



University “Haxhi Zeka” in Peja

**B.Sc. Food Technology
Reaccreditation**

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

February 2025, Pristina

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INTRODUCTION

Sources of information for the Report:

- *SER*
- *Syllabus*
- *Staff CVs*
- *Annexes*
- *Discussions and observations during the site visit*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *KAA indicators*
- *Compliance level according KAA*

Site Visit Programme

Programme Accreditation Procedure at University “Haxhi Zeka” in Peja	
Programmes:	Food Technology, BSc, 180 ECTS (Re-accreditation)
Site visit on:	19 February 2025
Expert Team:	Prof. Kyriaki Zinoviadou, Prof. Damir Magdic Mr. Gaga Gvenetadze
Coordinators of the KAA:	Arianit Krasniqi KAA Officer Leona Kovaçi, KAA Officer

Site Visit Programme		
Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:50	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Prof. Dr. Nexhdet Shala, Dean of Agribusiness Faculty Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Hoxha, Vice Dean for budget, finance and infrastructure Prof. Dr. Ismajl Cacaj, Vice Dean for Teaching, student affairs and research Prof. Asoc. Dr. Arieta Camaj, Board member MSc. Ukë Selimaj, Faculty Secretary
09.50 – 10.35	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Genta Kastrati, Quality Assurance MSc. Luan Lulaj, Quality Assurance MSc. Ukë Selimaj, Faculty Secretary MSc. Myhybije Zallqi, Official of Student Affairs MSc. Abetare Pelaj, Official of finances

		MSc. Alberina Brahimaj, Official of Archive and protocol. MSc. Agon Buçuku, Information Technology Expert
10:40 – 11:40	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Food Technology, BSc, 180 ECTS Prof. Kyriaki Zinoviadou Prof. Damir Magdic Mr Gaga Gvenetadze, Student Expert	Prof. Dr. Arsim Elshani, heads of the study programme Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Hoxha, heads of the study programme Prof. Asoc. Dr. Arieta Camaj, heads of the study programme
11:40 – 12:40	Lunch break	
12:40 – 13.10	Visiting Facilities	Prof. Asoc. Dr. Ilir Morina
13:10 – 13:55	Meeting with teaching staff	Prof. Ass. Dr. Kastriot Pehlivani, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness full-time Prof. Dr. Agim Rysha, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - full-time Prof. Asoc. Dr. Laura Naka, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - part time. Prof. Ass. Dr. Filipos Ruxho, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - part time Prof. Ass. Dr. Astrit Bilalli, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - full-time Prof. Ass. Dr. Shyherete Muriqi, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness -full-time Prof. Asoc. Dr. Albona Shala, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - part time Dr. Violeta Berlajolli, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - part time
14:00 – 14:45	Meeting with students	Vesa Lleshi, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – third year TU Rina Lokaj, students from Faculty of Agribusiness - second year TU Zerina Hajdar, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – second year TU Erlisa Tolaj, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – third year TPB Kristiana Gajanaj, students from Faculty of Agribusiness - third year TPB Seinas Gruda, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – second year TPB Denis Habibi, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – third year TU Anita Asllani, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – third year TU
14:45 – 15:30	Meeting with graduates	Erodit Morina Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TU Gerta Berisha, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TU

		<p>Besiana Hoxha, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TU</p> <p>Mendim Kelmendi, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TPB</p> <p>Gentiana Lajqi, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TPB</p> <p>Egzona Gashi, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TPB</p> <p>Elona Shllaku, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TU</p> <p>Agonis Cacaj, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TU</p> <p>Rina Bujupaj, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TU</p>
15:35 – 16:20	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	<p>Zana Lipoveci, The human resources department at Elkos Group</p> <p>Lahë Avdullahu, SHPK Oreksi</p> <p>Alban Ibrahim, "Jeta e re"</p> <p>Rodon Bala, Beer Factory</p> <p>Musa Berisha, Food Technologist at Devolli Group,</p> <p>Ilirjana Zymberaj, Food and Veterinary Agency, Republic of Kosovo</p> <p>Besnik Lila, BOOST BERRIES SH.P.K.</p> <p>Arben Osmanaj, Kosovo Agriculture Institute</p>
16:20 – 16:30	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
16:30 – 16:40	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

Overall instructions for HEIs:

1. No presentations of any kind are allowed, as the meetings are intended to be free discussions
2. The students selected for the meeting should reflect a diversity in terms of fields of study, programme, study cycle, year of study, students with special needs if any, etc.
3. The teaching staff selected for the meeting should reflect a diversity in terms of faculties and programmes, full-time and part time, local and international, etc.
4. The students, graduates and employers of graduates should not be employed at the institution.
5. Anyone whose attendance won't be agreed in advance with KAA, and the Expert Team will be asked to leave the interview session.
6. Nametags are to be provided for all people attending the meetings.

A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation

“Haxhi Zeka” University (UHZ) was formally established in 2011 when Kosovo aimed to expand higher education and increase study opportunities for students across Kosovo and the region. Located in Peja, UHZ is a public university with five faculties: the Faculty of Business, Faculty of Tourism, Hospitality and Environmental Management, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Agribusiness, and Faculty of Arts, offering a total of 20 study programs. The programs are organized according to the Bologna system, with Bachelor programs spanning three years (180 ECTS) or four years (240 ECTS) and Master’s programs of one year (60 ECTS) or two years (120 ECTS).

The institution's mission emphasizes UHZ's role as an academic entity dedicated to transferring knowledge, realizing students' potential for the dynamic labor market, fostering scientific research, artistic activity, internationalization, and contributing to the economic development of the Peja region and the country.

The “Food Technology” study program has been developed with a modern approach, making it comparable to the curricula of renowned international universities in this field. This program was designed in close collaboration with local, regional, and international experts. Throughout the review process and preparation for re-accreditation, the program remains focused on educating students in applying sustainability principles within food technology.

PROGRAMME EVALUATION

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 Food Technology study program is fully aligned with the mission of "Haxhi Zeka" University and the strategic objectives of the Faculty of Agribusiness. As stated the Food Technology Program is in line with this mission by offering a quality education that prepares students for the dynamic labor market and contributes to the economic development of the region and the country

A particular positive aspect of the study program under evaluation is the close collaboration with local enterprises (confirmed amongst other topics in the site-visit discussion). This is generally of high relevance in order to provide internships, topics for B.Sc.-theses and foster subsequent job opportunities for students. This is of extraordinary importance in Kosovo due to the difficult situation of its labor market. The SER confirms that the study program has a long-term vision of fulfilling its function and mission.

The development of the Food Technology program is supported by an assessment conducted by "Haxhi Zeka" University. This analysis was carried out by an ad hoc committee appointed by the university, which reviewed the implementation of recommendations from the latest accreditation, learning outcomes, syllabi, employment prospects, student demand, and the needs of the food industry. Moreover, the alignment with the program's objectives has been verified through consultations with the industry board (corporate panels) and experts from the University of Iowa.

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

It is indicated in the SER that the study program follows specific procedures for handling cases of plagiarism, informing staff and students about the course of the process. Ethical standards are in place and publicly available, as is stated by the SER and confirmed during the site-visit. In summary it can be concluded that there are clear ethical regulatory standards that govern teaching and research.

According to the SER it can be confirmed that the Ethics Commission and other structures are active in monitoring and dealing with cases of unethical behavior, and their decisions are distributed anonymously to ensure transparency and fairness.

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)

According to the SER there is a comprehensive information management system in place and intensively used. Discussions with representatives from all levels of the study program confirmed that the information management system includes relevant, updated and reliable information. Furthermore, concrete action plans are mentioned during the on-site-visit and in the SER to monitor the implementation of the study program.

As confirmed by representatives from all levels the information management system includes relevant, updated and reliable information. Furthermore, concrete action plans are in place to monitor the implementation of the study program. In addition, the SER indicates that there are clear ethical regulatory standards that govern teaching and research.

Recommendations for improving the study program, given by previous quality assurance procedures, are analysed and implemented effectively (SER).

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)

All study program activities and operations are subject to a policy and review process that ensures adequate and efficient administrative staff and budgetary support as it is confirmed in the SER.

The study program has sufficient administration to support the teaching and learning needs of students and academic staff. This is confirmed in the SER. It is also mentioned in the SER that the administrative staff is subject to continuous professional training as mentioned above, including training in foreign languages, computer and other important skills.

The SER also confirms that the administrative staff is subject to continuous professional training, which is important for the performance of their duties. Staff trainings are held several times a year, which are organized and financed by the rectorate. This has been confirmed by the site-visit discussion.

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)

«Recommendations for improving the quality of the study program have been incorporated into a comprehensive implementation plan. These recommendations, along with suggestions from the preliminary evaluation, have been thoroughly addressed in this self-evaluation report. The implementation plan outlines specific actions to address each recommendation, ensuring their alignment with established quality standards and their effective integration into program development» (SER)

It has to be strongly positive remarked that there is fixed schedule for a regular review provided and a Table of progress is attached to the SER, as well as a SWOT-analysis has been conducted. However, milestones and specific deadlines as well as the dedicated people in charge that will monitor the whole process are not provided in the table.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Increase student involvement in the respective procedures.*
- 2. Specific budget allocation to additional professional development of teaching staff is recommended.*
- 3. Intensified exchange with comparable programs at international level is recommended.*
- 4. An updated version of the improvement plan has to be constructed as a means to more effectively monitor progress and provide corrective actions when required.*

Timeline: Timeline: Immediate start and completion before the end of the summer semester 2027

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)

Internal quality assurance procedures such as quality assurance regulation and quality assurance guidelines for the study program are defined by the internal regulations of UHZ. “Quality assurance coordinators in the academic units are responsible for verifying the SMU platform and ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information on the university website.” (SER). QA-coordinators do not have any teaching obligations according to the SER. This has been confirmed during the site-visit discussion and is stated in the SER as well.

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

UHZ in 2022 has approved the Regulation for Study Programs in which the entire procedure from the initiation of the program to its monitoring is clearly defined. It has been repetitively

confirmed that the study program fulfils this request. It aligns with UHZ mission and strategic goals.

Despite the fact that the BSc Food Technology program is the one under accreditation strong references are made to the program Ecology applied in agriculture in pages 23 and 24 of the SER.

The study program under evaluation underwent an adequate and transparent internal quality assurance process and was formally approved by the designated strategic management bodies of the institution. This process is followed for all programs according to the SER. Its continuous improvement is planned. Such a process is explained in the SER in detail. A continuous improvement system should be further elaborated and implemented.

The process for the development and approval of the study program is well-defined by internal procedures as well as external procedures, e.g. submission of the program description to KAA where it undergoes an evaluation and accreditation procedure including international experts from suitable fields of expertise. The Council for Quality Management and Evaluation has assessed that the program meets the conditions for proceeding with the application for accreditation.

In the SER it is stated that Key Performance Indicators for this level of study program have been established. These performance indicators are measured through the forms set out in the respective regulation. However, key performance parameters should become highlighted more prominently and numerical information should be provided.

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)

Discussions with stakeholders of the study programs have been taken place during the site-visit. The ET got the impression that this board is quite active and attentive. The monitoring includes surveys of employers to determine the competences needed in the labor market, analyzes carried out in collaboration with stakeholders and examples of improvements based on stakeholders' evaluations of the study program.

The study program undergoes regular checks to establish whether the estimated workload allocation (ECTS) of students and the defined learning outcomes are achievable, realistic and adequate. The course syllabus determines regular assessments of students' achieved results during the course.

There is a career office available, which collects all the data related to the practical work of the students.

The collected information is analysed and concrete actions are taken to ensure that the program is up to date.

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

All policies, regulations and guidelines pertaining to the study program are publicly available and such information is accessible by all interested parties.

For all potential students and those currently registered as well as for all interested parties, the faculty continuously publishes on the UHZ website a summary of the study programs, which information is as follows, but not only: Schedules of lectures and exercises, consultation hours, data about the study program, the purpose and objectives of the study program, learning outcomes, teaching procedures, division of subjects according to the syllabus. In the SER it is stated that this information is accurate and constantly updated.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Reports of surveys and evaluations should be exemplarily provided as documents in the Appendix of the SER.*
- 2. A monitoring system for measuring continuous progress should become further elaborated.*
- 3. Key quality parameters of the study program such as number of applications, enrolment, completion rate, duration of the study and grade overview should be included into the QA mechanism on a regular basis and also provided in the SER continuously.*
- 4. Aggregated results of the course evaluations should be provided to the teaching staff, the FAV management and included in the SER.*
- 5. It's recommended to ensure proper functioning of the web page and public accessibility of all the regulations and information demanded under 2.4. substandard.*

Timeline: Immediate start and completion before the end of the summer semester 2027

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 University uses public calls for employment and announces job vacancies through public calls published on the university website and various employment portals. Procedures adopted by UHZ Senate and are fully in accordance with national legislative.

Processes for specific recruitment and employment contract published on the website in "Regulation on Selection Procedures Relating to The Appointment, Removal and Advancement of Regular Academic Staff at the "Haxhi Zeka" University in Peja" and "Employment Handbook for The Administrative Staff at 'Haxhi Zeka' University in Peja". The competent committee has three members, experts in the relevant scientific field, who are approved by the Faculty Council.

Job candidates at the Faculty of Agribusiness are provided with complete job descriptions and employment terms, which include various documents and regulations governing staff activities and responsibilities.

The members of the committee prepare a report open for public discussion for a period of 15 days. After the vote of the Faculty Council, the Senate makes the final decision. The Self Evaluation Report (SER) provided an example of a completed process.

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)

University employs 14 professors and two assistants (full-time) mostly specified in food technology and closely related scientific fields. Table with details about positions, degree, scientific field, courses and other relevant data provided in the Self Evaluation Report.

Approximately 70% of the study program's courses are offered by full-time academic staff, including 14 with doctoral degrees and one doctoral candidate. In one academic year the staff is allowed to cover only two teaching positions at maximum (one full-time, one part-time). This is based on UHZ governing council restriction.

The Academic staff work 6 hours lectures per week while assistants cover 10 exercise sessions per week, at maximum.

Academic staff consists of 60% permanent professors and 10% permanent assistants (70% in total number of employee).

The student-to-full-time academic staff ratio for the study program is 1:11, which is appropriate for achieving successful learning outcomes by the students.

The provided CVs and publications demonstrate comprehensive preparation and contributions of Academic staff to study areas of Food Technology.

The workload of Academic staff aligns with relevant legislation. Potential overload is fairly and transparently regulated and rewarded.

Regular academic staff have a standard 40-hour work week. During this time, they fulfill duties such as preparing and delivering lectures, seminars, exercises, and other forms of instruction, consultation, administration, preparing university textbooks and relevant literature, supervising seminar and diploma papers, and conducting exams as scheduled. A sufficient number of mentors for students ensured.

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)

Conditions and Criteria for Academic Titles are publicly available and very precisely describe achievements in teaching and scientific work necessary for obtaining academic titles and appointment.

The university has an annual plan for the professional development of the academic staff. Procedures for advancement through scientific-teaching titles are legally prescribed and publicly available. The University implements the prescribed procedures, and all academic staff is obliged to advance through the titles within the prescribed legal deadlines.

The conditions for promotion to a higher rank are clearly prescribed, and the procedures are carried out in a transparent manner. Full professors engaged for indefinite period of time, associate and assistant professors engaged for four years while university assistants and foreign language lecturer engaged for three years.

The results of feedback and comments are a key element in the process of advancement, reappointment, and contract renewal of teaching staff. This evaluation process includes the use of questionnaires completed by students, management, colleagues, and the self-assessment of instructors.

Regulation for the evaluation and selection procedures related to the appointment, reappointment and advancement of regular academic staff presented in annex on Self Evaluation Report.

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)

University supports professional development with education about vital themes for teaching.

"Strategy For Scientific Research and Artistic Activity 2023-2026" published on the web pages consists an annual operational plan for the professional development of academic staff. Professional trainings (Turnitin, AI, ...) are occasionally organized for academics and other employee. All activities are precisely regulated and related documents published on the institution's web page.

In period 2022-2024 almost 80 individual participations in professional trainings for various purposes documented in Self Evaluation Report.

Research, mobility issues, study visits, international cooperation, sabbatical, networking and related activities are permanently supported with transparent and precise activities regulated by university. Financial support is permanent for all research activities, mobility and sabbatical year. Up to 10.000 EUR per year is dedicated initial amount for research projects.

Education of staff about plagiarism and themes related to teaching and research permanently conducted at university.

The library and online resources have limited access to the latest scientific literature and journals. This hinders the further development of a scientific career and the possibility of submitting project 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)

The University Statute and the Regulation on Evaluation Procedures for Engaging External Collaborators define criteria for engaging external associates. Candidates must hold a PhD degree and at least one international publication in accordance of the UHZ Statute. External collaborators for practical work and exercises must have MSc degree in relevant scientific field with an average grade of at least 8 in both levels of study. The Evaluation Committee makes final decision and recommendation for engagement. Engaged part-time academic staff becomes members of an existing research programs and groups from university. Engaged academic staff seems to be fully adequate to deliver complete content of the study program.

ET recommendations:

1. *The Faculty of Agribusiness does not have technical staff employed in laboratories. Due to the obligation of constant advancement to higher ranks and the possibility of participating in scientific projects, it is recommended to find a way and hire technical staff who will assist academic staff in the preparation of laboratory teaching and experimental research work.*
2. *In order to better finance research and retain academic staff, the Expert Committee recommends increasing international cooperation, mobility, joint project applications, research and publication in scientific journals with foreign partners.*
3. *As long as there is no full access to relevant electronic scientific databases through the university infrastructure, it is recommended to contact potential foreign scientists in order to collect the necessary literature for successful and fruitful work.*
4. *Academic staff are recommended to undergo independent and institutional additional education in English in teaching, writing project applications and research work.*

Timeline: Immediate start and completion before the end of the summer semester 2027

5. 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. (ESG 1.2)

As stated in the SER the intended learning outcomes of the Food Technology BSc. study program are consistent with the mission and strategic goals of Haxhi Zeka University and the Faculty of Agribusiness. The mission of Haxhi Zeka University includes the transfer of knowledge to realize students' potential and to contribute to the economic development of the region and the country in general. However, the potential for acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies could be enhanced in the study program.

The intended learning outcomes cover all study programme objectives. Specific program objectives are well presented in the SER, and the intended learning outcomes are also provided.

As shown in the SER the intended learning outcomes for the BSc. Food Technology program are formulated from the student's perspective and clearly describe what a graduate will know and be able to do upon completion of the program.

UHZ has used examples of best practices for the determination of the learning outcomes for the BSc in Food Technology program based on the guide “ECTS Users’ Guide 2015,” published by the European Union. Based on the SER the learning outcomes include three main categories: knowledge, skills, and competencies.

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

The intended learning outcomes of the study program BSc in Food Technology align with the National Qualifications Framework (level VI) and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The intended learning outcomes of the individual subjects and overall course reflect the Bachelor-level requirements.

It is confirmed by the SER that the outcomes are designed to ensure that they clearly reflect the specific features and objectives of the program, avoiding overlap with other study programs within the institution. This helps guarantee a clear differentiation between programs and a well-defined academic pathway for students. The learning outcomes in this program are unique.

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

The curriculum as presented in the SER under provides a logical flow of subjects and allows a certain number of elective courses. The changes that were proposed during the last expert visit have been implemented demonstrating the willingness of the faculty to adapt. A total of 10 ECTS for the Diploma thesis is appropriate.

As stated, the rules that define students' progression through the program courses have been established to ensure that the learning outcomes achieved in successfully completed previous courses fulfill the necessary prerequisites for subsequent courses in the curriculum

Study program BSc in Food Technology is comparable with the Program of 70% with the University of Zagreb’s Faculty of Agriculture program, 65% with the University of Hohenheim’s Agricultural Sciences program and more. Certain differences such as the compulsory course in Beer production technology are desired in order to serve the needs of the region.

The flow of courses could be expressed more clearly and the distinction between general and specific competences should become further elaborated. The core disciplines necessary for

achieving the learning outcomes and acquiring competencies in the respective fields are adequately covered by the program courses.

These disciplines are adequately covered by the courses in the program. Foundational courses such as biology, mathematics, organic and inorganic chemistry cover the essential knowledge that students must master to achieve both general and specific competencies in the field.

The SER states that the study program is comparable to similar study programs abroad, enabling graduates to achieve horizontal and vertical mobility and to access a range of employment opportunities in the European and global markets. This statement is valid as the program has been aligned with various other programs delivered in prestigious Institutions in the EU.

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

N.a.

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

The curriculum includes practical work in the fifth semester. The detailed elaboration of the learning outcomes and assessment methods for internship is missing as the course syllabi is not provided. Currently it is an elective and it is recommended to make it compulsory for all students.

UHZ has drafted a Practical work manual (only Albanian Annex 25), which includes the expected learning outcomes, the rights and responsibilities of all involved parties, and templates for all necessary documents for conducting the internship. The learning outcomes of the internship are clearly specified and appropriate.

Monitoring of students during the internship is carried out by professors and company representatives when students perform the practical part. (SER).

For practical work students receive only 3 ECTS credits. The Evaluation methods can be assessed since the detailed syllabi is not provided.

UHZ has signed cooperation agreements with main stakeholders and the department has a strong collaboration with the private sector and is frequently contacted for professional

consultation, pointing to the fact that it has a good reputation in the real sector, which is growing.

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

In the study programs general small groups of students are enrolled. This normally implies a more student-centred pedagogical approach as professors can dedicate individual attention to students. The study program has a well-defined didactic and research concept, and students benefit from a combination of scientific research and direct practice in the food field

There is no evidence of teaching methods being adapted though there is a central office at the University of Prishtina which offers pedagogical skills upgrade training to professors at the Faculty.

It is confirmed in the SER that the program utilizes various pedagogical methods, including interactive lectures, seminars, workshops, practical projects, and case studies, ensure that students acquire advanced knowledge and skills necessary for success in the field of food technology.

The student evaluation methods are used in order to provide feedback on instructors and the methods used, contributing to further improvement of the teaching process.

As stated in the SER various digital tools and interactive platforms into the teaching and learning process. This was confirmed by the students and the faculty during the expert visit.

Teaching methods in the program are adapted to support the needs of a diverse student population, considering the specific requirements of various groups, such as part-time students, mature students, and those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Currently International students cannot be enrolled as all courses are delivered in Albanian.

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

The program clearly describes the relation between the overall intended learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) and the contribution made by each individual module to achieve those learning outcomes. However, the Learning outcomes are not presented in a consistent manner and in certain cases the wording that is used is not the appropriate one to demonstrate levelness.

The evaluation methods are too heavily reliant on middle assessments and exams, according to the detailed syllabus. Where courses have a heavy component of skills development and practical knowledge, the assessment methods should be adapted accordingly, and students' applied knowledge and skills should be assessed through applied and practical tests, both in group teamwork assignments and individual assignments.

From the SER it can be quoted that "The study program ensures an objective and reliable grading process for all students. Grading criteria are clear, predefined, and applied equally to ensure that each student is assessed fairly and in accordance with established standards." The study program ensures objective and reliable grading of students.

It is confirmed in the SER that students receive timely and detailed feedback on assessment results, identifying their strengths and weaknesses through consultations. These consultations are held within 48 hours of the grades being posted on SEMS. Moreover there is well defined appeal procedure and during the visit it was confirmed that all students are aware of the process.

Standard 4.8 Learning outcomes are evaluated in terms of student workload and expressed in ECTS. (ECTS 1.2)

The SER clearly remarks: 'The workload for students is calculated, and ECTS credits are assigned to all learning activities that contribute to achieving the intended program learning outcomes. This includes not only the main teaching activities but also all program components that assist in developing students' knowledge, skills, and competencies. The calculation for 1 ECTS is based on 25 hours of student activities.' The expert team trusts this vote.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Update reading material ensuring that all references are current*
- 2. Enhance the number of courses offered in English as a means to attract International students*
- 3. Revise the study programme objectives according to latest advances in technology and scientific discovery and ensure alignment of learning outcomes with the overall study programme objectives.*
- 4. Revise the intended learning outcomes in a way that ensures inclusion of competences and skills including research skills, critical and creative thinking and other competences relevant to the labour market. It is suggested to use the BLOOM taxonomy in order to use the appropriate wording for each level.*
- 5. Make the Practical work/Internship course a compulsory course with a minimum of 6 ECTS instead of 5. Additionally, there should be official and direct involvement of an*

Academic supervisor to the project in order to reassure the standards that are required for a level 6 student are met.

6. *Since nowadays the use of AI is increasing it is recommended to increase the number of oral presentations as a means of assessment in order to enhance students' soft skills and critical thinking as well as to indirectly evaluate the originality of the work.*

Timeline: Immediate start and completion before the end of the summer semester 2027

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 Food Technology, BSc program at University "Haxhi Zeka" in Peja are clearly defined, comprehensive, and publicly available. The university has established well-structured admission requirements for both national and international students, ensuring transparency and accessibility. The admission criteria include a high school graduation diploma or an equivalent qualification (such as State Matura results) for undergraduate applicants, in line with national higher education regulations.

The admission process ensures fair and equal treatment of all candidates by applying a standardized selection procedure. This procedure includes a decision-making process that evaluates applicants based on their academic performance and additional assessments where necessary. The criteria are applied consistently and without discrimination, ensuring that all applicants have an equal opportunity for admission. Additionally, students benefit from clear procedures for the recognition of prior learning and credit transfer policies, allowing them to transfer previous coursework from accredited institutions.

The admission policies are published on the university's website and other information channels, ensuring that prospective students can easily access all necessary information regarding entry requirements, deadlines, and application procedures.

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

The Faculty of Agribusiness has implemented a functional student monitoring system that tracks student progression and identifies potential academic challenges. This system allows for timely interventions to support students who may be struggling academically. The university provides counseling and academic support services, ensuring that students receive assistance when needed.

Regular monitoring of student progression rates, retention, and completion rates is conducted by the faculty. The data collected is analyzed and disseminated to academic staff and students

to promote transparency and encourage program improvement. When necessary, actions are taken to address high dropout rates or low course completion rates, such as providing additional mentoring, tutoring sessions, or course adjustments.

The program clearly defines progression possibilities for students, ensuring they understand the potential pathways available after graduation. Information about further study opportunities, employability, and career pathways is communicated to students through academic advisors and career services.

Additionally, the program has clear policies for credit recognition and transfer, facilitating student mobility between institutions and programs. This ensures that students who have completed coursework at another accredited institution can have their qualifications recognized and credited toward their degree.

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

Students enrolled in the Food Technology, BSc program are regularly informed about international exchange opportunities, particularly through Erasmus+ and other mobility programs. The Office for International Cooperation actively supports students in applying for and participating in exchange programs.

The university has established regulations for the recognition of ECTS credits, ensuring that students who study abroad can transfer their credits without academic disadvantage. Additionally, information on application procedures and admission requirements for international students is publicly available in English, increasing accessibility for prospective foreign students.

The university actively attracts and supports international students, offering academic advising, housing assistance, and language support. Courses in foreign languages are available for exchange students to help them integrate into the academic environment.

The institution collects and analyzes feedback from both national and international students, using this data to improve mobility procedures and student experiences. This ensures that students receive continuous support during their international exchange experiences.

Furthermore, the university tracks student participation in mobility programs, recording the number of incoming and outgoing students who participated in exchange programs over the last five years.

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)

The university ensures that a sufficient number of professional, administrative, and technical staff are available to support students academically and administratively. The support staff is adequately qualified to address students' needs effectively.

Students are regularly informed about available services, including academic regulations, study program requirements, and student support initiatives. This information is publicly accessible via information packages for new students, the university website, and printed materials distributed at orientation sessions.

The faculty provides students with academic and career guidance, offering mentorship programs, supervisors, and academic advisors to help them make informed decisions about their studies and future career paths. Additionally, clear procedures for appeals and complaints are in place, ensuring that students have a transparent and fair process to raise concerns.

Students have access to extracurricular activities, including student clubs, cultural events, and voluntary initiatives. There are also funding opportunities available to support student-led initiatives. The university provides sports and recreational spaces, promoting student well-being and engagement beyond academic life.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Improve academic mentoring and tutoring programs to help reduce dropout rates and increase graduation rates. Ensure better dissemination of student progression data through digital platforms.*
- 2. Increase the number of bilateral agreements with international universities. Develop additional language support programs and establish an international student support center.*
- 3. Increase funding for student clubs, extracurricular activities, and career development initiatives. Strengthen mental health and well-being services, including psychological counseling and stress management resources. Offer more extracurricular activities, networking opportunities, and professional workshops to enhance student engagement and employability.*
- 4. Expand infrastructure to better accommodate students with disabilities and provide additional learning accommodations.*
- 5. Increase the teaching hours of English courses.*

Timeline: Immediate start and completion before the end of the summer semester 2028

6. RESEARCH

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

The study program is fully aligned with the vision and mission of "Haxhi Zeka" University. The existing Strategic Plan with expected goals and achievements defines the framework of research work and activities through the study program. The goal is to support research for potential improvements to the study program and academic staff in the field of food technology. Strategy of scientific research and artistic activity 2023-2026. encourages innovation and the development of new knowledge in relevant areas in order to improve the quality of life and the local and national economy. The existing financial support and academic staff have the potential to fulfill the plan, but not to fully develop the research potential.

Research activities are compatible with international practice and meet the requirements and standards of the relevant field.

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

The university supports scientific research with 10,000 EUR per year, with additional financial support for papers published in journals cited in the Web of Science (1,000 EUR) and Scopus (800 EUR) scientific databases. Furthermore, it financially supports participation in scientific conferences (500 EUR) and mobilities. In addition, the university offers awards for the best work of the year (200 EUR) and researcher (500 EUR). During the free academic year (sabbatical), a full salary is received as institutional support.

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.

The University organizes institutional support for every type of cooperation. In previous years, international cooperation has been established with higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Albania, North Macedonia, Croatia, Germany (thesis, analyses, etc.) and Austria, from where guest lecturers have been invited. Cooperation agreements have been signed with 17 companies (attached to the SER) and some additional evidence of cooperation has been provided by former students and employers from the public and private sectors.

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.

The Office for Scientific Work creates databases with the scientific achievements of the teaching staff and publishes them on the university website. The document with the annual report on scientific work contains a list of publications, participation in conferences and mobility as well as links to Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar for each employee. The scientific work of the engaged staff is in line with national requirements and standards for the promotion of research and professional work.

Publications of full-time teachers of the Food Technology study program can be accessed via links in the SER and the university website. Published works are highly correlated with the curriculum and topics in teaching.

Students are occasionally involved in research activities with academic staff. Several final theses have been produced as part of research activities.

ET recommendations:

- 1. The existing research fund does not have sufficient potential for the full international scientific affirmation of academic staff. Increasing international cooperation and mobility for the purpose of joint research, preparation of project proposals and publication should be a permanent goal.*
- 2. Various forms of training for the preparation and submission of project proposals and networking with foreign partners are needed and recommended.*
- 3. The employment of technical staff in laboratories would make it easier for academic staff to improve the quality of teaching and scientific research.*
- 4. Joint projects with the public and private sectors have the potential to increase motivation, promote institutions and sustainably finance research work and equipment. It is recommended to intensify efforts to strengthen cooperation with economic entities.*

Timeline: Immediate start and completion before the end of the summer semester 2028

INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

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

As inspected during the site visit, the Faculty of Agribusiness of UHZ is providing suitable lecture halls, laboratories, library and IT infrastructure for the study program. Land and buildings are available from former military installations. Buildings are in a good condition and extensions are under construction.

For teaching an auditorium maximum with 130 seats, three teaching halls with capacities of 50, and 30 seats are available and equipped with internet connection and LED projectors. Five student laboratories for various applications are available and equipped with basic equipment. However, instrumentation is aged and investments are required. Shortcomings are partly

compensated by performing internships and thesis work in cooperation with surrounding agribusiness companies and the Agricultural Institute of Peja. A computer working room is available and software with valid licenses is provided. The faculty management assures that the premises will be available for the study program at least for the next five years. Upper floors are accessible by elevators for students and staff members with impaired mobility.

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

UHZ is providing a library with reading rooms, offering suitable spaces for individual study and smaller rooms for group work. The number of seats in the reading room and the group work rooms is sufficient for the number of students to be enrolled in the study program. A stock of books covering subjects included in the study program is available

The library provides services and access beyond regular class times, ensuring that students and academic staff have the opportunity to use the library's resources when needed. The library operates on the basis of the regulation as documented in the appendix of the SER.

The library offers a considerable book stock of Albanian and international literature. The library has a sufficient number of subscriptions to local and international publications, including periodical journals and electronic sources. It offers access to a wide range of online resources. Efforts to provide new titles and relevant materials to support the development of study programs have been noted in the discussions during the site visit.

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

The SER contains a 5-years financial plan for the study program. In total a budget of 220,000 € is provided by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kosovo in the first year, continuously increasing to 348,000 € in the fifth year. The budget is allocated mainly to staff salaries, followed by computers and software, laboratory equipment, literature and building infrastructure.

UHZ is a public university and does not charge tuition fees. Additional financial sources are generated through government-funded projects of various ministries and of NGOs. UHZ is part of the ERASMUS-EDU-2024-CB-VET project and has a partnership with Iowa State University which is supported by USAID, which should continue for the next 4 years according to the contract. However, this plan became quite uncertain since the new US administration started to withdraw funds from USAID. Further financial resources are generated by cooperation with the local companies in the agribusiness.

ET recommendations:

1. In the current difficult political situation of USAID provision should be made for the case of losing subsidies

Timeline: immediate start

2. Laboratory equipment should be continuously renewed by using project funds

Timeline: 15% reinvestment per year

OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program “Food Technology (B.Sc.)” offered by the Faculty of Agribusiness of the University Haxhi Zeka, Peja is *Substantially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *to accredit* the study program for a duration of 3 years with a number of 50 students to be enrolled in the program.

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	Fully compliant
6. RESEARCH	Fully compliant
7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES *Mandatory	Fully compliant
Overall Compliance	Substantially compliant

Expert Team

Chair



Dr. Kyriaki Zinoviadou

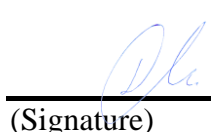
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(Signature)

(Print Name)

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Member



Dr. Damir Magdic

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