



Institutional Review of Higher Education Institutions in Albania

**Report of the Institutional Review of
European University of Tirana**

December 2016

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About this review

The overall aim of Institutional Review is to assess the extent to which each HEI meets the Albanian State Quality Standards, which came into force in 2011. Institutional Review is a peer review process with each review team composed of a mix of UK reviewers appointed by QAA and Albanian reviewers appointed by Albanian Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (APAAL). The review team is led by a QAA Reviewer.

The resulting reports will serve not only for institutional accreditation based on the extent to which the HEI meets the standards, but will also inform the HEIs, Albanian government, the public and students of how each HEI meets the standards. This report also helps the HEI to identify priorities for enhancement (the process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported). The Albanian State Quality Standards have been grouped under five Evaluation Areas: The Organisation and its Management; Resourcing; the Curriculum; Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research; and Students and their Support. This report identifies features of good practice, recommendations, affirmations of action in progress and weaknesses for each Evaluation Area, together with a judgement as to how well the HEI meets the standards. The Judgements that the reviewers may assign are: standards are fully met; standards are substantially met; standards are partly met; or standards are not met.

Finally, the reviewers conclude by recommending a summary judgement to APAAL's Accreditation Council. This overall judgement is one of four levels:

- **State Quality Standards are fully met**
- **State Quality Standards are substantially met**
- **State Quality Standards are partly met**
- **State Quality Standards are not met.**


As part of the report writing process, QAA has provided expert support to the review team by ensuring that the review team supports the findings made in the report with evidence, and also by proofreading and summarising the full report for the summary below.

Review team

Professor Mark Hunt	Lead Reviewer	Signature
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Dr Janthia Taylor	Reviewer	Signature
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Mr Stephen Harris	Reviewer	Signature
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Dr Diturije Ismaili	Reviewer	Signature
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The context of this review

The European University of Tirana (UET) is a private for-profit university in Tirana, Albania which was established in 2006. UET was licensed by the Albanian Ministry of Education & Sciences on 20 September 2006 following the decision of the Council of Ministers **[Nr. 636/2006]** and is fully accredited by the Albanian Agency for Accreditation of Higher Education.

The University's Vision is to be a leading university in the development of knowledge in Albanian society; a centre of excellence in the academic formation of its students; of expertise in the social, political, legal and economic studies in the country, with a wider impact in the region and beyond; as well as a centre of excellence in scientific research according to the areas of expertise within the University. The Mission of the University is to provide students with quality education, informed by the results of scientific research; to serve Albanian society through knowledge creation and dissemination, teaching processes, creativity, as well as through the development of interrelations with the labour market and international partnerships. The University's values include: Quality and Excellence; Leadership and Group Work; Freedom of intellectual exploration; Fairness and Integrity; Transparency and Responsibility; and Lifelong Learning.

The University has three faculties: the Faculty of Law; the Faculty of Economics and Information Technology; and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Education, eight departments and one centre.

The University offers first cycle, second cycle and third cycle programmes delivered in Albanian, and awards Bachelor degrees which usually take 3 years to be completed. It also offers Professional Masters, which last 1-1.5 years, and Scientific Masters, which last for 2 years. In 2011, the University acquired the right to award Doctorate degrees in Social, Economic and Judicial Sciences. **[Decree No. 503]** The University offers 13 Bachelor study programmes, 24 Master study programmes and three PhD study programmes are offered. The University operates the 'UET Press' publishing house and publishes five scientific journals. The University currently employs 167 members of academic personnel, of whom 80 are full-time professors and 87 part-time professors, **[19 Prof.Dr, 24 Assoc. Prof. Dr, 18 PhD, 20 Dr]** 82 lecturers and four researchers. In 2015-16 the University had 4,149 students enrolled on full time programmes. **[2361 1st cycle, 1557 2nd cycle and 231 3rd cycle]**

The University aims to be a leading university in its contribution to the socio-economic development of Albania, providing education of a high quality in the service of society, economy, politics and long-term sustainable development. Internationalisation is high on the University's agenda and the wide-ranging list of partner organisations, together with the considerable contributions of European and American academics participating at University conferences and forums underlines its strategic desire.

Summary report

A self-evaluation report was developed by a team at the University which included senior staff, academic and support staff and a student representative. Drafts were circulated to a wider audience within the University before being finalised and approved by the Rector and the self-evaluation writing team.

The visit took place over two days. The review team was made up of three senior higher education reviewers from the UK and one experienced higher education member of staff from an Albanian institution. The review team was supported by a Review Manager and note-taker provided by APAAL, the agency responsible for reviews of higher education in Albania. The review team was provided with a self-evaluation report and a portfolio of supporting evidence eight weeks in advance of the review visit, and supplemented by additional documentation requested. In all some 134 documents were considered, and enabled the team to familiarise themselves with the structure, policies, management procedures and the nature of teaching and research activity undertaken by the University. Evidence considered included the Statute of the University, Academic Regulations, Annual Reports, admission and orientation procedures, the range of external agreements and examples of programme information and evidence from deliberative meetings.

A series of meetings took place during the two days of the review visit, which allowed the review team to gain a clearer understanding of responsibilities, procedures and the views of staff and students. The review team met with the owner, President, Rector, senior managers, students, lecturers and administrative and support staff. Notes were taken at all meetings. As part of a tour of the campus the review team viewed the library, teaching spaces and IT laboratories, and were provided with a demonstration of the University's online and electronic information systems for staff and students. Having reviewed all evidence available, the team reached the conclusions set out below.

The University meets the standards fully for the Organisation and its Management. The responsibilities for the organisation and management of the University are clearly set out in the University Statute and Regulations. The review team identified good practices in the establishment of Labour Market Boards for each department to help ensure the currency of programmes and facilitate student employability, and in the range and quality of University partnerships with reputable universities outside of Albania. The review team did not identify any weaknesses or recommendations. The review team affirmed that the University should continue adopting a proactive stance to ensure institutional readiness for the new legislative framework.

The University meets the standards fully for Resourcing. The responsibilities for resources are clearly set out in the Statute and Regulations of the University. The review team identified good practice in the support provided for academic staff to study a higher level qualification at an overseas University. The review team did not identify any weaknesses or recommendations. The review team affirmed ongoing developments which support the resources of the University, including the continued development of the information management systems in order to provide strategic and integrated information on the performance of the University.

The University meets the standards fully for the Curriculum. The University's Mission is focused on a curriculum which supports regional and national labour market priorities. The review team identified good practices in the use of Labour Market Boards, and the teaching of English language to first cycle students and the differentiated and comprehensive approach to student support, including initial programme enquiries, tutorials, careers development, disability support and pastoral support. There were no weaknesses or

recommendations identified. The review team affirms the increasing role of alumni on the Labour Market Boards and in institutional activities.

The University fully meets the standards for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research. The responsibilities for the management of Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are clearly set out in the University Research Strategy and Scientific Research Policies. **[Evidence 6 Research Strategy 2011-2015; 60 Brochure of Documents on Scientific Research policies]** The review team identified two aspects of good practice: the active engagement in national and international collaborative agreements and partnerships; and the establishment of the University's own press which publishes both textbooks and research. The review team did not identify any weaknesses, recommendations or affirmations.

The University meets the standards substantially for the Students and their Support. The responsibilities for Students and their Support are clearly set out in the Statute and regulations of the University. The review team identified good practice in the differentiated and comprehensive approach to student support, the range of employment support for students, the provision of a high volume of scholarships and the active representation of the student voice within the University. The review team identified the analysis of graduate employability data as a weakness. The review team recommends that the University develop a clear strategy and process for the collection of graduate employability data in order to underpin the development of the University's study programmes and Alumni Association. No affirmations were identified.

Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the establishment of Labour Market Boards for each department which help ensure currency of programmes, reviews the curriculum on an annual basis and facilitates student employability (paragraph 1.12 and paragraph 3.1)
- the active engagement in national and international collaborative agreements and partnerships with reputable universities outside of Albania (paragraph 1.13 & paragraph 4.6)
- the support provided for academic staff to study a higher level qualification at an overseas university (paragraph 2.1)
- the use of departmental Labour Market Boards which review curriculum annually, ensuring its currency and increasing student employment potential (paragraph 3.1)
- structured delivery of English teaching in first cycle courses which enables students to communicate effectively in English and to participate more confidently in mobility opportunities (paragraph 3.7)
- the differentiated and comprehensive approach to student support, including initial programme enquiries, tutorials, careers development, disability support and pastoral support (paragraph 3.10 & paragraph 5.5)
- the support provided to students when undertaking periods of professional practice within their study programmes (paragraph 4.1)
- the establishment of the University's own press which publishes both textbooks and research, thus enhancing the student experience and supporting staff in disseminating research outputs (paragraph 4.9)
- the high volume and range of scholarships available to students (paragraph 5.6)

- the representation of the student voice in the institutional life of the University, which includes: representation on key committees, participation in student councils, the use of student surveys and involvement in clubs and societies (paragraph 5.11)
- the provision of employment support for students including the support for internships, the annual Jobs Fair, the University Business Forum and careers guidance support (paragraph 5.12).

Weaknesses

- the analysis of graduate employability data (paragraph 5.12).

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendations:

- develop a clear strategy and process for the collection of graduate employability data in order to underpin the development of the University's study programmes and Alumni Association (paragraph 5.12).

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following actions already in progress:

- adoption of a proactive stance to ensure institutional readiness for the new legislative framework (paragraph 1.5)
- that the University continues to develop its information management systems in order to provide strategic and integrated information on the performance of the University(paragraph 2.15)
- the increasing role of alumni on Labour Market Boards and in institutional activities which sustain links with past students and develop new industry partnerships, thus retaining alumni engagement with the University (paragraph 3.1).

Summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area

- 1 The Standards for the Organisation and its Management are fully met.
- 2 The Standards for Resourcing are fully met.
- 3 The Standards for the Curriculum are fully met.
- 4 The Standards for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are fully met.
- 5 The Standards for Students and their Support are substantially met.

Summary judgement

The review team recommends to the Accreditation Council that at the European University of Tirana the State Quality Standards are fully met.

Detailed report

Evaluation Area 1: The Organisation and its Management

1.1 The European University of Tirana (UET) is defined as a 'for profit' organisation and is governed by state law, **[Evidence 1.1 - Regulations]** which includes the organisational structure of the University. The main governing bodies of the University are the Academic Senate, Rectorate, Faculty Councils, Council of Ethics, Governing Council of the Doctoral School, Board of the School of Master Studies, Board of Financing of Research Activities and the Council of Professors. The positions of the senior post-holders, President, Rector, Vice Rector, Deans of Faculty, Directors of Doctoral and Master Studies Schools are also defined. The regulation describes the faculties of the University, of which there are three: The Law Faculty, the Faculty of Social Sciences and Education, and the Faculty of Economics and Information Technology. There are also two Schools, the Doctoral School and the Master Studies School. The Academic Senate, which is chaired by the Rector, is the leading academic committee, and is served by two Advisory Boards, the Board of Trustees, which is chaired by the President, and the Assembly of Partners, which is chaired by the Administrator. **[Chapter III Standard I.1; Chapter III Standard I.2]**

1.2 The Academic Board is the highest authority in respect of decisions for academic and scientific matters, but for decisions leading to structural or financial consequences, the approval of the Assembly of Partners is required, and that board is represented by the Administrator. **[E1.2 12.4]** The Administrator chairs the Administrative Board: this body does not have decision-making powers regarding academic matters but it serves as a link to the Academic Senate for the advisory bodies, including the Assembly of Partners and the Board of Trustees. **[Meeting1 The Rector, M4 Senior Management, M8 The President and Administrator] [Chapter III Standard II.1]**

1.3 Discussions with the senior management, academic staff and students confirmed that the University structure has worked well to date and also that the University intends to expand its faculty structure in the coming years, which will require approval from the Ministry of Education and Sport. The University has set up working groups in order to work on this. **[M1 The Rector, M4 Senior Management, M8 The President and Administrator, M2 1st cycle students, M3 2nd and 3rd cycle students, E2.2]** The University organogram of the organisational structure is available on the website. **[E2.10]** The review team confirms that the University works in accordance with its statute and is efficient in terms of its management. **[Chapter III Standard I.2]**

1.4 The state regulations also describe **[Evidence chapter X, article 43]** the rights and obligations of students, which includes the right to participate in the governance of the University through the Students' Council. The review team held discussions with senior and academic staff, as well as with first, second and third cycle students at the University, which confirmed that students participate fully in the governance of the University, with active participation at committee meetings from department level up to the Academic Senate, on which there are three student representatives- the Student President, the Student Vice-President and the Student General Secretary. There is also student representation on the Internal Quality Assurance Unit of the University. It was clear to the review team that the University encouraged constructive debate. **[M2, M3, M4, Ref 8.16. in additional evidence, AE 53] [Chapter III Standard I.3]**

1.5 At the time of the review visit, a new draft statute had been submitted to the Ministry of Education and Sport, even though the new law regarding universities was not yet in force and the appending by-laws had yet to be promulgated. The statute will be re-drafted when the law is in force and the by-laws have been published. The University is adopting a proactive stance to ensure institutional readiness for the new legislative framework. The

review team considers that this degree of foresight and active planning in order to manage the changes to the legislative framework merits an **affirmation**. [**Chapter III Standard I.1**]

1.6 The review team confirmed that all necessary documentation for committees is circulated to members by email in advance of meetings in order to improve debate and decision-making. The Academic Senate meets a minimum of three times per year and can convene extraordinary meetings when necessary. The Rectorate meets weekly as do the departments. The Rector also has a monthly meeting with the Council of Students. While department meetings are weekly, at the end of every month there is an open department meeting which students can attend. Informal and un-minuted focus groups involving students also occur each semester to elicit qualitative data for the departments on the student experience. [**M2, M3, M4, M6, E2.3.b Focus Group Report**] Staff and students confirmed both the regularity and usefulness of committee meetings and also that minutes are sent to attendees subsequently. Students confirmed that they receive feedback on what has been discussed together with any response the University has made in terms of proposed actions or changes. In the student survey carried out by APAAL, the majority of students stated that there is transparency of decision-making at the University. [**M2, M3, M4, E2.2, The Student Survey p29 question 21**] The review team held meetings with senior staff, academic staff and administrative staff which confirmed that the deliberative structure functions well. [**M1, M4, M6,**] To facilitate constructive debate in an external setting, the University hold retreats in order to have undisturbed discussions, and the University has held institution-wide retreats over a weekend period where staff can discuss the development of the University. The first of these was in 2012 and another was held in 2015. The first retreat led to the development of the School of Master's Studies and of the Doctoral School. [**M7, E3.7**] [**Chapter III Standard I.3**]

1.7 The University created a quality assurance unit in 2014, the Commission for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA). The CIQA is a permanent unit in the organisational structure of the University and its function is defined in the University's Regulations [**E2. Regulation UET, Article 7**] and in its Statute. [**E1. The Statute of UET, Article 11: 11.1.2**] The CIQA provides quality evaluation and assurance of the academic, administrative and financial activity of the University. The CIQA consists of a Chairman, and members representing each faculty and the administrative staff, as well as a representative member of the Student Council and at least one external expert representative. [**E3.6 The Unit for Internal Quality Assurance, E1.3. Brochure of Documents F.VII. On the Organisation and Operation of the Internal Commission for Quality Assurance**] The CIQA prepares a review report for the Dean of each faculty, covering academic activities such as the preparation of syllabuses, lecture and seminar planning, research, and planning and organising the working meetings at faculty and department level. [**E3.6**] Two of its stated main objectives are to create a culture of quality within the University and to monitor the level of student involvement in daily institutional activities. While the review team was satisfied that the University has installed effective structures of supervision and internal evaluation, it was of the opinion that the processes performed in the course of annual monitoring by the CIQA are largely compliance-based at present, and that alongside the future development of the University, the unit could develop a more enhancement-focused, and developmental approach to quality assurance. The team noted, however, that the work of the CIQA is valued by staff and of crucial importance to the University. [**M4, M5, M6, M7, M8**] [**Chapter III Standard I.4**][**ESG 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance**]

1.8 The review team confirmed that the University staff and students benefit from connections with European higher education institutions. Among the evidence provided for the review team were details of memoranda of understanding with The University of South Wales, UK; The University of Business and Technology, Kosovo; The Hague University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands—the memoranda are all currently valid. Exchange agreements exist with the Stockholm Business School, Sweden, and an inter-institutional

Erasmus+ agreement with the University of Ludwigshafen, Germany, both agreements are also currently valid. **[E3.2, 4.26]** The memoranda cover student exchanges, exchange of faculty members, joint research projects and joint conferences, and in the case of Stockholm Business School, joint curriculum development and joint degree programmes. Discussions with staff and students verified that the above agreements deliver clear benefits to both groups. **[M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, E1.14, 1.18, 1.19, 1.20, 1.22, 1.41, 1.42, 2.15, 4.26]** **[Chapter III Standard I.4]**

1.9 From the founding of the University in 2006 until the present, there have been three strategic plans. There was a Development Plan for 2006/11, a Development Plan entitled UET as an Excellence Centre from 2011/16 and the current Strategic Plan for 2016/20. **[M8, E1.5, 2.4]** The 2011/16 Development Plan was drafted during a staff retreat in 2011 and among the values it affirms is 'the motivated participation of students, professors and administrative staff in university activities'. **[E1.5 II.3]** The 2011 document does include one means of evaluating student participation, and it does provide many performance indicators that can be measured. The review team requested clarification regarding the progress made against some of these indicators but there was no single document available to them which presented that data, and so progress against the Development Plan 2011-16 remains unclear. The University is now reassessing its position and the Strategic Plan 2016-20 sets out revised priorities in respect of scientific research; the teaching process (including further alignment with the Bologna Process); students and student life; publications and academic teaching materials; service and infrastructure improvements; and priorities in international cooperation. **[E1.5 pp 3-7]** While it was clear to the review team from discussions with senior, academic and administrative staff that development strategies are discussed widely at every level of the University's committee structure, minutes of such meetings were not available, and the review team considers that it should be emphasised that meeting minutes, with attributable decisions, actions and timelines are a key part of the action-planning process. **[M1, M4, M5, M6, M8]** The Strategic Plan 2016-20 states that 'The University is to be monitored and evaluated on the basis of indicators of sustainable and measurable academic and institutional performance'. As a concrete step towards ensuring that performance indicators are meaningfully embedded in institutional planning, the University may wish to consider developing, adopting and implementing an action plan to support its Strategic Plan 2016-20. **[Chapter III Standard I.5]**

1.10 The Rectorate submits a report annually to the Senate which includes an analysis of indicators of the research and learning process. **[Evidence 1.15]** The report is made available to University Councils and Boards and is submitted to the Ministry of Education and Sport. Department reports are drawn up by the CIQA and from these the Deans compile faculty reports, and from those the Rectorate produces the single report that is sent to the Ministry each year. Conversations with staff confirmed that department and faculty reports are fully discussed at Department, Faculty and Rectorate level before inclusion in the final report to the Ministry of Sport and Education. The review team concludes that the process is effective. **[Chapter III Standard I.6, Chapter III Standard II.3]** **[ESG 1.8 Public Information]**

1.11 The University states that its autonomy and academic freedom are underpinned by its mission and purpose. The rights bequeathed by law include design of study programmes and research projects; selection of academic and admin staff; criteria for admissions; and the ability to sign agreements with home and overseas institutions. The review team held detailed discussions with senior, academic and administrative staff, and it was clear that the University had established the appropriate structures to accomplish its mission and purpose. **[M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8]** **[Chapter III Standard II.1]**

1.12 The University intends to be a leading institution in its contribution to the socioeconomic development of Albania, providing education of a high quality in the service

of its society, economy, politics and long-term sustainable development. In order to achieve this, it has developed mechanisms for obtaining information and data on the economic and social development of the country by the establishment of a Labour Market Board attached to every department. **[M1, M4, M8, E3.1 Labour Market Boards, E3.1 Labour Market Board minutes]** The Labour Market Boards contribute to their respective departments through the evaluation of teaching and syllabuses, assisting departments in both aligning to the changing requirements of the markets, and in helping to ensure that students receive an education that increases their employability. Members of the Labour Market Boards also give careers advice and guidance to students, and some members of the Labour Market Boards also sit on the Assembly of Partners, an advisory board to the Academic Senate. The members of the Labour Market Boards are drawn from industry, commerce, the legal profession, the media and local government. The establishment of Labour Market Boards for each department which help ensure currency of programmes and facilitate student employability was considered a feature of **good practice** by the review team.**[Chapter III Standard III.1, Chapter III Standard III.2, Chapter III Standard III.3]**

1.13 Internationalisation is high on the University's agenda and the wide-ranging list of partner organisations, together with the considerable contributions of European and American academics participating at University conferences and forums reflect this. **[1.20, 1.14, 1.42, 1.54, 1.57, 3.2]** As part of the agreements outlined above, both staff and students are encouraged to work or study at Western universities. At present, numbers are modest but the University's Strategic Plan highlights this as a priority development area for the University. **[1.18, 1.19, 1.20, 1.22, 1.41, 1.65, 3.26]** The review team considered that the range and quality of University partnerships with reputable universities outside of Albania was a feature of **good practice**.**[Chapter III Standard III.2, Chapter III Standard III.4]**

1.14 The responsibilities for the organisation and management of the University are clearly set out in the University Statute and Regulations. **[1.1, 1.2]** The review team identified good practices in the establishment of Labour Market Boards for each department to help ensure the currency of programmes and facilitate student employability, and in the range and quality of University partnerships with reputable universities outside of Albania. The review team did not identify any weaknesses. The review team affirmed that the University continue adopting a proactive stance to ensure institutional readiness for the new legislative framework.

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the establishment of Labour Market Boards for each department which help ensure currency of programmes and facilitates student employability (paragraph 1.12)
- the development of the University's partnerships with reputable universities outside of Albania (paragraph 1.13).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in relation to this Evaluation Area.

Recommendations

The review team did not make any recommendations in relation to this Evaluation Area.

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following action already in progress:

- the University is adopting a proactive stance to ensure institutional readiness for the new legislative framework (paragraph 1.5).

Judgement

The Standards for the Organisation and its Management are fully met.

Evaluation Area 2: Resourcing

2.1 The University manages the recruitment of academic and administrative staff according to criteria and procedures which are highlighted in the Statute [**E1 Statute - Articles 8.2, 17.1**] and Regulations. [**E2 Regulations, Articles 6.2, 10.3**] The policies, procedures and criteria for recruiting staff [**E21 Procedures for recruiting staff**] are published on the University website and designed to demonstrate an open and fair approach to recruitment. The University gives preference to candidates with a Western university doctorate which supports the principle of internationalisation. Forty-four academic staff have studied abroad for a higher level qualification [**E22 List of Staff Studied Abroad**] and 26 have worked abroad in higher education within the last five years. [**Staff Survey, Q3**] The review team considered as **good practice** the support provided by the University in enabling staff to study for a higher level qualification at an overseas institution. [**Chapter III Standard IV.1**] [**ESG 1.5 Teaching Staff**]

2.2 The staff workload is determined in a Work Contract which is based on the Labour Code and the Statute and outlines the rights and duties of all academic staff. An organogram is published on the University website, which clarifies the structure of the University. [**Evidence - AE-10 - Organogram**] The majority of staff are Albanian nationals; out of an academic staff of 194, two non-Albanians are employed. [**Evidence - AE-6 - Summary of staff turnover**][**Chapter III Standard IV.1**] [**Chapter III Standard IV.2**]

2.3 The University supports the training of professors and their doctoral studies at home and abroad, through the provision of paid research study periods. The University also encourages the involvement of foreign professors in supervising doctoral theses and participation in conferences held at the University. [**E35 - Agenda of ASD**] [**Evidence - AE-7 - Training for Professors**] The University has targeted the appointment of academic staff with PhDs from American and European universities. [**Meeting 1 Rector**] The review team considered the support provided by the University for the training of professors and their doctoral studies through the provision of paid research periods to be a positive feature. [**Chapter III Standard IV.3**]

2.4 The evaluation of teaching staff is undertaken by the Head of Department; through the analysis of the student online questionnaire and via the use of focus groups undertaken at the end of the academic year. [**Evidence 36 - Statute - Article 17**] Each Head of Department reports outcomes to the Performance Evaluation Commission which reports to the Rector. [**E2 - Regulations - Article 23.2**] Academic staff confirmed that they received training in support of their teaching roles and that review of teaching practice was constructive. [**Meeting 4 - Senior Staff**] Staff confirmed that peer observation of teaching takes place once every two years, a probationary period operates for newly appointed staff. [**Meeting 5 - Teaching & Research Staff**] The review team concludes that the University's approach to staff development could be enhanced by bringing all of the current individual elements together. [**Chapter III Standard IV.3**]

2.5 In order to support social development, the University organises a range of social activities in order to exchange ideas and share practice, including festive dinners; off-site retreats; lunches; birthday celebrations; debating clubs; and promotional book events. [**Evidence 37 & 86 - AE-16**] [**SER, p.11**] Retreats are used to consider new strategic developments. [**Meeting 1 Rector**] [**Meeting 5 - Teaching & Research Staff**] A number of effective integration and collaborative activities are also undertaken including high school tours, academic applicant counselling, open days, parent days and orientation weeks for newly enrolled students. The University Back Tour is undertaken with high school directors in order to bring high school graduates into the University. [**Evidence AE-11 - Open Days - AE-25 - Open Days - AE-26 - High School Tour**] [**Chapter III Standard IV.2**] [**Chapter III Standard IV.4**]

2.6 The University's budget is prepared each July and approved by the European Education Initiative Holding Ltd. The responsible officers for the Institution include the Chancellor and the Financial Officer. The budget is prepared on a conservative basis to ensure all financial obligations can be met. **[Evidence 39 Statute, article 39 & AE-17 - Financial Reports]** Supported by the Finance Office, the Chancellor (who reports to the Rector) prepares the annual draft budget in July, **[E1 - Statute, Article 22.1.1]** which is passed for comment at the Academic Senate prior to seeking institutional approval. **[E1 Statute, Article 19.1.6c; Article 20, 21.3.1.3e] [Meeting 1 - Rector] [Chapter III Standard VI.1] [Chapter III Standard VI.3]**

2.7 For the first 10 years, the University has operated a centralised budget process, rather than a bottom up approach to budget management. Deans and Heads of Department are now part of the annual budget management process: increasingly the budget will be based upon a bottom up approach. **[Meeting 6 - Support Staff]** The University issues an audit report each year on the budget outturn; budget reports provide transparency in accounting for both revenue and expenses and all programmes are cost controlled to ensure sustainability. **[Evidence 40 Statute, para 22.1.8]** The plan is to move to a devolved departmental model with key functions moving to departments by 2017. **[Meeting 8 - President /Owner]** The University's intentions to devolve the budget to departmental level in order to foster autonomy and to ensure that the annual budget is subject to discussion at the Senate to ensure transparency of decision-making was considered an enhancement by the review team. **[Chapter III Standard VI.2]**

2.8 The University's information management system is effective in coordinating and supporting the work of academic and administration staff and in supporting the learning process of students. The systems provide a number of supporting elements including IT labs, University website, system for electronic archives, student administration system, and learning portals for teaching staff and for students. The systems provide student communication in the form of a calendar for the academic year, a class timetable and information on exam results. **[Evidence AE-18 -UET electronic platforms]** The self-evaluation report SWOT did refer to weaknesses in the IT systems; however, recent purchases of additional high-powered machines and software, including the provision of 1terabyte of storage for each member of staff has resolved the previously identified weaknesses. **[Meeting 6 - Support Staff] [Chapter III Standard VII.1] [ESG 1.7 Information Management]**

2.9 The University provides good quality teaching classrooms which are well-equipped with audio-visual equipment, including PCs and projectors. Four IT labs are available for both timetabled and open access learning and each lab provides a range of computing software and hardware. Maintenance and equipment updating is undertaken by the Office of Information Technology and IT solutions. The campus is covered by Wi-Fi, although some cold spots still exist. The review team was able to see a practical demonstration of the professors and student portals during a visit to the campus; both portals were comprehensive in respect to the range of activities included. Training for staff and students is undertaken by the Office of Information Technology and IT solutions. The library also provides a small number of PCs, with access from 9am to 8pm on weekdays, and from 9am to 5pm on Saturdays. **[Campus review of resources during review visit]** Students were satisfied with their teaching environment and confirmed that if problems arose that they were resolved quickly. IT systems were considered effective and both hardware and software supported student learning. Students are also supported by specialist IT technicians. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students] [Meeting 3 - 2nd & 3rd Cycle Students] [Chapter III Standard VII.2] [ESG 1.6 Learning Resources & Student Support]**

2.10 The University is bound by statute to use its estates for educational or related purposes. **[E1 Statute, Article 8.6, 8.7]** The University has two buildings covering a floor

area of 12,340 m². The Estate Management Policy contains the principal rules and procedures applicable to the management of energy use, environmental protection, waste management, cleaning policy, security and car parking. **[Evidence AE-21 - estates management policy]** The University is in the process of developing plans for a new campus in order to support the future growth in student numbers and additional study areas. **[Meeting 1 Rector]** At present, the University owns one of the two buildings it currently occupies. **[Meeting 8 President & Owner]** **[Chapter III Standard VII.3]** **[Chapter III Standard V.I]**

2.11 The review team considered that the University's two buildings offer a suitable environment for conducting its business. The provision of staff offices and facilities is compliant with local health and safety requirements with respect to temperature control and fire safety. However, the review team noted that not all of the University's buildings were accessible to students with disabilities, an issue that was identified in the self-evaluation report. **[SWOT pg. 35]** Teaching staff were satisfied with the working environment and access to IT resources, **[Meeting 5 - Teaching & Research Staff & Staff Survey]** as were the students. However, students did draw attention to shortcomings in the areas of lifts and emergency stairs, **[Student Survey, Q.15.i]** disability ramps, **[Student Survey Q15. ii]** and an absence of sports facilities. **[Student Survey Q15.ix and 15.x]** The provision for disabled students was noted as a weakness by the University which would be resolved in the new campus; until that point teaching sessions are scheduled in accessible classrooms. **[Meeting 6 - Support Staff]** Although standards are not at risk the review team was concerned that, because not all University buildings were accessible to disabled students, it would encourage the University to ensure that the current infrastructure is compliant for all University students, including those designated as disabled. **[Chapter III Standard VII.4, 5& 6]** **[Chapter III Standard V.1]**

2.12 To support student learning the library provides a range of materials in both hard copy and in digital format for each University study programme, booklists are revised annually. The University holds over 5,000 book titles, has a subscription to SAGE for online materials and has access to the national Library of Albania. **[Meeting 4 - Senior Staff]** **[Meeting 5 - Teaching & Research Staff]** Students confirmed that library materials were easily accessible, that opening times were reasonable, **[9-8pm Monday to Friday, 9-5 on Saturdays & an extra hour added during examination periods]** and that the library provided a good working environment with open access to internet connected computers. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students]** **[Meeting 3 - 2nd & 3rd Cycle Students]** **[Chapter III Standard V.1]** **[ESG 1.6 Learning Resources & Student Support]**

2.13 UET Enterprise offers services to third parties on a consultancy basis; services are provided in the areas of business, human resources and IT. The quality of services is assured through the evaluation of the scientific research performance of academic staff, together with the number and type of signed University contracts. **[Evidence AE-24 - Consultancy of Third Parties]** **[Chapter III Standard VII 5 & 6]**

2.14 A number of administrative offices are responsible for maintaining all significant documentation of the University. An electronic version of all documents is stored and maintained by the IT Office, through the UMIS system. **[Evidence 46 Regulations article 6]** The offices of Archive-Protocol and Statistics, Human Resources and Finance **[E2, Regulations Article 6.2.9, 6.2.1, 6.2.8]** and the office of Contracts **[SER, p.16]** are responsible for maintaining documentation of all University activities. The departmental coordinator manages student documentation, for example essays, programme syllabuses and meeting minutes. The Academic Secretary also manages subject registers and exams. University statistics are generated by The Office of Archive-Protocol and Statistics for onward transmission to the Ministry of Education & Sport. Student progression data is stored electronically on UMIS and in hard copy, taking into account enrolment, scholarship holders

and students who have transferred or interrupted their studies. **[Learning Management System -www.eut.edi.al/lme]** The review team considers that the University has undertaken a great deal of work to unpin its information management processes. It therefore **affirms** that the University continue to develop its information systems in order to provide strategic and integrated information on the performance of the University.**[Chapter III Standard V.2] [ESG 1.8 Information Management]**

2.15 The responsibilities for resources are clearly set out in the Statute and Regulations of the University.**[E1 & E2]** The review team identified good practice in the support provided for academic staff to study a higher level qualification at an overseas University. Weakness was identified in the building infrastructure which was not totally compliant for disabled students. The review team recommends that the University develop a strategy and action plan in order to ensure that all parts of the current estate infrastructure are accessible to disabled students. The review team affirmed ongoing developments which support the resources of the University, including the continued development of the information management systems in order to provide strategic and integrated information on the performance of the University.

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- the support provided for academic staff to study a higher level qualification at an overseas university (paragraph 2.1).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in relation to this Evaluation Area.

Recommendations

The review team did not make any recommendations in relation to this Evaluation Area.

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following action already in progress:

- that the University continues to develop its information management systems in order to provide strategic and integrated information on the performance of the University(paragraph 2.15).

Judgement

The Standards for Resourcing are fully met.

Evaluation Area 3: The Curriculum

3.1 In accordance with the University's Mission, academic programmes are underpinned by scientific research and informed about employer needs through the University's Labour Market Boards. **[Evidence 1, Statute, Article 6]** The University seeks to position itself as a 'university of business', prioritising curriculum and programmes in disciplines which fulfil regional and national labour market needs. **[Evidence 5, Strategic Plan 2015-20, p.7]** Departmental Labour Market Boards, consisting of 10 industry partners with an increasing proportion of University alumni members, review the currency of the curriculum and its professional practice components annually ensuring that updates are included in the next year's syllabus. **[Evidence 1, Statute, Article 18.2]** The use of departmental Labour Market Boards which review the curriculum annually, ensuring its currency and increasing student employment potential, is a feature of **good practice**. **[Meeting 6]** The team also **affirmed** the increasing role of alumni on Labour Market Boards which sustain links with past students and develop new industry partnerships, thus retaining alumni engagement with the University. **[Chapter I Standard I.1]**

3.2 Information about the University's study programmes is available on the University's website, **[Evidence, <http://www.uet.edu.al/index.php/sq/studio-ne-uet>]** as well as in the University Prospectus-**[Evidence, Guida e Studimeve BA/MA/DR 2016-17]** both are also available in English. **[Additional Evidence 35b, UET Students Prospectus]** Study programmes are open to Albanian or foreign nationals who fulfil admissions criteria. **[Evidence 2, Regulation, Article 11]** Faculty-based commissions oversee candidate selection of first cycle applicants; candidates for Master's programmes are chosen by the relevant Scientific Committee; and doctoral students are selected by the Council of Professors. **[Evidence 2, Regulation, Article 12][ESG 1.8 Public Information]**

3.3 Coordinated by the Office of Admissions and Student Care, a team of executives, academics and students annually promotes programmes during March to May through a High School Tour. In 2016, 30 tours reached 142 schools with up to 15,346 potential applicants. **[Evidence 31, High School Tour Agenda; Additional Evidence 26, Photos and MAPO article on High School Tour]** Additionally, programmes are promoted through individual applicant appointments with lecturers, University visits and media campaigns. **[SER, p.29; Additional 26, Policies for Promoting UET Online; Additional Evidence 25, Agenda and attendance lists for institutional open days; Meeting 2, Undergraduate Students; Meeting 3, Postgraduate Students]** Doctoral students noted that the doctoral secretary answers programme queries and that PhD thesis defence events are open to all allowing prospective students to see what is involved. **[Meeting 3, Postgraduate Students]** The University also maintains contact with High Schools through its High School-University Forum. **[SER, p.29]**

3.4 During registration, a team of professors provides advice to new students about their study choices and offers institutional orientation. **[SER, p.17]** During the first one to two weeks, the faculty ensures that students understand learning objectives and know how to access University services and study opportunities, for example travel abroad. **[Evidence 2, Regulation, Article 37; Evidence 32, On Policy, Criteria and Admissions Process; Meetings 2 &, Undergraduate Students, Postgraduate Students]**

3.5 Currently offering only full-time programmes, the University does not provide a continuing education study programme though it does offer training, workshops and conferences supporting the principle of lifelong learning, for example annual Albanian Study Days. **[SER, p.11; Evidence 25, ASD Agenda]** The University offers a range of continuing professional development programmes for academic staff including training for professors and supervisors on the doctoral school's structure and regulation **[Additional Evidence 7, Online Trainings for Professors]** supportive workshops for new researchers **[Evidence 55,**

Training Programmes Presentations][Additional Evidence 28, Professional Training and Workshops] Certificate of Teaching and Research training for new staff [**Additional Evidence 12, Summary Programme Content, Trainings Staff Development Days]** and management training for senior staff. [**Additional Evidence 13, Training Plans for Management and Academic Staff]** Additionally, academics with five years of experience are entitled to a paid sabbatical. [**SER, p.34; Visit Evidence 24, No. of members who have taken sabbatical leave]** Although this represents a substantial offer, it was not clear whether it is strategic and coordinated, and academic staff awareness of its breadth was limited. [**Meeting 5, Academic Staff]** The review team considered that the University might enhance academic staff development in pedagogy and research by adopting a more explicitly strategic and integrated approach. [**Chapter I Standard I.2]**

3.6 Requirements for student assessment, progression and graduation are clearly set out in the appropriate Regulation [**Evidence 2, Regulation, Chapters 5 & 9]** and at programme level. [**e.g. Evidence 39, Regulation of the First Cycle Study Programme; Evidence 47, Regulation of the Second Cycle Study Programme]** Students confirmed a clear understanding of learning objectives and assessment derived from staff explanations and programme documentation provided at the beginning of a programme. [**Meetings 2 & 3, Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students]** [**Chapter I Standard I.3][ESG 1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification]**

3.7 The University's strategic focus on meeting employer needs ensures coherence to its offer and alignment with regional, national and international trends. Particularly effective is English language teaching with almost all students speaking in English at review meetings. [**Meetings 2 & 3, Undergraduate Students, Postgraduate Students]** The team considered that the delivery of English teaching in first cycle courses which enables students to communicate effectively in English and to participate more confidently in mobility opportunities was a feature of **good practice**. The University regularly undertakes market research initiatives that also support Albania's development, for example the 'UET Initiative Report: University of Business (2014-15)', a national investigation of graduate competencies sought by employers. [**SER, p. 18; Additional Evidence 33]** The University does not currently offer joint degrees with other national or international institutions though it is a strategic priority in the area of international cooperation. [**Evidence 5, Strategic Plan 2015-20, p.6]** [**Chapter I Standard I.4]**

3.8 Systems are in place to ensure the University works within its physical resource capacity. [**SER, p.18; Evidence 1, Summary Information on Institutional Infrastructure capacity]** Criteria for the management of staff workloads are clearly set out. [**Evidence 37, Criteria for Distributing Workload; Evidence 23, Working Contract Sample]** The staff contract makes provision for overtime payments should teaching hours exceed the agreed number. [**Evidence 23, Working Contract Sample, Article 16][Chapter I Standard I.5]**

3.9 Study programmes and their objectives are clearly defined and can be found on the University website which provides students with the content of their programmes including detailed module syllabuses. Admissions criteria and application procedures are also published on the official website. [**Additional Evidence 31]** Students confirmed that admissions criteria, programme content and learning objectives were clear to them. [**Meetings 2 & 3, Undergraduate Students, Postgraduate Students]** [**Chapter I Standard I.6]** [**Design and Approval of Programmes]** First cycle study programmes equip students with basic knowledge and concepts, civic education and scientific methods and principles, thus ensuring they develop necessary analytical and research skills and are prepared for master's study. [**SER, p.19; Evidence 45, On the principles of designing the course programme and literature, A.III.4.1.1]** The University supports the principle of students transferring credit to and from other institutions in accordance with the Bologna Process. [**Evidence 41, On Students' transfer and mobility, Meetings 2 & 3,**

Undergraduate Students; Postgraduate Students] thus promoting mobility which is also facilitated through institutional partnerships.**[Evidence 42, List of Partner Universities and Cooperation Agreements]** The emphasis on professional practice and internships enables first cycle students to put theory into practice and helps to ensure they are ready for employment. **[Chapter I Standard I.6 & Chapter I Standard I.7] [ESG 1.2 Design & Approval of Programmes]**

3.10 First cycle teaching methods vary according to the type of courses studied within a programme. Theoretical courses are normally delivered by lecture and colloquium; professional courses tend to be interactive combining lectures and seminars; practical courses are run through seminars or laboratory activity.**[Evidence 2, Regulation, Article 16; Evidence 45, A.III.4.1.2, Pedagogical Methods]** Seventy per cent of teaching is carried out by full-time academics.**[SER, p.20; Evidence 8, Teaching and Scientific Staff Statistics 2015-16]** The orientation and mentoring process for students starts prior to enrolment and continues after graduation. A range of support departments provide services as follows: The Office of Admissions and Student Care; The Office of Career and Practice; the Academic Advising Centre; tutorial and academic counselling and orientation days. **[Evidence 130/131/132 - Order of the Rector/Regulation Article 38/Methodological session]** Students adjust to University life during the first cycle, and all students are permitted to change their studies in accordance with the University regulations. **[Evidence 133 statute article 26]** Students considered that the information provided at orientation was detailed and very accessible. Each faculty's orientation programme was explained by the faculty secretary and then followed up by the Dean of Faculty in respect of the study programme. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students] [Meeting 3 - 2nd & 3rd Cycle Students]** The Office of Career and Practice offers careers advice, organises internships and the annual Job Fairs, and liaises with alumni **[SER, pg31]** the Service Unit of Limited Ability offers disability support,**[SER, pg32]** for example supporting a blind student **[Meeting 2, Undergraduate Students]** and the Psychological Clinic provides pastoral support.**[Evidence 66, Rector Order Nr.12; Meeting 6, Support Staff]** The team considers that the differentiated and comprehensive approach to student support, including initial programme enquiries, tutorials, careers development, disability support and pastoral support is a feature of **good practice. [Chapter I Standard I.8]**

3.11 Second cycle studies promote extension of knowledge and independent research.**[Evidence 46, Guide on Writing the Diploma]** Postgraduate programmes and student research themes normally lie within the research interests of staff, thus facilitating the development of student research groups. At least 70 per cent of second cycle teaching staff are full-time employees.**[Evidence 8, Teaching and Scientific Staff Statistics 2015-16]** Although teaching staff are normally expected to have a doctorate and university teaching experience there is provision for experts lacking high level academic credentials to contribute to teaching.**[Evidence 21, Recruiting Academic Staff, G.1.3]** Alongside independent research, Professional Practice is a mandatory element of second cycle studies.**[Evidence 49, On Professional Practice; Evidence 47, Regulation of the Second Cycle Study Programme: Communications-Public Relations]** Developed in 2011 and available in both Albanian and English,**[SER, p.4 and p.32]** third cycle programmes comprise three doctoral programmes in Legal, Social or Economic Sciences, that is, one per faculty. Each is based on research and independent creative activities, has a duration of at least three years, includes a 60-credit theoretical studies module during the first year and culminates with the submission and defence of the thesis.**[Evidence 2, Regulation, 3.9, 39.3, & Annex; Evidence 46: Guide on Writing the Diploma; Meeting 3, Postgraduate Students]** As in the case of first cycle studies, curriculum (including professional practice) is kept up-to-date through annual reviews informed by the departmental Labour Market Boards and market research; postgraduate students also attend the University's annual Jobs Fair with up to 25 per cent gaining employment as a result.**[Meeting 3, Postgraduate Students] [Chapter I Standard I.9]**

3.12 Internationalisation and student mobility are key University strategies. **[Evidence 5, Strategic Plan 2015-20]** In fulfilment of these, study programmes are compliant with the Bologna Process and easily understood by those from outside Albania. The University's 'On transfers, recognition of credits and student mobility' **[Evidence 41]** provides a clear framework for facilitating student transfers to and from the University; and diplomas awarded at the completion of studies include a detailed transcript. **[Chapter I Standard I.10]**

3.13 All programmes, regardless of how theoretical, require students to participate in professional practice. **[Evidence 45, On principles of designing the course programme and the literature, A.III.3 (i)]** First and second cycle students also prepare a thesis and undergo a formal public thesis defence. In the case of second cycle students, a key assessment criterion is originality. **[Evidence 46, Guide on Writing the Diploma, p.10]** On occasion, students have the opportunity to contribute to scientific research. **[Evidence 50, Student Evaluation System, A.V.3, Meeting 5, Academic Staff]** In line with its aspiration to develop civically aware students, the University and the student-driven Office of Students encourage participation in extracurricular cultural and social activities covering a rich range of subjects, for example literature, debate, politics, economics, sociology, leadership, sport and travel. **[SER, p.34; <http://uet.edu.al/index.php/en/student-life/student-activities-and-clubs>]** These activities also enable students to develop professional skills. **[Meetings 2 & 3, Undergraduate Students, Postgraduate Students] [Chapter I Standard I.11]**

3.14 The University places strong emphasis on developing active citizens [SER, p.21] and employment-ready graduates which it facilitates through internships. **[Evidence 49, On Professional Practice]** for example placement in a law firm, **[Meeting 2, Undergraduate Students]** journalist-reporter experience, **[Meeting 3, Postgraduate Students]** visits to businesses and institutions, **[SER, p.21]** industry talks given by practitioners, industry-based tutors, **[SER, p.20; Evidence 21, Recruiting Academic Staff, G.1.3]** and an annual Jobs Fair featuring key employers. **[Evidence 48, List of Participating Companies in the Career Fair] [Chapter I Standard I.12]**

3.15 The University's Mission is focused on a curriculum which supports regional and national labour market priorities. The review team identified **good practices** in the use of Labour Market Boards, the teaching of English language to first cycle students and the differentiated and comprehensive approach to student support, including initial programme enquiries, tutorials, careers development, disability support and pastoral support. There were no **weaknesses** or **recommendations** identified. The review team **affirms** the increasing role of alumni on the Labour Market Boards and in institutional activities.

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the departmental Labour Market Boards which review the curriculum annually, ensuring its currency and increasing student employment potential (paragraph 3.1)
- structured delivery of English teaching in first cycle courses which enables students to communicate effectively in English and to participate more confidently in mobility opportunities (paragraph 3.7)
- the differentiated and comprehensive approach to student support, including initial programme enquiries, tutorials, careers development, disability support and pastoral support(paragraph 3.10).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in relation to this Evaluation Area.

Recommendations

The review team did not make any recommendations in relation to this Evaluation Area.

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following action already in progress:

- the increasing role of alumni on Labour Market Boards and in institutional activities which sustain links with past students and develop new industry partnerships, thus retaining alumni engagement with the University(paragraph 3.1).

Judgement

The Standards for the Curriculum are fully met.

Evaluation Area 4: Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research

4.1 The University organises its study programmes in order to take account of a balance of subjects across semesters and academic years, and enables the fulfilment of the workload of academic staff. **[Evidence 51]** The website of the University includes detailed information on each study programme. **[Evidence 45; 79 SER]** Professional practice is a compulsory element under the Higher Education Law for first and second cycle students. Student practice takes place in different companies under the joint supervision of the department and host organisation. **[Evidence 49, M2;M3;M5]** The University has established a Labour Market Board for each department which consults with departments to ensure the quality of the professional practice periods for each study programme. **[Evidence 2; M4; M6;M8]** The review team considered the support provided to students when undertaking periods of professional practice within their study programmes to be a feature of good practice. **[Meeting 2 & 3] [Chapter I, Standard II.1]**

4.2 Student assessment is based upon the principle of continuous assessment. The regulations specify the format and structure of the thesis and the exam procedures. **[Evidence 2; 50; M2;M3]** Assessments are considered fair and objective. The University upholds the principle of confidentiality in exams and students are informed of exam results using the UMIS electronic system. In order to ensure compliance with examination procedures, examinations are always checked by the Head of the Department, Head of Subject Group and Head of Quality Assurance Unit. **[Evidence 50; M5]** The University has prepared a detailed regulation on the preparation of the diploma theses/dissertation including regulations for each department and the defence of the theses in front of the Evaluation Committee. **[Evidence 2; 46; Meeting 3]** In terms of theses originality, the University has prepared a 'Statement of Authenticity' and all work is subject to plagiarism checks. **[Additional Evidence 29; M3]** The University has subscribed to plagiarism-detection software, a service where the upload of all Master's and PhD theses is undertaken. **[Evidence 46 Guide on the preparation of the Diploma thesis; M5 Teaching and Research Staff]** In light of these recent procedural changes the review team encourages the University to further develop and enhance the systems (Turnitin) to support plagiarism detection through, for example, workshops and training seminars for students. **[Chapter I, Standard II.2][ESG 1.3 Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment & 1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification]**

4.3 Enhancement of study programmes is through a number of interlocking processes which include evaluation of the quality of teaching by the Head of Department, student surveys once per semester, views from the Commission of the Performance Evaluation and from the Quality Assurance Unit. **[Evidence 21, 63, Meeting 4 and 5]** The quality of teaching is improved by undertaking staff training for teaching and research involving both internal and external experts. **[Evidence 55]** In regard to research improvement, the University encourages lecturers to participate in research activities both internally and externally. **[Evidence 33]** At the end of the academic year the institution prepares a teaching evaluation report produced by the Head of the Department, which includes a short statistical report on teaching performance. **[Evidence 38, Meeting 4, Meeting 5]** The review team considered that the annual teaching report prepared by the Head of Department was effective. The review team considers that the University should continue to implement the key outcomes from the Teaching Process Analysis to enhance and support good quality teaching. **[Chapter I, Standard II.3] [ESG 1.9 Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes]**

4.4 The University's Strategy prioritises the recruitment of highly qualified staff, investment in research resources, for example library provision, engagement in international

projects, student support through scholarships, including for disadvantaged students, **[SER, pp.24; Evidence 5, Strategic Plan 2015-2020]** and the recruitment of highly qualified, research active staff. In support of the latter, there is a four-step scoring framework for staff research performance evaluation that measures individual research performance covering: basic scholarly updating; determination of individual research expertise, for example supervision of internal theses; achievement of third party funding; and external recognition as an expert. **[Evidence 33 Research Grant System and Indicators of Measuring Scientific Research Performance]** The review team would encourage the University to further enhance its four-step evaluation process for staff research which provides a framework for staff who wish to develop a research profile. **[Chapter I, Standard II.4]**

4.5 The University encourages academic staff to take part in scientific research projects for which funding is available, from both the University and third party organisations. **[Evidence 33; 35; 58]** The Office for Project Development and Partnerships supports and coordinates activities related to scientific research projects for staff. **[Evidence 59, Meeting 5]** The measurement of the research activities is undertaken based on scientific outcomes and according to the direction of research that staff are involved with. Reporting is undertaken periodically to the department and assessed by the Council of Professors. **[Evidence 60; AE25, Meeting 4]** **[Chapter II, Standard I.1]**

4.6 The University is involved in projects for capacity building with local and international partners in a range of subject areas, including hosting conferences, for example Albanian Study Days. **[Evidence 60; 61; 25, Meeting 4, 5]** The University cooperates with European Universities to develop projects in the Erasmus+ Programme in all fields that the University offers. The University has 90 cooperation agreements with international institutions and 13 agreements with national institutions. **[SER 102; AE2]** The review team **endorses** the University to continue to support staff in applying for international research projects to further enhance the reputation of the University internationally. Academic staff are encouraged to publish internationally and participate as referees for conference paper panels. **[Evidence 23; 38, Meeting 4]** Internal benefits from the active engagement in collaboration agreements are high: so far the University has engaged in seven EU projects for capacity-building, several regional research projects, 300 outgoing mobility opportunities, five incoming exchanges, and a number of summer schools, there have also been a number of visiting professors. **[Evidence 15; 18, Meeting 5]** The review team considers that active engagement in national and international collaborative agreements and partnerships is a feature of **good practice**. **[Chapter II, Standard I.2; Chapter II, Standard I.3]**

4.7 The University Mission and Vision are reflected in the Strategy for Scientific Research, which is approved by the Council of Professors, and led by Directors of particular fields. **[Evidence 60, M8]** Research projects aim to enhance interdisciplinary activity, support grant applications, provide networking opportunities with the private sector and result in published outcomes and findings through the sharing of knowledge. **[Evidence 37; Meeting 5]** Each academic staff member of the department specifies the individual pillars in his/her field of research expertise. Staff are involved in major research directions which are conceptualised as working groups of academic staff with expertise in related fields of activity. **[Evidence 57; AE23; Meeting 4; M5,]** A statistical report has been published on the results of the individual scientific research of staff and by mid-October 2016 the research report will be published for the research projects of the 2015-16 academic year. **[Evidence 40; Additional Evidence 3a; Meeting 5]** The University's departments work with the Doctoral School and the Office for Project Partnerships which support academic staff and also evaluate the work produced by each staff member. The Board for Financing of Research Activities is responsible for the selection of research projects which are financed by UET Ltd. **[E 58]** Annually the University supports a number of individual research projects which have a direct impact on society. **[Evidence 62 list of policy papers published by staff]** **[Chapter II Standard I.4 and Chapter II, Standard I.5]**

4.8 The University has a five-year scientific research strategy aimed at supporting internationalisation, project development and scientific research. A budget of 500,000 euros is provided by the University [SER pg. 27; E60 Policy of Scientific Research; E9 Innovative Albania 2020; AE23 Action Plan for Evaluation of the research strategy; Meeting 5] and funding is distributed in the following ways: 85 per cent for scientific research for internal staff, 10 per cent on visiting academic staff and visiting fellows and 5 per cent for student research projects. Benefits include the professional development of staff through the exchange programmes in terms of increased knowledge; improved English language; improved networking capacities, better teaching experience; and development of new methods. It has created opportunities to expand the network of partners and has created the possibility of applying for other projects. [Additional Evidence 33; Meeting 5 Teaching and Research staff and answers from the clarification questions] The University presented a sample range of action plans for its research programmes. [Additional Evidence 47; Meeting 4] The review team would encourage the University to prepare a clear action plan which will enhance the implementation of research programmes (Innovative Albania 2015-22). Action plans would benefit from clear targets, key performance indicators and explicit timelines for actions, attributable to responsible post-holders. [Chapter II, Standard I.6]

4.9 The outcomes of scientific research are published during scientific conferences organised by the University, for example the Next Europe Network. [SER 112] The University Press publishes periodicals; all articles are evaluated by experts through a peer review process. [SER 113; E27; answer 4 from the clarification questions] Academic staff are also encouraged to publish scientific research through the media in order to provide expertise on issues of public interest. Of particular note is the work of the University's own press which publishes peer-reviewed periodicals: including 'Theses' and 'Monographs, Essays and Studies'; and, twice yearly, refereed journals relating to each of the faculties (*Economicus, Jus & Justicia, Polis, Education and Sociological Analysis*) [SER, p.28; answers from the clarification questions] it also publishes books, including translations of textbooks. [SER, p.28] Authors are both internal and external to the University. [Additional Evidence 29] The establishment of the University's own press which publishes both textbooks and research, thus enhancing the student experience and supporting staff in disseminating research outputs, is a feature of good practice. [E34 Brochure of UET Press Publications, E69 Library inventory periodicals, AE 26 Photos of MAPO Articles, site visit to the library where many UET periodicals were seen on the book shelf] [Chapter II, Standard I.7]

4.10 The University periodically monitors and evaluates the results of the scientific work of academic staff, reporting on the performance of scientific research activities, results of the individual research projects and concrete outcomes such as national and international publications with impact factors including participation in conferences. [Evidence 63; 52; Additional Evidence 3b; Meeting 5] The University is committed to the transfer of research outcomes to wider society, two examples include The ConSus Project, which aims to establish a regional science network for sustainable innovation, and the Forum Business University, which aims to cooperate with the most successful businesses in the country. [SER 117 <http://www.uet.edu.al/index.php/sq/consus-tempus>] [Chapter II, Standard I.8]

4.11 The responsibilities for the management of Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are clearly set out in the University Research Strategy and Scientific Research Policies. [Evidence 6 Research Strategy 2011-2015; 60 Brochure of Documents on Scientific Research policies] The review team identified two aspects of good practice: the active engagement in national and international collaborative agreements and partnerships; and the establishment of the University's own press which publishes both textbooks and research. The review team did not identify any weaknesses, recommendations or affirmations.

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the active engagement in national and international collaborative agreements and partnerships (paragraph 4.6)
- the establishment of the University's own press which publishes both textbooks and research, thus enhancing the student experience and supporting staff in disseminating research outputs (paragraph 4.9).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in relation to this Evaluation Area.

Recommendations

The review team did not make any recommendations in relation to this Evaluation Area.

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team did not affirm any actions already in progress in relation to this Evaluation Area.

Judgement

The Standards for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are fully met.

Evaluation Area 5: Students and their Support

5.1 The University's current student admissions system is based upon state legislation and internal regulations. **[Evidence 118 - Criteria for Admissions Process]** The admission criteria are published online, available in print media and are provided during visits to high schools. **[Evidence 119 - website study-in-eut]. [Evidence 120 - Regulations article 6]** The University undertakes a range of admission activities including high school university forums; high school tours; applicant counselling; media campaigns; career orientation days and open days. **[Evidence 121/122/123/124/125/126]** Prior to joining the University, students had received presentations at their high school, made visits to the University in order to meet staff and students and had received printed brochures. In addition, open days are available for parents to find out about the University and its study offer. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students]. [Meeting 3 - 2nd & 3rd Cycle Students]** Students confirmed that they had been satisfied with the services of the admissions office. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students] [Meeting 3 - 2nd & 3rd Cycle Students] [Chapter I Standard III.1]**

5.2 The University welcomes non-Albanian students to its study programmes. However, the numbers enrolled are limited due to first and second cycle programs being taught in Albanian. Foreign students come from neighbouring countries such as Kosovo, Montenegro and Macedonia; a few PhD students are registered from Turkey. In terms of student mobility, a number of international students have pursued a semester of study at the University via the Erasmus scheme. **[Evidence 127 - Agreements summary table & 128 - Erasmus + Int Exchange]** All teaching at the University conforms to a staff-student ratio of 1:20 in order to meet state norms. **[Chapter I Standard III.4]**

5.3 The University uses a range of communication methods with students including the website, the use of social media pages, telephone, email, tutorials and regular meetings. Each student has access to an electronic account (UMIS) in which detailed information about the course, the lectures, course timetables, assessment and exams can be found. Student files are managed by the Office of Contracts. **[Evidence 129 - Info from the IT Office]** Additionally, office times for academic and administration staff are published on the office door, and the email address of each member of academic staff is published on the website. Students confirmed that they were content with the staff office hours arrangements and could always contact their tutors by email: they confirmed that 'there is always someone available to talk with'. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students] [Meeting 3 - 2nd & 3rd Cycle Students] [Meeting 5 - Teaching & Research Staff] [Meeting 4 Senior Staff] [Chapter I Standard III.2]**

5.4 Students operate an effective and efficient Student's Council, in addition open meetings are held every month, and student representatives meet regularly with the Rectorate. Departmental meetings are held every Tuesday where all students can attend in order to freely discuss issues. After each meeting, minutes of the meetings are posted online, normally on the same day. Students confirmed that the University was responsive to feedback and to making changes. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students] [Meeting 3 - 2nd & 3rd Cycle Students] [Meeting 6 - Support Staff]** The review team was of the view that academic and admin staff take feedback from students seriously and are responsive to student views. The review team did, however, learn that 'only excellent students' were sometimes selected to take part in focus groups, round tables and other projects in order to gather feedback. **[Meeting 2]** The review team would suggest that future focus groups or round tables involve a cross-section of students in order to gather feedback which is representative of the whole student body. **[Chapter I Standard III.7]**

5.5 The orientation and mentoring process for students starts prior to enrolment and continues after graduation. A range of support departments provide services as follows: The Office of Admissions and Student Care; The Office of Career and Practice; the Academic

Advising Centre; tutorial and academic counselling and orientation days. **[Evidence 130/131/132 - Order of the Rector/Regulation Article 38/Methodological session]** Students adjust to University life during the first cycle, and all students are permitted to change their studies in accordance with the University regulations. **[Evidence 133 statute article 26]** Students considered that the information provided at orientation was detailed and very accessible. Each faculty's orientation programme was explained by the faculty secretary and then followed up by the Dean of Faculty in respect of the study programme. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students] [Meeting 3 - 2nd & 3rd Cycle Students]** The Office of Careers and Internships offers careers advice, organises internships and the annual Job Fairs, and liaises with alumni **[SER, pg31]** the Service Unit of Limited Ability offers disability support, **[SER, pg32]** for example supporting a blind student **[Meeting 2, Undergraduate Students]** and the Psychological Clinic provides pastoral support. **[Evidence 66, Rector Order Nr.12; Meeting 6, Support Staff]** The team considers that the differentiated and comprehensive approach to student support, including initial programme enquiries, tutorials, careers development, disability support and pastoral support is a feature of **good practice. [Chapter I Standard III.3]**

5.6 The University offers a number of scholarships, including: Excellence, Leadership, Social Promotion and Talent. **[Evidence 134 - Data on distribution of scholarships]** Social scholarships are awarded for students with limited abilities, for students from the Roma and Egyptian communities, the children of policeman [fallen in the line of duty] and students from difficult academic backgrounds. **[Evidence 135 & 136 - allocation polices/scholarship poster]** The University has produced a 'Regulation for Limited Ability Students', which constitutes general standards related to the support for students with mental and physical disabilities. The regulation also maps to 'Article 57 of the Constitution of Albania' which stipulates that 'Everyone has the right to Education'. The definition includes those whose physical function, mental capabilities or psychological health are likely to last for more than six months from the mental or physical condition starting. **[Evidence 137 - data from student care office & AE-50]** For students to retain an 'Excellence Scholarship' students must retain a high GPA score throughout their studies at the University. **[Meeting 4 - Senior Staff]** The University allocates 13 per cent of its annual budget to scholarships, including support to Roma and Albanian Egyptian students. **[Meeting 4 - Senior Staff]** In meetings with the review team, students spoke highly of the scholarship programme and were very clear on what was on offer and how to apply prior to joining the University. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students] [Meeting 3 - 2nd & 3rd Cycle Students] [Meeting 5 - Teaching & Research Staff]** The review team considers that the high volume and range of scholarships available to students represented **good practice. [Chapter I Standard III.4]**

5.7 In respect to students with disabilities the University has clearly made enormous efforts to support students with both seen and unseen disabilities. Support is available for students with visual impairment, for example text translated into braille; in addition, the University employs a full-time psychologist for those in need of support. The University does, however, acknowledge that not all floors in all buildings are accessible to students with mobility difficulties. The University intends to solve this access issue by building a complete new campus. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students] [Meeting 3 - 2nd & 3rd Cycle Students] [Meeting 6 - Support Staff]** The review team acknowledges the action already taken by the University and encourages it to continue to develop its strategy of supporting 'at risk' students with seen and unseen disabilities. **[Chapter I Standard III.4]**

5.8 The University provides literature support through the provision of the library; materials are also produced by academic staff and from the press publishing house and bookstore. The library has 5,626 book titles and 155 periodicals, a proportion of which are in English. **[Evidence 138 - Library Inventory]** A range of online libraries are also available which are classified according to each faculty. The library is open between 9am and 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm on Saturdays. **[Evidence 139 - library]**

webpages]Students confirmed that they had access to both hard copy and online resources to support their studies. The library opening times were considered reasonable; the working space and environment were considered good. The library also provided open access internet enabled computers. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students] [Meeting 3 - 2nd& 3rd Cycle Students] [Meeting 5 - Teaching & Research Staff] [Chapter I Standard III.5]**

5.9 Tutorship for students is provided throughout the academic year. The University advises that each student retains the same lecturer throughout the cycle of studies. **[Evidence 140 - Regulation article 38]** Support for academic study is provided by teaching staff as well as library staff; support is also provided through academic writing and research methods sessions. Students who encounter difficulty are supported by a number of specialist support sessions **[Evidence 141 - Data on secretary office]** Teaching staff are available every Friday between 3-5pm in order to address students' academic issues. Class representatives are also able to raise issues on behalf of students; it was confirmed that issues are generally resolved very quickly. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students]** In addition, the Dean of Students is available to students at all times if they have a problem or particular issue. **[Meeting 4 - Senior Staff][Chapter I Standard III.6]**

5.10 Students are encouraged to take part in the representation of the University and its decision-making bodies; students are expected to express their own opinions. The Rector meets with the students regularly to discuss particular issues of interest. **[Evidence 142 Statute article 34] [Meeting 1 - Rector]** Students are represented on a number of committees within the University, including: Students Council; Academic Senate; Ethics Council; Commission of Internal Quality Assurance and Departmental open meetings. The University supports the Students Council, and does Finance projects including a student newspaper. **[Evidence 143/144/145/146 Statute, articles 19]** Students were fully involved in the development of the self-assessment report and provided useful and reflective feedback to the writing team. **[Meeting 0 - SER writing team]** Students confirmed that they completed an online anonymous survey every semester. For visually impaired students a spoken survey was available. In respect to outcomes from the surveys, students confirmed that the Head of Department takes every issue seriously and all students receive a summary of actions undertaken. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students] [Meeting 3 - 2nd& 3rd Cycle Students][Chapter I Standard III.7][ESG 1.3 Student Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment]**

5.11 Students are supported in their personal, social and academic achievement through the Dean of Students and by the Office of Admissions and Student Care. Students are able to take part in a range of student clubs, which range from artistic, and cultural to more academic activities. **[Evidence 147 - website - activities and clubs]** Students confirmed that they were active in the student clubs, which included football, basketball, a lawyers' group and IT Innovation club. In addition, students organised round table events, focus groups, guest speakers and mock debates. **[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students] [Meeting 3 - 2nd& 3rd Cycle Students] [Meeting 6 - Support Staff]**The review team commends the University in ensuring that students are represented within the University and that their voice is heard by representation on key committees, participation in student councils, by taking part in regular surveys and by involvement in clubs and societies. The review team considers these aspects represent **good practice. [Chapter I Standard III.8]**

5.12 The University's students are employed or undertake an internship in a range of important companies and institutions throughout Albania.**[Evidence 148 - Data from the Office of admissions and student care / alumni]** The University has a range of activities aimed at promoting the employment of students, including the Labour Market Board which aims to strengthen the professional character of all programmes; the Job Fair which takes place each year with the participation of 60 companies **[25% of students taking part have been employed by the companies participating]**and the University Business Forum which

aims to support cooperation between the University and the business community in order to create opportunities for students' employment after graduation. **[Evidence 149] [Meeting 1 Rector] [Meeting 5 - Teaching & Research Staff]** Students told the review team that they felt supported in preparation for seeking employment; every department has a 'careers Professor' who supports career ambitions, and further support is provided by the Careers Office.**[Meeting 2 - First Cycle Students] [Meeting 3 - 2nd& 3rd Cycle Students]** A Labour Market Board operates in each department and is composed of 10 external representatives. The Board provides a focus on the currency of study programmes in relation to employment. **[Meeting 4 - Senior Staff] [Meeting 6 - Support Staff]** The review team considers that the provision of employment support for students which includes the Labour Boards, the range of internships on offer, the annual Jobs Fair, the University Business Forum and careers guidance support to represent **good practice**. The University could, however, improve its graduate support by analysing the data of its graduates more thoroughly, this was identified by the review team as a **weakness**. The review team **recommends** that the collection of statistical data on the employment of graduates (which is at an early stage of development) evolves into a clear strategy and process for the collection of graduate employability data in order to underpin the development of the University's study programmes and Alumni Association. **[Chapter I Standard III.9] [ESG 1.7 Information Management]**

5.13 The responsibilities for Students and their Support are clearly set out in the Statute and regulations of the University. The review team identified good practice in the differentiated and comprehensive approach to student support, the range of employment support for students, the provision of a high volume of scholarships and the active representation of the student voice within the University. The review team identified the analysis of graduate employability data as a weakness. The review team **recommends** that the University develop a clear strategy and process for the collection of graduate employability data in order to underpin the development of the University's study programmes and Alumni Association.

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the differentiated and comprehensive approach to student support, including initial programme enquiries, tutorials, careers development, disability support and pastoral support (paragraph 5.5)
- the high volume and range of scholarships available to students (paragraph 5.6)
- the representation of the student voice in the institutional life of the University, which includes representation on key committees, participation in student councils, the use of student surveys and involvement in clubs and societies (paragraph 5.11)
- the provision of employment support for students including: the support for internships, the annual Jobs Fair, the University Business Forum and careers guidance support (paragraph 5.12).

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weakness:

- the analysis of graduate employability data (paragraph 5.12).

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendation:

- develop a clear strategy and process for the collection of graduate employability data in order to underpin the development of the University's study programmes and Alumni Association (paragraph 5.12).

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team did not affirm any actions already in progress in relation to this Evaluation Area.

Judgement

The Standards for Students and their Support are substantially met.