is the Development Department that is in charge of alumni relations, including communication with them, information-sharing and events organisation. Some of the key alumni events in the calendar are fundraising events for scholarships or events celebrating achievements of alumni. Alumni confirm the tight relationship with the university and the talent pool that it provides for their current jobs, be it in the private or public sector. This is important in order to reverse the outflow of highly educated young people out of the country. However, the alumni do not report being contacted via alumni surveys to feed into the development of the curricula or to provide more structured feedback to the university, which is a lost opportunity.

#### **ET recommendations:**

1. *Formulate a clear internationalisation strategy and nominate a strategic person to implement it by strengthening international partnerships and increasing mobility flows of students and staff.*
2. *Provide concrete incentives to academic staff to participate in and lead in Erasmus+ projects and involve students in the process.*
3. *Enhance collaboration with the local community and schools in order to leverage the expertise within the university but also to bring back to the community.*
4. *Conduct regular alumni/graduate surveys on employment outcomes, relevance of the study programmes and skills/outcomes to their current jobs, career progression and satisfaction with the qualification, in order to feed back into the improvement of the teaching and learning in the programme.*

1. Public Mission And Institutional Objectives	<i>Fully Compliant</i>
2. Strategic Planning, Governance And Administration	<i>Fully Compliant</i>
3. Financial Planning And Management	<i>Fully Compliant</i>
4. Academic Integrity, Responsibility, And Public Accountability	<i>Fully Compliant</i>
5. Quality Management	<i>Substantially Compliant</i>
6. Learning And Teaching	<i>Fully Compliant</i>
7. Research	<i>Fully Compliant</i>
8. Staff, Employment Processes And Professional Development	<i>Fully Compliant</i>
9. Student Administration And Support Services	<i>Substantially Compliant</i>
10. Learning Resources And Facilities *Mandatory	<i>Fully Compliant</i>
11. Institutional Cooperation	<i>Substantially Compliant</i>
<b>Overall Compliance</b>	<b><i>Fully Compliant</i></b>

### **Overall evaluation and judgments of the ET**

According to the KAA Accreditation manual, in order to be granted a positive decision for institutional accreditation, every education provider has to demonstrate at least a substantial compliance level in the overall judgment. Therefore, failure in meeting at least an overall substantial compliance level entails delaying, withdrawing, suspending or denying accreditation.

Rochester Institute of Technology Kosovo demonstrated an overall Fully compliance, with 8 fully compliant area of evaluation including the mandatory areas. According to the Manual requirements, the Expert Team recommends to accredit the Higher Education Institution for a duration of 5 years.

## Expert Team

### Chair



(Signature)

**Joke Denekens**

**17.06.2025**

(Print Name)

(Date)

### Member



(Signature)

**Pavo Barišić**

**18.06.2025**

(Print Name)

(Date)

### Member



(Signature)

**Nadia Manzoni**

**18.06.2025**

(Print Name)

(Date)