



Haxhi Zeka University,  
Faculty of Management in Tourism, Hospitality, and Environment

Tourism Marketing Management

**Report of the expert team**

22-23 April, Peja

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
Site visit schedule	3
A brief overview of the institution under evaluation	3
<b>PROGRAMME EVALUATION</b>	<b>3</b>
1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION	3
2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT	5
3. ACADEMIC STAFF	5
4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT	6
5. STUDENTS	8
6. RESEARCH	9
7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES	9

### **Sources of information for the Report:**

- *Self evaluation report 2024*
- *CV's of academic staff*
- *Feasibility report*
- *Regulations for the internal mobility of students of UHZ*
- *Statute of UHZ*
- *Regulation for Internal Organigram and systematization of job positions*
- *Regulation on Basic Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts Studies*
- *Regulation on Master of Science and Master of Arts Studies*
- *Performance Indicators for Study Program Evaluation*
- *Law on Higher Education in Kosovo*
- *Regulations of the Study Programs*
- *Strategic Plan 2023-2026 (UHZ)*
- *Strategic Plan 2023-2026 (FMTHE)*
- *National Qualification Framework*
- *Code for Ethics and Integrity in Scientific Research*
- *Code of Ethics for Students at UHZ*
- *Code of Ethics of Academic Staff of The UHZ in Peja*
- *Regulation on Measures and Disciplinary Procedure for the Academic Staff of UHZ*
- *Regulation on Anti-Plagiarism Procedures with the Anti-Plagiarism System*
- *Regulation on Prevention and Protection from Sexual Harassment and Bullying*
- *Regulation on Measures and Disciplinary Procedure for Students of the UHZ*
- *Regulation on the Use of Equipment and Monitoring of the Working Hours of Academic Staff and Students at UHZ*
- *Quality Assurance Strategy*
- *Quality Assurance Guide*
- *Law on Protection of Personal Data 06/L-082*
- *Regulations for the internal mobility of students of UHZ*
- *Regulation for engaging students in internships in the administration of UHZ*

- *Law on Budget*
- *Regulation for the Evaluation and Selection Procedures Related to the Appointment, Reappointment, and Advancement of Regular Academic Staff at UHZ*
- *Plan for Academic Development*
- *Regulation of Work of the Commission of Studies at the Level of the Senate and at the Level of Academic Units*
- *Regulations on the Quality Assurance and Assessment System at UHZ*
- *Guideline for the Study Programs*
- *Report of the Council for Quality Management and Assessment at the UHZ*
- *Regulation for the Workload of Students at UHZ*
- *Internship Manual*
- *Law on Labour no. 03/L-212*
- *Academic Staff Handbook*
- *Manual on Syllabus design*
- *Plan for Academic Development*
- *Code of Ethics of Academic Staff of the UHZ*
- *Code of Ethics for Students at UHZ*
- *Regulation for the workload for teachers, associates and assistants*
- *Law on Kosovo Accreditation Agency*
- *Regulation for publications*
- *Regulation for Scientific Research and Artistic Activity*
- *Center for Excellence*
- *Regulation on Sabbatical Year and External Mobility of UHZ Staff*
- *Regulation on Anti-Plagiarism Procedures with the Anti-Plagiarism System*
- *Manual on SMU*
- *Strategy for Scientific Research and Artistic Activity 2023–2026*
- *Regulation on Evaluation Procedures for the Engagement of External Associates of UHZ*
- *Law on Higher Education in Kosovo*
- *Law on Kosovo Accreditation Agency*
- *Assessment on Labor Market Relevance for the Existing Study Programs of the UHZ*
- *Analysis of student demands and the needs of stakeholders for bachelor's and master's*
- *Regulation for the Work of the Career Development Center*
- *Career Development Guide*
- *Tutorial and Peer-to-Peer system*
- *The Guidebook for young students*
- *Regulations for the internal mobility of students of UHZ*
- *Regulation on the Provision of Services to Students and other parties*
- *Administrative Instruction 01/2018 Principles of Recognition of International Peer-Reviewed Platforms and Journals*

## **Additionally received documents from the FMTHE:**

- *Curriculum, master study program Management and Sustainable Tourism*
- *List of Research Projects and Involved Staff*
- *List of Additional Funding*
- *Missing CV*
- *Evidence of Student Engagement in Research Projects*
- *Report, 1st International Winter University UNIWIN*
- *Report, 2nd International Winter University UNIWIN*
- *Evidence of Research Projects*

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

- *KAQ Standards and performance indicators for external quality assurance applicable for accreditation of bachelor and masters study programs;*
- *Site visit interviews with all participants in the meetings.*

## **Site visit schedule**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Participants</b>
<b>09:00 – 09:50</b>	<i>Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Prof. Dr. Adem Dreshaj (Dean MTE)</li><li>2. Prof Dr. Bedri Millaku (Vice Dean)</li><li>3. Prof Assoc. Dr. Albona Shala (Vice Dean)</li><li>4. Prof Ass. Dr. Anela Dzogovic (Head of Bosnian Department)</li></ol>
<b>09:50 – 10:30</b>	<i>Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Msc. Gentian Kastrati Director for quality assurance and evaluation</li><li>2. Msc. Luan Lulaj (quality assurance office)</li><li>3. Msc. Besa Baloku (Secretary of faculty, MTE)</li><li>4. Msc. Mimoza Nurboja (Official for master's degree)</li><li>5. Msc. Armend Fetahaj (quality assurance office, MTE)</li></ol>

<b>10:35 – 11:25</b>	<i>Meeting with the heads of the study programme</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Prof Ass. Dr. Behrije Ramaj Desku</i></li> <li>2. <i>Prof Ass. Dr. Thelleza Latifi Sadrija</i></li> <li>3. <i>Prof Asssoc. Dr. Beke Kuqi</i></li> </ol>
<b>11:25 – 12:25</b>	<i>Lunch break</i>	
<b>12:25 – 12.55</b>	<i>Visiting Facilities</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Msc. Libron Kelmendi</i></li> </ol>
<b>12:55 – 13:40</b>	<i>Meeting with teaching staff</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Prof Dr. Mimoza Hyseni (Full time professor)</i></li> <li>2. <i>Prof. Dr. Afrim Hoti (Part-time professor)</i></li> <li>3. <i>Prof Dr. Afrim Selimaj (Full time professor)</i></li> <li>4. <i>Prof Dr. Ferdije Zhushi (Part-time professor)</i></li> <li>5. <i>Prof Ass. Dr. Hajrija Skrijelj (Full time professor)</i></li> <li>6. <i>Prof Ass. Dr. Merita Dauti (Full time professor)</i></li> <li>7. <i>Prof Assoc. Alberta Tahiri (Full time professor)</i></li> <li>8. <i>Prof Ass. Dr. Anita Cucivic (Part-time professor)</i></li> </ol>
<b>13:45 – 14:25</b>	<i>Meeting with students</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Earta Morina (Bachelor's student)</i></li> <li>2. <i>Fortesa Gashi (Bachelor's student)</i></li> <li>3. <i>Doresa Mulaj (Master's student)</i></li> <li>4. <i>Festina Lajqi (Master's student)</i></li> <li>5. <i>Anita Belegu (Bachelor's student)</i></li> <li>6. <i>Muamel Dupljak (Bachelor's student)</i></li> <li>7. <i>Anesa Abazović (Bachelor's student)</i></li> <li>8. <i>Omer Honsi (Bachelor's student)</i></li> </ol>

<b>14:30 – 15:10</b>	<i>Meeting with graduates</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Nora Draga (Graduate Student bachelor – Master)</i></li> <li>2. <i>Elvir Gashi (Graduate Student)</i></li> <li>3. <i>Mimoza Mekuli (Graduate Student bachelor – Master)</i></li> <li>4. <i>Flaka Muriqi (Graduate Student bachelor – Master)</i></li> <li>5. <i>Mendim Nimanaj (Graduate Student bachelor – Master)</i></li> <li>6. <i>Emir Adžajlić (Graduate Student)</i></li> <li>7. <i>Aldin Murić (Graduate Student)</i></li> </ol>
<b>15:10 – 15:50</b>	<i>Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Vyrtyt Morina – Municipality, Peja</i></li> <li>2. <i>Armend Delijaj "Resturant Freskia"</i></li> <li>3. <i>Mentor Bojku "Outdor Kosova"</i></li> <li>4. <i>Muhamed Hamza - Restaurant "Nora"</i></li> <li>5. <i>Krenare Lluka – Hotel Dukagjini</i></li> <li>6. <i>Fatjona Rugova "Onix" SPA</i></li> </ol>
<b>15:50 – 16:00</b>	<i>Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts</i>	
<b>16:00 – 16:10</b>	<i>Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Prof. Dr. Adem Dreshaj (Dean MTE)</i></li> <li>2. <i>Prof Dr. Bedri Millaku (Vice Dean)</i></li> <li>3. <i>Prof Assoc. Dr. Albona Shala (Vice Dean)</i></li> <li>4. <i>Prof Ass. Dr. Anela Dzogovic (Head of Bosnian Department)</i></li> </ol>

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

The Tourism Marketing Management Program at the Faculty of Management in Tourism, Hospitality, and Environment (FMTHE) is designed to equip students with the essential skills and knowledge required to thrive in today's dynamic tourism and hospitality industry. Spanning three semesters, the program offers a comprehensive curriculum that blends theoretical insights with practical applications, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for the complexities of the field.

The first semester serves as the foundation, where students delve into fundamental courses such

as Scientific Research Methodology, Strategic Management of Tourism Marketing, and Human Resources Management. These courses lay the groundwork by imparting crucial skills in research methodologies, marketing strategy formulation, and human capital management specific to the tourism sector. Electives like Consumer Rights, Tourism, Culture, and Society, and Global Perspectives on Tourism enrich students' understanding of the socio-cultural and legal dimensions impacting the industry.

Moving into the second semester, the curriculum intensifies with mandatory courses like Market Research, Consumer Behavior, and Integrated Marketing Communication. These courses deepen students' understanding of market dynamics, consumer psychology, and effective communication strategies crucial for successful marketing campaigns in tourism. The Tourism and Hospitality Industry course provides a comprehensive overview of industry structures, service management, and client relations, essential for navigating the sector's complexities. Electives such as Green Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Project Management, and Green Marketing underscore the program's commitment to sustainability and innovation, preparing students to address future industry challenges.

In the final semester, students consolidate their learning through mandatory courses like E-Tourism and Digital Marketing, Service Marketing, Data Analysis and Customer Relationship Management. These courses focus on leveraging technology for marketing, enhancing service delivery, and optimizing customer relationships through data-driven insights. The mandatory Internship provides invaluable hands-on experience, allowing students to apply their knowledge in real-world settings and further develop their professional skills.

Throughout the program, elective courses like Budgeting and Market Performance Management, Leadership Communication Skills, and Internet Law and Data Privacy complement the core curriculum, ensuring students gain a well-rounded understanding of management and marketing in tourism. The program's holistic approach not only prepares graduates for diverse career opportunities but also contributes to the economic growth of the region by fostering skilled professionals capable of driving innovation and sustainability in tourism.

## **PROGRAMME EVALUATION**

*The program evaluation consists of 7 standard areas through which the program is evaluated.*

### **1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION**

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

The program demonstrates alignment with the mission and strategic objectives of HEI and is designed to respond to labor market needs at the regional and national levels while contributing to the economic and social development goals of Kosovo.

The program has been designed in accordance with the mission of HEI, which emphasizes knowledge transfer, research, and sustainable economic development through specialized education (SER, p. 12). It follows strategic priority number seven of UHZ's Strategic Plan 2023–2026—"Entrepreneurship"—by promoting innovation, strategic management, and digital marketing within the tourism and hospitality sector. This alignment is reflected in the structure of the curriculum, designed to balance theoretical knowledge and practical application through a 60:40 ratio (SER, p. 13). The curriculum also incorporates teaching methodologies and intended outcomes consistent with Level 7 of the NQF.

While the strategic alignment is clearly stated in the design phase, weaknesses arise in ensuring that the program's objectives, learning outcomes, and full syllabi will remain accessible and continuously updated online, as required for transparency and external stakeholder engagement.

The program explicitly considers the economic and geographical context of the Dukagjini region where tourism development potential is high and labor market demands are evolving. This relevance was confirmed in meeting with external stakeholders. The involvement of the Regional Economic Forum Dukagjini (FERD) and the Business Support Center demonstrates an effort to root the program in the regional context.

Despite these efforts, HEI should strengthen its research and innovation strategy by formalizing how research output generated through the program will be directly linked to regional tourism and development challenges. Currently, the program lacks a clearly articulated long-term vision for how its curriculum and associated research will systematically contribute to addressing these emerging challenges over time.

The proposed learning outcomes are clearly defined and support the HEI's mission to prepare professionals capable of implementing advanced marketing strategies and managing tourism systems based on sustainability and innovation. These outcomes emphasize competencies in areas such as consumer behavior, digital marketing, customer relationship management, and entrepreneurship.

HEI has conducted an internal needs assessment to inform program design, using labor market data from the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, the ETF Skills 2020 report, and regional consultations with municipalities such as Peja and Deçan. A complementary survey involving high school students, UHZ students, and alumni was conducted to test interest and perceived relevance, with positive results. The study also acknowledged key challenges such as youth and gender-based unemployment, which the program aims to address.

HEI provides a clear justification for proposed enrollment numbers, referencing labor market analysis, consultations with employers, and available institutional resources including staff and infrastructure. The planned enrollment—25 students in the Albanian-language track and 20 in the Bosnian-language track—is proportionate and appropriate for the delivery capacity of the institution. This decision was approved by the Faculty Council and Senate, in line with the UHZ Statute and national accreditation requirements.

HEI has committed adequate infrastructure to the program, including classrooms with audiovisual and digital tools, library resources, and electronic systems. The SMU academic platform and Career Development Office are in place to support practical learning. Partnerships with entities such as “Syri i Vizionit” and activities like the Winter University are mentioned as avenues for enhancing public engagement and applied learning.

The program presents a coherent design aligned with the institutional mission and the strategic priorities of the HEI, particularly in promoting entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable regional development. The curricular structure reflects the intended objectives, and the learning outcomes are conceptually well defined, addressing relevant competencies for the tourism and marketing sector.

However, several structural elements are not yet systematically secured. In particular, there is an absence of formal and operational mechanisms to: ensure the continuous review and updating of learning outcomes and curricular content, based on regular quality assurance cycles and stakeholder feedback; continuously monitor labor market needs and integrate those changes into program revision, going beyond ad hoc project-based studies; and articulate a long-term vision for applied research that embeds the program into regional innovation and development strategies, with particular focus on the challenges of the tourism sector.

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

The program includes the necessary regulatory and procedural elements to support a culture of academic integrity and ethics. The program is built upon the ethical framework already in place at the institutional level, including the Code of Ethics for academic staff and students, and the Regulation on Measures and Disciplinary Procedure for the Academic Staff of Haxhi Zeka University.

The program will be governed by the HEI’s ethical and disciplinary regulations, including the Code of Ethics and the Regulation on Measures and Disciplinary Procedure. These documents detail processes for reporting, assessing, and sanctioning unethical behaviors, such as academic

dishonesty and discrimination (Articles 4–6). They are publicly available and include clear responsibilities shared across university bodies and faculty leadership.

SER indicates that anti-plagiarism tools are in use for evaluating theses and seminar work and are required before the defense of the master's thesis. Regulations reinforce the role of teaching staff in enforcing academic standards through these tools.

The program is underpinned by institutional ethical standards that govern teaching and research practices. The Code of Ethics outlines responsibilities related to grading fairness, supervision conduct, intellectual property, and research integrity.

Mechanisms for monitoring unethical behavior are formally defined at the institutional level, including structures such as the Ethics Council, disciplinary committees, and the Quality Assurance Office (Quality Assurance Guide). Anonymous complaints and student feedback mechanisms are in place.

The program benefits from the existence of a formal institutional ethical framework and a set of disciplinary regulations that are publicly available and aligned with national and ESG expectations. These provide a solid regulatory basis for promoting academic integrity, fairness, and ethical conduct.

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

HEI has set up a functional information management system that supports the collection and analysis of data across a variety of performance indicators, including student enrollment, academic progression, and course delivery. The use of the SMU digital platform enables centralized data entry and access by academic and administrative staff, ensuring consistency in reporting.

HEI also uses the “Performance Indicators Manual” to guide data collection and benchmarking in areas such as student-to-teacher ratios, graduation rates, research productivity, and internationalization.

However, the linkage between data collection and corrective action remains weak. While the tools and guidelines exist, SER provides limited evidence of how this data has led to specific programmatic improvements. There is also a lack of periodic public reporting on implementation results or follow-up actions.

HEI has established commitments to protecting the personal data of students and staff, in line with Kosovo's legislation on data privacy. The data protection framework is addressed through university-level documents that safeguard sensitive information and set standards for the responsible use of data (Academic Staff Handbook; Quality Assurance Guide).

Students and staff engagement in the management of the study program is reflected in various ways. SER describes how course evaluations, stakeholder questionnaires, and quality assurance feedback forms are conducted regularly. These tools gather perceptions about the teaching process, infrastructure, and learning outcomes. Additionally, students are represented in the Faculty Council and in other participatory bodies at both faculty and university levels, as guaranteed by the UHZ Statute.

Staff participate in the evaluation process through self-assessment forms and engagement in quality improvement initiatives. There is also a formal role for staff in designing and revising study programs via the Council and the internal studies committee (Regulations of Study Programs, Article 7).

Despite these participatory structures, the SER does not sufficiently demonstrate how these contributions will influence tangible follow-up activities or program revisions. The connection between data collection, stakeholder involvement, and concrete program improvements remains underdeveloped.

Standard 1.4 The delivery of the study program is supported by appropriate and sufficient administrative support to achieve its goals in teaching, learning, research, and community service. (ESG 1.6)

HEI has defined structures and internal regulations that govern administrative support across academic units, including the Faculty of Management in Tourism, Hospitality and Environment. According to SER, the faculty operates with an organized general administration that facilitates both academic and research functions. The internal regulation on systematization of job positions defines the responsibilities of administrative staff, ensuring that activities are implemented efficiently (Strategic Plan FMTHM 2023–2026).

Furthermore, the Quality Assurance Guide outlines the involvement of administrative personnel in internal evaluation processes, such as data collection, logistical coordination, and technical support. Budgetary planning for staff needs is discussed and approved annually by the Faculty Council and Senate.

The administration of FMTHE shows to be sufficient to support the program's regular operations, including organizing lectures, exams, thesis defenses, and student services. The administrative staff provides logistical support to academic staff, including managing schedules, documentation, and digital systems such as SMU.

Additionally, the Career Development Office supports students in accessing internships and employment opportunities, thus reinforcing the learning outcomes of the program. The presence of dedicated coordinators for international relations and academic mobility also supports the academic staff in planning cooperation and research initiatives.

HEI has included administrative capacity-building as part of its strategic objectives. Strategy foresees ongoing training for administrative staff in areas such as digitization, financial management, planning, and communication. These trainings are also confirmed in the Academic Development Plan, which specifies that administrative personnel will be trained in institutional systems, ethical standards, and use of digital platforms (Plan for Academic Development).

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

N/A

ET recommendations:

*1 - Develop a Strategic Research and Innovation Integration Plan specifically designed to connect the program's academic research and applied research projects with the emerging needs of the regional tourism sector. This plan should span a five-year horizon and define specific thematic research areas directly aligned with regional economic and tourism development priorities. Program research activities, master's theses, and collaborative projects should be clearly mapped against these thematic lines to ensure their relevance and regional impact. (3 years)*

*2 - Strengthen the continuous review and updating of the program's learning outcomes, curriculum structure, and professional profiles by ensuring systematic engagement of internal and external stakeholders and regular analysis of labor market needs, student feedback, and regional development trends. (3 years)*

## **2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

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

HEI has formally developed a multi-level quality assurance framework, supported by internal regulations and aligned with national and international standards, to monitor and improve the delivery of the program. A series of procedures, actors, and tools are in place to assure quality across the program lifecycle. These are detailed in key institutional documents and are supported by dedicated quality structures. However, despite these formal mechanisms, the effectiveness of the system is weakened by under-documentation and strategy of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, lack of clarity on follow-up strategies.

HEI has established an internal quality assurance system that is formally aligned with the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency standards, and the European Standards and Guidelines. These principles are operationalized through key internal documents such as the Quality Assurance Strategy, the Quality Assurance Guide, and the Regulations of the Study Programs. These documents provide the structure for planning, monitoring, and improving program delivery, including at the level of the program.

The system includes a vertical structure involving the Senate, the Quality Management and Evaluation Council (QMEC), the Office for Quality Assurance (OQA), and QA Coordinators at faculty level (Quality Assurance Guide).

The Regulation of Study Programs and the Guideline for Study Programs (2022) are published online and define roles and procedures for all phases of the program lifecycle, including design, approval, monitoring, revision, and termination (Guideline for Study Programs; Regulations of Study Programs, Article 2). These policies are structured to reflect ESG 1.1 and the national legal framework.

However, while the documents are formally accessible, SER and meetings did not provide a clear analysis of how the QA policy will be communicated and integrated in the program culture by students, academic staff, and external stakeholders. This represents a weakness in its functional utility.

The quality assurance procedures of the study program are articulated in internal regulatory documents. The program followed the official institutional path of proposal, validation by the Faculty Council, review by QMEC, and final approval by the Senate, in line with Articles 4 and 5 of the Regulation of Study Programs.

In addition, the program is subject to internal monitoring at defined intervals, including curriculum evaluation and staff-student feedback analysis, as outlined in the Quality Assurance Guide.

The Office for Quality Assurance has designated QA Coordinators in every academic unit. These officials are not involved in teaching activities, allowing them to focus fully on supporting quality assurance processes. Their duties include supporting the implementation of QA instruments (questionnaires, self-assessments), reporting to the central office, and advising program coordinators on compliance with standards.

HEI formally uses the PDCA model, described in the Quality Assurance Strategy through cycles of planning (strategic objectives, curriculum design), implementation (program delivery), evaluation (student surveys, self-assessment reports), and improvement (modification of content, teaching techniques).

However, SER and meetings were scarce in showing how the PDCA cycle is to be put into practice. This suggests a break in the feedback loop and limits the evidence of real continuous improvement.

HEI involves a broad range of stakeholders in quality assurance processes, including students (through surveys and representation), academic staff (through self-assessment), employers (via the Industrial Board), and alumni (through periodic consultations). These engagements are outlined in the Quality Assurance Guide and were used to validate the relevance of the program content.

HEI has established a comprehensive and regulation-compliant internal quality assurance system that governs the delivery of the program. Policies, structures, and actors are clearly defined, and stakeholder involvement is formally present.

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

The development of the program followed a regulated process as defined in the Regulations of the Study Programs and the Guideline for Study Programs. The program was initiated based on institutional priorities and regional needs and passed through structured stages including proposal by the Faculty Council, verification by the Study Committee, review by the Quality Assurance Office and the Quality Management and Evaluation Council (QMEC), and final approval by the University Senate. Each stage involved the submission of justifications, evidence of labor market demand, and qualified program holders.

The approval process of the program was executed by the Faculty Council, followed by review

by QMEC and validation by the Senate, in full accordance with the Regulation of Study Programs. This structure complies with Kosovo's legal and regulatory framework and ensures the inclusion of both academic and quality assurance bodies. The documentation provided confirms that the approval process respected legal procedures and included qualified reviewers and QA officers.

The program is to be subject to biennial review as per the internal regulations, with the Quality Assurance Office, QMEC, and the Faculty Study Committee holding formal responsibility for initiating and overseeing the review cycle (Quality Assurance Guide; Regulations of Study Programs). Evaluation includes academic content, workload, student feedback, employer opinions, and performance indicators such as graduation rates and student satisfaction.

The development of the program involved consultations with students, alumni, municipal representatives, and business actors. The Industrial Board and Regional Economic Forum Dukagjini were part of this process and provided input regarding labor market needs and curriculum relevance. Additionally, alumni surveys and feedback from academic staff contributed to shaping the program's structure and learning outcomes.

HEI collects student and stakeholder feedback and tracks indicators such as enrollment numbers, gender balance, and geographic distribution. Surveys and evaluations are performed using tools provided in the Quality Assurance Guide.

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

HEI demonstrates a structured approach to monitoring the relevance of its study programs to societal and labor market needs. Graduate and employer surveys are used to assess the competencies gained by students and their applicability in the job market. These surveys provide regular and concrete feedback about the adequacy of academic preparation and skills alignment. Focus group discussions with employers and alumni further enrich the evaluation process. The information collected is analyzed to identify gaps and propose curriculum improvements.

HEI has taken concrete steps to ensure that the allocation of ECTS credits and learning outcomes are realistic and achievable for students. The Regulation on Student Workload, approved in 2023, defines the parameters for workload measurement and student engagement. Regular monitoring is performed by the Dean and Vice Dean for Teaching, who report findings to the Vice-Rector. Surveys conducted among students assess whether the workload is appropriate and whether learning outcomes are attainable. Focus groups and course evaluations are also used to verify the alignment between the workload and learning expectations. The results are actively used to adjust teaching practices and academic planning where needed.

HEI ensures active involvement of all key stakeholders, including students, staff, alumni, and employers, in the monitoring and evaluation of study programs. Surveys, focus group discussions, and meetings with industrial boards are conducted periodically to collect diverse viewpoints. The industrial board at the faculty level includes external employers and alumni, ensuring external perspectives are well integrated. Students participate through regular evaluations of academic staff and the administration. Alumni and employer surveys are conducted every three years, providing long-term insights into program effectiveness.

HEI demonstrates regular and systematic collection of feedback from students, graduates, staff, and employers. Standardized questionnaires are used. Employer and alumni feedback are collected every three years to ensure a broader longitudinal perspective. Survey results are analyzed by the Quality Assurance Office and contribute directly to study program revisions. Feedback from employers and alumni is instrumental in aligning programs with labor market needs. HEI publishes these results publicly on its website, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Student internships are formally integrated into the study programs and governed by clear regulations. The course "Internship and Career Development" ensures that internships are assessed both academically and professionally. Monitoring mechanisms involve course professors, internship supervisors, and the Career Office, who jointly collect and evaluate performance data. Student evaluations, employer feedback, and mentor assessments are systematically gathered.

Data gathered from surveys, focus groups, and internal evaluations are systematically analyzed to identify both strengths and areas for improvement. The results feed directly into curriculum reviews and strategic planning within academic units. Concrete action plans are developed based on the findings and are aimed at addressing identified shortcomings. Improvements over previous years are documented, demonstrating a clear trajectory of program enhancement. Academic and administrative staff, students, graduates, and employers all contribute to this reflective process. The institution shows a commitment to evidence-based management by regularly reviewing and updating its programs.

HEI ensures that the results of internal monitoring processes and related action plans are communicated to stakeholders. Reports are made publicly available on the university's official website, guaranteeing accessibility and transparency.

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

HEI is to provide public access to all policies, regulations, and guidelines governing the study program through its official website. This ensures transparency and compliance with ESG 1.8. Students, staff, and external stakeholders can find and consult the governing documents. The

availability of these resources strengthens accountability and facilitates informed decision-making by all parties.

HEI publishes information on admission requirements, recognition of prior qualifications, enrollment numbers, curriculum structures, learning outcomes, credit distribution, and assessment methods. This data is accessible and regularly updated to reflect any program changes. By doing so, HEI ensures clarity and fairness in the application and academic processes.

Information regarding student pass rates, dropout statistics, and graduate employability outcomes is made publicly available. This data is to provide a clear picture of program effectiveness and student success. It allows prospective and current students, as well as other stakeholders, to evaluate the program's performance.

HEI demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that study program public information is to be accurate, reliable, and objectively presented. Updates are to be made on a regular basis to reflect changes in curricula, staffing, and program policies.

#### **ET recommendations:**

- 1. Strengthen quality culture at the program level by fostering shared responsibility among students, staff, and external partners, embedding quality discussions in academic activities, improving communication on quality processes, and promoting continuous improvement as a core element of the program culture. (3 years)*
- 2. Strengthen the practical application of the PDCA cycle by formalizing its use across all stages of program management, embedding clear guidelines and regular tracking to ensure continuous improvement and close feedback loops. (3 years)*

### **3. ACADEMIC STAFF**

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

The program is implemented with the support of academic staff selected through procedures that comply with national legislation and the institution's internal regulations. Teaching positions are publicly announced in accordance with legal requirements, ensuring equal access and open competition. SER confirms that the program adheres to these principles, and job calls have been documented as non-discriminatory and transparent (Regulation on Employment). However, despite compliance with national-level dissemination requirements, there is little evidence of

sustained international outreach or strategic efforts to attract foreign academic staff, which limits the program's potential for academic diversification and internationalization.

The recruitment procedures are clearly defined in the Statute of the University (Articles 169–174), the Regulation on Employment, and the Regulation for the Engagement of External Associates. These documents outline a step-by-step process that includes the public announcement of vacancies, establishment of evaluation committees, candidate interviews, academic unit deliberation, Senate validation, and final decision by the Rector. The process is formally structured to promote fairness, meritocracy, and institutional oversight.

Candidate evaluation is based on academic qualifications, research output, professional experience, and pedagogical competencies, in line with national standards. Evaluation committees are expected to assess applicants in relation to program-specific needs. According to the Regulation on Evaluation and Appointment, particular attention is given to the relevance of previous academic and professional experience in tourism and marketing.

Position announcements include detailed descriptions of required qualifications, selection criteria, academic responsibilities, and contractual terms, in line with the Law on Higher Education, Labor Law, and institutional regulations (Statute of UHZ; Regulation on Employment). These documents are publicly accessible and provide clarity for prospective candidates.

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

The academic staff assigned to the program include professors and lecturers with PhDs and relevant research and professional backgrounds in tourism, marketing, and management. SER confirms that each course is assigned to individuals qualified in the corresponding field, meeting the requirement that each 60 ECTS is covered by at least one full-time academic with a doctoral degree.

HEI adheres to the legal limit that academic staff may only hold one full-time and one part-time position per academic year. The Regulation on Staff Engagement and institutional employment contracts include explicit clauses to this effect.

HEI follows Kosovo legislation regarding maximum weekly teaching hours and ensures that the number of courses assigned per staff is within legal thresholds.

SER confirms that more than 50% of the academic staff teaching in the program are full-time employees of Haxhi Zeka University, fulfilling a key requirement for program accreditation.

The program complies with the KAA requirement that for every 60 ECTS delivered, one full-time academic with a doctoral degree is engaged. The list of staff, their academic ranks, and fields of specialization are available, and courses are matched to these staff profiles.

The student-to-staff ratio for this program is within the required threshold of 1:30. This ratio supports personalized instruction, effective mentorship, and responsiveness to student needs.

SER confirms that each professor or lecturer teaches within their field of expertise, verified through CVs, academic records, and publication histories. Staff qualifications are aligned with course syllabi, and those engaged in advanced courses hold relevant doctoral degrees and have published in fields related to tourism, marketing, or management.

There is an integrated workload model that distributes academic tasks proportionately across teaching, research, supervision, and administrative duties.

The program is delivered by academic staff who meet national requirements in terms of qualifications, full-time engagement, and legal teaching limits. The ratio of staff to students is appropriate, and the staff possess relevant expertise in the field of study.

HEI employs a sufficient number of qualified professors involved in mentoring students throughout their academic journey. Mentoring activities are carried out in line with the Regulation on Master of Science and Master of Arts Studies, ensuring a formal and standardized approach. Each student receives individualized support to meet the objectives of the study program and successfully fulfill academic requirements.

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

The advancement of academic staff involved in the program is governed by transparent and legally compliant institutional procedures. These procedures are outlined in the university's internal regulations and aim to uphold academic merit, teaching performance, and scientific contributions. Advancement is aligned with national labor law, the Statute of UHZ, and internal strategic priorities.

The Regulation for the Evaluation and Selection Procedures related to the Appointment, Reappointment, and Advancement of Academic Staff ensures that processes are public, equal, and based on academic merit. Competitions are announced publicly, and the procedures include formation of evaluation committees, submission of evaluation reports, and multi-level institutional validation, including by the Senate and Rector.

The timelines, committee composition, and criteria are communicated and compliant with Articles 169–174 of the Statute of UHZ.

The advancement process evaluates candidates based on their research productivity (e.g., publications in indexed journals), quality of teaching, involvement in academic projects, supervision of theses, and international activity. The selection process also considers student feedback and institutional contributions.

Student evaluations, peer review, and self-assessment are conducted regularly through standard questionnaires and institutional mechanisms. These tools are part of the Quality Assurance Guide and are applied across faculties.

The program is supported by a staff advancement system that is legally structured, transparently managed, and aligned with academic standards. The institution provides detailed procedures for evaluation and selection, based on defined criteria and involving impartial committees.

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

HEI demonstrates a formal commitment to supporting the professional development of academic staff through institutional documents such as the Strategic Plan, the Academic Development Plan, and specific regulations regarding training and research. The staff of the program has access to mobility programs, training, and mentoring opportunities, reflecting a positive institutional culture toward staff development.

The Strategic Plan of UHZ 2023–2026 and the Academic Development Plan outline the institution's commitment to promoting academic excellence through regular professional development. These documents refer to faculty training in teaching methodology, digital learning tools, and research capacities.

Some academic staff from the Faculty of Management in Tourism, Hospitality, and Environment have participated in mobility and training programs supported through funded projects. While the Faculty of Management in Tourism, Hospitality, and Environment has taken steps to promote internationalization through participation in mobility and training programs, there remains a need to further expand international experiences among academic staff. Increasing opportunities for staff to engage in international teaching assignments, collaborative research projects, and joint publications would significantly enhance the faculty's academic profile. Greater involvement in international networks, exchange programs, and research consortia would also contribute to improved teaching quality, curriculum innovation, and the integration of global best practices.

HEI provides support in assessment-related training through quality assurance workshops, internal seminars, and by providing assessment guidelines.

Institutional regulations and strategic documents refer to general training on teaching methods, Bologna process implementation, and ECTS crediting.

New academic staff receive training. HEI provides comprehensive support mechanisms to aid academic staff in the development of their research programs. Staff are encouraged to participate in national and international projects, with financial support offered for research publications, participation in conferences, scientific project development, and mobility initiatives. The support framework is formalized through key institutional documents, including the Statute of UHZ, the Scientific Research Strategy, and the Regulation on Scientific Research. Academic staff benefit from mentoring by senior colleagues and assistance in developing research proposals.

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

HEI engages external associates who hold at least a master's degree, with many possessing doctoral qualifications and professional experience in the fields of tourism, marketing, management, and related sectors. Selection is guided by institutional regulations that require relevance between the candidate's academic background and the content of the course they are assigned to deliver.

HEI selects external staff not only for their academic qualifications but also for their practical experience and contributions in the field. This includes professionals from partner institutions, private sector, and international organizations. This integration is designed to enhance students' exposure to contemporary developments in the sector.

Training is provided to external academic staff in areas such as course outcome definition, assessment standards, academic ethics, or the ECTS framework as internal regulations apply equally to all lecturers. Institutional regulations permit external staff to participate in thesis supervision.

HEI regulates the engagement of external associates through individual contracts, which include basic information such as course titles, teaching hours, and honoraria.

The program includes the engagement of qualified external associates, which contributes to the applied, international, and labor market-oriented nature of the curriculum. HEI follows a baseline legal framework in appointing these professionals, ensuring they possess relevant academic and field experience.

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Promote internationalization by enhancing staff mobility, strengthening international academic and research collaboration, and increasing efforts to integrate global perspectives into teaching and research activities, thus improving the overall quality of the teaching staff.* (5 years)

#### **4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT**

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

The study program's learning outcomes align with the FMTHE's mission and strategic goals (SER, p. 4). Targeted learning outcomes of the study program (Conducting Scientific Research and Analyzing the Tourism Market, Designing and Implementing Marketing Strategies, Human Resource Management and Leadership, Implementing Sustainable Practices and Entrepreneurship, and Managing Customer Relationships and Using Digital Technologies) are also aligned with the stated goals and objectives. Proposed learning outcomes of the study program are written from the student's perspective. They inform what skills a graduate of the study program should gain. For example: *Conducts scientific research in marketing and analyses the tourism market.*

Development of the study program has been realized with regard to the standards and procedures from the National Qualification Framework, the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework, Law on Higher Education in Kosovo (04/L-037, Article 3/1.4), law No. 08/L-110 On the Kosovo Accreditation Agency; the Bologna Declaration, the Statute of Haxhi Zeka University (Annex No. 3), the Guidelines for Study Programs (Annex No. 36), the Strategic Plan of the University for the years 2023-2026 (Annex No. 10), and the Haxhi Zeka University Syllabus Design Manual (Annex No. 42). Such approach ensures the alignment of the study program with international best practices.

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

The proposed learning outcomes correspond to the expected level for master studies. All three categories, gained knowledge, skills and competencies are in line with the purpose of the study program. The changing needs of the industry should be addressed in an adequate manner. Study program was designed by analyzing similar programs from Austria, Croatia, and UK as key references (SER, p. 77). They were compared to identify best practices and ensure the program aligns with international standards. The alignment ranges up to 75%, determining similar or

same study courses, reflecting their objectives etc.

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

Study program is designed in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework, Law No. 08/L-110 on the Kosovo Accreditation agency, the Bologna Declaration, the Statute of Haxhi Zeka University, and the European Qualifications Framework. The program comprises a total of 120 ECTS credits (SER, pp. 78-79), which is appropriate for a master study program. The bachelor's and master's programs offered by the FMTHE (<https://unhz.eu/en/fmthm/>) are focused on the general management of tourism and hospitality, while this study program provides a specific focus on tourism marketing management and the development of unique strategies for promoting destinations and managing marketing activities.

The developed structure and learning outcomes ensure there is no overlap with existing programs in the FMTHE, maintaining the clarity of competencies and specialization that this program offers. The content and structure of the curriculum (SER, pp. 78-79) are coherent and partly enable the students to achieve all the intended learning outcomes and to progress smoothly through their studies.

The study program is similar and compatible with other study programs in the EHEA area (SER, p. 77). The planned courses are designed to build specialized knowledge and skills in tourism marketing management. Learning outcomes from earlier courses are integrated into later ones, helping students apply and expand on what they've already learned. This approach supports a deeper, more lasting understanding of complex topics and ensures continuous academic development.

The core disciplines (SER, pp. 79-80) provide a strong foundation in tourism marketing management, encompassing aspects such as scientific research, the development of marketing strategies, and the management of human resources and tourism destinations. Some learning outcomes, such as acquiring entrepreneurial skills in tourism marketing by taking the elective course Green Entrepreneurship (SER, p. 81), can only be achieved if students choose specific electives. However, since students are limited to selecting only three elective courses, the range of competencies gained may be less comprehensive.

It would be more beneficial to offer a greater number of elective options with fewer ECTS credits (e.g., 3 ECTS), thus aligning the program with current trends in European higher education. The number of ECTS credits for master's thesis is also quite generous (30 ECTS), while in many similar programs this number is around 18-20 ECTS. Especially considering the fact that students also take two methodological courses. This could give us more room to introduce additional courses and achieve even better learning outcomes.

Horizontal and vertical mobility, progression and employability on a European or global level is secured for students from the proposed study program. Further proof for such statement is its comparability with similar international study programs (40%-75% in structure and content). FMTHE provided a list of cooperation agreements with international academic institutions (<https://unhz.eu/bashkepunimet-me-universitete/>).

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

Agreements with public and private institutions and companies to create internship for students are initiated and managed by the Career Development Office through the Regulation of the work of Career Development Office (Annex No. 63). It ensures that these agreements comply with labor market standards and requirements while assisting students in finding suitable internship. Internship Manual is available for students and companies' support; it outlines the process of monitoring and executing internships, through the provision of guidance for both parties. A Career Development Guide (Annex No. 64) has been created to help students with career orientation and professional development. UNHZ has also developed a Regulation for engaging students in internships in its administration.

Each student is assigned a mentor from the academic staff to provide guidance during their internship. Internships are carried out outside the institution, in collaboration with the labor market through formal agreements with employers, ensuring a supportive environment for hands-on learning and professional development. To maintain the quality of the internship experience, a course professor oversees and evaluates the students' work in coordination with the employers throughout the semester. This approach reflects the institution's commitment to offering practical experiences and supporting students' career growth.

Students' practical work is assigned 4 ECTS credits, which are based on the number of working hours and assessed through reports and evaluation forms to support and track the learning process. This approach meets the required standards for monitoring internships and credit allocation. Internship activity reports, including detailed records, are used to monitor students' progress and performance. The entire internship process is guided by the Internship Manual (Annex No. 39), implemented through the Career Development Center. The manual outlines each phase—from continuous communication with the host company to the use of evaluation forms and assessments by both the internship coordinator and the Career Development Center—ensuring accuracy and quality in the internship experience.

To support the internship process, the university has established cooperation agreements with various businesses (Annex No. 71). These agreements incorporate the Internship Manual,

designed for students and partner institutions. The program effectively combines theoretical knowledge with practical experience, which is crucial for developing the skills required for a successful career in the tourism industry.

Standard 4.6 The study program is delivered through student-centered teaching and learning.

Course syllabi are designed around the program's learning outcomes, ensuring that both content and objectives are closely aligned with the overall goals of the program. The curriculum follows a student-centered didactic approach, incorporating teaching methods that foster the development of key skills needed to achieve the intended outcomes. Learning materials and practical activities are carefully structured to support the application of knowledge in real-world contexts, enhancing both understanding and professional readiness.

A variety of pedagogical methods are used to deliver the program, including interactive lectures, group work, project-based research, and case studies, aligned with the intended learning outcomes. These approaches are appropriate for the master's level and are designed to help students develop critical thinking, analytical abilities, and practical skills essential for effective tourism marketing management. At FMTHE, teaching includes lectures for larger student groups, supported by tutorials, seminars, and independent study. Besides the lectures, program also includes other forms like flipped classroom, active learning, problem-based learning, work-based learning, blended learning, and student-led learning (SER, p. 84).

After each semester, the faculty gathers student feedback through the "Student-Teacher" questionnaire, conducted via the SMU electronic system, which streamlines data collection and analysis. Additionally, the Quality Office monitors student pass rates, also generated automatically by the SMU system. The Quality Office reviews these results to identify areas for improvement. Based on the findings, professors adjust their teaching methods to better meet student needs and enhance the learning experience. This structured, data-driven approach supports ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement, ensuring a higher-quality academic environment.

Support is available for international students, including individual sessions to help them adapt to the curriculum (SER, p. 84). For students with disabilities, the faculty offers assistive technologies and learning materials in accessible formats. Small group sessions provide a more personalized learning experience, promoting greater interaction and tailored support. For students facing challenges in specific subjects, the faculty organizes additional lectures through the Tutorial System—designed to improve learning outcomes, and the peer-to-peer support system, which encourages collaboration and mutual assistance among students.

Professors use SEMS (Student Management Electronic System) to distribute learning materials, communicate with students, submit assignments, and assign grades (interview with

students). Lectures take place in classrooms equipped with advanced technological tools, such as video projectors and interactive whiteboards. These modern classroom technologies enhance the teaching process by providing students with a more engaging and interactive learning experience.

In the Master's program in Tourism Marketing Management, courses are aligned with the intended learning outcomes. Every module features specific objectives that correspond to the knowledge and skills students are expected to acquire, as detailed in the course descriptions and syllabi. Diverse assessment methods such as tests, projects, and presentations will be used to evaluate students' knowledge and skills. Assessment methods are tailored to each course's nature and specified in the syllabus to ensure they align with learning objectives and course content (SER, p. 85).

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

Assessment criteria, methods, and grading standards are published in advance and made accessible to all students. These are clearly outlined in each course syllabus, available through the Student Management Electronic System (SEMS). At the beginning of the semester, students are informed about the evaluation process during an orientation session and through materials provided in class and on online platforms, ensuring transparency and clarity.

Student evaluation is conducted using standardized criteria and consistent methods across all participants in a given course, ensuring fairness and objectivity. Clear procedures are in place for grade reviews and appeals, allowing students to raise concerns and request reassessment when needed. This structured approach upholds the integrity of the evaluation process and guarantees that every student is assessed in a transparent manner.

After each exam, professors hold consultation sessions to review results before entering grades into the SEMS system (<https://smu.unhz.eu/>; interview with students). These sessions provide students with detailed feedback, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. For those who perform poorly, professors offer guidance, suggest resources, and recommend learning strategies. Open communication is maintained throughout the course, ensuring fair assessment and continuous support for student learning.

Students can submit complaints either through the SEMS platform or in written form. In line with Articles 143 and 150 of the University Statute (Annex No. 3), students have the right to raise concerns related to teaching quality, infrastructure, or decisions affecting their studies. The complaint process includes clear steps: the right to appeal, submission deadlines, committee reviews, and the option for a second-level review or court appeal. The Student Guidebook (Annex No. 66) outlines this multi-level process, which involves the Faculty

Council, Appeals Committee, and University Study Committee, ensuring transparency, fairness, and the protection of student rights throughout their academic experience.

Each course's evaluation criteria are aligned with the required skills and knowledge outlined in the learning outcomes. A variety of assessment methods are used to ensure a comprehensive evaluation, including theoretical tests with analytical questions, research projects, case studies, presentations, practical assignments, and participation. Students are assessed based on their engagement in lectures, independent work, and collaborative projects, ensuring that both theoretical understanding and practical abilities are accurately measured.

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

The workload for each course is calculated based on the total time a student needs to complete all learning activities—lectures, independent study, research, consultations, assignments, and exam preparation. For example, a 4 ECTS course requires around 100 hours of student work (1 ECTS = 25 hours), typically including 30 hours of lectures, 5 hours of consultations, 30 hours of project work, 15 hours of assignments, and 20 hours of exam prep. Students must complete 60 ECTS per academic year, aligned with the European standard for a 40-hour work week. Courses vary in credit value depending on their duration and practical demands, with those involving more hands-on learning usually carrying more credits. The academic year includes 30 weeks of instruction and 8 weeks of exams, covering all learning components (SER, pp. 86-87).

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Discuss the reduction of the ECTS amount for a single elective course, thus enabling better achievement of the planned learning outcomes through the increase of the courses' offer and choice.*
- 2. Consider reducing the proposed number of ECTS for the master's thesis, allowing more space for additional courses.*

## 5. STUDENTS

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

The admission policies for the FMTHE are clearly defined, transparent, and publicly available. The program has established comprehensive and structured admission requirements for Master level studies (SER, p. 88).

Admission to the program requires candidates to hold a Bachelor's degree, with selection based on a standardized evaluation system that combines prior academic performance (GPA) and entrance examination results (SER, p. 88). The admission process is publicly announced through the university's official channels, ensuring that all relevant information regarding

entry requirements, deadlines, application procedures, and selection criteria is accessible to prospective students (<https://unhz.eu/en/fmthm/>).

The selection procedure ensures fair and equal treatment of all candidates, in accordance with national regulations and internal university policies. During interviews, both staff and students demonstrated familiarity with the admission process and confirmed that it is implemented consistently and transparently (site visit).

Procedures for the recognition of prior learning and transfer of credits are in place, in accordance with Kosovo's higher education regulations. Although the program has not yet enrolled international students, FMTHE has mechanisms prepared for the recognition of foreign qualifications where necessary.

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

Student progression and academic records are systematically managed through the university's Student Management Electronic System (SEMS). This platform serves as the primary tool for communication between students and academic staff, publishing examination results, sharing learning materials, and tracking academic achievements (SER, p 90). Both students and professors demonstrated familiarity with SEMS during the site visit interviews.

To ensure continuous improvement, students evaluate the study process after each semester. Feedback is collected and analyzed by the faculty and the university's Quality Assurance Office, and it serves as a basis for identifying areas for improvement (SER, p. 84).

Following each examination session, professors are obliged to organize consultation sessions, allowing students to review their exam results, seek clarifications, and better understand their academic performance (SER, p. 86).

Academic integrity is supported through the use of plagiarism detection software, systematically applied to major written assignments and final theses to ensure that students meet ethical academic standards (Annex No. 18).

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

Students are regularly informed about mobility opportunities, including participation in summer and winter schools, short-term exchanges, and activities under various academic cooperation agreements (SER p. 92). Information is distributed, and students demonstrated awareness of these opportunities during the site visit interviews.

FMTHE has administrative structures responsible for the academic recognition of mobility results. The procedures for recognizing credits earned abroad are clearly defined, ensuring that students who participate in exchanges will not face obstacles in credit transfer or academic progression (SER pp. 92-93).

Although the foundation for supporting mobility is established, opportunities for long-term international exchanges (such as Erasmus+ semester mobility) remain limited at the faculty level for this specific program. Strengthening formal partnerships and creating more outgoing and incoming mobility opportunities would significantly contribute to the program's internationalization goals.

It was observed that some students' English language proficiency is not sufficiently strong to fully benefit from international mobility opportunities. Enhancing English language teaching and support would improve students' readiness for participation in global academic activities.

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

Academic guidance and mentoring are supported through peer-to-peer (SER, p. 90) mentoring initiatives. According to the Self-Evaluation Report and site visit interviews, a peer-to-peer mentoring model has been introduced, aiming to support students who are experiencing academic difficulties. This model enables students who require additional academic assistance to receive help from peers, strengthening collaboration within the faculty (Annex 65).

Career development is encouraged through the inclusion of a mandatory internship as part of the curriculum (SER, p. 79). Site visit findings confirmed that students perceive internships as highly valuable for gaining practical experience. Alumni further reported that in some cases, successful internships led directly to employment opportunities after graduation, demonstrating a positive impact on student employability.

General student support mechanisms are available at the university level, covering academic advising, administrative assistance, and guidance for students who require additional academic or personal support. Although FMTHE has not yet enrolled international students, the institutional structures are in place to offer support when needed, in line with the university's broader inclusion and diversity policies.

Students are informed about their academic rights, including the ability to appeal grades. It was clarified during the site visit that students have 48 hours after grades are published to submit an appeal, correcting the 24-hour reference stated in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER, p. 90). Students showed a good understanding of the appeal procedures during interviews.

#### **ET recommendations:**

- 1. It is recommended that FMTHE increases formal exchange opportunities*
- 2. It is recommended that FMTHE strengthens the teaching and development of English language skills among students*

## **6. RESEARCH**

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

To achieve the strategic goals outlined in the Strategic Plan 2023–2026 FMTHE (Annex No. 11) for scientific research, specific and measurable targets have been set. The main objective of the Strategy for Scientific and Artistic Research 2023–2026 (Annex No. 57) is to strengthen the university's presence across all levels by increasing research activity by 50% compared to the 2013 baseline. Within this framework, the program aims to boost research projects in tourism and hospitality by at least 50% during the same period. To support this goal, the university funds the publication of academic staff research, particularly those published on reputable platforms such as Web of Science and Scopus (SER, p. 97). Additionally, staff members receive support to participate in scientific conferences, further encouraging research development and academic engagement.

The university has implemented several effective mechanisms to promote scientific research and reward academic achievement (SER, p. 97; interview with staff). Publication funding: academic staff receive financial support for publishing in indexed journals—€1,000 for Web of Science and €800 for Scopus. Initially limited to one paper per year, from 2023 onward, funding now covers up to three publications annually. Conference participation: financial support of €500 is provided for attending international conferences, once per calendar year. Research project funding: staff can receive up to €2,000 per year to conduct research projects, either individually or in collaboration with internal or external colleagues. Annual awards: Best scientific work of the year: €200 + certificate. Researcher of the year: €500 + certificate. These awards aim to recognize excellence, encourage continued effort, and promote professional growth.

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

In line with Article 7 of the Code of Ethics for Scientific Research, staff are guided by core principles such as: Commitment to research quality, Honesty, fairness, and transparency, Respect for colleagues, Responsibility toward cultural heritage and the environment, Social accountability of research. Faculty members at FMTHE aim to publish their scientific work in internationally recognized journals (e.g. SCI, SSCI, and Scopus), ensuring compliance with global scientific standards and ethical norms. In 2021, the Office for Scientific Research was established at the institutional level to support and promote academic research. Its core mission is to identify research needs, motivate academic staff, and foster a culture of quality and

integrity in scientific work. The office plays a key role in encouraging professional development and recognizing the contributions of researchers.

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

Most of the academic staff of the FMTHE actively publish in indexed journals, as defined by Administrative Instruction 01/2018 on the recognition of peer-reviewed platforms (Annex No. 69). Faculty members also participate regularly in conferences, symposia, and seminars. A review of their research output confirms consistent engagement in high-quality academic and scientific activities. It has also been noticed that some members of the academic staff do not publish regularly, or publish in the last quartiles of ranked journals (Q3, Q4). The content of the articles sometimes isn't consistent with their habilitation field or the subjects they teach. This is why it would be recommendable that from the total number of publications, which are taken into account for the election to the title, only those where the person is first or the leading author are eligible.

All staff involved in this program hold at least a master's degree and have over five years of experience in academic and research work (SER, p. 98). The staff contribute their expertise to both national and international projects, with a notable increase in leadership and participation over the past five years. This growing involvement demonstrates the faculty's strong ability to bridge theory with practice, benefiting both industry and the wider community.

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

Program staff participate in working groups that support local municipalities in the Peja region, further reinforcing their role in regional development. Faculty members contribute to the development of policies in the field of Tourism and Hospitality. All staff involved in this program have participated in research projects, collaborating with colleagues both nationally and internationally. Partnerships have been established with several universities and institutes across Europe, creating opportunities for both staff and students to engage in exchanges and participate in joint scientific projects. Research findings are being integrated into the teaching process, serving as valuable content for specific course units.

FMTHE and its staff are actively seeking alternatives for active students' participation in research projects (presented an example with the US university; interview with students). Those not directly involved still benefit, as research insights and experiences are shared during lectures, enriching the learning experience. Master's thesis work provides students with valuable experience in their specific research fields (SER, p. 99). The outcomes of these studies are often published in academic journals, with students frequently listed as first authors or co-

authors. Recently, students have also begun participating in departmental research projects, led by faculty members. These opportunities allow them to conduct research at partner institutions and take part in scientific conferences, further enriching their academic and professional development.

#### **ET recommendations:**

- 1. Determine each professor's expected minimum research output in the strategic documents, e.g., at least one publication in SSCI, SCI, or Scopus-indexed journals per year.*
- 2. Strengthen the criteria for election to the titles: Include the condition that at least a part (one article) of the publications in the last five years is in the top half of ranked journals (Q1, Q2) as a condition for the election to higher titles (associate prof., full prof.). Only the publications where the person is first or leading author are eligible for the election procedure.*

## **7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES**

Standard 7.1. The HEI ensures adequate premises and equipment for performing education processes and research.

The FMTHE Faculty shares part of its building with the Faculty of Business, utilizing a total of 2,604 m<sup>2</sup> of usable space (SER, p. 99). At present, these facilities are adequate and sufficient to accommodate the expected number of students enrolled in the program. A recommendation from the 2022 FMTHE Academic Staff Self-Evaluation highlights the need for improving the infrastructure and increasing the number of cabinets. Experts' team received the information, that the faculty will be relocated to the new premises until October 2025, currently under construction. FMTHE has 89 computers, 21 printers, and 6 scanners, distributed across the classrooms. Additionally, there are 3 photocopiers and 14 projectors available for use. Every classroom is equipped with sound systems (SER, p. 100). The equipment is appropriate for conducting the study program.

A recommendation from the 2022 Faculty of Business Academic Staff Self-Evaluation was Management of UHZ needs to invest in improving the learning conditions for students, including renovating the classrooms by equipping them with modern projectors, new blackboards and installing the Internet in each classroom. This recommendation is being progressively realized, the university equips lecture halls with modern equipment and smart boards, in accordance with available funds. FMTHE has licensed software (SPSS) for the study disciplines included in the curriculum.

FMTHE and the Faculty of Business own 16 classrooms with a capacity of 1077 seats, a library with 84 seats, two IT laboratories with 60 seats (20 and 40), and rooms for teaching staff (SER, p. 101; visiting facilities). The regular academic staff consists of 13 professors and 1 assistant in their respective fields, together with 5 administrative staff members who provide administrative services to students and academic staff. The classrooms are equipped with whiteboards, projectors, and, in some cases, smart boards. Ramps at the entrances enable individuals with special needs to access the ground floors. UHZ has an agreement with the "Xheladin Deda" Resource Center for Learning and Counseling in Peja (SER, p. 102), which facilitates the exchange of necessary teaching materials and offers expert advice from the center on improving working conditions for individuals with special requirements.

Standard 7.2 The HEI ensures adequate library resources for study program.

The library offers a reading room (84 seats), two IT labs (60 seats), and the E/2 hall (30 seats). These spaces support individual study and group work, encouraging collaboration and independent learning. On three working days, the library is open from 8 to 16, two days from 8 to 19, and on Saturday from 10 to 16. The schedule is visible on the doors and website, it lets students use the library after classes to study, do research, or access digital and academic resources. It provides a quiet space with everything they need for learning. The reading room offers 84 seats, accommodating approximately 76.36% of the total number of students eligible to use the library at any one time (SER, p. 103). This capacity provides a reasonable degree of flexibility, enabling students to access the space throughout the day. The total capacity of the workspaces (two IT labs and Hall E/2) is 90 seats, which is sufficient for the group work if students are divided into smaller teams.

In the FMTHE and FB library are 875 books and 2535 copies, but the textbooks written as mandatory in the syllabi are mostly missing. Dean explained that the books are being acquired three times per year, and they will provide for the purchase of necessary mandatory literature in June 2025. There are other books which cover the Tourism and Communication field, in Albanian, English, and Bosnian language. The number of books in UHZ libraries in Albanian prevails (2380), there are 330 books in Bosnian language, and 905 in English (SER, p. 104; visiting facilities).

The electronic bases are modest (14 sources), but there could be added some more, relevant for business and tourism field, such as Scopus, WoS, ScienceDirect, Emerald, etc. (SER, p. 104). A recommendation from the 2022 FMTHE Academic Staff Self-Evaluation highlights the need for improved access to core scientific journal databases to better support research and academic work. Since these bases are expensive, it would be recommendable to form a Kosovar consortium of HEIs to negotiate better conditions.

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

The Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kosovo has a legal obligation to ensure adequate funding for the University to fulfill its duties and responsibilities as outlined in the provisions of the University Statute. This means that the study program will be financially supported by the Ministry of Education (SER, p. 105). Additional funds from projects and other sources support a range of initiatives, including international mobility programs, scientific research, study visits, student internships, conferences, training sessions, and the organization of the Summer University (UNISUM) and Winter University (UNIWIN).

#### **ET recommendations:**

- 1. Improve the access to the core scientific journal databases.*

## FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT TEAM

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

## OVERALL EVALUATION AND JUDGMENTS OF THE EXPERT TEAM

In conclusion, the expert team considers the master study program Tourism Marketing Management substantially compliant with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation Manual and, therefore, recommends accrediting this study program for a duration of 5 years with a number of 25 students to be enrolled in Albanian and 20 students in Bosnian language, both in regular studies.

### Expert Team

#### Chair

(Signature)



Armand Faganel

(Print Name)

20. 5. 2025

(Date)

#### Member

(Signature)



Giorgi Gvenetadze

(Print Name)

20.05.2025

(Date)

#### Member

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Sofia Gaio

(Print Name)

20.05.2025

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