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University of Prishtina – Faculty of Medicine
DENTISTRY – PhD

RE/ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

15 July 2025, Prishtina



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 17 June 2025

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Prof.dr. Joke Denekens*
- *Dr. Keti Kankova*
- *Dr. Nibal Sabri*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Ilijana Ademaj*
- *Lenda Hyseni*
- *Arianit M. Krasniqi*
-

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self evaluation report department of dentistry UP*
- *National Qualification framework Kosovo*
- *European Qualification Framework*
- *Dublin descriptors*
- *Annexes*
 - *Academic integrity*
 - *Code of ethics*
 - *MF Council FM program approval*
 - *UP Strategic Plan 2020-2022*



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- o CV's dentistry PhD*
- o Syllabi dentistry PhD*
- o Monthly reporting PhD format*
- o Annual Progress report for PhD candidate from Supervisor (template)*
- o Annual progress report PhD candidate (template)*
- o Auditing form*
- o Eur J Dental Education - 2017 - Field - The Graduating European Dentist A New Undergraduate Curriculum Framework.*
- o University of Prishtina - Dentistry*
- o List of professors*
- o QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS*
- o Regulation for doctoral studies 2021*
- o REGULATION FOR FUNDING OF THE SCIENTIFIC research*
- o REGULATION ON Academic staff appointment*
- o REGULATION ON DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AND PROCEDURES*
- o Regulation on QA UP*
- o Statute of UP*
- o Students and mentors*
- o Academic and administrative staff*
- o Application*
- o doctoral candidates*
- o Doctoral supervision*
- o Financial resources*
- o Infrastructure 2022-2025*
- o Mobility*
- o monthly report progress*
- o MoU-agreements*
- o Projects in english*
- o Proposals*
- o Research collaboration 2022-2025*
- o Respond letter point by point*
- o Strategic plan for dentistry*
- o Translated-regulations*



Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *KAA standards for evaluation PhD programmes*
- *Qualification Network Kosovo*
- *European Qualification Network*
- *Dublin descriptors*

1.2. Site visit schedule

Insert site visit schedule (as provided by KAA)

<i>Programme Accreditation Procedure at University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Faculty of Medicine</i>	
<i>Programme:</i>	<i>Dentistry, PhD (Accreditation)</i>
<i>Online site visit on:</i>	<i>June 17th, 2025</i>
<i>Expert Team:</i>	<i>Dr. Joke Denekens Dr. Ketevani Kankava Dr. Nibal Sabri, Student Expert</i>
<i>Coordinators of the KAA:</i>	<i>Ilijane Ademaj Lenda Hyseni</i>

Site Visit Programme

<i>Time</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Participants</i>
<i>09:00 – 09:50</i>	<i>Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated</i>	<i>Sefedin Muçaj-Dean Aurora Bakalli Naser Ramadani Miranda Stavileci Armond Daci</i>
<i>09:55 – 10:55</i>	<i>Meeting with the head/s of a doctoral programme</i>	<i>Miranda Stavileci Albena Reshitaj Violeta Vula Mergime Prekazi-Loxha Jehona Reçica Ahmedi</i>



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		<i>Zana Agani</i>
<i>11:00 – 11:50</i>	<i>Meeting with representatives of relevant doctoral committees, administrative and QA staff involved in doctoral programmes</i>	<i>Shaip Krasniqi Toskë Kryeziu Ardita Kastrati Shkumbin Tafilaj Besnik Loxha</i>
<i>11:50 – 12:50</i>	<i>Lunch break</i>	
<i>12:50 – 13:40</i>	<i>Visiting Facilities</i>	
<i>13:40 – 14:30</i>	<i>Meeting with research-teaching staff and supervisors</i>	<i>Blerim Kamberi Donika Bajrami Linda Dula Zana Sllamniku Dalipi Burim Neziri</i>
<i>14:35 – 15:25</i>	<i>Meeting with doctoral candidates</i>	<i>Vigan Aliu Gentiana Zekaj Fisnik Aliu Orion Shaqiri</i>
<i>15:25 – 15:35</i>	<i>Internal meeting between expert team and KAA</i>	
<i>15:40 – 15:50</i>	<i>Closing meeting with the management of the institution/doctoral programme</i>	<i>Sefedin Muçaj-Dean Aurora Bakalli Miranda Stavileci Naser Ramadani</i>

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

Insert general information about the institution and the programme under evaluation, its legal status, its mission, and others.

The Faculty of Medicine of the University of Prishtina (UP) was established in 1969.

In 1973, a collaboration between Prishtina Hospital and the Faculty of Medicine (FM) was established and was registered at the Commercial Court of the District of Prishtina.

The Department of Dentistry within the Faculty of Medicine that operates as an academic unit, and educational activities are carried out at the following Institutions: University



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Clinical Center, University Dentistry Clinical Center, National Institute of Public Health, Preclinical Institutes, National Center for Blood Transfusion, Institute for Occupational Medicine, Center for Development of Family Medicine and Kosovo Agency for Medical Products.

Study Programs

Medical Faculty offers 6 study programs (integrated and basic):

- General Medicine with a duration of 6 years (360 ECTS) – the obtained title is Medical Doctor
- Dentistry with a duration of 6 years (360 ECTS)– the obtained title is Doctor of Dentistry
- Pharmacy with a duration of 5 years (300 ECTS)– the obtained title is Master of Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy with a duration of 3 years (180 ECTS)– the obtained title is Bachelor of Physiotherapy
- Nursing with a duration of 3 years (180 ECTS)– the obtained title is Bachelor of Nursing
- Midwifery with a duration of 3 years (180 ECTS) – the obtained title is Bachelor of Midwifery

In addition, the Medical Faculty offers the following Ph.D. studies:

- Preclinical Medicine
- Clinical Medicine
- Dentistry: not accredited in 2022
- Experimental Biomedicine
- Public Health

The Medical Faculty wants to continue the program of doctoral study (Ph.D.) in Dentistry. The ET is convinced of the importance of the programme for the development and innovation and quality of the workfield in dentistry in Kosovo. The doctoral program (Ph.D.) is compliant with the Bologna Declaration.



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The doctoral program "**Dentistry**" intends to continue the academic cooperation with international partners (the University of Ghent, University of Edinburgh, the University of Vienna, and the University of Graz, etc.). Quality, internationalization, mobility, promotion of scientific research, development, and building a knowledge society are the focus of the program. Benchmark for the programme is the Ph.D. Program and Doctoral Program of Applied Medical Science at Medical University of Vienna/Austria.

The study program is adapted to the needs of Kosovo. Criteria of ECTS, the structure of modules, contents of modules, practical and theoretical ratio, and self-learning tasks of students are adapted to the requirements and conditions of Kosovo.

2. PROGRAMME EVALUATION: Doctoral programme in Dentistry

2.1. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE, ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND FUNDING

(Insert all comments or observations, commendations and suggestions relating to this general area and its allocated standards, core and supplementary, as specified in the KAA Accreditation manual for doctoral programmes. Consideration should be given to the adequacy of processes and results achieved in each of the standards.)

The program is under formal policies, guidelines, and regulations derived from the Law for Higher Education of Kosova and the Statute of the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" and defined according to the Ph.D. regulation Nr. 1/96 date 24.06.2021 (translation in English Nr. Prd 937 date 26.04.2023) publicly available to all staff and students. This regulation defines the purpose of the study and the research. **The core component should be research and creation.** Lectures may not exceed 20 per cent of the total workload required by the study program and calculated under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). According to the SER the program is aligned with the National Qualification Network and the Qualification Network of the EHEA.

By checking the syllabi of the courses of the first year, the ET has determined that the formulated learning outcomes of some courses are not at the level of a PhD program as defined by the Dublin descriptors. Mostly the lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy are used (understanding, describing), the higher levels of Bloom as analysis and creation are often not

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mentioned) although in the explanation of the teaching and learning activities student centered learning, activating deeper learning sessions are described.

The ET recommends to work out “explicitly” learning outcomes at the higher levels of Bloom for the first year courses/modules.

The ET finds the content of the electives mostly as theoretical topics for specialization and subspecialization and not with a focus on transferable skills needed to broaden the competences of the doctoral candidates.

The ET recommends to revise the content of the electives and to put extra attention to the intended learning outcomes of the electives with the focus on transferable skills needed to broaden the competences of the doctoral candidates outside the content of their own discipline.

In the regulation document of the PhD the following topics are defined:

- Number of students
- Th content and conditions of enrollment
- Duration and stages of the programme
- Mentoring (including obligations of mentors and students)
- Procedure of submitting: topic, mentor, PhD project proposal
- PhD thesis forms
- Evaluation procedure
- Defence procedure
- Removal of title of Doctor in Science
- Publishing and saving the doctoral thesis
- Promotion
- Quality insurance of the thesis: 12 documents give evidence for quality of the doctoral thesis

During the site visit the ET is convinced about the growth of infrastructure since 2022 for the dentistry programs with appropriate facilities in place in the labs and in the hospital to perform research activities by the doctoral students.

Each academic year University of Prishtina allocates the budget for the Faculty of Medicine. In 2022 in total 335.000 euro to 888.250 in 2025 are allocated for the dentistry program(with 280.000 investment in a teaching building and 357.750 for laboratory equipment.)

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Calculation and budgetary allocations are regulated in accordance with the budget law, as well as in compliance with the regulations on personal income and the Statute of the University of Prishtina.

The Dentistry Department also is supported by the University Dentistry Clinical Center of Kosovo. (200.000 euro yearly)

The academic staff and PhD candidates may receive financial support from the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, University of Prishtina, Kosovo Dental Chamber and donors when applying for a research project.

The ET was informed about ensuring access of academic staff to electronic libraries and encouraging their use in at least 5 international electronic libraries of academic and scientific resources.

The ET has seen Presence of Tempus funded science laboratories, experimental animals as well and the continuous enrichment of scientific laboratories in recent years with advanced technical expertise to increase the activity and quality of the scientific product.

The ET wants to highlight the functioning of the laboratory funded by the Wus Austria, Tempus IV grant (2014) to (2020). A part of the staff that has proven expertise on experimental models has used the laboratory, gained support for grants and scientific projects from MEST by publishing scientific articles.

Furthermore the creation of new spaces for increasing scientific capacities and rooms for scientific presentations, in recent years has to be mentioned.

In the SWOT analysis the ET is informed about the limited departmental financial resources to provide optimal administrative assistance for the program and sufficient support for all ongoing doctorate projects. The ET recommends investing more in professional business associations/relations with industrial partners to enhance collaboration between academia and market needs and to create a flow of potential financial resources for some theses.

According to the SER 14 teaching professors are appointed for the dentistry PhD program and academic staff from the Faculty of Medicine deliver more than 90% of courses at the doctoral level.



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From total academic staff, most of them are Ph.D in the research field of the doctoral programme and there are more than 14 professors which have at least 3 articles, as the first or corresponding author, published in international relevant publications in the last 5 years, cited in platforms Web of Science and SCOPUS. The list of published articles is available on the web pages of the Faculty. In the annexes the ET is informed that 48.7 % (n = 19) of the current academic staff in clinical medicine (from 39 Professors with the title of at least Professor Assistant, with the right to supervision) involved in the programme meet the required standard for the right for supervision - published of at least 3 papers as first or corresponding author in the journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science from 2016-2021. It is not clear what the publication rate is over the last 3 years for these professors.

The Ph.D. regulation defines that policies, regulations, terms of reference, and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the study program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in light of changing circumstances. The individual cathedra addresses a request for any changes to the Council of Faculty which can be approved or referred to the Senate of University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”.

The ET is convinced of the huge efforts of the staff to realize a major revision of the program over the last 2 years in congruence with the recommendations of the ET of the last accreditation.

During the interviews the ET is convinced that the doctoral education opportunities are shown on the website but because of non accreditation in 2022, content is not fully updated yet for the new situation.

The University of Prishtina has a clear strategy for the delivery of its doctoral education and rights and obligations of students, academic staff and other relevant issues are specified on Ph.D. Regulation **Nr. 1/96 date 24.06.2021** of University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”

The Dentistry department has provided a preliminary draft of the strategic plan 2025-2030. This is a good starting document. The document needs a discussion in the coming weeks to become the cornerstone in the policy of the dentistry department. Choices have to be made for teaching , research and social services in society, budget allocation defined, responsible persons, time schedules etc. The ET recommends to elaborate the draft strategic plan and to define per year the goals, not too much. It is obligatory to make choices: which groups are



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strong in research, which groups have to be supported to grow, what is impossible to do because collaboration national and international is still too weak.

The ET recommends to invest in a research visitation with an international panel in order to define the quality level of the research.

Compliance level: substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The ET recommends to work out explicitly learning outcomes at the higher levels of Bloom for the first year courses/modules.*
- 2. The ET recommends to revise the content of the electives and to put extra attention to the intended learning outcomes of the electives with the focus on transferable skills needed to broaden the competences of the doctoral candidates outside the content of their own discipline.*
- 3. The ET recommends to invest more in professional business associations/relations with industrial partners to enhance collaboration between academia and market needs and to create a flow of potential financial resources for some theses*
- 4. The ET recommends to elaborate the draft strategic plan 2025-2030 and to define per year the goals, not too much. It is obligatory to make choices: which groups are strong in research, which groups have to be supported to grow, what is impossible to do because collaboration national and international is still too weak.*
- 5. The ET recommends investing in a research visitation with an international panel of research experts in dentistry in order to define the quality level of the research of all units.*



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2.2. SELECTION AND ADMISSION CRITERIA

Based on the Regulation of Doctoral Studies Nr. Prot. 937, dated 26/04/2023, and its updated version approved by the Senate of the University of Prishtina in February 2025, aligns with international academic standards and stipulates that doctoral candidates must be selected through a competitive and transparent process. Article 7 outlines a structured admissions procedure in which the final decision is made by the University Senate, based on recommendations from academic units and the Central Council for Doctoral Studies. Admission calls must be publicly announced, and the names of selected candidates, along with the selection criteria, are to be published on both the university's and the respective academic unit's websites.

However, during the review period, the university's designated English-language website for this doctoral program was either unavailable or inactive. Any potentially relevant data was outdated or inaccessible.

Despite this implementation gap, the regulation introduces a points-based evaluation system that objectively assess candidates based on academic and scientific achievements, promoting fairness in the selection process.

According to the SER and the updated 2025 regulation, Article 13 requires all doctoral candidates to demonstrate English language proficiency at a minimum B2 level, verified through internationally recognized tests such as TOEFL or IELTS. This requirement also appears in the application form samples reviewed. However, it raises concerns, as it was not part of the previous regulation (2023) and was only formally approved in February 2025, while the applications reviewed date back to the 2022–2023 academic year.

Moreover, the SER notes that candidates without TOEFL or IELTS certificates must take a B2-level English entrance exam organized by the University of Prishtina. However, this provision is not clearly stated in the formal regulation, contributing to further ambiguity in the admission requirements and how they manage without a legal framework. .

Regarding academic qualifications, the regulation meets standard expectations that candidates must hold a master's-level degree or equivalent. Article 7 specifies three eligible pathways: (i) a pre-Bologna magister degree, (ii) a post-Bologna master's degree, or (iii) completion of at least 300 ECTS credits. Interviews confirmed that all currently enrolled doctoral students

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were graduates of the University of Prishtina's Faculty of Dentistry, holding either a specialization or a master's degree.

Nonetheless, both the SER and the regulation imply that candidates holding only a diploma in dentistry are also eligible to apply directly to doctoral studies. This raises concerns about whether these applicants have sufficient research training or recent scholarly publications.

The regulation also allows students holding a scientific master's degree to complete the PhD in the minimum period, with the master's degree contributing up to one-third of the total required ECTS credits. However, the criteria for granting such credit equivalence are unclear, and no transparent mechanism is provided to show how the doctoral councils make these credit transfer decisions. This lack of clarity raises concerns about the academic rigor and consistency of doctoral progression.

The regulation requires that candidates' research potential be assessed. Article 7 mandates submission of a motivation letter, a research concept note, academic transcripts, and two academic references, forming the basis for qualitative evaluation. The updated regulation also includes a detailed, points-based scoring system for prior research, including indexed publications, books, and conference presentations. These documentation requirements also appear in the university's application forms.

According to the SER, the PhD program is full-time and lasts between three and five years. However, their rules and regulation, Article 8, allows for a six-year duration, with a possible one-year extension upon approval (making it up to max of 7 years). Per their regulations , It also permits part-time study for up to two consecutive academic years—or three years total—with prior approval from relevant doctoral bodies. It is worth noting that these discrepancies between the SER and the regulations, create confusion regarding the official duration and flexibility of doctoral studies

The internal inconsistencies between the SER and the regulations raise concerns about the credibility and clarity of procedures and SER writing. This ambiguity may affect and limit staff and students' understanding of their responsibilities and timelines during their doctoral educational process.



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Compliance level: fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The ET recommends updating the official website to include the latest doctoral regulation and provide a clear outline of the admissions process, including eligibility criteria, selection procedures, and the list of admitted candidates. All relevant information for the PhD program in Dentistry, particularly on the English-language site, should be accurate, active, and easily accessible.*
- 2. The ET recommends revising the doctoral admissions criteria to require that applicants possess a master's-level qualification or an equivalent postgraduate research degree in addition to their initial professional 300+ ECT diploma (e.g., in dentistry). Alternatively, introduce a formal research preparation phase or bridge program for candidates applying directly from diploma-level qualifications, to strengthen their research competencies and scholarly readiness before admission into doctoral studies.*
- 3. The ET recommends to clearly align official regulations with the information presented in the SER and application materials. In particular concerning the English language requirements and the program duration. Clear, unified guidance is essential to ensure consistency and transparent implementation by staff and full understanding by students.*

2.3. DOCTORAL PROGRAMME STRUCTURE/CONTENT

(Insert all comments or observations, commendations and suggestions relating to this general area and its allocated standards, core and supplementary, as specified in the KAA Accreditation manual for doctoral programmes. Consideration should be given to the adequacy of processes and results achieved in each of the standards.)

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The SER describes that the program has changed since 2022 with more emphasis on research and creative processes and only 20% of theoretical lectures.

Furthermore the SER formulates the profile of the program as based on interdisciplinary areas and states “As such, the program will focus on specific research and enable candidates to undertake in-depth scientific research work on their own, but also to get professional skills and qualifications related to the future professions. This includes targeted training of Ph.D. candidates in entrepreneurship and knowledge transfer between university and professional environment and vice versa – for the benefit of the society as a whole – especially concerning the economic and social impact of the candidates’ work”.

The ET has seen that efforts have been made in order to realize this vision. Of course a long term investment with creation of networks not only academically but also with professional partners in the field is needed.

The PhD program has 2 parts:

- *Doing research* under the supervision of a supervisor and an individual doctoral committee in one of the research groups at the university
- Participating in the faculty’s/university’s *doctoral educational programme* which focuses on training in research methods, career management, teamwork and networking skills, project management, communication skills, IT skills, self-management including time management etc.

Courses/modules as the journal club, the research seminar and the thesis seminar should be the core business in the educational programme with focus on defining research questions, learning methodology, interpretation of data, making conclusions. Some /courses modules have not yet enough this focus and are on one hand too much focused on basic courses with level master, sometimes even bachelor as for several topics in biostatistics and on the other on knowledge of specialised and super specialised courses. In those courses too much attention goes to “knowledge transfer” and to “case studies” as is seen in the formulation of the learning outcomes and teaching

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and learning activities and not enough in working in research-based modus of inquiry, discovery, discussion etc.. with stimulation of critical thinking, analysis, evaluation, synthesis, decision making, meta level thinking, generalizing, transferring and creation of new and complex ideas as was seen in the syllabi. Overall the recommended literature is often too old and the ET recommends to update recommended literature with the latest international standard books.

The ET recommends in a **first phase (for academic year 2025-2026)** to redefine learning outcomes of those courses in the first year at the higher levels of intellectual functioning of Bloom's taxonomy.

The course research methodology, medical informatics, biostatistics and complex systems is mentioned twice and can perhaps be split into biostatistics and methodology(part 1) in congruence with the other course of methodology, a course at level PhD (part 2).

The elective courses are mostly too theoretical and very specialised. A revision is necessary with emphasis on a doctoral educational program for all doctoral candidates of the faculty/university and with a much broader scope. More interdisciplinary topics should be integrated in the educational part of the programme.

The ET recommends to reduce the contact hours in the classroom in favor of more time for research and creation and to make it possible that the elective domains can be filled in with more broader competences needed to integrate more faster into the work fields where the innovative knowledge can be applied in order to make the field of dentistry more research based in society.

The ET recommends in a **second phase** to implement a revision of the educational part of the programme with a benchmark with outstanding international doctoral programmes starting in academic year with some changes already 2026-2027 and at least fully implemented in academic year 2027-2028.

According to the SER time limit for the programme is 3 to 5 years. This should be 3 to 4 years as ther ET heard during the interviews.

Laboratory research activities in various laboratories designated in Nr. 9, 10 and 11 of the study curriculum, the doctoral student can complete during the stay in the scientific



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laboratory medical institutes outside Kosovo with the approval of the Mentor and the Coordinator of the doctoral program. Staying in Scientific Laboratory Institutes outside Kosovo for 2 weeks is calculated 5 ECTS. The maximum stay is 4 weeks and up to 10 ECTS will be calculated.

The approval of a legal framework for developing a joint-degree program is a huge opportunity to implement more mobility and to build capacity in well chosen domains. The possibility for joint degrees, for education partnership between universities , research institutes and scientific societies has been created.

Opportunities for mobility are created for students as well for academic staff with universities in Austria, North Macedonia, in the USA, in Turkey, in Poland and in Hungary. The ET finds evidence for signed contracts of dentistry students and professors in the annexes.

Doctoral candidates can take courses outside the institution national and international in other universities and in scientific organisations. Joint degrees and other formats of collaboration with external partners is possible and stimulated. The ET found evidence for presentations at academic conferences for academic staff and students as well as for participation in workshops and summer schools especially on international level.

Academic staff is aware of the necessity to collaborate with industry and are taking steps to realize educational and research partnerships between academia and industry partners with set up of professional business associations to enhance the collaboration between academic institutions and market needs

The Ph.D. Commission of Faculty of Medicine and Council of Faculty according to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reports annually with the overall performance of study programs. The report includes the analysis of course completion, program progression, completion rates, and program evaluations, with summaries and comparative data distributed automatically to senior administrators and relevant committees at least once each year.

According to Ph.D. regulations, the structures solve the situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.

The counter service at the Faculty of Medicine has established the central recording for statistical data on indicators, including grade distributions, progression, and completion rates, which are retained in an accessible central database and regularly reviewed and reported in

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the periodic program report. According to regulatory frameworks, the institution promotes the concepts of gender justice and the promotion of equal opportunities for students in special situations.

Supervisors of doctoral candidates are allocated within the first 12 months as is stipulated in the regulation for doctoral studies.

The criteria for acceptance of a doctoral proposal are clearly defined in the Regulations for Doctoral Programme and the procedures are transparent

During interviews with top management and academic staff ET found evidence that all mentors and members of the doctoral committee are involved in institutional bodies for doctoral education.

Compliance level: substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The ET recommends in a **first phase** to redefine learning outcomes of those courses in the first year at the higher levels of intellectual functioning of Bloom's taxonomy.*
- 2. The ET recommends to reduce the contact hours in the classroom in favor of more time for research and creation and to make it possible that the elective domains can be filled in with more broader competences needed to integrate more faster into the work fields where the innovative knowledge can be applied in order to make the field of dentistry more research based in society.*
- 3. The ET recommends in a **second phase** to implement a revision of the educational part of the programme with a benchmark with outstanding international doctoral programmes starting in academic year 2026-2027 and at least fully implemented in academic year 2027-2028.*
- 4. The ET recommends to update literature with the latest international standard books.*



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2.4. RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT CAPACITY

Infrastructure and facilities at the university are compatible with the requirements of the program and doctoral research projects described in SER and during interviews. The equipment in the laboratories is up-to-date. The specifications of the equipment correspond to the specificity of the field and it's continuously being renewed in alignment with the approach stated in the strategic plan. For the past 4 years the expenditures on laboratory equipment have some fluctuations, but overall show financial amounts sufficient for successful implementation of the program. Still the SER describes financial issues as one of the weaknesses of different components of the program, while the staff is committed to further increase the capacity of scientific infrastructure.

SER and interviews raise no concern regarding the compliance with the international ethical standards when planning and performing the research. This is also clearly highlighted in SER and the document, regulating ethics committee functioning. There are separate documents provided, that describe disciplinary measures for students and staff of the university, in addition to the code of ethics, which was not provided in English. From the translation it's evident that the document outlines general regulations related to ethical concepts as well as rights and responsibilities of the staff members. The name of the document is also Code of ethics for academic staff members. The expert team didn't have access to any document which would summarize all ethical regulations applicable to the whole university society.

Ethics committee consisting of 15 members (according to SER) evaluates fulfillment of ethical standards in general and also with regard to the research projects. The composition of this committee is available on the web-page, where 17 members are listed. In the document describing ethics commission composition and functions 9 members are mentioned. The ethics committee acts according to the document, where its responsibilities are described, however neither this document was available for experts in English. The translation highlights that the functions and activities of the committee are clearly defined. Revision of research proposals in ethical aspects as well as competencies of applicants belongs to the responsibilities of the committee. Studies involving experimental animals as well as clinical trials with participation of humans need approval from the ethics committee and in addition the applicants need to have adequate skills and certification to conduct such research.

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University pays special attention to providing doctoral candidates with adequate support from faculty. Each supervisor might supervise no more than 3 doctoral candidates. The qualification of mentors as well as other staff involved in teaching is closely monitored. The number of students in the program take into account the capacity of research at the faculty as well as employment opportunities. Currently the absence of PhD programs in Dentistry in the country this program is highly demanded and the employment market has a gap which still has to be filled.

To monitor the research quality the faculty of medicine has established an office with a science coordinator. This office studies the scientific publications of academic staff, classifying them according to reputation, reliability, journal indexing, authorship, and official international impact factor. Data is published on the institution's website. Furthermore, the public plan for scientific research in the field of medicine, dentistry and public health are priorities of the National Science Plan of the Republic of Kosovo. As per SER the research development plan includes clearly defined indicators and parameters for performance objectives: Expectations for the involvement of teaching staff in research and academic activities are specified, and performance with these expectations is considered as part of the criteria for staff evaluation and promotion. In this regard, regulations determine promotion of academic staff based on the number of scientific publications in internationally credible journals including the two databases - Web of Science and Scopus.

The inter-institutional and interdisciplinary approach is encouraged by HEI. For the evaluated program it is in first place highlighted by the joint financial responsibilities for the program expenses from University of Pristina and University Dentistry Clinical Center of Kosovo. University management is committed to development of interdisciplinary research, which they foster by the project - Mapping scientific infrastructure in the Republic of Kosovo - MEST. Different settings of partnership with other institutions are accepted including agreement on using the infrastructure where needed. Staff members are encouraged to participate in international programs, including exchange programs and their initiatives on obtaining external grants are encouraged and supported by the university. However the examples provided are not always reflecting the efforts from university but rather determination of specific academic staff members. The strategic goal of internationalization



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would benefit from more active initiatives and proposals on international activities for staff development from the university side.

Compliance level: fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The ET recommends making a Code of Ethics a core document addressing all aspects related to ethical concerns, making it available and easily accessible by the whole university society.*
- 2. The ET recommends that ethics committee composition is clear and described similarly in all documents and sources.*
- 3. The ET recommends that in terms of improving the research quality, international activities of staff members are proactively planned and proposed by the faculty/university.*

2.5. SUPERVISION

The SER, supervisors' CVs, samples of Senate decisions on doctoral topic approvals and supervisor appointments, and samples of proposal evaluation reports were reviewed against current regulations. Overall, these materials demonstrated clear alignment with institutional requirements and KAA standards, as further confirmed through interviews.

This alignment showed that the selected doctoral research topics correspond well with the academic backgrounds and specializations of the appointed supervisors. The supervisors' academic ranks and affiliations complied with regulatory expectations. In several cases, co-mentors were appointed, and in all instances, the mentor was a full-time academic staff member at the institution.



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The supervisors' CVs reflected relevant academic qualifications and active research engagement consistent with the regulations and the standard. This was supported by publication links included in the SER, confirming ongoing scholarly activity.

According to Article 9 of the regulation, a mentor may supervise up to two registered doctoral students per academic year, but no more than three simultaneously. Co-mentors may not supervise more than three doctoral students at the same time. Given that 16 academic professors from the Faculty of Dentistry currently supervise approximately 10 doctoral students, per the SER, this ratio supports quality supervision alongside manageable quantity. The professors' weekly supervision workload ranges from 12 to 20 hours. As of the 2024/2025 academic year, six students were in their third semester and scheduled to defend their research proposals soon.

The responsibilities of both doctoral candidates and mentors are clearly outlined in Articles 10 and 11 of the doctoral regulations, promoting structured supervision and mutual accountability throughout the doctoral process.

However, while both monthly and annual mentor reports on student progress are formally documented, they lack substantive depth. These reports tend to be procedural, often completing checklists without specifying concrete goals, targets, or developmental plans. This absence of structured milestones makes it difficult to track progress or draw meaningful connections between past and current reports. Although the annual reports contain slightly more information, they still offer only general remarks about student conduct, with minimal reference to measurable achievements or alignment with the student's individual PhD project plan.

While the SER notes that professional development is considered during academic promotions, there is no evidence of structured training or continuous development programs specifically aimed at enhancing supervisory skills and responsibilities, aside from the mentorship workshop that supervisors are required to attend before beginning supervision.

Compliance level: fully compliant



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ET recommendations:

The ET recommends enhancing the quality of mentor reporting by requiring clearly defined goals, measurable milestones, and structured feedback to effectively monitor doctoral student progress over time.

The ET recommends to develop and implement structured, targeted professional development programs for doctoral supervisors that focus not only on supervision skills and research mentoring but also on their personal development

2.6. ASSESSMENT

(Insert all comments or observations, commendations and suggestions relating to this general area and its allocated standards, core and supplementary, as specified in the KAA Accreditation manual for doctoral programmes. Consideration should be given to the adequacy of processes and results achieved in each of the standards.)

The assessment methodology of PhD students is indicated in the PhD regulation of University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, specifically in articles 11, 12, 15, 17, 18 and article 19.

During the first and second semester the student collects 36 ECTS from teaching modules with diverse assessment methods per module (presentation, MCQ, group work, ect). Furthermore 24 ECTS from individual research activities, presentation of results in the form of scientific debate and scientific seminars contribute to the 60 ECTS for the first year..

In the third semester the student has to deliver the draft doctoral proposal approved by the Mentor (6 ECTS) and the Central Council of Doctoral Studies (CCDS) of the University of Prishtina (24 ECTS)

In the fourth semester the student accumulates 20 ECTS from the publication of results as an article in International Journals of the respective field of study on certain publishing

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platforms according to the Doctoral regulations, 5 ECTS from the Presentation of doctoral thesis results at international scientific conferences (first author) and 5 ECTS from publication in local journals of the University of Prishtina. Alternatively, the doctoral student can collect 10 ECTS from the presentation of the results of the doctoral thesis in two (2) international scientific conferences (first author)

The 5th and the 6th semester the student writes the thesis in order to get approval of the doctoral manuscript and to be ready for the public defense of the doctoral thesis

The assessment process of PhD students in the Faculty of Medicine is a transparent process and reflects the ability of students in the literature review and demonstrating depth of understanding in their specific areas of interest and study.

The assessment process is persistent and focused to evaluate the scientific competences of PhD students to analyze, interpret and write about the findings of their approved research study.

The assessment process guarantees the right methodology to evaluate the students in their ability to synthesize a large amount of material in a cogent, well-organized, and effectively argued thesis.

The assessment process provides a system of evaluation tools for all activities performed during the PhD study and therefore to consider the student's progress in their PhD research and its feasibility (in the foreseen deadlines).

The assessment process of PhD study evaluates also the abilities and competencies related to the dissemination of research, the participation in cooperative research and the interaction with other researchers and research centres.

The Assessment of PhD student is performed through different evaluation and assessment forms such are:

- F1 - Introduction to the doctoral thesis
- F2 - Evaluation of the doctoral thesis
- F3 - Decision on approval of the topic of the doctoral thesis
- F4 - Annual report of the doctoral student
- F5 - Mentor's annual report on doctoral student progress
- F6 - Request for change of topic and / or mentor
- F8 - Instructions for compiling the doctoral thesis

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- F7 - Request for postponement of public defense of doctoral thesis
- F8 - Instructions for compiling the doctoral thesis
- F9 - Annual report on the study activity
- F10 - Report on the evaluation of doctoral work
- F11 - Protocol and minutes for the defense of doctoral thesis

The doctoral student, in agreement with the dean of the academic unit and with the committee for the defence of the doctoral thesis, must defend the doctoral thesis within a period of two (2) months from the day of ratification in the Senate.

The mentor takes part in the defence of the doctoral thesis but does not have the right to make any decisions regarding the thesis.

The defence of the doctoral thesis is done in physical presence and publically. The call for public defence must be announced in the premises of the academic unit, on the official website of the academic unit and the university, at least eight days before the defence. The defence must be organized in the space of the university, in its units, presented in the language in which the doctoral thesis was written. In case of double doctorates and doctorates done within the framework of joint studies, the defence can be organized at another university. The protection procedure is developed based on the protocol presented in the F9 form.

The committee for the defence of the doctoral thesis makes the assessment immediately after the public defence of the doctoral thesis. The evaluation of the defence of the doctoral thesis can be:

- Defended with great success;
- Defended with very good success;
- Defended with good success
- Did not defend it

In cases where the defence committee assesses that the doctoral student has failed to defend the doctorate due to deliberate non-compliance with the defence procedures, wilful ignorance of the defence committee or any other controversial behaviour, the doctoral student loses the right to defend the doctoral thesis.

In cases where the defence committee assesses that the doctoral student has failed to defend the doctorate due to insufficient preparation of the defence process, not being able to give good answers to the questions asked by the committee, or creating an impression based on serious ignorance of the material presented in the paper , the committee may decide to offer

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the doctoral student a period of 1 year to repeat the defence process. If after the second attempt, the doctoral student fails to successfully defend his thesis, they lose the right to defend the doctoral thesis.

The decision, based on the assessment resulting from the defence process, is made by majority vote of the members of the committee for the defence of the doctoral thesis, accompanied by their signature.

For the defence procedure, minutes are drawn up in the Albanian language, and in the case of the defence is done in another language, the minutes are drawn up in that language as well.

The Senate, on the recommendation of the rector, can remove the title "Doctor of Sciences" from the holder at any time, if it is established that there was forgery or cheating during the assessment or exam or plagiarism or copyright included in the preparation of the doctoral thesis.

Compliance level: fully compliant

ET recommendations: no recommendations

2.7. DOCTORAL RESEARCH OUTCOME

(Insert all comments or observations, commendations and suggestions relating to this general area and its allocated standards, core and supplementary, as specified in the KAA Accreditation manual for doctoral programmes. Consideration should be given to the adequacy of processes and results achieved in each of the standards.)

The final outcome of the program is a PhD thesis, which should be defended publicly. The procedures related to the defense are described in Articles 17-21 of PhD regulation of University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina". The entire thesis is published on web-page no later than one month from the defense. As stated in the above-mentioned document, publication in the central university library is an optional decision for exceptional cases, needing extra

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argumentation. The rule of keeping the hard copy of the thesis is not clearly defined in the regulations.

The PhD regulation of University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina” defines the procedure of thesis defense explicitly, in detail. All evaluation forms and request forms are predefined. Before defense the final assessment stage consists of multiple rounds of evaluation at all levels of the university and involving external stakeholders such as a committee member from outside Kosovo and a public discussion of the thesis published online. This ensures additional control of the quality of the thesis as well as novelty of the topic. The content of the thesis and findings presented have to be novel and unique for the field not reduplicating the existing scientific knowledge. The main document, evaluating the thesis before defense, is the Report on the evaluation of the doctoral thesis, which encompasses the assessment of the committee as well as public discussion results. The template of the report was not available for the expert team, however the PhD Regulation document clearly states, that “The committee report must contain an explicit assessment regarding the original scientific/artistic contribution of the doctoral student”.

The case of the doctoral thesis leading to potential patent is addressed in the document determining the possibility of postponing the thesis publication as needed for the patent acquisition procedure.

The doctoral program provides students not only with the degree and recognition, but with skills and competences for scientific and professional careers. The competences that the program claims to develop range from those related to research planning and conducting (such as design and planning of research, data analysis and interpretation, lab skills) followed by critical thinking, application of knowledge in practical and commercial spheres, rules of copyright, conflicts of interest, etc.. Taking into consideration the composition of the program and content of the courses, the acquisition of these competences is realistic. In cases of failure to obtain the doctoral degree, the university issues a certificate regarding the courses that the student has completed.

Compliance level: fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *ET recommends that hard copies of PhD thesis are kept at the university and this procedure is clearly described in the regulatory documents.*

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3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

(Insert overall observations referring to the evaluation process, the quality of doctoral programme, approach to the site visit, etc.)

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the doctoral programme PhD dentistry (180 ECTS) offered by University of Prishtina is fully compliant with the standards (5 fully and 2 substantially (36 core standards and more than 12 supplementary) included in the *KAA Accreditation manual for doctoral programmes* and, therefore, recommends to accredit the study program for a duration of 3 years with a number of 5 students to be enrolled in the program.

4. APPENDICES *(not available)*



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Expert Team

Chair

Joke Denekens

15.07.2025

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