



Institutional Review of Higher Education Institutions in Albania

**Report of University College
Pavarësia Vlorë
June 2017**

Review Team:

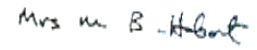
1 Professor Mark Hunt

Lead Reviewer



2 Ms Mandy Hobart

Reviewer



3 Dr Benita Starve

Reviewer



Date: 1 to 2 June 2017

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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 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 headings, the 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 actions 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 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 team supports the findings made in the report with evidence, and also by proofreading and summarising the full report for the summary below.

The context of this review

The University College Pavarësia Vlorë is a private University College based in Vlorë, Albania which was established in 2007 [Law no 9741, dated 21.05.2007 - On Higher Education in the Republic of Albania and as amended and licensed by the Decision of the Council of Ministers no 279, dated 12.03.2009 - On granting permission for Private School of Higher Education Pavaresia - By order no 238 - dated 30.04.2010] and given permission to open first level degree programmes as follows: Bachelor in Law; Bachelor in Economics; Bachelor in Political Science; Bachelor in Computer Engineering and Integrated Diploma of Second Level (IDSL) in Architecture. The University College was licensed to open second-cycle study programmes in 2011 [Order no 388 - dated 10.08.2011 - MOES - based on decision no 149 dated 18.02.2011 of the Accreditation Council] in Professional Master's [Specialist of trade association right/Specialist of bank system right/Specialist in Public Administration right/Finance and Bank/Informatics system application in public Administration/System and networks administration/Specialist in software system programmer] and Master of Science [The private right and international private right/Public right and public administrate/European study/Diplomacy and international politic/Computer Engineering/Economics Informatics]. [12]

The University College's mission which is described in the Strategic Plan 2015-20 aims at 'Forming researchers and young specialists in the fields of law, economics, political science, computer engineering, architecture, physical education and sports, electronics and electro-engineering, information technology, software engineering mechatronics, design business management, tourism and environmental tourism management, medical law, administration and international relations, notary and property law and public relations'. [12]

The mission is underpinned by a number of values and principles which include: developing the academic level according to research and teaching standards; development and protection of knowledge; provision of higher education in a range of subjects; promotion of innovation and critical thinking; providing a diverse intellectual environment and increasing cooperation and communication with researchers at an international level; teaching methods deployed to support and promote student creativity; and practical training in cooperation with public and private institutions. [12]

The University College has two faculties: Faculty of Applied Sciences and Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, four departments (Informatics Engineering, Architecture, Economics and Law and Political Sciences) and two research units (Human and Applied Sciences). [001] The University College offers first and second-cycle programmes delivered in Albanian, and awards four bachelor degrees which usually take three years to be completed. It also offers one Professional Master's, which last 1-1.5 years, and five Scientific Master's, which last for 2 years, and one Professional Master's (Integrated Study Programme) which lasts 5-6 years. In 2016-17 the number of students enrolled was as follows: 257 first-cycle students and 140 second cycle. The University College does not currently have any non-Albanian students enrolled. The University College currently (2016-2017) employs 42 full-time staff, 12 part-time academic staff and 10 administrative staff. [001]

The University College has developed three key challenges for itself over the next five years. First, to be a regional leader of higher education, together with improving the University College's national ranking, second, a desire to be an intensive research institution of higher education and third, to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical experience in teaching and learning. [12]

Summary report

A self-evaluation report was developed by a team at the University College which included senior staff, academic and support staff and a student representative. Drafts were circulated to a wider audience within the University College 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 two 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 ASCAL, 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 129 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 College. Evidence considered included the Statute of the University College, 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 Rector, senior managers, lecturers, students and administrative and support staff. Written 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 College's online and electronic information system for staff and students. Having reviewed all the evidence available, the team reached the conclusions set out below.

The University College meets the standards substantially for the Organisation and its Management. The responsibilities for the organisation and management of the University College are set out in the Statute and Regulations. **[1; 2; 3]** The review team identified good practice in the University College's strategy for collaboration with local partners, which has identified priorities to support the local economy of Vlorë and which has led to the opening of programmes to meet the local labour market. Weakness was identified in the implementation of the role of the Deans of Faculty with respect to the new Statute and the higher education Regulations. The review team recommends that the role of the Deans and that of the Faculties are implemented in line with the approved Regulations and Statute of the University College. The review team affirmed that the University College should implement in full the approved Statute and Regulations, for example the election of senior post-holders.

The University College meets the standards substantially for Resourcing. Resources in place are largely appropriate to meeting the study requirements of students, including a computer access and online communication systems. The institution has recently introduced a Board of Administration to comply with statutory financial management requirements and the team affirms actions in place to support greater transparency in the management of budgets. The building in which the University College is currently located does not meet all statutory requirements for fire exits and lighting which has been identified as a weakness. The team recommends that fire exits and lighting requirements should be addressed in compliance with statutory requirements.

The University College meets the standards substantially for the Curriculum. The University's mission is focused on a curriculum which supports regional and national labour market priorities. [12] The review team identified good practice in the well-established system of internships and cooperation with the regional employment market of Vlorë which clearly supports student employment possibilities after graduation. Weakness was identified due to a number of second-cycle study programmes not being licensed by the Ministry of Education and Sport, although students had been enrolled onto the programmes. The review team recommends as a matter of urgency, that the University College and the Ministry of Education & Sport should meet in order to resolve the outstanding licensing issue to enable the enrolled students to graduate. The review team affirms the embedding of the University College's approach to partnership with overseas institutions, for example Erasmus+, and the establishment of foreign language training in English and Italian.

The University College meets the standards partly for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research. The responsibilities for the management of Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are set out in the Strategic Development Plan 2015-20. The review team did not identify any feature of good practice. Weaknesses were identified as follows: the team was unable to see a clear policy at University College level that strategically promoted the continuous improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. Additionally, the University College's approach to research is at an early stage of development and currently lacks an institutional management approach to research and the structures for the development of priorities for enhancing its local and national research profile. The review team recommends that the University College develop and implement at institution level a policy for the improvement of staff teaching and learning quality and the University College develops a strategic approach for the management, implementation and enhancement of research priorities at institutional level. The review team affirmed that the University College enlarge the scope of the library infrastructure to support all study programmes and to support teaching, learning and assessment.

The University College meets the standards fully for Students and their Support. Students have access to a good range of programme information which is published on the University College website. Students' engagement with management is through the elected representatives to the Student Council who represent the student voice on key committees including the Academic Senate. The activities organised by the Student Council receive financial support from the University College, and students are also encouraged to participate in external projects. Clear information is provided on internship opportunities through the Office for Careers, Student Support and Alumni, who also maintain contact with graduates and support students to find employment. Library resources on campus are supplemented by access to nearby public and other institution libraries. The review team did not identify any good practice, weaknesses, recommendations or affirmations.

Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the University College's strategy for the collaboration with local partners which has identified priorities to support the local economy of Vlorë and which has led to the opening of programmes to meet the local labour market (paragraph 1.14; **Chapter III Standard III.3**)
- the well-established system of internships and cooperation with the regional employment market of Vlorë which clearly supports student employment possibilities after graduation (paragraph 3.12; **Chapter I Standard I.7; Chapter I Standard I.11; Chapter I Standard I.12**).

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- at present the University College is unable to demonstrate that the role of the Deans and the function of the faculties is embedded in order to ensure collegial decision making in the use of human and material resources (paragraph 1.10; **Chapter III Standard II.1; Chapter III Standard I.2; Chapter III Standard II**)
- the configuration of the current building as it does not meet all regulatory requirements for lighting and emergency exits (paragraph 2.11; **Chapter III Standard VII.1**)
- a number of second-cycle study programmes that are not currently licensed by the Ministry of Education and Sport, although students had been enrolled onto the programmes (paragraph 3.2; **Chapter I Standard I.1**)
- the review team was unable to see a clear policy at University College level that strategically promoted the continuous improvement of teaching, learning and assessment (paragraph 4.5; **Chapter II Standard I.3; Chapter II Standard I.4**)
- the University College's approach to research is at an early stage of development and currently lacks an institutional approach to research and the structures for the development of priorities and enhancing the local and national research profile (paragraph 4.11; **Chapter II Standards I.1-8**).

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendations:

- ensure by the start of the 2017-18 academic year that the role of the Deans and that of the Faculties are implemented in line with the approved Regulations and statute of the University College (paragraph 1.10; **Chapter III Standard II.1; Chapter III Standard I.2; Chapter III Standard II.1**)
- University College to address the lighting and emergency exit requirements to fully comply with Regulations for the start of the 2017-18 academic year (paragraph 2.11; **Chapter III Standard VII.1**)
- as a matter of urgency, the University College and the Ministry of Education & Sport need to meet in order to resolve the outstanding licensing issue so that the enrolled students can graduate (paragraph 3.2; **Chapter I Standard I.1**)

- during 2017-18 develop and implement at University College level a policy for the improvement of staff teaching and learning quality (paragraph 4.5; **Chapter II Standard I.3; Chapter II Standard I.4**)
- during 2017-18 the University College develops a strategic approach for the management, implementation and enhancement of research priorities at institutional level (paragraph 4.11; **Chapter II Standard I.1-8**).

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following actions already in progress:

- University College to implement in full the approved Statute and Regulations, for example the election of senior post-holders (paragraphs 1.1, 1.5; **Chapter III Standard I.1; Chapter III Standard I.2**)
- the establishment of the Board of Administration will allow the University College to support the development and transparency of financial management (paragraph 2.6; **Chapter III Standard VII.1; Chapter III Standard VII.2; Chapter III Standard VI.1**)
- the embedding of the University College's approach to partnership with overseas institutions, for example Erasmus+, and the establishment of foreign language training in English and Italian (paragraphs 3.8 and 3.16; **Chapter I Standard I.4; Chapter I Standard I.10**)
- enlarge the scope of the library infrastructure to support all study programmes and to support teaching, learning and assessment (paragraph 4.1; **Chapter I Standard II.1; Chapter I Standard II.3**).

Summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area

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

Summary Judgement

The review team recommends to the Accreditation Council that at University College Pavarësia Vlorë the State Quality Standards are **substantially met**.

Detailed report

Evaluation Area 1: The Organisation and its Management

1.1 The University College Pavarësia Vlorë was established in 2009 as a private School of Higher Education and licensed to offer undergraduate degree programmes in Law, Economics, Political Science, Information Engineering and an Integrated Diploma in Architecture. **[002 p.4; M1]** Postgraduate provision at Professional Master's and Master of Science level were licensed in 2011. Until December 2016 the institution had been working according to the previous Statute. **[1 Note 1]** A new Statute was approved in December 2016 **[2 Note 2 & New Law 80/2015]** fully consistent with the mission and goals of the University College and applied to all departments. **[002 p.6]** The internal Regulations **[3 Note 3]** were approved in 2012 and regulate the educational, scientific and administrative activities of the institution. The Regulations outline the structures, management bodies and authorities in terms of the management of the institution. **[002 p.7]** The University College is still in the process of implementing the approved Statute and Regulations, for example the election and appointment of senior post-holders. The review team therefore **affirms** that the University College implement in full the approved Statute and Regulations, for example the election of senior post-holders (see also paragraph 1.5) **[001; 38; 130] [ESG 1.8 Public Information; Chapter III Standard I.1]**

1.2 The University College has a clear structure for its organisation and management as set out in its statutes. **[1; 2]** The Academic Senate is the senior decision-making body which decides on strategic planning in the fields of education, research and administration. **[M2]** The Academic Senate is chaired by the Rector and membership includes Faculty Deans, elected academic staff representatives and an elected student representative. **[1; 13]** The Rectorate, a senior management committee, is chaired by the Rector and members include the Vice-Rector, Deans of Faculty and the Administrator of the College. Its responsibilities include implementation of decisions made by Academic Senate, preparing the development plan, responsibility for budgetary policy, recommendations for new projects, approval of new programmes of study, research strategy and any proposed structural changes. Proposals are considered by the Senate, while the Rector approves procedures, deadlines and working groups. **[4 Note 4; 002 p.7]** Faculties approve proposals based upon the plans of departments in respect to the number of study programmes, study cycles and the number of students. **[M5]** However, at the time of the review, faculties were not operating and were planned to be introduced from September 2017 (see paragraph 1.10). Details of the University's provision, research and publications are made available to all stakeholders through the University website. **[M0; 131]**

1.3 The Board of Administration **[2 Article 29; 78]** is the decision-making body that ensures the financial sustainability of the University College and ensures oversight of the administration, financial, economic and property matters. **[002 p.7; M3; M5; M6]** The Ethics Council **[2 Article 23; M0]** approved by the Academic Senate has been operating since 2012. It considers ethical issues of academic life, as well as making and submitting proposals to the Rector. Issues considered include conflicts between academic staff, student complaints and unethical behaviour during the electoral process. **[002 p.8; 5 - Note 5]** The College Deaneries **[2 Article 19]** have replaced Faculty Councils as the Executive body that considers proposals from departments in terms of new programmes, the distribution of human resources and facilities, proposals for the draft budget and proposing recommendations for projects and scientific research.

1.4 The University College has developed a range of mechanisms to support academic staff in the participation of national and international activities, including: dissemination of

research opportunities on the website; information days for the promotion of projects; internal training events; an internal scientific journal published twice per year enabling staff to publish their research; **[7 Note 7]** and the organisation of scientific conferences at home and abroad for staff to present their research. **[8 Note 8; 002 p.8; 88]**

1.5 The Rector for academic matters is the highest legal authority of the institution. The review team learnt during the review that the election of senior post-holders does not yet take place, as indicated in the self-assessment report, for the post of Rector, Deans and the Heads of Department due to current contractual arrangements. However, the Statute approved in 2016 does imply that, in future, senior post-holders will be elected; the institution confirmed that elections would take place in the future as current contracts came up for renewal. This supports the affirmation indicated a paragraph 1.1. **[2 Article 36, 40, and 44; 002 p.9] [Chapter III Standard I.2]**

1.6 The Academic Senate and all committees meet on average twice per month, the quoracy is based upon one quarter of the total membership. **[2 Article 13]** Decisions and proposals from meetings are sent to the relevant structures to be implemented. Debate and discussions with staff is provided through departmental meetings, led by the respective Head. The institution uses the data contained within the annual report **[9 Note 9]** to monitor the implementation of decisions. **[002 p.9]** Agendas and papers for all meetings are sent to members in advance (normally 7 days) so that papers can be reviewed by members who can contribute to meetings through constructive debate and decision making. **[002 p.9] [Chapter III Standard I.3]**

1.7 The Internal Quality Unit has oversight of compliance with legislation, its role is independent and ensures the implementation of legislation and policies. **[M0; M3; M6]** IUQA's systematic and disciplined approach aims to evaluate and improve the management of internal control processes. **[002 p.9; 10; 3; 73; 131]** Undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are structured to reflect the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) model, while a range of provision is taught in English to enhance employability. **[001; 9; 3]** The three-year study programmes at the University College are based upon the Bologna Declaration and a system of ECTS credits is applied. **[M2]** Diplomas are in Albanian, but the supplement is in English and Albanian in order that the qualification can be understood outside Albania for education and employment reasons. **[11 Note 11; 002 p.10] [Chapter III Standard I.4]**

1.8 The Strategic Development Plan 2015-20 is in place and **[12 Note 12]** approved by the Academic Senate. **[M3]** The plan is designed in accordance with the mission and achieving the strategic goals of the institution. The plan identifies the objectives, the actions to achieve them, together with the performance indicators to measure them. Strategic objectives focus on high quality learning and teaching, quality management, research and development, community and partner relations, collaborations and sustainable communities. **[M1]** The outcomes of success are published in the Annual Report and Scientific Research Activities at the end of each academic year. The reports are discussed throughout the institution. **[002 p.10; 9] [Chapter III Standard I.5]**

1.9 The Annual Report of Educational, Research and Financial activities **[9 Note 9]** is submitted for approval to the Academic Senate and the Board of Administration by December of each year. **[2 Article 9]** The Rector holds an open meeting representing all staff of the University College to present and discuss the report. At the end of the meeting the Annual Report is approved by collegial decision-making and a copy is sent to the Ministry of Education and Sport. **[002 p.10] [Chapter III Standard I.6; ESG 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance]**

1.10 The University College is organised in two parallel structures: **[13 Note 13]** first, administration governed by the Board of Administration, the second consisting of two faculties managed by the Academic Senate. The institution enjoys autonomy and academic freedom in teaching, research, organisational and financial matters as indicated in the Statute. The institution has ability to raise funds, make independent agreements with institutions and business organisations to support students. **[002 p.11]** The structure of University College consists of two faculties: Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences (FESS) and the Faculty of Applied Science (FAS), and six basic units (departments/centres): Department of Economics; Department of Law & Political Science; Department of Computer Engineering; Department of Architecture; Social Sciences Research Centre; and Applied Sciences Research Centre. Each faculty has two academic departments and one research centre. The University College offers study programmes in two cycles, the first cycle was opened in 2009, both faculties offer second-cycle programmes in Professional Master's and Master of Science. **[002 p.11]** However, through the review visit the team learnt that the role of the Deans of Faculty was at an early stage of implementation in respect to the new Statute and the higher education Regulations. At present the University College is unable to demonstrate that the role of the Deans and the function of the faculties is embedded in order to ensure collegial decision-making in the use of human and material resources; the review team considered this a **weakness**. The review team **recommends** that by the start of the 2017-18 academic year, the role of the Deans and that of the Faculties are implemented in line with the approved Regulations and Statute of the University College. **[Chapter III Standard II.1; Chapter III Standard I.2]**

1.11 In terms of the staffing structure **[14 Note 14]** all departments have at least three people with scientific degrees and titles and at least seven members. However, the Department of Informatics was closed down as it did not meet the requirements. **[002 SER p.11/12]**

1.12 Under current statute and regulation all permanent committees and boards **[Board of Administration/Academic Senate/Ethics Council/Faculty & Departmental Boards]** operate on the basis that they hold discussions and make decisions through the participation of staff. All boards meet periodically and discuss and debate according to their written responsibilities. **[002 p.12] [71; M5; 131] [Chapter III Standard II.3]**

1.13 The University College is informed about regional economic development through research conferences developed by the departments. **[M4]** The institution has an Office for Careers, Student Tutoring and Alumni to monitor and track the employment of its graduates. **[M2; M6]** To date monitoring has been limited to creating a database of graduates with whom to communicate. To develop and adapt programmes of study to meet market need the institution conducts labour market research in its study fields. **[117; M1]** This research is undertaken at departmental level, for example market research was conducted into a potential new study field: Physical Education and Sports at bachelor level in the field of physical education. **[M3; 002 p.13]** Although this provided an example for the review team, it would appear that programme market research is somewhat ad hoc and not adopted universally across the University College. **[002 p.13]** In order to capture graduate data, the website now has an online employability questionnaire for students to complete. **[15/98 Questionnaire for Alumni - Note 15; www.unipavaresia.edu.al] [ESG 1.8 Public Information] [Chapter III Standard III.1]**

1.14 The University College actively seeks to engage in partnership activities including supporting staff to attend national and international conferences, **[M1; 89]** and engaging on international projects. Staff are actively encouraged to publish their research in journals including the 'Pavarësia Scientific' Journal. **[M5]** Staff are also offered opportunities to undertake visits and to engage in training abroad. **[18; 19; 17; 7]** The institution's collaborative and partnership activity is clearly articulated in the Strategic Development Plan.

[12] The University College cooperates with various institutions regarding the engagement of students in terms of teaching practice and training. It aims to create stable partnership relationships, example agreements include: Municipality of Vlorë; the Port Authority of Vlorë; Office for Consumer Protection of Vlorë; Chamber of Commerce Vlorë; and FIB Bank National Centre EPICT. [16; 002 p.13] The University has several cooperation agreements with other institutions of higher education in and outside Albania, [17] the main purpose being to exchange academic staff and students, for example Sapienza University and the European University of Tiranë. [103 Note 18; 002 p.13; M5] The University College's strategy for the collaboration with local partners, which has identified priorities to support the local economy of Vlorë and which has led to the opening of programmes to meet the local labour market is considered **good practice**. [50; 65; 130; M4] [**Chapter III Standard III.2; Chapter III Standard III.3; Chapter III Standard III.4**]

1.15 In order to support the mobility of staff and students the University College participated in 'Enchase'. [19 **Enhancing Albanian System of Quality Assurance in HE: Application of the Process and Outcome-Based Methodology - 2013-2016**] The project enabled the annual mobility of staff and students at a summer school at the University of Koblenz. [002 p.14; M5] Staff are informed about upcoming calls for applications for projects via briefings, displayed posters and the official website (www.unipavaresia.edu.al). The University College has an active programme of engaging guest lecturers, renowned personalities and former senior officials from the state administration. Faculties regularly invite foreign lecturers for the development of institutional teaching. [002 p.14] [**Chapter III Standard III.4**]

1.16 The responsibilities for the organisation and management of the University College are set out in the Statute and Regulations. [1; 2; 3] The review team identified good practice in the University College's strategy for collaboration with local partners which has identified priorities to support the local economy of Vlorë and which has led to the opening of programmes to meet the local labour market. Weakness was identified in the implementation of the role of the Deans of Faculty with respect to the new Statute and the higher education Regulations. The review team recommends that the role of the Deans and that of the Faculties are implemented in line with the approved Regulations and Statute of the University College. The review team affirmed that the University College should implement in full the approved Statute and Regulations, for example the election of senior post-holders.

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- the University College's strategy for the collaboration with local partners which has identified priorities to support the local economy of Vlorë and which has led to the opening of programmes to meet the local labour market (paragraph 1.14; **Chapter III Standard III.3**).

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weakness:

- the role of the Deans of Faculty is at an early stage of implementation in respect to the new Statute and the higher education Regulations. At present the University College is unable to demonstrate that the role of the Deans and the function of the faculties is embedded in order to ensure collegial decision making in the use of human and material resources (paragraph 1.10; **Chapter III Standard II.1; Chapter III Standard I.2; Chapter III Standard II.1**).

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendation:

- ensure by the start of the 2017-18 academic year that the role of the Deans and that of the Faculties are implemented in line with the approved Regulations and Statute of the University College (paragraph 1.10; **Chapter III Standard II.1; Chapter III Standard I.2; Chapter III Standard II.1**).

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following action already in progress:

- University College to implement in full the approved Statute and Regulations, for example the election of senior post-holders (paragraphs 1.1 and 1.5; **Chapter III Standard I.1; Chapter III Standard I.2**).

Judgement

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

Evaluation Area 2: Resourcing

2.1 The University College has clear mechanisms for the recruitment of staff which are managed in line with the Statute, Regulations and the Albanian Law on Higher Education. **[1; 3; M3]** Job descriptions are drafted by the Heads of Departments and approved by the Rector prior to being advertised on the website and through local media twice per year. **[20; 3; 76; M5]** The process of recruitment and handling of applications is managed by the Human Resources, Public Relations and Services Office. **[3; 20; M6]** Applicants complete a form available on the website which includes details of their previous experience and qualifications. **[21; 3]** Applications are scored against selection criteria agreed with departments, which represents 60 per cent of the selection process. Short-listed candidates for academic positions are invited for interview by the Dean and an ad hoc selection committee. **[20; 3; M6; M5]** All information from the applicant's file is made available to the selection committee including verification of information provided and candidate scores against criteria. Information and recommendations for appointment are submitted to the Rector for approval. **[3; 20]** Employment contracts are drafted by the Human Resources Office based on duties and responsibilities and agreed salary. **[22]** All staff contracts include the provision of health insurance in compliance with the Law no. 10 383. **[ESG 1.5 Teaching Staff; Chapter III Standard IV.1]**

2.2 The employment of part-time staff and guest lecturers is managed in accordance with legal regulations, and with appropriate criteria which reflect the needs of the departments. The University College seeks to recruit staff who, where possible, have studied abroad, hold higher degrees and have experience working as practitioners in their field. **[127; M3; M5]** For example, the law department has recruited two magistrates as part-time lecturers, and invites staff from the local Justice Department as guest speakers. **[24; M5; M2; M4]** In the academic year 2016-17, 12 part-time staff were recruited, seven of whom are external specialists, and five of whom are guest lecturers. The strategy for linking theoretical knowledge to practical applications serves to ensure students have access to current specialist practice-based teaching. **[23; 14]** Recruitment is managed by the Human Resources Office in accordance with the Law on Higher Education and the Labour Code. **[3]** Contracts are signed by the Rector, and new academic staff have their duties and responsibilities mentored by nominated department staff. The terms and conditions of employment are set out in contracts. **[1; 3; 22; M5]** **[Chapter III Standard II.2; Chapter III Standard IV.1]**

2.3 The University has a clear staffing structure to meet both administrative and academic requirements. **[13; 14]** Academic departments are supported by administrative functions including human resources, finance, secretarial, library and archiving, marketing and IT staff. Current staffing includes 42 full-time academic staff with relevant degrees, and 10 staff working in administrative and support roles linked to teaching and research activities. **[14; 001;]** Each academic department is made up of seven members of staff, of whom at least three hold the required qualifications and academic titles in accordance with the statutory requirements of Article 25 of Albanian Law on Higher Education. **[13; 127]** The research centres located in each faculty, are focused on subject-related research, and staff work with external projects and partnership activities which informs curriculum delivery. Academic staff are also expected to use their research to publish at least two papers per year. **[18; 25; 11; 16]** **[Chapter III Standard IV.2]**

2.4 The Quality Unit is responsible for maintaining records of the evaluation of the quality of teaching and overall staff performance. **[3; 10]** Procedures and requirements for the evaluation of staff performance and achievement are set out in regulations, and summary tables of activities are compiled and included in the annual report which is

reviewed and approved by the Academic Senate. This includes numbers of students achieving their qualifications, enrolments, project engagement and analysis of student satisfaction surveys. [25; 9; 1; 54] The Quality Unit has also taken part in a European quality project and has worked with students to gain additional feedback on their experiences, and to provide a report to senior managers which informs identification of areas for improvement. [74; M6; 80] The feedback from student surveys indicates high levels of overall satisfaction with the teaching they receive and the overall quality of resources. [54; 114; M2]

2.5 Work with external institutions is a priority and staff are encouraged to engage in projects with partner institutions and employers, as well as in seminars and conferences to promote research and best academic practice. [25; 26] Staff and students also engage in local and national projects including those on domestic violence and local business challenges. [19; M5] [*Chapter III Standard IV.2; Chapter III Standard IV.4*]

2.6 The management of financial resources and budgets is now organised in compliance with the new Law on Higher Education, which has led to a new statute being approved and changes to the University College's procedures and budget management responsibilities. [1; 27; M3] The previous Management Board has been replaced by the Board of Administration which met for the first time in May 2017. The Board of Administration represents the highest decision-making administrative authority, and is chaired by the Administrator. [78; 5; M1] Under the new Statute and regulatory requirements, the Administrator is responsible for compiling the budget based on information from departments, and managing allocation of resources following budget approval. Department Heads are responsible for the management of their allocated budgets. The budget is drafted to reflect the programme of activities, research functions and development priorities, reviewed by the Rector and approved by the Senate. [3; 27; 28; 1; 78; M3] The Administrator has oversight and responsibility for the implementation of agreed budgets and is supported by the finance office; however, the new systems have not been in place long enough for meaningful evaluation. [13; 78; 1; M3] The team **affirms** that the planned establishment of the Board of Administration will allow the University College to support the development and transparency of financial management. End-of-year accounts are internally audited, as in the case of public higher education institutions, and forwarded to the Ministry of Education and Sport. [27; 30; 113] [*Chapter III Standard VII.1; Chapter III Standard VII.2; Chapter III Standard VI.1*]

2.7 Information management mechanisms comply with statutory data protection requirements and data storage. [31; 81] The IT Office is responsible for managing the electronic communications systems of the University College including email platforms which provide both staff and students with accounts, and the website infrastructure. [129; M2; M5] All staff and students have access to an intranet facility with portal links through the website, and staff use emails and the virtual learning environment to provide teaching-related information as well as answers to student questions. Students are provided with programme handbooks, study materials and assessment-related guidance via email and can access online resource through links provided by staff. [42; 43; M2; M5; 129] Communications related to social and cultural activities are also made available online, as well as through posters and website announcements to support social integration. [45; 57; M2] Students and staff confirm that communications work effectively and that their views are sought and reflected through the deliberative meetings structure. [131; 130] [*Chapter III Standard VII.1; ESG 1.6 Learning Resources and Student Support*]

2.8 Data storage is both in electronic and hardcopy and arrangements are in place to archive materials. [37; ;81] The Quality Unit and the Office of Students and Alumni are responsible for the collection and processing of statistics on current students, and gathering destination and progression information on graduates and alumni, which are reported to the Ministry annually. [97; 98; 102] Student enrolment and the management of student data lies

with the Academic Secretary's Office, and student grades are made available to individual students online. [129; M2; 128; 18] Students are provided with a University College identification and password as part of online registration, and access to resources and staff correspondence. Student results are processed each semester and hardcopy and electronic course records updated by faculty secretaries who pass information back to the Academic Secretary responsible for compiling institution statistical reports. [1; 3; M2; 129] [**Chapter III Standard V.2; ESG 1.7 Information Management**]

2.9 Staff have access to computers and programmes to support teaching and administrative functions. To support teaching and learning the University has two computer labs with seating for 40 students and a more specialist architecture lab which can accommodate 40 students. [129 [9; 32; Site visit] [**Chapter III Standard VII.2**]

2.10 The University College is located in a modern building in the centre of Vlorë, which has been adapted to provide teaching areas and office space. Facilities are located over two floors, with the second floor providing the main teaching space, library, computer facilities, studios and offices, and the first-floor social areas. [site visit; 9; 36] The building provides some 2,000 square metres of space, with security guards in place to ensure authorised access. [32] Teaching accommodation includes five teaching rooms and a lecture theatre, nine seminar rooms and three teaching laboratories, which can accommodate a total of 710 students at any one time, and meets the statutory surface and height requirements. [32; site visit] Offices are provided for academic and support staff. Classrooms are equipped with wireless internet, a computer and projector. The College has plans for the development of a new campus to meet an expansion in its provision, including sports-based curriculum. [12; M1; M3] [**Chapter III Standard VII.5**]

2.11 The building is managed in accordance with basic regulatory requirements. Facilities meet hygiene requirements, [35] and teaching rooms have appropriate acoustics as do conference rooms. [130; 131] Exterior walls have thermal insulation and windows are double-glazed. However, as the building was designed for commercial and residential purposes, natural light in teaching rooms does not always come from the left, and in some teaching areas, particularly the lecture theatre, the students' view is restricted by pillars, and lighting levels are low. [site visit; 35; 36] While the University College has a technical fire report, the team could not identify fire exits, and only noted exits via external walk-ways to adjacent buildings, in some cases without railings or balcony walls. Student levels of satisfaction were also lower in respect of fire exits and access by lifts and stairs than with any other aspect of facilities. [131] The University College also lacks lift access to teaching areas for any staff or students with mobility problems. [36; site visit] The team noted **weakness** in the configuration of the current building as it does not meet all regulatory requirements for lighting and emergency exits. The team **recommends** that the University College address the lighting and emergency exit requirements to fully comply with regulations. [**Chapter III Standard VII.1**]

2.12 Priorities for improvement to facilities and review of provision are informed by staff and student surveys. [34] Market research is undertaken to identify potential areas for curriculum development including through meetings with employers, professional bodies and alumni, and, as in the case of sports-related provision, inform the Strategic Development Plan. [117; 12; 15; 102; M4; 59] [**Chapter III Standard VII.5; Chapter III Standard VII.6**]

2.13 Arrangements are in place for the maintenance of academic and heritage materials. Copies of syllabus materials, dissertations, scientific publications and other records of work linked to the University are stored in the library. Staff are encouraged to publish papers in the University's scientific journal free of charge. [33; 37; 80; 104] Work is digitally recorded where possible and the library has 2,900 titles which it also shares with other libraries nationally and internationally. To enhance its book stock, the library cooperates with the

National Library Vlore Branch and with the University of Vlore. The library offers 10 computers for student use and 20 study seats. [**Chapter III Standard VII.4**]

2.14 Resources in place are largely appropriate to meeting the study requirements of students, including a computer access and online communication systems. The University College has recently introduced a Board of Administration to comply with statutory financial management requirements and the team affirms actions in place to support greater transparency in the management of budgets. The building in which the University College is currently located does not meet all statutory requirements for fire exits and lighting which has been identified as a weakness. The team recommends that fire exits and lighting requirements should be addressed in compliance with statutory requirements.

Findings

Good practice

The review team did not identify any features of good practice.

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weakness:

- the configuration of the current building as it does not meet all regulatory requirements for lighting and emergency exits (paragraph 2.11; **Chapter III Standard VII.1**).

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendation:

- University College to address the lighting and emergency exit requirements to fully comply with regulations for the start of the 2017-18 academic year (paragraph 2.11; **Chapter III Standard VII.1**).

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following action already in progress:

- the establishment of the Board of Administration will allow the University College to support the development and transparency of financial management (paragraph 2.6; **Chapter III Standard VII.1; Chapter III Standard VII.2; Chapter III Standard VI.1**).

Judgement

The Standards for the Resourcing are substantially met.

Evaluation Area 3: The Curriculum

3.1 University College 'Pavarësia' offers four first-cycle study programmes, one integrated programme in architecture, six Master of Science and six Professional Master's programmes. [001; 038] Programmes operate in accordance with the Bologna Process: first-cycle studies are conducted with 180 European credits (ECTS) over a three-year period; the integrated programme in Architecture has 300 ECTS; Master's of science 120 ECTS, while Professional Master's 60-90 ECTS. [3 Art.34] [Chapter I Standard I.1; Chapter I Standard I.10]

3.2 The review team identified that the following second-cycle study programmes had not been licensed by the Ministry of Education and Sport, although students had been enrolled onto the programmes: Professional Master (PM) 'Finance and Accounting', PM 'Finance and Banking', PM 'Public Finance and Public Administration', PM 'Specialist of Law for Public Administration', PM 'Specialist of Law for Banking System', PM 'Specialist of Law for trade companies' and Master of Science Informatics Engineering'. [M1;9] Even though the review team learnt that the University College had done all it could to resolve the matter with the Ministry of Education & Sport, it considers it a **weakness**. The review team **recommends** that as a matter of urgency, the University College and the Ministry of Education & Sport need to meet in order to resolve the outstanding licensing issue for these programmes so that the enrolled students can graduate. [Chapter I Standard I.1]

3.3 The programmes are designed in line with the institutional priority domains of study and research: economics, law, political sciences, information engineering and architecture. [1 Art.4] There is an increasing awareness of business community needs and the role of market research policies in curricula review. [M4] The restructuring of the first-cycle programme in Architecture, in supporting local historical monument restoration, is an example of working with local employers. [M1; M4; 48] The University College is paying attention to the design of study programmes that define clear objectives and employment opportunities. [74] Its Strategic Development Plan foresees new qualification profiles in line with market requirements, including sport profiles, mechatronics, environmental tourism management and profiled architecture. A new profile of student qualifications and market-focused competences is foreseen in the Strategic Development Plan. [12 Chapter 3.2] The majority of the academic staff that answered the APAAL questionnaire responded that the University College provision is compatible to the job market needs and that the relationship with market stakeholders is highly appreciated. [130] [Chapter I Standard I.3]

3.4 Information about awards is made available via the website (<http://www.unipavaresia.edu.al/al/diplomat>), in addition the University College produces a range of promotional leaflets and brochures. [93] The institution organises promotional campaigns for its provisions with pre-university education institutions to increase the number of student enrolments. [131; M3; 83; 96] The description of objectives, curriculum plan, admission criteria and course content is available for students to access at the University College website. Objectives of the study programmes are identified in the course syllabus and include learning objectives. [M2; <http://www.unipavaresia.edu.al/al/diplomat/20-diplomat>; 42; 48; 49] [Chapter I Standard I.1; Chapter I Standard I.6]

3.5 The institution implements admission criteria for the first-cycle study programmes which are set by the departments and approved by the Academic Senate. Additional admission criteria are set for the integrated diploma in the field of justice. [119] Admissions criteria for the second cycle are also agreed for each respective award. [M5] The admission process is carried out in line with the rules and procedures approved by the Ministry of

Education & Sport. [84; 39; 92'; <http://www.unipavaresia.edu.al/al/aplikimi-ne-upv?id=25;61>] [**Chapter I Standard I.1; Chapter I Standard I.6**]

3.6 Assessment policies at the University College are defined in a set of rules and regulations. [3 Art.44-48] The assessment of knowledge is carried out in either written or oral form in a system of 0-100 points. These are converted in grades 4-10, in the definition Fail-Excellent and in letters F-A. Continuous evaluation includes attendance in lectures, discussions in seminars, essays, practice assignments and mid-term exams. [3 Art. 44-48] The authorities issue guidelines of the exam process and monitor its procedures. [M3; 53; 3; 123] Transparency of the exams and assessments is highly appreciated by 82.86 per cent of the interviewed students. [131] [**Chapter I Standard I.1**]

3.7 The University College does not provide evidence of any short-term specialisation, part-time studies or other forms of lifelong learning, even though the legal framework for these has been set up with the new statute provision. [2 Article 81] The University College does have plans to organise a Summer School during the academic year 2016-17 with the scope of offering continuous training to improve individual qualifications and professional skills. It is also planning a meeting with its alumni, to share experiences gained by graduates in employment. [102] The University College offers afternoon classes for students of the second-cycle programmes who work or are non-resident in the Vlora region. Experiences gained are also evaluated by the Inner Quality Assurance Unit, which periodically assesses the effectiveness of teaching, scientific research and other institutional activities by means of self-evaluation report writing and surveys. [2 Chapter XI; 10; 73] The self-evaluation report states that this Unit should enhance mechanisms of quality assessment and workload efficiency inside and outside the auditorium. [002 p.28] [**Chapter I Standard I.2**]

3.8 Internationalisation issues are mainly related to Erasmus+ and curriculum capacity building through Tempus and foreign language learning (see also paragraph 3.16). The review team **affirms** the embedding of the University College's approach to partnership with overseas institutions, for example Erasmus+, and the establishment of foreign language training in English and Italian. [80; 26] [**Chapter I Standard I.4**]

3.9 The workload of the academic staff is determined according to the legislation in force [Directive Nr.20. dt.09.05.2008] and is approved by the Academic Senate. The annual teaching workload varies according to the categories of qualification and administrative duties. [2 Art 57] The role of part-time academic staff is defined in accordance with institutional needs. Teaching activities include lectures, seminars, exercises, laboratories and professional practice. Full-time academic staff can exceed the annual rate of teaching after having fulfilled all obligations of the annual workload. The teaching workload for staff members is agreed by the lecturer and Head of Department and signed off at the beginning of the academic year through an Academic Advancement Plan. [40] Commitment of the University College structures requires formal documentary procedure to be set up which reflect harmonisation between teaching, research work and other administrative duties performed by the academic staff. [**Chapter I Standard I.5**]

3.10 First and second-cycle study programmes are harmonised and based upon guidelines from the Ministry of Education & Sport. [45; 82] First-cycle programmes provide a more professional orientated curriculum and include basic information about scientific principles of research, which enables the formation of research understanding and prepares students for the second-cycle study programmes. They include professional practice and diploma thesis writing courses. The normal duration of study programmes for the first cycle is three academic years. [3 Art. 38] The disciplines of the study programmes are categorised in five groups: courses of an authentic professional character, general education disciplines, general training disciplines, specific training disciplines and integrated training disciplines. They also include selective courses, which fit the profile and preferences of the

students. **[3 Art. 37-38; 82]** To support learning, a range of methods are used including: learning expeditions, conferences, workshops, presentations, meeting with prominent figures and mock trials [For reference, Paragraph 3.18] **[Chapter I Standard I.7; Chapter I Standard I.11; Chapter I Standard I.12]**

3.11 Study programmes are organised to enable application in practice of required skills through course projects, essays, presentations and case studies. Essay-writing constitutes 10 per cent of the overall assessment. Practical activities take place mainly in programmes related to architecture, law and business. **[M5; 2 Art.45; 42]** Graduation exams rules and diploma thesis writing procedures are clearly documented. **[51; 82]** The department evaluates the topic choice, the research methodology and the analysis of the outcomes for each graduation paper, in order to assess its contribution to the local priority developments. The graduation file of a student is considered in the department in order to see if it meets the local priorities of development. **[Chapter I Standard I.7; Chapter I Standard I.9; Chapter I Standard I.11]**

3.12 Study programmes of both cycles integrate professional practice in the form of internships in public and private institutions. **[44; 50; 51]** Internships are monitored by the University College staff **[M2 1st and 2nd cycle students]** and a department commission is set up with the order of the Dean to evaluate the students' internship papers. **[44; 47; M3 Senior Staff]** The Career, Student Tutoring and Alumni Office supports student integration in the job market (by offering career training) and gives internship advice, especially in law domains. **[M4; 131]** The well-established system of internships and cooperation with the regional employment market of Vlorë supports student employment possibilities after graduation and is considered by the review team to be an example of **good practice**. **[Chapter I Standard I.7; Chapter I Standard I.11; Chapter I Standard I.12]**

3.13 Study transfer procedures are available for students who need to change their study programme in line with their qualifications, skills and experience. Information enabling the transfer of study programmes is carried out through the website and through the academic secretaries. **[3 Chapter III, No 43; Example of a file for a transferred student, M2]** **[Chapter I Standard I.7]**

3.14 The University College offers support policies for students' progress by means of weekly consultation hours with lecturers, who guide students in their academic and professional life. A system of tutorship based upon one lecturer for nine students facilitates student support, but from the evidence available feedback of the tutorship was limited. **[64; M2]** Due to the small number of students, the staff manage a flexible system of communication with them at this time. However, the system is currently informal and would need to be redesigned with appropriate policies in order to meet the University College aims to increasing the range of student numbers and curricula. **[Chapter I Standard I.8]**

3.15 The University College recruits priority academic staff with titles and scientific grades, who are engaged in research through publications. The University College is, however, aware of the fact that some gaps in the staffing profile remain to be met. **[M3; 20; 14]** Experienced staff are selected to be part of the programme review committees. **[90]** The workload of the study programmes for the academic year 2016-17 was reported to be covered by 42 full-time and 12 part-time academic staff. **[001]** Part-time staff are mainly specialists of business and law, who had been invited to cover special parts of the curricula and to build market-oriented teaching approaches. **[23]** **[Chapter I Standard I.8; Chapter I Standard I.9]**

3.16 No foreign students are reported to attend actual courses at the University College. The institution does not offer study programmes in English. However, the University College's curricula are organised to provide information to foreign observers. The content is

structured in terms and credits rated using ECTS. Compliance with the Bologna Declaration provides flexibility in transferring studies and enabling exchange. **[001]** Language learning is in line with the internationalisation strategy **[12]** and the University College is planning to create a language centre which will provide English and Italian language training. **[M1]** Coordination on language training is also managed in cooperation with an American university. **[M5]** These findings support the affirmation at paragraph 3.8. **[Chapter I Standard I.10]**

3.17 Diplomas are issued at the conclusion of programmes for both first and second-cycle students. In addition to the diploma, a diploma supplement is issued in Albanian and English. **[46 (10), (20)] [Chapter I Standard I.3; Chapter I Standard I.10]**

3.18 The University College has in place policies for student involvement in cultural and educational activities related to the curricula. During the on-site visit, a number of such activities were mentioned, including: open forums with guest lecturers, round tables on social topics organised by the Student Union, training sessions with organisations that operate on social networks, national innovative competitions, visits to cultural sites, local tourist enterprises, local project applications, law reform awareness training, court participation and demonstration of specific study skills in companies. **[M2; M3; M6; 57; 95; 125; 126] [Chapter I Standard I.11; Chapter I Standard I.12]**

3.19 The University College mission is focused on a curriculum which supports regional and national labour market priorities. **[12]** The review team identified good practice in the well-established system of internships and cooperation with the regional employment market of Vlorë which clearly supports student employment possibilities after graduation. Weakness was identified due to a number of second-cycle study programmes not being licensed by the Ministry of Education and Sport, although students had been enrolled onto the programmes. The review team recommends as a matter of urgency, that the University College and the Ministry of Education & Sport should meet in order to resolve the outstanding licensing issue so that the enrolled students can graduate. The review team affirms the embedding of the University College's approach to partnership with overseas institutions, for example Erasmus+, and the establishment of foreign language training in English and Italian.

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- the well-established system of internships and cooperation with the regional employment market of Vlorë which clearly supports student employment possibilities after graduation (paragraph 3.12; **Chapter I Standard I.7; Chapter I Standard I.11; Chapter I Standard I.12**).

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weakness:

- a number of second-cycle study programmes that are not currently licensed by the Ministry of Education and Sport, although students had been enrolled onto the programmes (paragraph 3.2; **Chapter I Standard I.1**).

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendation:

- as a matter of urgency, the University College and the Ministry of Education & Sport need to meet in order to resolve the outstanding licensing issue so that the enrolled students can graduate (paragraph 3.2; **Chapter I Standard I.1**).

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following action already in progress:

- the embedding of the University College's approach to partnership with overseas institutions, for example Erasmus+, and the establishment of foreign language training in English and Italian (paragraphs 3.8 & 3.16; **Chapter I Standard I.4; Chapter I Standard I.10**).

Judgement

The Standards for the Curriculum are substantially met.

Evaluation Area 4: Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research

4.1 The University College commits itself to the efficient organisation of its study programmes. Internal evaluation of the curricula and its documentation is carried out and reviews of the annual teaching plans are undertaken. [48; 114] Academic staff coordinate course activity in compliance with the curriculum content and study outcomes. Academic staff are appropriately qualified which also includes relevant business experience. Individuals with working experience are invited to cover professional courses within the curriculum. [23; 24; M4] Mandatory and recommended literature for all study programmes is made available to students via the course syllabus. [42; 131] Efforts to improve the range of literature available in the library to match the curriculum learning requirements is being undertaken. The review team **affirms** the University College plans which are in train to enlarge the scope of the library infrastructure to support all study programmes, as well as teaching, learning and assessment. [91; 114; M2; M3] The University College has recognised the need in future development plans for improvement of the laboratory equipment in order to carry out research and enable more practical approaches to the curricula content. [12; M2] [*Chapter I Standard II.1; Chapter I Standard II.3*]

4.2 Study programmes offer relevant practical experience, in the form of internships, diploma graduation papers, practice assignments, case-studies, business and company visits, training in terms of social, juridical and economic policies. The University College provides a range of facilities to support the practical and vocational training of students including the preparation of practical and theoretical projects. [49; M3; 131 Paragraphs 3.13, 3.15, 3.21] Guidelines on the diploma thesis are made available to students. [51 ; M4] [*Chapter I Standard II.1*]

4.3 Examination rules and requirements are approved and described in the 'Regulation of Study'. They are reflected in the regulations of the study programmes and are transcribed in the course syllabi. [2 Art: 52-54; 49; 42; M7] Exam procedures are made available on the University College website: (<http://www.unipavaresia.edu.al/al/sesionet-e-provimeve>). Graduation criteria and procedures are defined in the regulations. [2 Art: 60-62] In respect to the principle of confidentiality, the anonymity principle is respected and final results are made known to students through the electronic information system. [129] Appeals and complaints against examination outcomes are in compliance with the examination regulations. Students are entitled to a process of appeal in case of grade dissatisfaction. [M3; M6] The process is monitored by the Dean of the faculty. [2 Art: 59; 52] [*Chapter I Standard II.2; Chapter I Standard II.3*]

4.4 Additional improvements to the study programmes are carried out through the assessment of lecturing staff; assessment is performed by the students and the Heads of Department. Support is also provided by the Finance Office and the IT Office. [54; 55; M3] There was limited evidence provided to the review team of student feedback on the quality of teaching and learning or on institutional follow-up plans to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The statistical analysis of employment rates for the alumni to support curriculum review is at an early stage of development and the institution may wish to consider improving the situation in due course. [M3]

4.5 Staff training procedures are sporadic, based on informal communication between older and younger staff. [M3; M4] Open lectures are foreseen as part of the Department Annual Plan, but no evidence of them was provided during the review. [67] The review team was unable to see a clear policy or plan at University College level that strategically promoted the continuous improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. [12; 67; 9]

The review team considered this to be a **weakness** and **recommends** the development and implementation at University College level of a policy for the improvement of staff teaching and learning quality. **[M1] [Chapter II Standard I.3; Chapter II Standard I.4]**

4.6 Each department in the University College promotes, develops and administers core duties for the management of the departments' teaching and research activity. It monitors the research activity and the promotion of its staff, as well as progress in respect of research quality. The Research Centre of Human Sciences and the Research Centre of Applied Sciences are bodies at the level of the main unit. **[001; 13; 115; M0]** However, the review team was unable to see evidence that demonstrated how the research centres were monitoring research at departmental level. There was limited evidence to show that they performed any evaluation of research progress, or created a plan for the promotion of the research outcomes. The quality of research is measured by the number of publications and the impact factor of the research in terms of the quality and reputation of the publication. **[M5; 131]** The scientific activity of the research centres is reported to be supported by project application calls. Yet, as stated in the self-evaluation report, there has been a shortage of funds and some of the applications have not been realised. **[002 Chapter II Standard I.2; M1]** The review team was unable to see much evidence of the national and international research projects to support the encouragement of a dynamic research activity; a finding which supports the judgement in paragraph 4.11 below. **[80] [Chapter II Standard I.1; Chapter II Standard I.2; Chapter II Standard I.4; Chapter II Standard I.8]**

4.7 The monitoring of research activity is also undertaken by the department and is evaluated on an annual basis by assessing the performance of each lecturer. Lecturers periodically submit to their department an 'Academic Advancement Plan', **[40; M5]** in which they declare research progress and future plans. At the end of the year the Head of Department conducts a performance assessment of each staff member **[55]** as part of the Annual Report of the Scientific- Research Activity. **[25; 56; M3]** The documents provided to support this are mainly teaching quality related or lists of publications of the academic staff; they do not reflect any evaluation of the research quality procedures, or strategic action plan of development. This inadequacy limits the research strategy application referred to in paragraph 4.11. **[Chapter II Standard I.1]**

4.8 The Strategic Development Plan 2015-20 determines international cooperation, conferences, publications, scientific symposiums, round tables and discussion forums, as the priority trends for the research profile of the institution. **[12; M3; 67]** Research priorities defined as the scientific priorities of the department (see paragraph 4.11 below) in the above documents mostly focus on activities in which the students are involved during their participation in curriculum development. **[M1; 56; M5] [Chapter I Standard II.4]**

4.9 The academic staff participate in national and international scientific events and publish papers in international scientific journals, as part of their individual scientific promotion. **[25; 108; M3]** Collaboration with the 'Canadian Institute of Technology', 'EPICT' Centre, Albania and national or international higher education institutions has enabled the University College to organise or to participate in international scientific events and promote the work of its staff. **[11; 16; 17; 65]** The institution has organised one international scientific conference on its premises and publishes its Journal 'PAVARËSIA' to encourage scientific debate in priority areas of research. The journal and the conference publication are examples of the intellectual property and promotion of the University College's research at an international level. **[89; 8; 7; 58; M5]** Yet, the internationalisation efforts of the University College seem to be quite modest, limited to the participation of the academic staff in international scientific events, mainly conferences. The international projects mentioned do not appear to produce referenced and sustainable research activity, which supports the findings of the review team (see paragraph 4.11 below). **[Chapter II Standard I.2; Chapter I Standard I.3; Chapter II Standard I.4; Chapter II Standard I.7]**

4.10 The University College aims to recruit qualified academic staff who are research active in the fields offered by the institution and who have overseas qualifications. Recruitment of staff prioritises criteria of the scientific degrees and research publications. [M5; 20; 21] Thirteen members of the full-time academic staff have pursued either bachelor, master's or PhD studies abroad. [88] The University College encourages young researchers by promoting their research in national and international scientific events. [130] The diploma thesis of the second cycle are undertaken, approved and evaluated on the basis of their impact on local developments. [M4] Staff receive support with conference fees or attendance fees at professional events which are paid by the University College. [M5; 63] There are supporting mobility policies for post-doctoral researchers. [6; M1, M3] Full-time academic staff are not required to pay any fees to publish in the in-house journal 'PAVARĒSIA'. The University College is planning to build an online database of staff research activity, to be made available on the University College website, but no evidence was available during the virtual learning environment presentation. [002 *Chapter II Standard I.7*] [*Chapter I Standard I.5; Chapter II Standard I.6; Chapter II Standard I.7; Chapter II Standard I.8*]

4.11 Due to its very young age as a higher education institution, the University College has not yet developed a solid research profile in terms of defining its scientific research priorities. [12] Its policy of collaboration with national research bodies is at an early stage and the evidence reflects modest commitment to the design and implementation of regional and national science policies. [80] Research collaboration with local, regional and foreign businesses and economic and social activities is also under-developed. [12] The review team regarded the lack of an embedded research strategy, supported by clearly articulated oversight policies and structures to be a **weakness** and **recommends** that the University College develops a strategic approach for the management, implementation and enhancement of research priorities at institutional level. [*Chapter II Standard I.1-8*]

4.12 The responsibilities for the management of Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are set out in the Strategic Development Plan 2015-20. The review team did not identify any feature of good practice. Weaknesses were identified as follows: the review team was unable to see a clear policy at University College level that strategically promoted the continuous improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. Additionally the University College's approach to research is at an early stage of development and currently lacks an institutional management approach to research and the structures for the development of priorities for enhancing its local and national research profile. The review team recommends that the University College develop and implement at institutional level a policy for the improvement of staff teaching and learning quality and the University College develops a strategic approach for the management, implementation and enhancement of research priorities at institutional level. The review team affirmed that the University College enlarge the scope of the library infrastructure to support all study programmes and to support teaching, learning and assessment.

Findings

Good practice

The review team did not identify any features of good practice.

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- the review team were unable to see a clear policy at University College level that strategically promoted the continuous improvement of teaching, learning and assessment (paragraph 4.5; **Chapter II Standard I.3; Chapter II Standard I.4**)
- the University College's approach to research is at an early stage of development and currently lacks an institutional approach to research and the structures for the development of priorities for enhancing its local and national research profile. (paragraph 4.11; **Chapter II Standard I.1-8**).

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendations:

- during 2017-18 develop and implement at University College level a policy for the improvement of staff teaching and learning quality (paragraph 4.5; **Chapter II Standard I.3; Chapter II Standard I.4**)
- during 2017-18 the University College develops a strategic approach for the management, implementation and enhancement of research priorities at Institutional level (paragraph 4.11; **Chapter II Standard I.1-8**).

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following action already in progress:

- enlarge the scope of the library infrastructure to support all study programmes and to support teaching, learning and assessment (paragraph 4.1; **Chapter I Standard II.3; Chapter I Standard II.1**).

Judgement

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

Evaluation Area 5: Students and their Support

5.1 Admissions quotas are set by the Ministry of Education and Sport along with key admission criteria, which are implemented by the University College in compliance with statutory requirements. Admission of students to programmes of study are set out in the Admissions Policy and articulated in Articles 71 and 76 of the Law of Higher Education. Overarching criteria and processes for admissions to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are set out in the Statute. **[1 Art 64 and 76; 3; M6]** Where applicants have the same higher school levels of achievement they are ranked on the basis of additional criteria applied by the Senate, and applications are reviewed by the Rector. **[92; 61; 62; 39]** Programme descriptors are available on the University College website as well as through brochures distributed to high schools. **[40 - 42.4; 93; M2]** Open days are run for interested applicants and talks provided to high school students; students reported that they are satisfied with the clarity and range of information they received. **[59; 84; M6; 131; M2]** Foreign students are welcomed by the University and procedures are in place to facilitate applications, though at the time of the visit no foreign students were studying at the University College. The staff to student ratio exceeds minimum requirements, current staffing representing one teacher for every nine students. **[001; 9] [Chapter I Standard III.1; Chapter I Standard III.4]**

5.2 Student induction, student support and counselling is effectively organised, with overall responsibility for information and planning lying with the Office for Career, Student Tutoring and Alumni. **[94; 96; 59; M2; M6; 114]** Transfer processes are in place for students wishing to transfer in from other institutions or to transfer to external programmes in line with statutory regulations and internal procedures. **[1; 3; 43; M2]** Information about programmes being taught by the University College is published on the website between June and August along with details of procedures and application forms, which students confirmed are clear and accessible. **[131; M3]** The Office for Careers, Student Tutoring and Alumni also follows up on student employability and assists graduates with preparing for and finding employment through ongoing liaison with employers. **[9; 97; 102; M2; M6] [Chapter I Standard III.3; Chapter I Standard III.9]**

5.3 Copies of timetables are made available to students through the Finance Office, the library, academic secretaries and online. **[129; M2]** Students are provided with information about their programme including handbooks, course specifications and study requirements during orientation week. **[96; 114; M2]** Teaching schedules are set and agreed before the start of each semester, which students confirm are clear and accessible. **[3; 45; M5; 131]** The average number of taught hours for undergraduate programmes is agreed in line with the staff workload agreements and the strategy for learning, teaching and research. **[85; 83; 79]** Students have access to tutorial support for each of the three undergraduate years and as part of postgraduate provision. All lecturers have a tutor group of students they teach and produce monthly reports. **[64; 61; M5; M2; 79]** Reports generated by academic teaching staff are passed to the Head of Department who reports progress and emerging priorities to the Academic Senate. Reports include student involvement in both academic and non-academic activities. **[55; 79; 9; M5; 1]** Faculty academic secretaries are responsible for maintaining student files which include their personal contact details and data related to achievement and progression. **[Example of data-base with student data; 61] [Chapter I Standard III.2]**

5.4 The University College makes clear provision for supporting and guiding students. Students receive guidance and study support in the first hour of classes, and are able to request additional clarification and guidance from lecturers either informally or via email directly to subject tutors as confirmed by the high satisfaction rates reported in the student

survey where 95 per cent reported staff were accessible and helpful. **[131; M2]** Learning support is provided by the Office for Careers, Student Tutoring and Alumni to meet individual learning needs. **[M2; M5; 45]** Students can access their grades and feedback through reports online, and students confirmed that feedback and results were clear, timely and accessible. **[M2; 114; 129]** As all staff have University College email addresses, students can contact academic staff directly and request information, clarification and feedback as appropriate. **[129; M2; 114; M5]** **[Chapter I Standard III.3; Chapter I Standard III.6]**

5.5 Students are effectively supported to undertake internships through agreements between the University and employers. The University College has developed a network of employers with whom it works to support student employability. **[103; 11; M2; M4]** Students confirmed that the Career, Student Tutoring and Alumni Office provides information on available placements, and supports students in making placement applications, the Student Survey indicating 92 per cent of respondents felt the support they receive is good or very good. **[97; 59; 65; 131]** Students are also encouraged to participate in external projects to further their opportunities and knowledge; for example, the 'Models of Success' Project, which focused on placing students in companies and public institutions to broaden their understanding of policies and practices linked to their area of study. **[66; 65]** The Career, Student Tutoring and Alumni Office collates information on alumni and graduate employment which is used by the University College as part of its strategic review and planning process. **[Chapter I Standard III.9]**

5.6 The Career, Student Tutoring and Alumni Office provides information, advice and guidance to students about summer schools and training courses. Students attending summer schools and short courses receive attendance certificates. **[66; 114; Students]** As part of the broader institutional experience, students are provided with information on social and cultural activities as well as workshops and conferences through the website. Further information is made available on internal television screens and through posters displayed around the University College. Where students are engaged in external projects, support is provided with travel and other expenses. **[126; 95; 63; 125; 124]**

5.7 Student engagement with decision-making is effectively promoted through the Student Council and representation on University College committees. Students elect representatives to the Student Council, and are represented by the Student President on the Academic Senate, and by nominated representatives on Faculty Councils. **[1; M1]** Students have access to decisions made by University College committees through the intranet. **[1; 125; M2]** Students are also encouraged to participate in a range of extracurricular activities including sports, chess tournaments and fund-raising events. Students have taken part in raising funds for underprivileged children, environmental projects and support for vulnerable groups. **[63; 95; 80; M2]** The University provides a yearly budget to support student activities which are led by the Student Union. **[1; 3; 63]** **[Chapter I Standard III.7; Chapter I Standard III.8]**

5.8 Scholarships and support for students from socially disadvantaged groups is provided by the University College, which complies with government legislation. **[62; 1; 5]** The criteria are reviewed and revised annually as appropriate by the Senate. **[62; 84; 92]** Undergraduate Roma and Egyptian ethnicity students along with students who are deemed to meet 'excellence' criteria are given 100 per cent fee remission, along with students who have suffered domestic loss, care leavers and children of police officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. **[62; 1; 3]** Students for the identified groups studying on postgraduate provision receive 50 per cent fee remission. In 2015-16 the University provided fee remission for 12 Roma and Egyptian students, and 13 students whose parents had lost their lives while serving in the police. However, as noted in paragraph 2.11 there is no access for students with physical disabilities. **[28; 9]** **[Chapter I Standard III.4]**

5.9 Students have access to the library which has 2,900 titles available including textbooks, handbooks, papers and online texts covering all subject areas. **[91; M2]** The University keeps the book stock under ongoing review and books are added each month, and supplemented by the exchange of resources with other libraries locally and as appropriate abroad. **[9; 27; 103; M6]** The library also contains copies of student dissertations and theses as well as research papers published by staff; however, as noted earlier in the report, resources are limited. **[104; M6]** Students are able to access materials from the National Library Vlorë branch and through agreements with the University of Vlorë. **[103; M2]** The University College library is open for 10 hours each day except for Sundays, and provides students with study areas and support with accessing and printing materials. **[site visit; M6; 91]** Students expressed satisfaction with access to resources and materials, which are supplemented by online materials provided by lecturers. **[M2; M5 ; 131] [Chapter I Standard III.5; Chapter I Standard III.8]**

5.10 Students have access to a good range of programme information which is published on the University College website. Students' engagement with management is through the elected representatives to the Student Council who represent the student voice on key committees including the Academic Senate. The activities organised by the Student Council receive financial support from the University College, and students are also encouraged to participate in external projects. Clear information is provided on internship opportunities through the Office for Careers, Student Support and Alumni, who also maintain contact with graduates and support students to find employment. Library resources on campus are supplemented by access to nearby public and other institution libraries. The review team did not identify any good practice, weaknesses, recommendations or affirmations in the evaluation of this area.

Findings

Good practice

The review team did not identify any features of good practice.

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

Recommendations

The review team did not identify any recommendations.

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team did not affirm any actions already in progress.

Judgement

The Standards for Students and their Support are fully met.

Evidence list

No.	Documentary evidence or record
001	General Information & Data on the University
002	Self Evaluation Report of KUPV
No 1.	Statute of SHPALPV
No 2.	Statute of KUPV
No 3.	Regulation of SHPALPV
No 4.	Decision of Rectorate for Establishment of ISE Group
No 5.	Code of Ethics of SHPALPV
No 6.	Kërkesë për leje akademike post-doktorale
No 7.	Pavaresia Scientific Journal
No 8.	Conference Proceeding Book
No 9.	Institutional Annual Report 2015-2016
No 10.	Regulation of IUQA
No 11.	Cooperation Agreement with the National Center Epic Albania, TreCon IT
No 12.	Strategic Development Plan of SHPALPV for the period 2015 – 2020
No 13.	Organigram of KUPV
No 14.	Analytical Structure of KUPV
No 15.	Alumni Questionnaire
No 16.	Cooperation agreement with the Private Architecture Studio ASI
No 17.	Cooperation agreement with the University “La Sapienza”, Romë
No 18 .	Protection and processing of data
No 19.	Report of the Project “ENCHASE”
No 20.	Recruitment procedure (example)
No 21.	Application form for academic staff
No 22.	Type of Full Time Contract for Academic Staff
No 23.	List of academic external and guest staff for the academic year 2016 – 2017
No 24.	CV of guest academic staff Arlind AHMETAJ
No 25.	Report of scientific research for 2015-2016
No 26.	Mandate for application for the Erasmus Plus programme with the University Leon, Spain
No 27.	Financial budget for 2017
No 28.	Balance Sheet for 2016
No 29.	Charge Sheet for Internal Audit Report 2016
No 31.	Regulation on “The use of information technology and its application in CCTV”
No 30.	Rregullore për “Mbrojtjen, përpunimin, ruajtjen dhe sigurinë e të dhënave personale”
No 32.	Documents Related to Rental Assets under the Administration of KUPV
No 33.	Memo for the exemption of the internal academic staff from the journal publishing fee
No 34.	General Questionnaire Developed from IUQA
No 35.	Sanitary Permit of HEI
No 36.	Technical Report on Fire Protection
No 37.	Regulation of Archive on Professional-technical rules and methodological procedures for the archive service at KUPV
No 38.	List of Study Program
No 39.	Senate Decision on Additional Proposed Criteria for Student Registration in the First and Second Cycle
No 40.	Advanced Academic Plan & Example of Academic Advanced Plan

No 42. Syllabus Economics
No 42.1 Syllabus Mathematics
No 42. 3 Syllabus Marketing Management
No 42.4 Syllabus Statistical Analyses
No 43. Example of a file for a transferred student
No 44. Dean Order to Set up the Commission for Evaluating the Student Practice
No 45. Example of Curriculum
No 46. Example of Diploma Supplement (1)
No 46. Example of Diploma Supplement (2)
No 47. Student Folder for the Practice Period
No 48. SER Bachelor in Economy
No 48.1 SER Bachelor in Informatics
No 48.2 SER Master in Computer Engineering
48.3 SER Master in Economy
No 49. Regulation of Law Study Program
No 50. Example of Agreement with other Institution for Student Practice
No 51. Diploma Thesis Manual
No 52. Order for the development and assessment of exams
No 53. Senate Decision to Approve the Changes in the Curriculum
No 54. Evaluation questionnaire for the lecturer, compiled by students
No 55. Evaluation Form for the Lecturer by the Head of Department
No 56. Scientific Research Planning of Computer Engineering Department
No 57. Poster of an Open Lecture with Guest Lecture Arlind AHMETAJ
No 58. Decision of Academic Senate for Editorial Board
No 59. Report on informing activities from CSTAO
No 61. Example of a student folder
No 62. Senate Decision for the Approvement od Scholarships for Special Students Categories
No 63. Memo for Financial Support
No 64. Tutoring Report
No 65. Agreement Cooperation UET
No 65. Cooperation agreement in the field of cultural heritage
No 66. Certificate issued from HEI
No 67 Plani Vjetor i Punës së Institucionit, për vitin akademik 2016 – 2017 (Dok Plotesues)
No 68 Marrëveshje Bashkëpunimi në fushën e Trashëgimisë Kulturore (Dok Plotesues)
No 69 Relacion, dt. 10.11.2016, “Pjesëmarrja e studentëve në konkursin “Unë zgjedh të flas- Shkruaj dhe Fito” (Dok Plotesues)
No 27. Buxheti financiar për vitin 2015 - 2016
70. Raport i Vleresimit te Brendshem Institucional
Additional evidence provided
No 71, sample minutes for institutional decision making.pdf
No 72. action plan for the recommendations of the order nr 340 date 8.06.2012.pdf
No 73. Example of IUQA activity.pdf
No 74. Study on requirement for Physical Education and Sports programmes
No.75. Remit of Trust Council.
No 76. 14 recruitment procedures, job description.
No 77. Alumni Questionnaire
No 78. Board of Administration
No. 79. Summary of annual report on teaching and research activities
No. 80. List of projects
No. 81 Data protection Procedures

No. 82. Regulation of a Bachelors in Law programme
No. 82. Example of programme workload
No. 83. Cooperation Agreement with a high school
No. 84. Regulations and procedures for student admissions
No. 85. Summary of strategy for learning, teaching & assessment
No. 86. Example of the approval process & outcomes for a study programme – Faculty Council and Academic Senate.
No. 87. Summary of research strategy linked to pedagogy enhancement
No. 88. Staff qualified abroad
No. 89. Copy of European conference programme
No. 90. Procedures for review of a programme of study to implement changes
No. 91. Library, data-base and enrichment
No. 92. Admissions practices, additional criteria and quotas
No. 93. Brochures
No. 94. Schedule of recruitment activities 2016 - 17
No. 95. Example of student union activities
No. 96. Orientation week
No. 97. Report of CSTAO – progression and careers advice
No. 98. Alumni questionnaire template
No. 99. Explanation of senior staff selection
No. 100. Appointment periods and provisions for staff
No. 101. Status of Department of Computer Engineering
No. 102. Careers Office meeting with Graduates
No. 103. List of Cooperation Agreements
No. 104. List of scientific activities in last 3 years
No. 105. 1 Request for fee support
No. 105. 2 Establishment of Self-Assessment Group
No. 106. Cooperation Agreement – La Sapienza, Rome
No. 107. Statement confirming audit arrangements
No. 108. List of scientific activities in the last 3 years
No. 109. Annual Academic Staffing Plan
No. 110. Regulation on IT and use of CCTV
No. 111. Examples of Health Care Cards
No. 112. Archiving Protocols
No. 113. Internal audit statement
No. 114. Study Survey Summary
No. 115. Research qualifications of full-time staff
No. 116. List of institutions that support fieldwork for Masters programmes
No. 117. Market Research on demand for HE
No. 118. List of study programmes
No. 119. Decision on entry requirements for integrated programmes in Justice
No. 120. Decision on Professional Masters Degree in Economy
No. 121. Diploma Thesis Template
No. 122. Senate Decision on Data Protection and Editorial Board of Scientific Journal
No. 123. Exam Process Decision
No. 124. Request for funding for student travel
No. 125. Summary of support for Student Union activities
No. 126. Extra-curricular activities
No. 127. Staffing list by department with qualification information
No. 128. Regulations for the MIS and IT system
No. 129. VLE Demonstration
No. 130. Staff Survey - High approval ratings on the management of the UC
No. 131. Student Survey - High approval ratings on the management of the UC

No.	Meetings
M0	Facilitator and Self-evaluation team
M1	Rector
M2	1 st and 2 nd Cycle Students
M3	Senior Staff
M4	Employers and Alumni
M5	Teaching and Research Staff
M6	Support Staff