



QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**Report of the Institutional Periodic Accreditation of
University College of Business**

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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 Quality Code Standards which came into force in 2021. The Institutional Review is a peer review process with each review team composed of a mix of international reviewers and Albanian reviewers appointed by ASCAL.

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 Quality Code Standards have been grouped under five headings, the Evaluation Areas: Management, Autonomy, and Quality Assurance; Resources and Partnership; Study Programs, Teaching, and Evaluation; Scientific/Artistic Activity and Innovation; 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 ASCAL's Accreditation Board. 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.**

The context of this review

The University College of Business (UCB) is a non-public institution of higher education in Albania, established in 2011 as the Professional Academy of Business (PAB). The institution was granted university college status in accordance with the provisions of the Law No. 80/2015 "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania." UCB is licensed and accredited to provide study programs across the first (Bachelor), second (Master), and short professional cycles. It operates under the authorization of the Ministry of Education and has been subject to both initial and periodic institutional accreditation processes by ASCAL.

UCB has steadily evolved its academic profile, aiming to combine academic excellence with market-relevant competencies in the fields of economics, law, social sciences, engineering, and computer science. Its academic structure comprises three primary units:

- The Faculty of Economics, Law, and Social Sciences,
- The Faculty of Engineering and Computer Sciences, and
- The College of Higher Professional Studies.

As of the 2024–2025 academic year, UCB offers 19 licensed and accredited study programs, including:

- Bachelor programs in finance, law, business administration, information technology, and engineering,
- Master of Science and Professional Master programs,
- Integrated study programs,
- Short professional programs (2-year cycles), including a renewed focus on applied qualifications.

The institution serves a diverse student population, with an increasing emphasis on employability, professional development, and internationalization. UCB's Strategic Plan 2024–2030 articulates its long-term vision to become a regional reference point in business and applied sciences education. This includes strategic objectives related to curriculum modernization, research development, digital transformation, and external collaboration.

Since its last periodic accreditation in 2022, UCB has undertaken a wide range of institutional reforms, including the consolidation of its Internal Quality Assurance System, expansion of international cooperation through Erasmus+ agreements, increased investments in infrastructure, and development of new study programs to meet labor market needs. The institution has also implemented digital tools to ensure transparency and efficiency in academic and administrative operations.

UCB maintains active engagement with both internal stakeholders (students, staff, governing bodies) and external actors (employers, alumni, partner institutions). The internal quality



assurance processes are managed by a functional IQAU that operates in line with national standards and reports directly to institutional leadership.

This external institutional review is therefore situated in the context of strategic transformation and quality enhancement, with the goal of validating UCB's progress toward meeting state quality standards and promoting continuous institutional development.

The Accreditation Board's Decision No. 03, dated 07.01.2022, issued a set of recommendations to improve internal quality assurance, update the strategic plan, strengthen partnerships, and improve transparency. Based on the documentation and meetings held, the review team confirms that UCB has substantially fulfilled the recommendations provided in the previous cycle.

The external evaluation team recognizes that UCB has developed significantly over the past decade, both in academic scope and institutional infrastructure. With 19 accredited study programs currently offered, sustained student enrolment, and over 2,000 graduates, UCB has positioned itself as a relevant and evolving actor in the Albanian higher education landscape.

08/09/2023



RECOMMENDATIONS FULFILLMENT FROM THE LAST ACCREDITATION

The Accreditation Board issued on January 7, 2022, granting a positive final assessment for the UCB's periodic institutional accreditation, valid for four years until January 6, 2026. The Board noted that while the evaluation process was compliant with legal requirements, there were weaknesses in certain areas.

I. Recommendations Based on the Decision of the Accreditation Board, based on Decision No. 03, dated 07.01.2022 are:

1. The institution should establish a well-structured research budget allocation process, so that support for the promotion of the scientific development of academic staff is included in research plans and institutionalized agendas at the department/faculty/research center level. The institution's Research Center should organize, coordinate and harmonize this process at all institutional and individual levels, with the aim of optimizing the efficiency of research investments, continuously training academic staff and increasing the quality of the institution's research/professional services in general;
2. The institution should make efforts to increase international cooperation and draft a concrete strategy within the framework of increasing internationalization, extending this to the department level;
3. The institution should more closely involve external partners and students in reviewing and improving curricula;
4. The institution should create an Alumni association, with the aim of facilitating the institution's activities in the context of interaction with students;
5. The institution should utilize international agreements in terms of reflecting foreign experiences in its academic offer and especially in terms of increasing the mobility of staff and students and the use of contacts for joint projects in the field of applied research;
6. The institution should institutionalize and harmonize scientific promotion and research in general at the department and faculty level, with the aim of increasing management efficiency and increasing the activities/performance of academic staff;
7. The institution should find other mechanisms to increase income from international resources, programs and projects, to increase funds dedicated to teaching quality and research infrastructure, with the aim of ensuring long-term sustainability and independence from tuition fee income;
8. The institution should analyze data on employed students, with the aim of identifying the profiles most in demand by the labor market and continue to improve study programs, considering students' interest in further specialization and/or future employment opportunities;

In fulfillment of the above recommendations, the "University College of Business" must draft a concrete Action Plan and submit it within 6 (six) months to the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.



In response, UCB created an action plan to address these recommendations. The UCB's action plan, dated April 2022, details the steps the institution plans to take to fulfill the recommendations. The plan was prepared and submitted to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

II. Completion of recommendations by the Institution

Recommendation 1: The University College of Business (UCB) had planned to improve financial transparency and planning by detailing its budget in monetary values (in Lek) for each basic unit and staff member, instead of presenting data solely in percentage terms. This measure was scheduled for completion by the end of 2022. In line with this, the institution also committed to covering the full costs of scientific activities, including conferences and workshops. The review team affirms that the University College of Business demonstrates a clear institutional commitment to strengthening its role in scientific research, innovation, and academic development. Research priorities are well-aligned with national and international strategies and are developed in coherence with the institution's academic profiles. The establishment of the Center for Scientific Research, Projects, and Innovation (CSRPI), active coordination at departmental and institutional levels, and regular organization of international scientific conferences reflect UCB's structured approach to advancing research. The institution provides adequate support to academic staff and students through mentoring, infrastructure, and participation in scientific events, thereby fostering a growing research culture across its academic units.

The review team noted positively that the institution had taken concrete steps to fulfill the recommendation. The allocation of budgeted funds in specific monetary terms and the integration of mobility and research monitoring under a functional office represented a satisfactory response to the need for more structured and transparent research support. These measures contributed to enhancing the institution's research visibility and international engagement.

Recommendation 2: The Accreditation Board had initially found that the University College of Business demonstrated low levels of international cooperation and lacked a concrete strategy for advancing internationalization. In response, UCB referred to its Development Strategy 2021–2026, which included a dedicated and comprehensive section on international cooperation and internationalization. During site visit, the institution emphasized that, although it operated as a relatively small higher education provider within Albania, it had successfully established over 60 cooperation agreements with international institutions. Moreover, the strategy outlined objectives related to internationalization across various levels, including student governance.

The review team recognized these developments as a positive step forward in addressing the previously identified shortcoming. While the institution had not yet achieved high levels of international impact, the presence of a formal strategy, along with the growing number of

cooperation agreements, indicated clear institutional commitment to expanding its global engagement. The inclusion of internationalization objectives even at the level of student governance was evaluated as a commendable and inclusive approach, reflecting a broader and more integrated vision. Nevertheless, the review team encouraged the institution to further consolidate its strategic efforts through measurable targets and implementation mechanisms to ensure sustainable progress in international cooperation.

Recommendation 3: The Board observed a limited involvement of external partners and students in the review and improvement of curricula. In response, UCB reported that the Curriculum Development Office and the Career Counseling Office had undertaken a series of activities during 2022 and beyond to address this concern. These included ongoing discussions and workshops aimed at strengthening stakeholder engagement in curricular development. Notably, an international conference focusing on curriculum standardization was held in June 2022, bringing together academics, employers, and external experts to exchange best practices. Furthermore, throughout the academic year 2022–2023, the institution organized targeted discussions with graduates to collect feedback on aligning study programs more closely with labor market demands.

The review team considered these actions as positive progress toward meeting the recommendation. The inclusion of graduate perspectives and the effort to engage international and external actors in curriculum-related discussions demonstrated a proactive and responsive institutional approach. However, the team encouraged UCB to further systematize this engagement by formalizing stakeholder feedback processes and integrating them as a standard component of curriculum review cycles. This would ensure a more consistent and impactful contribution from students, alumni, and external partners in the continuous improvement of academic offerings.

Recommendation 4: The Accreditation Board had noted the absence of a formal Alumni Association as a missing link in fostering systematic interaction between the institution and its graduates. In response, UCB expressed reservations regarding the recommendation, emphasizing that the establishment of such an association is not explicitly mandated for higher education institutions. The institution maintained that its primary focus had been directed toward strengthening collaboration with employment partners to support internships, curriculum enhancement, and job placement for students and graduates.

Nevertheless, UCB acknowledged the potential benefits of improved alumni engagement and took the recommendation into consideration. During 2023, the institution initiated a study to assess the feasibility of establishing an Alumni Association, exploring its legal basis, organizational structure, and functional role within the institution. The review team recognized UCB's clarification during site visit that an Alumni Association is not a formal legal obligation. However, the team emphasized that alumni structures are widely considered a best practice across higher education institutions, serving as a valuable mechanism for professional networking, graduate tracking, and institutional development. The team noted

UCB's decision to explore the legal and institutional feasibility of such a body and encouraged the institution to further develop structured and sustained alumni engagement, even if not in the formal association. Establishing such mechanisms could strengthen the institution's strategic objectives related to labor market integration, quality assurance, and external collaboration.

Recommendation 5: The Board has recommended that UCB make more effective use of its international agreements to integrate foreign academic practices into its curricula and to enhance mobility opportunities for staff and students. In response, UCB considered this a continuous and strategic process and reported that it had already begun implementing the recommendation. The institution highlighted its active collaborations with partner institutions in countries such as Hungary, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, and Latvia, which have facilitated exchanges of academic practices and supported mobility initiatives.

The review team acknowledged these efforts and noted positively the institution's commitment to leveraging its international partnerships. While recognizing that UCB is a relatively small institution, the team emphasized that further structured integration of international experiences into teaching and curriculum—beyond mobility alone—could enhance the institution's alignment with European Higher Education Area (EHEA) standards. The team encouraged UCB to continue expanding the scope and impact of its international collaborations, particularly in terms of academic staff exchanges, joint projects, and internationalization at home, as these are key indicators of academic development and global engagement.

Recommendation 6: The Accreditation Board had recommended that UCB institutionalize and harmonize the promotion and organization of scientific research across departmental and faculty levels. In response, the institution stated that it would focus on enhancing the visibility and impact of staff publications and scientific activities at both the faculty and departmental levels, rather than limiting promotion to the institutional level. UCB indicated that each department would develop specific action plans involving all academic staff, and that scientific work would be reviewed and promoted internally within departments following an initial evaluation process. The review team recognized this approach as a positive step toward strengthening the research culture within the institution. The team commended UCB's intention to decentralize scientific activity promotion and to ensure broader participation at the departmental level. However, the team also encouraged the institution to formalize these practices through written policies and to establish consistent mechanisms for internal review and dissemination of research outputs. Such steps would enhance coherence, increase the quality and quantity of scientific output, and contribute to a more structured and sustainable research environment aligned with institutional development goals.

Recommendation 7: The Board had recommended that UCB identify and implement new mechanisms to increase revenue from international projects to reduce its reliance on tuition



fees. UCB acknowledged the validity of this recommendation, recognizing it as a significant challenge that required strong institutional commitment. The institution stated that for the academic years 2022–2023, a key strategic priority had been to increase its involvement in international projects—not merely as a partner, but also by initiating, leading, and coordinating such projects. The review team positively noted UCB’s awareness of the importance of diversifying income sources and its expressed intent to become more active in securing international funding. However, the team encouraged the institution to formalize a long-term strategy with clear targets, support mechanisms for project writing and management, and the designation of a dedicated team or office to lead these efforts. Doing so would enhance institutional sustainability and contribute to the development of research, innovation, and international visibility.

Recommendation 8:

The Board recommended that UCB identify and analyze data on employed students to support the improvement of study programs and strengthen alignment with labor market demands. In response, UCB stated that during the 2022–2023 academic year, the Career Counseling Office had updated its database of employed graduates and developed a plan for maintaining long-term communication within the framework of lifelong learning. Additionally, the main academic units had organized discussion groups with alumni to gather their feedback and insights on program relevance and quality. Based on the conclusions of these consultations, UCB reported that adjustments were made to the curricula for the 2023–2024 academic year.

The review team considered this a positive and proactive approach to implementing the recommendation. The institution demonstrated awareness of the value of graduate employment data as a feedback mechanism for quality improvement. However, the team encouraged UCB to further systematize these practices by establishing periodic tracking and reporting mechanisms to ensure continuity, as well as integrating this data more explicitly into program revision processes across all study cycles.

Based on the above analyses and drawing from the institution’s action plan, the activities carried out, and the findings gathered during the on-site visit, the Review Team considers that the recommendations previously issued by the Accreditation Board have been appropriately addressed by the institution. At the same time, the team supports the continuation of these activities and encourages the institution to take further measures aimed at their ongoing development and long-term sustainability.



Summary report

The University College of Business is a non-public higher education institution based in Tirana, Albania. Since its establishment in the academic year 2011–2012, UCB has offered professionally oriented study programs at both the first and second cycle levels, focusing on economics, law, and various technical disciplines. This Institutional Review is a periodic evaluation of UCB for accreditation in accordance with Albanian Quality Code in higher education. This external evaluation report reviews the period 2022-2025 in which the institutions have full operation.

The UCB is recognized today as a consolidated institution of higher education, with over 14 years of academic activity contributing significantly to the education and training of professionals across multiple disciplines. In alignment with its academic structure and institutional profile, UCB currently offers a total of 19 accredited and licensed study programs, which operate in full compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework.

Throughout its development, UCB has established a distinct institutional identity by integrating the academic and professional expertise of its founders, ensuring the recruitment of qualified and experienced academic staff, and consistently upholding legal and academic standards. The institution emphasizes innovation in the teaching process, the creation of constructive and professional relationships with students, and the development of an inclusive academic culture that supports collaboration with external partners.

UCB's contribution to the labor market is evidenced by the graduation of over 2,084 students in fields such as economics, law, and technology, alongside 487 professionally trained students who have completed two-year post-secondary programs. These graduates have successfully met the demands of the labor market, helping address skill gaps in key sectors [AI. 17]. UCB alumni are employed in various central and local government institutions, as well as in private and public enterprises, both productive and non-productive. The institution's diploma is recognized with value both nationally and internationally, and over 90% of its graduates have secured employment in fields aligned with their studies.

Given these outcomes, UCB represents an asset to the national higher education landscape. It aims to position itself as a competitive and distinguished institution in both the academic and employment markets. Over the years, UCB has cultivated sustainable and dynamic relationships with a wide range of public and private, national and international partners to enrich student learning experiences and continuously update its curricula in response to labor market needs.

A Self-evaluation Report was developed by a team of UCB's staff, which included senior managers, academics, support staff, and a student representative. The self-evaluation process gathered evidence from academic and administrative units, interviews, roundtables, and questionnaires with stakeholders within and outside UCB.



The site visit took place over two days on 22 and 23 May 2025. The review team was made up of one senior academic reviewer from Kosovo and one senior academic reviewer from Albania. The review team consisted of Mrs. Dafina Xhako (Lead Reviewer) and Mr. Milazim Gjocaj (Reviewer). The review team was supported by the Review Manager provided by the Albanian Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (ASCAL). The review team received the Self-evaluation Report and the portfolio of supporting evidence weeks in advance of the review visit, later supplemented by additional requested documentation during the visit. The wide range of supporting information provided by UCB enabled the team to familiarize with the structure, policies, procedures, and nature of teaching and research activity undertaken. Evidence included the Statute and Regulations, internal reports, admission and orientation procedures, a list of external agreements and memoranda, examples of program information, and evidence of deliberate meetings. Drafts were circulated to a wider audience within the institution before being finalized. The Academic Senate authorized the release of the final report and sent this to the ASCAL.

The review team met with senior managers, students, lecturers, administrative and support staff, as well as external partners during the review visit. The meetings supported the clarification of procedures, responsibilities, and viewpoints. Notes were taken at all meetings. As part of a tour of the campus, the review team viewed the library, teaching areas, laboratories, sports facilities, and offices.

The review team recognizes the difficulties that the institution went through in this assessment and acknowledges the working groups for engagement with the process and the cooperation provided to the review team throughout all phases. In particular, the review team commends the work of the Self-evaluation Group in providing comprehensive evidence base documentation and information to academic staff and students, who participated in the meetings.

The review team judges that:

The Standards for the Higher Education Institution – Organisation and its Management are fully met. In reaching this judgment, the review team identified multiple features of good practice, including the institution's proactive and inclusive approach to revising its internal regulatory framework, which involves the Academic Senate, Board of Administration, Student Council, and academic units. UCB has developed a comprehensive set of internal regulations that operationalize its Statute and ensure effective governance. The institution demonstrates a well-structured management system that aligns with its Strategic Development Plan 2024–2030, promoting transparency, accountability, and participatory decision-making across all levels. Furthermore, the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) systematically monitors institutional performance through periodic assessments of academic activity, student satisfaction, staff performance, and administrative services. These evaluations are used to improve internal processes and support the enhancement of study programs. UCB presented strong documentation to confirm its institutional commitment to



fostering a culture of quality and continuous improvement. The review team affirms one action being taken in this Evaluation Area. The implementation of the internal quality assurance system is supported by structured policies and procedures, data-driven evaluations, and annual reporting mechanisms. These measures have proven effective in supporting the institution's goals for quality enhancement and organizational development.

The review team concludes that the Standards for Resourcing are fully met. UCB demonstrates a strong institutional commitment to ensuring the sustainability and development of its human, infrastructural, and financial resources in alignment with its mission and strategic objectives. Several good practices were noted, including the transparent recruitment and promotion of staff, the structured approach to professional development through training and mobility, and the comprehensive management of physical and digital infrastructure to support teaching and learning. The institution has made noteworthy investments in modernizing facilities, ensuring accessibility, and maintaining high standards of information management and data security. The effectiveness of these practices reflects a clear institutional vision for inclusive, supportive, and resource-rich academic operations.

While the institution's current internationalization strategy requires diversification and further expansion beyond the Erasmus+ framework, this was the only identified weakness. A targeted recommendation was made to enhance international collaboration and academic offerings in English. Affirmations of ongoing improvements were also acknowledged, particularly in the areas of digitalization, infrastructure development, labor market alignment, and budgeting processes. Overall, the institution's approach to resourcing supports its academic integrity, operational effectiveness, and long-term development.

The review team concludes that the Standards for the Curriculum are fully met. The University College of Business (UCB) demonstrates a strong and structured approach to curriculum development, delivery, and review. The institution has established good practices that align its academic offer with national labor market needs, particularly through the development of professional programs within the College of Higher Professional Studies. The integration of practical experiences, such as seasonal employment opportunities and access to industry infrastructure, reinforces the relevance and applicability of the curricula.

The institution's policies for academic workload allocation and staff engagement in professional development initiatives through both national collaborations and international partnerships demonstrate a sustained commitment to improving teaching quality and institutional capacity. The laboratories and other academic facilities were deemed appropriate for the current stage of program implementation, especially in relation to professional tracks.

No weaknesses or recommendations were identified, reflecting the institution's effective alignment with quality standards in this area. The review team affirmed that processes for curriculum revision and program design are already in place and are responsive to ongoing changes in technology and innovation. Overall, UCB's curricular structure supports both academic excellence and employability, fulfilling the requirements of this evaluation area.

The review team concludes that the Standards for Teaching, Learning, Assessment, and Research are fully met. The University College of Business demonstrates a comprehensive and integrated approach to academic development, combining teaching excellence with growing research capacity. The institution's efforts to build research infrastructures such as the establishment of the Center for Scientific Research, Projects, and Innovation (CSRPI) and its active participation in both national and international collaborative projects reflect a structured and ambitious vision for research and innovation.

Good practices were observed in the creation of research teams, the strategic alignment of research agendas, and the involvement of staff, students, and alumni in scholarly activities. The integration of mobility opportunities into research and teaching processes further enhances the institution's academic profile and international visibility. The review team also noted UCB's commitment to supporting research through seminars, conferences, and partnerships with external institutions.

No weaknesses or recommendations were identified in this area. Additionally, actions to further strengthen the institution's research role and academic development are already underway. These include ongoing investments in capacity building and alignment with broader innovation agendas. The review team commends UCB's forward-looking strategy and affirms that the institution is well-positioned to continue advancing quality in teaching and research.

The review team concludes that the Standards for Students and their Support are fully met. The University College of Business demonstrates a strong and strategic commitment to supporting its student body through an integrated and student-centered approach. The institution effectively aligns its admission policies with national regulations and its own Strategic Development Plan, ensuring sustainable growth in student numbers while maintaining quality and inclusiveness.

Good practices were identified in UCB's approach to promoting academic and professional pathways, its provision of diverse scholarship schemes, and the operation of an effective academic advisory system. These structures contribute to equitable access, support student progression, and foster academic success. The Student and Career Counseling Office plays a critical role in guiding prospective and enrolled students, while academic advisors provide personalized mentoring throughout the student journey.

No weaknesses or recommendations were noted in this area, indicating that UCB meets and exceeds expectations in supporting student integration, well-being, and achievement. The review team affirms that the institution's ongoing efforts to promote student representation in decision-making bodies and to cultivate a supportive academic environment reflect a clear and sustained institutional commitment to student success and empowerment.



Overall, the review team notes that UCB undertook the review to ASCAL guidelines. The review team acknowledged the institution's high level of engagement with the process and the cooperation provided to the review team throughout the visit

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Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

1. The institution demonstrates a commitment to an open and transparent recruitment process to ensure that hiring practices are equitable and inclusive, aiming to attract a diverse range of talented and qualified individuals to contribute to the institution's academic and administrative roles. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.1*). UCB commits to guarantee the long-term sustainability of its academic staff. This approach ensures stability and continuity in the academic staff, which is crucial for maintaining the quality of education and research. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.5*)
2. UCB has a comprehensive staff development policy, including regular internal and external training, participation in Erasmus+ mobility programs, and involvement in national and international research projects. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.2*)
3. UCB through IQAU has established personnel management policies that are relevant to both academic and non-academic staff, starting with identifying the human resource needs, involving in internal and external training, participation in Erasmus+ mobility programs, involvement in national and international research projects and assessing the performance of staff periodically. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.6*)
4. The institution has made investments in the improvement of the infrastructure and consistently modernized its current facilities and learning environments compared with actual student numbers. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.7*). The facilities are designed to support effective academic engagement and include appropriate accommodation for students and staff with disabilities, such as access ramps and barrier-free internal pathways. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.9*)
5. UCB has an effective coordinated management system to ensure the care and preservation of all documentation and information, including student data held by secretariats included. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.13*). The combination of digital platforms, real-time communication tools, and centralized academic and administrative services—along with the involvement of professional IT support—ensures transparency, accessibility, and data security. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.14*)
6. The UCB's proactive development and expansion of professional programs through its College of Higher Professional Studies (CHPS). These programs are closely aligned with national workforce demands and regional labor market trends, particularly in fields such as business, economics, and ICT. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.2*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.3*)



7. The existence of clear and structured guidelines at the University College of Business for the allocation of academic staff workload across teaching, research, administrative duties, and other responsibilities. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.5*)
8. The range study programs demonstrate their commitment to providing students with quality guidance and theoretical as well as practical knowledge. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.7*)
9. The UCB's engagement of academic and administrative staff in structured training programs aimed at improving teaching and institutional processes, delivered through an international quality assurance project. The approach to the professional development of academic and administrative staff. This includes structured training programs delivered through Erasmus+ partnerships, collaborations with national institutions such as NAC and IACA, and international projects supported by the World Bank (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.12*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.14*)
10. The provision of seasonal employment opportunities for students, especially for students of professional programs who have been employed during the summer or after school. The combination of theoretical and practical skills, the connection of students with the labour market, and their preparation for employment is good practice. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.16*)
11. The current laboratory infrastructure as quite suitable for covering the needs of the study programs up to this stage. Also, the access that students have to the infrastructure of the companies that are part of the network, is available to students for its use in various programs, especially for professional programs. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.20*)
12. The establishment of the Center for Scientific Research, Projects, and Innovation (CSRPI), the formation of research teams within academic units, and the alignment of research priorities with national and international agendas reflect a proactive and coordinated approach to research activity in accordance with standards of Quality Code. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.2*).
13. UCB has built relationships with other research organizations and takes part in joint projects, involving both local and international researchers, through the signing of cooperation or participation agreements or participation in joint activity events. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.3*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.5*).
14. UCB is actively enhancing its research activities and securing the involvement of staff, students and alumni. This approach aims to cultivate partnerships and enhance the institution's presence on the international level (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.8*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.12*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.13*).
15. The mobility efforts are evident and actively integrating these activities into research or teaching opportunities, including but not limited to, delivering open lectures, conducting workshops, and leading seminars. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.14*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.16*).

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16. The institution effectively aligns its admission policies with its strategic development goals, ensuring a gradual and sustainable increase in student numbers. UCB actively promotes both academic and professional study pathways, supports prospective students through dedicated structures like the Student and Career Counseling Office, and ensures inclusive access to information via its official communication channels. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.1*).
17. UCB offers various scholarships, including excellence and institutional scholarships through partnerships, and special scholarships for certain regions' graduates. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.2*). The effectiveness of the information system, which offers ongoing academic assistance. Academic advisors from both core and major units contribute to guiding student advancement. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.3*).

Weaknesses

The review team identifies the following weaknesses.

The institution's current internationalization profile demonstrates limited diversification, as active mobility agreements are predominantly concentrated within the Erasmus+ framework. There is a notable lack of global partnerships, international exposure for students and staff. The offering of English-taught courses remains limited, and the institution has yet to develop or promote international double-degree programs, which could enhance its attractiveness to prospective international students and academic staff. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.21*)

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendations:

The review team recommends that UCB further strengthen its internationalization strategy by increasing the number and diversity of active mobility agreements, particularly beyond the Erasmus+ framework, to include global partnerships outside Europe. Additionally, the institution is encouraged to develop a formal monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track the long-term academic and professional impact of student and staff mobility. Promoting international double-degree programs and expanding the offer of English-taught courses would also enhance UCB's attractiveness to foreign students and staff. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.21*)



Affirmation of action being taken

The review team identified the following affirmation of action being taken:

1. UCB has established a functional internal quality assurance system, supported by systematic data collection and regular evaluations of academic and administrative performance. The practice of compiling comprehensive annual reports, based on unit-level contributions, reflects a structured and evidence-based approach to institutional monitoring. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.7*). The University institution, through the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU), demonstrates a structured and well-coordinated approach to internal quality assurance. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.9*)
2. The institution is working to enhance the infrastructure for information technology and automatization for professional study programs. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.8*)
3. The University College of Business demonstrates a proactive and structured approach to aligning its academic offer with national strategies and labor market needs. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.22*)
4. UCB demonstrates a strong commitment to fostering an inclusive, collaborative, and professionally supportive environment for its academic, teaching-support, and administrative staff. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.2*)
5. The institution has a clear and sustained commitment to strengthening its IT infrastructure, ensuring comprehensive digital support for teaching, research, and administration. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.15*)
6. The UCB has established a transparent and well-structured budgeting process that ensures financial accountability and effective resource allocation aligned with institutional objectives. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.16*).
7. The University College of Business has established and follows a structured and legally compliant process for the development, approval, and revision of its study programs. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.4*). We encourage the institution to continuously monitor and update these programs as they are part of the fields that currently have the fastest development in technology, innovation and implementation. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.11*)
8. The University College of Business demonstrates a clear institutional commitment to strengthening its role in scientific research, innovation, and academic development. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.1*), [*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.7*], (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.10*).
9. UCB emphasizes a student-centred approach in teaching, research, and social impact, incorporating student representatives into the Academic Senate and engaging them in essential institutional committees and the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.4*).

Summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area

1. The Standards for the Higher Education Institution - Management, Autonomy, and Quality Assurance are **fully met**;
2. The Standards for Resources and Partnership are **fully met**;
3. The Standards for Study Programs, Teaching, and Evaluation are **fully met**;
4. The Standards for Scientific/Artistic Activity and Innovation are **fully met**;
5. The Standards for Students and Their Support are **fully met**.

Summary Judgement

The reviewers recommend to the Accreditation Board that at the University College of Business the Quality Code Standards are **fully met**.



Detailed report

Evaluation Area 1: Higher Education Institution - Management, Autonomy, and Quality Assurance

- 1.1** UCB operates in full compliance with Law 80/2015 and its by-laws, guided by its Statute, internal regulations, and clearly structured governance. The institution ensures collegial decision-making through the Academic Senate and maintains detailed documentation of all regulatory updates. The review team acknowledges UCB's strong legal alignment and governance practices, identifying as a good practice its proactive and inclusive approach to updating internal regulations. The involvement of the Academic Senate, Board of Administration, Student Council, and academic units reflects a participatory institutional culture. The team encourages UCB to further document the impact of student contributions in these processes to enhance transparency and stakeholder engagement. The review team acknowledges that UCB demonstrates a strong commitment to legal compliance and institutional governance, fully aligned with Law No. 80/2015 and its by-laws. **The review team commends the University College of Business (UCB) for its proactive and inclusive approach to the continuous improvement of its regulatory framework. A notable good practice is the institution's transparent process for revising internal regulations, which actively involves key stakeholders, including the Academic Senate, Board of Administration, Student Council, and academic units. This participatory model ensures institutional coherence, strengthens governance, and reflects a clear commitment to quality assurance and shared decision-making.** [Ev. 21, 26, 27] The systematic documentation of all regulatory updates and decisions further reflects a well-functioning governance structure. Additionally, the establishment of working groups to support legal and procedural updates exemplifies a dynamic and participatory internal culture. The institution is encouraged to continue promoting inclusive consultation processes during regulatory revisions and to document more explicitly the impact of Student Council contributions on institutional policies, thereby further strengthening transparency and stakeholder engagement. Also, internal regulations and acts are continuously improved and adjusted in response to suggestions and requests from the Student Council and/or the units, [BM2], [Ev. 23]. **The review team evaluates very positively the drafting of many regulations and procedures in function of the good implementation of the institution's statute. [Annex No. 1, Standard I.1].**

- 1.2** The institution demonstrates management efficiency, as evidenced by the structured budget process and financial management. According to the UCB Statute, the institution's governing bodies are separated into three categories: administrative, academic, and other. The Academic Senate is the highest body within the university. Administratively, the institution is governed by the Board of Administration. Other key bodies include the Rectorate, Dean's Offices, and the Ethics Council, while leadership roles include the

Rector, Deans, Directors, and Heads of Units—all appointed according to legal and regulatory procedures. [Ev. 20]

The Rector leads academic affairs, and the Chairman of the Board oversees administrative, financial, and legal matters. As a small institution, UCB benefits from flexibility and efficient internal management. For specific functions such as staff recruitment and evaluations, temporary committees are formed, operating under specific regulations. The effectiveness of governing bodies is regularly assessed through internal reports, audits, and self-analyses. External oversight is conducted by the Ministry of Education and financial authorities (audits and tax compliance). [Ev. 34, 43, 61, 61.1, 62] Academic performance is also evaluated by internal units and, when applicable, external partners. The review team judges that the institution has good structural organization, which enables it to be efficient in management. However, we encourage the institution to conduct a detailed long-term performance evaluation of the work of each administrative and management structure. [BM2]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.2*)

- 1.3 UCB carries out its academic activity in full alignment with the Strategic Development Plan approved by the Academic Senate. The institution has consistently implemented its 2024–2030 objectives, expanding its mission through the creation of new study programs and units. [Ev. 16, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3] The simultaneous submission of program accreditation requests for “High Automotive Technician,” “High Electrical Technician,” and “High Technician” profiles alongside the institutional accreditation process reflects progress toward these goals. The Strategic Plan is informed by best practices from comparable institutions nationally and internationally, the evolving context of higher education within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and current economic, social, and legal reforms in Albania. Its core aim is to prepare highly qualified professionals, researchers, and specialists capable of contributing to the country’s socio-economic development and EU integration. Structured around the institution’s mission, the plan outlines short-, medium-, and long-term priorities. In the short term, it focuses on institutional consolidation; in the medium and long term, it aims to develop UCB into a comprehensive center for higher education and research in economics, law, and professional training, while also enhancing infrastructure and exploring the establishment of a university campus.

The review team finds as good practice that UCB has made commendable progress in aligning its academic activity with the objectives of the Strategic Development Plan 2024–2030. A noteworthy, good example is the institution’s simultaneous advancement of academic goals and institutional accreditation, as demonstrated by the coordinated submission of new program accreditation requests. The strategic vision is clearly informed by relevant European and national developments and emphasizes institutional consolidation, professional training, and socio-economic impact. The plan’s structure—clearly distinguishing short-, medium-, and long-term objectives—

demonstrates a coherent and forward-looking approach to institutional development. [BM2, BM4]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.3*)

1.4 The institution has autonomy on organizational structure, academic staff management, and finances. In order to carry out its mission, financial autonomy is ensured by the right to generate lawful revenue from teaching, scientific research, services, and other sources; to receive funding from the government and other organizations; to establish internal guidelines for the financing and use of income; to set study fees; and to manage its assets, to determine criteria for the admission of students in study programs in accordance with the law and other legal and by-law acts in force, to conclude agreements with legal entities, public and private, domestic or foreign, for teaching, research-scientific, qualification activities, etc. The right to self-govern, ensures organizational autonomy and academic freedom. [Ev. 9, BM2; BM4; BM7]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.4*)

1.5 Through its collegial organizations, which have different functions and responsibilities, such as the Senate and Rectorate, the institution promotes productive discourse. Frequent gatherings of these groups help in the formulation and implementation of policies by exhibiting a setting that encourages candid discussion and decision-making (verified through on-site interviews). The different bodies convene on a regular basis in accordance with their bylaws, and agenda items are distributed beforehand. Meetings with staff made it clear to the review team that they felt heard and involved in choices made by the university, both on subjects of personal importance to them and the institution. Periodically, the following convene: The Academic Senate, the Board of Administration, the Rectorate, the Dean's Office, the Departments, the Centers, and the designated Commissions. The members of these structures are provided with discussion materials before each meeting, allowing them the chance to review the materials and consider the options before making any choices. **The review team commends UCB for fostering a collegial and participatory governance culture through the regular and structured functioning of its governing bodies. The systematic distribution of materials prior to meetings and the inclusive engagement of staff in decision-making processes represent good practices that enhance transparency, accountability, and collective ownership of institutional policies.** This participatory approach was clearly validated through on-site interviews, where staff members expressed that their voices are heard and respected in institutional matters. [Ev. 23, 35, 36, 49; BM4, BM5, BM7]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.5*)

1.6 UCB is subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation by the Ministry of Education and Sports. In parallel, the institution conducts internal evaluations through a Rector-appointed working group tasked with reviewing the implementation of the annual action plan. Over the past years, comprehensive analytical reports have been compiled, documenting all institutional activities across teaching, scientific research, staff

qualification, and academic program implementation. These annual reports are distinctive in their detailed, objective-based structure, where each responsible unit reports on the progress of its planned activities. Each report concludes with a summary analysis outlining achievements, developments, challenges encountered, and recommendations for the coming year. The analysis is evidence-based, drawing from data provided by faculty deans and the Director of the CHPS regarding the implementation of teaching and research plans. The 2023–2024 institutional annual report was approved by the Academic Senate, published in both Albanian and English on UCB's official website, and submitted to the Ministry in accordance with MES's official guidelines. These reports serve as key instruments for institutional self-reflection, enabling the identification of both progress and areas requiring improvement. **The review team commends UCB for its well-structured and evidence-based internal evaluation process. The comprehensive annual reports, approved by the Academic Senate and made publicly available in two languages, reflect a strong culture of transparency, accountability, and continuous institutional improvement. [Ev. 30, 34, 38, 43]. (Annex No. 1, Standard I.6)**

1.7 The university employs systematic data collection and feedback for internal quality assurance. Regular evaluations assess the quality of educational programs and organizational units, ensuring the continuous development and improvement of study programs. This commitment to quality assurance was reflected in the discussions during the meeting with Teaching Staff, where quality assurance challenges and strategies are addressed. In addition, since the institution is at the first stage of its functionality, for some activities regarding graduates, alumni is not yet possible to provide information. [Ev. The annual report is drafted by the institution and represents the information from academic and financial activities for the year [Ev. 1.17]. Because it includes thorough analysis, it aids in both internal and external assessments of the institution. The academic activity reports of the main units and minor UCB constituent units served as the basis for the final product. Also, the institution's website offers data on income and budgetary expenses, along with details about the decision-making processes of academic, administrative, and collegial bodies. **The review team affirms that UCB has established a functional internal quality assurance system, supported by systematic data collection and regular evaluations of academic and administrative performance.** The practice of compiling comprehensive annual reports, based on unit-level contributions, reflects a structured and evidence-based approach to institutional monitoring. Furthermore, the public availability of key data on the university's website enhances transparency and demonstrates a commitment to continuous quality improvement, despite limitations in alumni data due to the institution's recent establishment. [Ev. 17, 34, 38, 38.2, 43, 110, 121.6; BM4]. (Annex No. 1, Standard I.7)

1.8 UCB has internal quality assurance policies, processes, and procedures that comply with its internal acts as well as the applicable laws and sub-laws. To ensure quality and



transparency, UCB collaborates with external institutions such as IQE for the evaluation of academic activities and student-staff relations, and with the auditing firm "Grant Thornton" for the independent review of the institution's financial operations. [Ev. 1.21]. The institution monitors the quality of study programs periodically for continuous improvement. This unit gathers data through various questionnaires, including the students' assessments of the subjects, which are also looked at in the annual analysis of the basic units. IQAU is composed of 5 persons; a representation from each faculty, a student, and an external expert. Academic program administration and coordination, including curriculum development, implementation, assessment, and outreach, are provided by the academic program coordinator. To plan, organize, coordinate, evaluate, and participate in an academic program, this position offers specialized academic expertise. The Internal Quality Assurance Unit has proposed a package of evaluation instruments, to periodically evaluate the results of the quality of education, research, human resources, finance, infrastructure, public relations, international relations, social and cultural activities, and works within quality development and improvement activities at UCB. This package consists of formats assessment, categorized according to the need for and importance of assessment, institutionalizing quality culture at institution. **The review team identifies as good practice the systematic and periodic assessments conducted by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU), which include evaluations of academic performance, student feedback, staff performance, and administrative services. This comprehensive and structured evaluation process contributes directly to the continuous improvement of study programs and institutional quality assurance. [Ev. 32, 33, 33.1, 37, 38, 38.1, 110; BM7]. (Annex No. 1, Standard I.8)**

1.9 The Internal Quality Assurance Unit at UCB has proposed a package of evaluation instruments, to periodically evaluate the results of the quality of education, research, human resources, finance, infrastructure, public relations, international relations, social and cultural activities, works within quality development and improvement activities at the institution. Various assessment tools and methodologies are used to evaluate its study programs' effectiveness, aligning with the discussions in the "Evaluation Team Meeting," which highlighted the need for enhanced research publications. The IQAU conducts periodic internal evaluations of the study programs. This structure administers the topic evaluation questionnaire twice a year, just before the start of exam season. The information from the questionnaire is analyzed, and the results and suggestions that apply are included in the report. The reports are included in the self-assessment report for the study program or institutional accreditation, as well as the annual analysis of the units or the institution. The institution has undertaken various promotional activities involving academic staff and students, focusing on its study programs, staff and student academic engagement, labor market demands, and the quality of the teaching and learning process. Contributing to this objective are several key structures, notably the Office of public relations, the student and career counselling office, the Curricula office, the Office of scientific research and projects, the Office of External relations, and the Internal quality

assurance unit, all of which play a vital role in meeting the requirements of this criterion. Additionally, the institution utilizes multiple communication platforms including its official website, email and IT systems to disseminate and reflect its broad institutional activities. **The review team affirms that the University College of Business (UCB), through the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU), demonstrates a structured and well-coordinated approach to internal quality assurance.** The implementation of a broad package of evaluation instruments covering key institutional dimensions education, research, infrastructure internationalization, and student services reflects UCB's ongoing commitment to quality enhancement. The integration of evaluation results into institutional reports and strategic planning shows a clear alignment between assessment, reflection, and improvement processes [Ev. 19, 28, 29, 37, 38, 38.1, 114; BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.9*)

1.10 To ensure and continuously improve the quality of the study programs, the UCB's internal acts anticipate and uphold internal quality policies and processes and involve both internal and external actors. The IQAU includes members from the student body as well as outside specialists who actively participate in its annual activities. The reports produced by the IQAU are made public through the official website. [www.kub.edu.al]. The work plan and departmental discussions include the report findings. The institution's internal acts and the corresponding rules specify the roles and responsibilities of the Institutional Quality Standards and Study Programs, IQAU, and other entities. Involving academic units, staff, and students in the study programs' IQA process, the institution ensures an inclusive approach. The engagement of the fundamental and primary unit responsible for the study programs, the academic, administrative, and staff members, as well as the students in the study programs, is ensured in the evaluation and assurance of the quality of the study programs. When creating and carrying out study plans, the fundamental unit adheres to quality requirements. In this case, it also involves outside specialists in the creation of curricula, reviews of relevant material, or suggestions for fresh study plans. To represent the views of the students, the student representative is asked to attend the meetings that the unit organizes. The IQAU's makeup includes representatives from each primary unit, student representatives, and outside specialists. [Ev. 31, 37, 38, 38.2, 43, 110; www.kub.edu.al], (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.10*)

1.11 In line with Law No. 80/2015 on Higher Education, the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) at UCB has systematically organized periodic evaluations of teaching and research performance across its three main academic units. The resulting reports serve as key references for both external evaluations and internal quality enhancement measures. According to the Student Questionnaire on Teaching Quality for 2023, overall student feedback was highly positive across all evaluated indicators. Students expressed favorable views regarding academic staff performance in all UCB study programs. The analysis considered various factors such as lecturer workload, courses receiving "poor" or "sufficient" ratings, the number of students involved, the quantity of questionnaires

analyzed, and subject-specific characteristics that may have influenced responses. Negative feedback was limited to 2–3 specific questions in a small number of cases and did not extend across all questionnaire items. These cases represented less than 1.5% of total responses. Such findings are forwarded to the Rectorate, which assesses the specific faculty or study program where issues were most noted, enabling timely corrective actions. UCB regularly plans events for students, academic staff, academic assistants, and administrative personnel to educate and increase their understanding of the need of maintaining and enhance the long-term quality of study programs. **The review team considers as good practice the proactive role of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) in designing and applying comprehensive evaluation instruments, including biannual topic-based questionnaires.** These instruments generate data that are systematically analyzed and integrated into self-assessment and annual institutional reports. This evidence-based approach contributes to improving study program effectiveness, aligning institutional activities with labor market needs, and enhancing transparency through the active use of public communication platforms. [Ev. 1.34, 1.35, 1.36, 1.37, 1.38] (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.11*)

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

1. The proactive and inclusive approach to the continuous improvement of its regulatory framework, the transparent process for revising internal regulations, which actively involves key stakeholders, including the Academic Senate, Board of Administration, Student Council, and academic units. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.1*).
2. The drafting of many regulations and procedures in function of the good implementation of the institution's statute. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.1*).
3. The institution has good structural organization, which enables it to be efficient in management. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.2*). UCB has made commendable progress in aligning its academic activity with the objectives of the Strategic Development Plan 2024–2030]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.3*)
4. The inclusive engagement of staff in decision-making processes enhances transparency, accountability, and collective ownership of institutional policies, reflect a strong culture of transparency, accountability, and continuous institutional improvement. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.5*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.6*)

5. The systematic and periodic assessments conducted by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU), which include evaluations of academic performance, student feedback, staff performance, and administrative services. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.8*)

Weaknesses

The review team didn't identify any weaknesses:

Recommendations

The review team didn't make any recommendations:

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following actions are already in progress:

UCB has established a functional internal quality assurance system, supported by systematic data collection and regular evaluations of academic and administrative performance. The practice of compiling comprehensive annual reports, based on unit-level contributions, reflects a structured and evidence-based approach to institutional monitoring. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.7*). The University institution, through the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU), demonstrates a structured and well-coordinated approach to internal quality assurance. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.9*)

Judgement

The standards for Evaluation Area 1: Higher Education Institution - Management, Autonomy, And Quality Assurance are fully met.

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Evaluation Area 2: Resources and Partnership

2.1 The review team affirms that the University College of Business (UCB) demonstrates full compliance with the legal and regulatory framework governing non-public higher education institutions in Albania, including Law 80/2015. The institution has established a clear and transparent recruitment policy for both academic and administrative staff, ensuring alignment with institutional needs and legal provisions. The recruitment process is publicly accessible, merit-based, and well-documented, contributing to institutional integrity and accountability. Furthermore, UCB's efforts to attract academic staff educated at reputable international institutions reflect a strategic commitment to academic excellence and internationalization. As part of this strategy, UCB actively recruits academic personnel educated at reputable international universities. Currently, the institution employs 12 lecturers who have completed their studies abroad, alongside several others actively contributing to scientific research through publications, reports, and participation in specialized training programs. This approach reflects UCB's commitment to enhancing academic quality and promoting a culture of continuous professional growth. The review team identified that the institution demonstrates a commitment to an open and transparent recruitment process. The policies and procedures followed by the institution ensure that hiring practices are equitable and inclusive, aiming to attract a diverse range of qualified individuals to contribute to the institution's academic and administrative roles. [Ev. 19.1, 20, 21, 23, 47, 60, 61, 61.1, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 72.6, 72.7, 111; BMS, BM7]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.1*)

2.2 UCB actively pursues a comprehensive integration policy for academic, scientific-teaching support, and administrative staff, aiming to enhance collaboration, efficiency, and the overall quality of academic processes. Academic staff are meaningfully involved in decision-making through participation in collegial bodies, and their cooperation with teaching and administrative units is emphasized in fulfilling institutional responsibilities. This integration is clearly reflected in collaborative engagement in academic activities such as supervision of professional practices, coursework assignments, and laboratory sessions. The institution maintains an inclusive and informed working culture by regularly training and updating staff on ongoing institutional activities. These trainings—both internal and external—are often organized in cooperation with partner Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), especially within the framework of the Erasmus+ program. UCB has supported the participation of academic and administrative staff in mobility initiatives abroad, which significantly strengthen their professional competencies and academic engagement. The review team encourages UCB to expand its international staff mobility initiatives and formalizes mechanisms for assessing the long-term impact of training and mobility programs on institutional quality and staff performance. Moreover, staff capacities are further developed through participation in collaborative meetings and project presentations, particularly in connection with projects

funded by the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI). These initiatives support international and regional cooperation and contribute to the continuous professional growth of staff members by facilitating knowledge exchange with reputable institutions. Staff are also regularly informed about institutional developments through multiple communication channels, including official announcements, the UCB website, social media, brochures, and newsletters. Beyond academic engagement, UCB staff are actively involved in institutional promotional activities such as career fairs, student recruitment events (e.g., "Work & Study Fair"), public lectures, and community service activities, which further reinforce the institution's mission and values. **The review team affirms that UCB demonstrates a strong commitment to fostering an inclusive, collaborative, and professionally supportive environment for its academic, teaching-support, and administrative staff.** The integration of staff into decision-making processes and institutional development reflects a participatory governance culture that enhances institutional effectiveness. **A notable example of good practice is UCB's comprehensive staff development policy, including regular internal and external training, participation in Erasmus+ mobility programs, and involvement in national and international research projects.** The institution's proactive communication strategy—using multiple platforms such as newsletters, social media, and institutional announcements—further reinforces transparency and staff engagement. Additionally, the provision of social support measures, such as financial assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic, reflects a commendable commitment to staff wellbeing. [Ev. 23, 37, 39.1, 39.2, 41, 42, 43, 54, 57, 64, 66, 72.1, 114, 121.5, 121.6, 121.8; BMS, BM7]. (Annex No. 1, Standard II.2)

2.3 UCB has established a proactive policy for the assessment and ongoing development of academic staff. Annual departmental and faculty plans include provisions for advanced qualification in their respective fields. Targeted training has been conducted in collaboration with the National Accounting Council, IAAE, IBSA, and real estate licensing bodies. The university promotes scholarly advancement through conferences, journal publications, and financial support for publishing in indexed journals. Staff are also supported in developing teaching materials and advancing within academic ranks. Performance evaluation is conducted annually through standardized forms and student feedback via IQAU-administered surveys. These evaluations inform institutional decisions and improvements. Independent evaluations by the Institute for Quality in Education (IQE) have been conducted multiple times, offering external validation of staff performance and institutional quality. Career development is actively encouraged, with many staff members pursuing doctoral or academic titles. UCB has seen measurable advancement, with recent doctoral defenses and others in progress. These coordinated efforts demonstrate UCB's structured and supportive environment for staff development and performance enhancement. The review team concludes that UCB has established a well-structured and effective system for the assessment and continuous professional development of its academic staff. The institution actively fosters staff advancement through targeted training, support for academic publications, teaching material

development, and career progression. Regular performance evaluations—both internal and external—are systematically used to inform improvements and ensure academic quality. These initiatives reflect a coherent and strategic commitment to enhancing staff competencies and strengthening the overall academic profile of the institution. [Ev. 30, 33, 33.1, 38, 38.1, 39.1, 43.1, 43.1.1, 59, 64, 65, 66, 72.3, 72.4, 72.6, 72.7, 104, 110, 111; BM5, BM7]. *[Annex No. 1, Standard II.3]*

2.4 The University College of Business (UCB) demonstrates a strong institutional commitment to social responsibility through structured initiatives involving students and staff in cooperation with partners such as the Albanian Red Cross, NGOs, and the Student Council. UCB supports participation with logistical and financial resources, promotes student inclusion in cultural, artistic, and sports events, and has achieved notable success in university competitions. It upholds staff rights by ensuring contracts are fully compliant with labor laws, offering health and life insurance, and providing financial support during emergencies. From 2022–2025, UCB awarded scholarships to over 100 students with academic merit and financial need. Staff integration and development are also prioritized. UCB maintains a stable academic body, with many lecturers serving between 4 to 12 years. The Human Resources Office ensures timely fulfillment of all obligations, including retirement-linked indefinite contracts for qualified staff. In 2023–2024, UCB underwent a significant internal reorganization—merging faculties, opening new programs and units, and aligning academic offers with labor market needs. These changes led to a 25–30% increase in student enrollment and the hiring of new academic staff, resulting in a well-balanced structure across departments. The institution continues to meet all legal requirements regarding the number and qualification of academic staff and maintains a favorable staff-to-student ratio. **The review team considers UCB's structured approach to social responsibility and institutional restructuring as good practice.** The combination of sustained student engagement in community initiatives, targeted scholarship schemes, long-term staff retention, and academic reorganization aligned with labor market needs demonstrates a proactive and inclusive institutional culture that supports both academic and social development. [Ev. 17, 43.2, 43.2.2, 47, 52, 53, 59, 72, 72.1, 72.2, 119, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 14, 14.1, 44, 50, 50.1, 50.2; BM4, BM5]. *(Annex No. 1, Standard II.4).*

2.5 For academic and administrative staff, the institution honours and carries out its employees' contractual work requirements and obligations, as well as financial and social security obligations and other duties resulting from current laws and bylaws. After the Board of Administration approves employment, the Rector concludes the indefinite-term employment contract for academic staff and academic assistants working for the institution. The contract is renewed based on performance evaluations and quality assessments in the areas of scientific research, teaching, and the support and advancement of the institution. **UCB based on its mission and objectives, commits to guarantee the long-term sustainability of its academic staff. This approach ensures stability and**

continuity in the academic staff, which is crucial for maintaining the quality of education and research. The basis for recruitment, employment arrangements, and employment reports is the Labour Code, the requirements for academic engagement, curriculum, and/or function at the academy, and the specific provisions in the specific staff employment contract, including descriptions of work. UCB systematically evaluates and supports its academic and administrative staff by providing a conducive environment for academic, administrative, and social activities. Staff performance is assessed through key indicators, including annual performance reports, student questionnaires, and IQAU evaluations conducted each semester. The institution actively promotes professional and scientific development by supporting staff qualifications and research activities. Academic staff benefit from free publication opportunities in UCB's Book of Proceedings and Scientific Journal for Professional Studies, published 1–2 times annually. Additionally, UCB allocates a dedicated budget to fund staff publications in impact factor and Scopus-indexed journals, as well as participation in international conferences and trainings. Currently, 7 academic staff members are pursuing doctoral studies, and 5 teaching assistants are in the process of earning academic degree. [Ev. 29, 33, 41, 43.4, 52, 53, 60, 66, 67, 72.4, 72.6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.5*)

2.6 The institution has a structured process for evaluating and supporting its staff to meet their academic and administrative responsibilities while also promoting their academic success and growth. **UCB through IQAU has established personnel management policies that are relevant to both academic and non-academic staff, starting with identifying the human resource needs and assessing the performance of current staff.** The approach involves performance evaluations and providing the necessary resources and training to help the staff effectively fulfil their duties. The staff receives additional training during the academic year to clarify the contents and process. The evaluation is based on self-assessment where the head department assesses the academic staff's work using performance evaluation and related metrics. Student questionnaires are used to track and assess how well academic staff members are fulfilling their duties in relation to teaching processes. For administrative staff evaluation, UCB organizes an annual questionnaire. The collected information is analysed to provide a report and overall assessment. The annual evaluation also is performed for each unit and for overall institutional evaluation. **Review team identified that the institution appraises and supports its own staff in meeting their annual academic and administrative obligations in accordance with individual contracts, the role, activities and workload.** Creating specialized policies and procedures aids staff in managing their responsibilities throughout the school year. Additionally, there are clear and transparent terms and methods for taking disciplinary and administrative measures against violators, as well as provisions of individual contracts, performance assessments and compensation based on expected contributions, and reviews of contractual conditions. [Ev. 29, 33, 33.1, 38, 38.2, 52, 60, 66, 67, 72, 72.4, 72.8]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.6*)

2.7 UCB effectively manages its real estate assets, ensuring they fully support academic, administrative, and social activities. All premises are maintained and continuously improved to provide optimal conditions for teaching and learning. The institution operates in two main facilities—Building A and Building B—leased under long-term contracts (5–10 years), both adapted specifically for higher education purposes in line with MES requirements. These premises are constructed using high-quality materials and meet modern standards for safety, hygiene, and accessibility. Building B serves all three academic units, while Building A, located in central Lapraka, is dedicated to the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Sciences. Facilities include modern lecture halls, seminar rooms, and six fully equipped laboratories: one for Auto mechanics, one Electrical, one Electrotechnics, and three for Computer Science and Digital Electronics. All classrooms are equipped with air conditioning, internet, laptops, and projectors to support contemporary teaching methods. UCB prioritizes safety, with annual certifications of electrical systems, fire protection, hygiene standards, and workplace risk assessments carried out by licensed entities such as Safety Work Albania. Regular training on safety protocols is provided to staff and students. Investments in infrastructure represent a significant part of UCB's budget, aimed at ensuring quality academic environments. The institution has also integrated hybrid and online teaching modalities post-pandemic and organizes 1–2 international conferences annually. Looking forward, UCB's Strategic Development Plan (2026–2030) envisions the construction of its own university campus. The current facilities are systematically monitored and inventoried for capacity, function, and technical specifications in line with MES standards. **We found that the institution has made investments in the improvement of the infrastructure and consistently modernized its current facilities and equipment with the good support of the founders. The review team identified that the legal quality criteria are met in terms of the quality of learning environments compared with actual student numbers. [Ev. 31, 74, 74.1, 74.2, 74.3, 74.4, 74.5, 74.6, 75, 76, 77, 59, 59.1, 16]. (Annex No. 1, Standard II.7)**

2.8 UCB operates in two main academic buildings (A and B), along with several auxiliary and administrative facilities that fully support its educational mission. The infrastructure includes lecture halls, seminar rooms, workshops, laboratories, offices for departments and academic staff, and administrative units such as finance, HR, curriculum, and the Center for Scientific Research, Projects, and Innovation (a department-level unit at FECS). The institution maintains a well-equipped physical library with over 7,500 volumes (contracted and open access), an online library, and dedicated halls for scientific conferences. Buildings A and B are fitted with modern teaching technologies, alternative energy sources (including high-capacity generators), proper ventilation, lighting, thermal and acoustic insulation, and 24-hour surveillance systems. Conference rooms accommodate 80–100 participants, while lecture/seminar rooms hold between 30 and 120 students. Daily in-class student attendance reaches 800–850, within the capacity standards of DCM No. 418, dated 16.05.2017. According to MES reports, UCB meets all regulatory criteria regarding usable space per student and maintains an academic

environment conducive to teaching, learning, and research. The institution has made available the infrastructure and environment needed to support all academic activities linked to teaching and research. This involves making certain that the spaces have the tools and technology required to support the institution's activities, learning, research, and social activities. In general, all teaching and learning spaces are well equipped with smart boards, wi-fi, natural light, air conditioning, etc. Protocols for quality control, communication of possible problems, and cooperative resolution were in place. The academic staff has the necessary infrastructure to support their research activities, according to the evaluation team's assessment of the scientific infrastructure. **The review team affirms that the university is working to enhance the infrastructure for information technology and automatization for professional study programs. [Ev. 74, 74.1, 74.2, 74.3, 74.4, 74.5, 74.6, 75, 76, 116, 59, 16]. (Annex No. 1, Standard II.8)**

2.9 UCB places a strong emphasis on providing high-quality infrastructure for its academic staff and students. The institution offers a spacious and well-maintained campus located outside the city, featuring modern, accessible teaching and working environments. Classrooms are equipped with new furniture and smart boards to enhance the learning experience. They also include natural lighting, air conditioning, and ventilation systems, fostering an atmosphere conducive to interaction, discussion, and active engagement between students and faculty. Lecture halls are fully equipped with necessary didactic and technological tools, and sanitary facilities meet hygiene requirements, with separate provisions for staff and students. Continuous water and electricity supply ensures uninterrupted operations. Modern laboratories support both academic and research activities, offering students practical, hands-on training aligned with legal and professional standards. The campus includes spaces for academic and administrative staff, department offices, faculty secretariats, the Academic Senate, a library, and computer/multimedia labs, all sized appropriately for the institution's population. Safety is ensured through certified fire protection systems and regularly maintained facilities. Additionally, UCB has made infrastructure improvements to support students with disabilities, including access ramps and barrier-free pathways. To promote inclusive education, UCB implements support policies across all study cycles—professional, bachelor, master, and integrated programs—providing tuition reductions or full scholarships to students from vulnerable groups, including orphans, individuals with disabilities, and Roma and Balkan-Egyptian communities. Reserved quotas are allocated annually, affirming UCB's commitment to equal access in higher education. **The review team found that the institution ensures a good standard of infrastructure by providing spacious, accessible, and well-equipped working, teaching, and laboratory environments. These facilities are designed to support effective academic engagement and include appropriate accommodation for students and staff with disabilities, such as access ramps and barrier-free internal pathways. The physical spaces promote an inclusive and supportive learning atmosphere, enhancing the overall academic and professional experience for all members of the university**



community. [Ev. 31, 59, 59.1, 72, 72.1, 74, 74.1, 74.2, 74.3, 74.4, 74.5, 74.6, 75, 76, 78, 83, 116, 116.1, 119, 130; BM3, BM5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard II.9)

2.10 UCB provides modern laboratories that meet high professional and scientific standards, particularly for its programs in computer science, engineering, and professional technical education. These laboratories serve both educational and research purposes and are fully integrated into the teaching process for bachelor and master's programs in Business Informatics, Information Technology, and Computer Science (with profiles in Business Informatics, IT, and E-Commerce and Innovation). Following a recent academic reorganization, UCB established the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Sciences (FECS), which now hosts all informatics and engineering programs. A new bachelor program in Computer Engineering has also been launched, offering three distinct profiles: a) Computer Engineering, b) Software Engineering applied in Economics, and c) Electronic and Digital Engineering. In parallel, the College of Higher Professional Studies (CHPS) continues to operate with 2-year professional programs in Administration, Finance, Law, Tourism, and newly developed technical programs in: Automotive Technology (Automechanics, Autotronics, Hybrid-Electric), Electrical Engineering (Energy, Automation, Electromechanics), Computer Systems, ICT, and Multimedia. All professional and technical programs are supported with dedicated spaces for laboratory instruction, exercises, seminars, and project presentations, as well as on-site professional practice. UCB has invested in creating specialized laboratory environments tailored to each program, equipped with the necessary tools, manuals, safety equipment, and professional supervision by qualified support staff. Professional internships are an integral part of the curricula—organized annually for technical programs and at the end of the study cycle for bachelor and master's programs—carried out in cooperation with companies and service providers under the supervision of institutional and external mentors. These developments reflect UCB's strategic commitment to aligning infrastructure with academic reforms and labor market demands, ensuring that students acquire strong practical and technical competencies. **The review team during the site visit found that the facility's laboratory infrastructure was adequate.** [Ev. 12, 12.1, 14, 44, 45, 46, 46.1, 74, 74.1, 74.4, 75, 83, 99, 99.1, 119; BM4, BM5; Tour]. (Annex No. 1, Standard II.10)

2.11 The University College of Business (UCB) ensures comprehensive documentation of its academic and institutional activities through both physical (hardcopy) and electronic systems. A dedicated structure, the Protocol-Archive Office, is responsible for managing, archiving, and maintaining official records in accordance with Law No. 9154, dated 06.11.2003 "On Archives" and the applicable Technical and Professional Norms of the Archival Service in the Republic of Albania. All documents are archived systematically by issue and academic year, following internal regulations that guarantee legal compliance and operational accuracy. UCB has developed a digital documentation system, managed by the educational secretaries and the Chief Secretary, allowing the

digitization of records, including those related to student registration and academic progress. This is supported through platforms such as: HEQAA Management System, ESC Matriculation System, AAN Portal, U-Albania system for graduate registration. Student data is recorded in both written and electronic registers, including: the fundamental student register, academic performance registers, exam protocols and graduation records. These records are maintained by faculty secretaries and subsequently transferred to the Protocol-Archive Office, while the Diploma distribution register is handled by the Chief Secretary in collaboration with the Human Resources Office. Administrative and academic documentation—such as ministerial directives, institutional decisions (SA, BA), and internal regulations—are retained at both unit level and centrally. All data is processed with strict confidentiality in compliance with the Law on the Protection of Personal Data. The Chief secretary, who also serves as Institutional coordinator, oversees the collection, verification, and reporting of official statistics, ensuring compliance with the Ministry of Education's guidelines. Student records include, personal and academic data, Matriculation numbers, Curricula and ECTS credits, Records of study progress and final results, Diploma and Diploma Supplement registers. Each faculty's secretariat is accountable for maintaining these records, in both formats, with high standards of accuracy. Official correspondence, administrative acts, and decisions are stored in dual format: electronically and as signed hardcopies archived through the Protocol Office. Moreover, UCB maintains comprehensive data on study programs, course structures, credit allocations, and all academic documentation that supports teaching, learning, and student services. Review team confirms that UCB upholds a transparent, secure, and fully compliant documentation system that supports quality assurance and institutional integrity across all academic processes. [Ev. 20, 21, 31, 78, 79, 80, 80.1, 114; BM7]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.11; Standard II.12*)

2.12 Documentation of academic activities in both hard and soft copy is maintained by the institution and is stipulated clearly in its main regulatory documents. This ensures that all academic processes, decisions, and outcomes are recorded and accessible, thus providing transparency and accountability. More specifically, the documentation related to human resources, related contracts, and respective procedures are filed in the Office of Human Resources. In addition, at the start of the academic year, the staff is assigned their annual workload and other expected outputs, which is done in writing and constitute an integral part of their overall assessment. Overall, the review team noted that at UCB there are effective coordinated management systems in place to ensure the care and preservation of all documentation and information, including student data held by secretariats. In addition, the review team found that electronic storage and archiving facilities within libraries met the expectations. [Ev. 21, 29, 60, 69, 69.1, 73, 73.1, 78, 79, 80, 114; BM7]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.13*)

2.13 The University College of Business (UCB) has established a dedicated Protocol-Archive Office for the classification, storage, and archiving of all institutional and

academic documentation in both physical and electronic formats. This activity is conducted in accordance with Law No. 9154, dated 06.11.2003 "On Archives" and related technical norms. UCB maintains a comprehensive documentation system through physical registers (e.g., the fundamental register, student performance registers, exam minutes, and diploma records) and a digitalized platform managed by the Chief Secretariat. This ensures secure and structured access to academic and administrative records. Key platforms used include the HEQAA Management System, ESC Matriculation System, AAN Portal, and U-Albania, which support student registration and graduation data. The secretariats of the main academic units are responsible for recording, verifying, and transferring the finalized documentation to the archive. Diploma distribution is overseen by the Chief Secretary and the Human Resources Office. All procedures comply with the Law on the Protection of Personal Data, ensuring confidentiality and data integrity. UCB also systematically collects, processes, and reports statistical data through its Institutional Coordinator (Chief Secretary), based on requirements set by the Ministry of Education. Registers are maintained permanently in both formats and include student identification, academic results, diploma supplements, study program structures, and ECTS credits. All academic and administrative acts, communications, and student documents are stored in both digital and printed forms, with each official action being protocolled and archived accordingly. This structured system enables full traceability, legal compliance, and support for institutional quality assurance and transparency. The basic register of students with their personal information, the basic register for the evaluations received while completing the study program in written and electronic form, and the register for the diploma or diplomas obtained along with the diploma supplement are all kept by the teaching secretariat. [Ev. 21, 54, 54.1, 54.2, 54.3, 54.4, 54.5, 54.6, 54.7, 54.8, 55, 55.1, 55.2, 56, 57, 58, 58.1, 58.2, 73, 73.1, 79, 80, BM7].
(Annex No. 1, Standard II.13)

2.14 The University College of Business (UCB) has established an integrated institutional information and management system that aligns with the Law on Higher Education and its implementing regulations. This system supports both academic and administrative operations and ensures effective internal communication and data management. Key components of the system include: The official institutional website (in Albanian and English), regularly updated with comprehensive information on UCB's mission, programs, organizational structure, academic calendar, admissions, tuition fees, and ongoing activities. A dedicated electronic portal for academic staff and students, facilitating access to syllabi, lecture materials, academic calendars, grades, course assignments, and official notifications. Google Education, Edu4Schools etc. The information infrastructure includes modern IT laboratories, classroom audiovisual technology, email domains, and social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube), ensuring widespread, real-time dissemination of information. UCB has contracted a specialized IT firm (Trusted Business Partners®) to manage its servers, email domains (Office 365), and website maintenance, ensuring data security and professional oversight. All UCB facilities are equipped with high-speed internet (200

Mb/s) and full Wi-Fi coverage. Classrooms are digitally connected and support interactive learning. Students are provided with institutional email addresses, granting access to the portal from enrollment through graduation. The academic and administrative secretariats manage data regarding student records, financial documentation, contracts, and exam results both in hardcopy and digital formats. The entire system is governed by internal regulations and complies with national data protection laws. Through its platforms, UCB ensures transparency and accessibility of data for students, staff, partners, and the public. The website and portals serve as central hubs for academic information, regulatory documents (statutes, development strategies, regulations), staff directories, scientific activities, and external partnerships. The institution places particular emphasis on accurate, real-time communication with students, supported by the responsiveness and professionalism of teaching secretaries, who play a key role in ensuring clarity and consistency in academic procedures and information delivery. **The review team considers UCB's integrated institutional information and management systems good practice. The combination of digital platforms, real-time communication tools, and centralized academic and administrative services—along with the involvement of professional IT support—ensures transparency, accessibility, and data security. The system's alignment with legal requirements and its inclusive communication strategy significantly enhances the institution's operational efficiency and stakeholder engagement.** [Ev. 21, 73, 73.1, 80, 122, 123, 121.5, 121.6, 121.7, 121.8, BM7]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.14*)

2.15 The institution has demonstrated continuous commitment to strengthening its information technology (IT) infrastructure to support teaching, research, and administrative operations. The institution systematically invests in modernizing facilities, increasing computerization capacities, and enhancing the quality of academic and administrative environments for students and staff. UCB operates two dedicated high-speed fiber-optic internet lines that ensure uninterrupted wireless (Wi-Fi) coverage across all floors of both central facilities, Building A and Building B. Every lecture and seminar room is equipped with a laptop, video projector, air conditioning, and internet access, ensuring optimal conditions for digital teaching and student engagement. UCB maintains its own official website, which is regularly updated by contracted IT professionals. This platform serves as a central information hub for academic, scientific, and institutional communication. Additionally, UCB offers access to study halls and library rooms with computers that support both physical and electronic library resources. The institution has long-standing access to the JSTOR international digital library under a formal subscription agreement, offering students and academic staff access to millions of scientific books and articles across disciplines. UCB also provides access to various free electronic library platforms, further facilitating research and study. UCB currently operates three fully equipped computer laboratories with 26 computers, 20 and 50 computers, supporting both undergraduate and Master's level instruction in IT-related programs. In both buildings, internet café-style spaces are available to students for conducting lab work, academic research, or accessing study materials. The entire



institutional space is covered by 24-hour internet access, supporting seamless communication and information exchange among students, staff, and administration. Since the 2023–2024 academic year, UCB has expanded its IT offerings through the establishment of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Sciences (FECS). The faculty offers: Bachelor's programs in Computer Engineering, with profiles in Computer Engineering, Applied Software Engineering, and Electronic & Digital Engineering. Bachelor's and Master of Science programs in Business Informatics and Information Technology, formerly under the Faculty of Economics. The implementation of modern IT systems and facilities is complemented by regular trainings and capacity-building activities for academic and administrative staff. These efforts are informed by periodic evaluations from the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) and external partners which confirm high satisfaction levels among students. **The review team affirms that the University College of Business has demonstrated a clear and sustained commitment to strengthening its IT infrastructure, ensuring comprehensive digital support for teaching, research, and administration.** The institution's continuous investment in high-speed connectivity, equipment, libraries, and the expansion of IT-related academic programs reflects a strategic approach to digital transformation, aligned with student needs and contemporary educational standards. [Ev. 48, 73, 73.1, 74, 74.1, 74.4, 83, 116, 116.1, 121.6, 121.9, BM7]. (*Annex No. I, Standard II.15*)

2.16 The review team affirms that UCB has established a transparent and well-structured budgeting process that ensures financial accountability and effective resource allocation aligned with institutional objectives. The budgeting procedures are clearly defined in the institutional policy manual, widely understood by academic and administrative staff, and implemented in accordance with applicable laws and internal regulations. The institution demonstrates responsible financial management supported by active participation from its units and oversight by designated structures. The review team finds that UCB's budgeting process is distinguished by clear, open protocols. This strategy guarantees financial accountability and facilitates the efficient distribution of resources in accordance with the institution's aims and objectives. Being a non-public university, UCB is primarily funded by the proceeds from its operations as well as numerous grants, contributions, and gifts from both Albanian and foreign legal entities. The established budgets, internal policies, and relevant laws are followed in the administration of these funds. The self-evaluation report states that the following sources account for the majority of UCB's revenue streams: tuition fees; money from services rendered to outside parties; research projects; gifts, inheritances, and public and private donations. UCB's budget is prepared on an annual basis by the administrator based on proposals from the units of UCB and submitted for approval to the Board of Administration and Academic Senate. This procedure is published on the policy manual of UCB and staff members and academics seemed to be well-acquainted with it [www.kub.edu.al]. UCB has committed staff members in charge of finances who monitor expenditures and file the necessary internal and external documents. Additionally, the staff plans internal meetings with different stakeholders to talk about and help make

decisions on financial matters including income, expenses, and so forth. The UCB policy manual contains information on this approach, and faculty and staff members appeared to be familiar with it. [Ev.2.28, 2.66, 2.67, 2.44, 2.67], [Tour]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.16*).

2.17 UCB implements its financial policies through structured governance in line with Law No. 80/2015, its Statute, and internal regulations. The Academic Senate and Board of Administration oversee financial planning, supported by the Financial Programming and Reporting Office, which prepares annual financial statements in accordance with national standards. These include detailed reports on revenue and expenditures, audited annually by an independent firm and approved by institutional bodies. Financial transparency is ensured through public reporting and disaggregation of data by program and unit. UCB maintains sustainability through tuition, training programs, and externally funded projects (e.g., Erasmus+), applying public HEI standards in budgeting, auditing, and resource allocation. [Ev. 19, 20, 21, 25, 70, 71, 71.1, 71.2, 71.3, 71.4, 71.5, 72, 121.7, BM4, BM7]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.17*).

2.18 UCB applies a structured financial control policy, in line with the HEL, Law No. 25/2018 "On Accounting and Financial Statements," and other applicable legal and regulatory frameworks, including its own Statute and Internal Regulations. Financial control is exercised through an internal system managed by the Office of Financial Programming and Reporting, which operates a certified Accounting Information Program and maintains compliance with all relevant documentation and reporting standards. Internal financial audits are conducted periodically by UCB's specialized personnel to assess risk areas. In parallel, IQAU monitors the implementation of academic quality standards, including financial processes related to study programs. UCB is also subject to external financial audits, carried out annually by the international firm Grant Thornton, whose reports are submitted to the Academic Senate and Board of Administration for discussion and approval. The certified Annual Financial Statements are then published on the UCB website and registered with the National Business Center, ensuring full transparency. In addition, financial and legal compliance is verified by public authorities such as the General Directorate of Taxes and the Ministry of Education and HEQAA, particularly during institutional or program accreditation processes. UCB also engages in voluntary external evaluations, with results reviewed by governing bodies and followed by improvement plans. The Annual Financial Report includes clear data on revenues mainly student tuition fees and their allocation across key expenditure categories. These financial insights support planning, student service improvement, and institutional sustainability. Overall, UCB's financial management practices ensure legal compliance, transparency, and effective use of resources to support academic quality. **The evaluation team concluded that the institution has the adequate budget to support the activities carried out in the institution, the investments made in the infrastructure and the**

current investments identified during the visit. [Ev. 19, 20, 21, 25, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 70, 71, 71.1, 71.2, 71.3, 71.4, 71.5, 121.7, BM4]. (Annex No. 1, Standard II.18).

2.19 During meetings and supporting documents, review team identify that the institution has long-standing and fruitful partnerships with different institutions and organisations. UCB adopts an open strategy for cooperation and partnership at various levels, including regional, national, and international. This approach fosters collaboration and networking, enhancing the institution's ability for academic and research exchange. The institution wants to establish itself as a national and international hub for excellence in higher education, with a focus on research and innovation, and academics. The institution has outlined the goals of its collaboration policy in detail in its institutional growth strategy in order to carry out its mission. Partnerships have made it possible to implement both national and international projects and to plan significant events. The review team identify that cooperation agreements with local, national, and international institutions, as well as with other universities around the country, reflect these aims and ambitions. [Ev. 16, 39, 39.1, 39.2, 40, 41, 42, 51, 51.1, 51.2, 51.3, 51.4, 51.5, 51.6, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, BM6]. (Annex No. 1, Standard II.19)

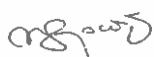
2.20 The University College of Business (UCB) actively fosters cooperation with public and private institutions to enhance academic quality, administrative performance, scientific research, and professional practice. These partnerships are essential to aligning study programs with labor market needs and supporting students' professional development across all study cycles. UCB has formalized numerous cooperation agreements with key public bodies and private entities, including central and local government institutions, judicial bodies, auditing and legal studios, commercial banks, and major business groups. Academic partnerships also extend to professional organizations like the National Accounting Council (NAC), Institute of Authorized Accounting Experts (IAAE), and Approved Accounting Association, ensuring the relevance and applicability of business and finance study programs. In support of ICT-related programs, UCB collaborates with leading companies such as Infosoft Systems, Alpha, Bilanc Shpk, Financa 5, and Datech Shpk, offering students opportunities for internships, training, and applied research. These agreements are strategically tailored to the institution's study profiles, enhancing student employability and skill acquisition. Professional practice is supported by dedicated computer, informatics, and electronics laboratories, and UCB regularly organizes open lectures, training sessions, and joint activities with its institutional partners. Guest speakers from industry and government frequently contribute to teaching and professional orientation sessions. UCB also emphasizes student engagement beyond academics. Partnerships with organizations like the Albanian Federation of University Sports support student participation in extracurricular and sports events, reinforcing personal and social development. Through these collaborations, UCB ensures dynamic interaction between academia and industry, enriching its educational offer and preparing students for successful integration into the

professional environment. [Ev. 43.2, 43.2.1, 43.2.2, 43.7, 47, 51, 51.1, 51.2, 51.3, 51.5, 56, 59, 81.1, 82, 99, BM6]. (Annex No. 1, Standard II.20)

2.21 The institution implements an active policy in support of internationalization and mobility, aiming to enhance the academic and professional capacities of both students and staff. The institution promotes and supports participation in the Erasmus+ program, enabling academic exchanges, staff training, and student mobility across a wide network of partner institutions. UCB has signed cooperation agreements with over 20 respected higher education institutions across Europe. These partnerships facilitate student exchanges, academic staff training, participation in joint research projects, and co-organization of international conferences. As a result, UCB students have completed mobilities in countries such as Spain, Hungary, and Slovenia, while academic staff have participated in teaching and training abroad. In last years, UCB has been a partner in the Erasmus+ Joint Project “Creating Opportunities for VET Mobility in Hospitality and Tourism”, contributing with its academic expertise in economics and research. The institution continues to build bridges with the European academic community through active engagement in project consortia and hosting of foreign lecturers. UCB also supports academic mobility by inviting international experts for open lectures and scientific collaboration. In line with its internationalization strategy, the institution has submitted applications to license several first- and second-cycle study programs in English, aiming to welcome full-time foreign students and staff through Erasmus+ or other mobility schemes.

The review team recommends that UCB further strengthen its internationalization strategy by increasing the number and diversity of active mobility agreements, particularly beyond the Erasmus+ framework, to include global partnerships outside Europe. Additionally, the institution is encouraged to develop a formal monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track the long-term academic and professional impact of student and staff mobility. Promoting international double-degree programs and expanding the offer of English-taught courses would also enhance UCB’s attractiveness to foreign students and staff. [Ev. 16, 39, 39.1, 39.2, 40, 41, 42, 51, 51.1, 54, 55, 57, 58, 112, 123, 127.1, BM6]. (Annex No. 1, Standard II.21)

2.22 The University College of Business (UCB) bases the development and revision of its study programs and institutional structures on market research, national development strategies, scientific participation, and labor market trends. The design and reorganization of faculties and programs—such as the Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Applied and Political Sciences, and the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science—are guided by detailed market studies confirming the demand for qualified specialists in Albania and the region. UCB maintains partnerships with public and private entities that provide regular updates on economic, legal, and labor market developments, including bulletins from the Albanian Parliament, Bank of Albania, and other regulatory bodies. These inputs are



integrated into UCB's long-term strategic planning (2020–2025 and 2024–2030), which aligns with the MES Strategy 2025–2030 and emphasizes employability, innovation, and international cooperation. To strengthen the link between studies and employment, UCB has established the Student and Career Counseling Office (SCCO), which advises students and monitors alumni integration into the labor market. This office collects feedback on curricula and employment outcomes and informs graduates about job openings. UCB has signed cooperation agreements with over 100 national and international institutions to facilitate student internships and job placements. Employment rates for Master of Science graduates in Informatics and IT exceed 94%. Outstanding graduates are also employed as assistant lecturers or administrative staff at UCB. Regular analysis of these collaborations ensures their impact and identifies new opportunities to better serve students and the institution's mission. **The review team affirms that the University College of Business (UCB) demonstrates a proactive and structured approach to aligning its academic offer with national strategies and labor market needs.** The institution regularly utilizes data from market studies, national development frameworks, and feedback from stakeholders to guide the development, revision, and restructuring of its study programs and institutional units. The establishment of dedicated structures such as the Student and Career Counseling Office, along with active partnerships across sectors, ensures that UCB's academic planning is evidence-based, employment-oriented, and responsive to both national and regional demands. The high employment rate of graduates, particularly in Informatics and IT, is a clear indicator of the effectiveness of these efforts. [Ev. 16, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 50, 50.1, 50.2, 52, 53, 95, 96, 113, 125, 125.1, BM5, BM6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.22*)

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

1. The institution demonstrates a commitment to an open and transparent recruitment process to ensure that hiring practices are equitable and inclusive, aiming to attract a diverse range of talented and qualified individuals to contribute to the institution's academic and administrative roles. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.1*). UCB commits to guarantee the long-term sustainability of its academic staff. This approach ensures stability and continuity in the academic staff, which is crucial for maintaining the quality of education and research. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.5*)
2. UCB has a comprehensive staff development policy, including regular internal and external training, participation in Erasmus+ mobility programs, and involvement in national and international research projects. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.2*)



3. UCB through IQAU has established personnel management policies that are relevant to both academic and non-academic staff, starting with identifying the human resource needs, involving in internal and external training, participation in Erasmus+ mobility programs, involvement in national and international research projects and assessing the performance of staff periodically. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.6*)
4. The institution has made investments in the improvement of the infrastructure and consistently modernized its current facilities and learning environments compared with actual student numbers. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.7*). The facilities are designed to support effective academic engagement and include appropriate accommodation for students and staff with disabilities, such as access ramps and barrier-free internal pathways. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.9*)
5. UCB has an effective coordinated management system to ensure the care and preservation of all documentation and information, including student data held by secretariats included. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.13*). The combination of digital platforms, real-time communication tools, and centralized academic and administrative services—along with the involvement of professional IT support—ensures transparency, accessibility, and data security. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.14*)

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

The institution's current internationalization profile demonstrates limited diversification, as active mobility agreements are predominantly concentrated within the Erasmus+ framework. There is a notable lack of global partnerships, international exposure for students and staff. The offering of English-taught courses remains limited, and the institution has yet to develop or promote international double-degree programs, which could enhance its attractiveness to prospective international students and academic staff. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.21*)

Recommendations

The review team made the following recommendations:

The review team recommends that UCB further strengthen its internationalization strategy by increasing the number and diversity of active mobility agreements, particularly beyond the Erasmus+ framework, to include global partnerships outside Europe. Additionally, the institution is encouraged to develop a formal monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track the long-term academic and professional impact of

student and staff mobility. Promoting international double-degree programs and expanding the offer of English-taught courses would also enhance UCB's attractiveness to foreign students and staff. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.21*)

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following actions are already in progress:

1. The institution is working to enhance the infrastructure for information technology and automatization for professional study programs. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.8*)
2. The University College of Business demonstrates a proactive and structured approach to aligning its academic offer with national strategies and labor market needs. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.22*)
3. UCB demonstrates a strong commitment to fostering an inclusive, collaborative, and professionally supportive environment for its academic, teaching-support, and administrative staff. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.2*)
4. The institution has a clear and sustained commitment to strengthening its IT infrastructure, ensuring comprehensive digital support for teaching, research, and administration. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.15*)
5. The UCB has established a transparent and well-structured budgeting process that ensures financial accountability and effective resource allocation aligned with institutional objectives. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.16*).

Judgement

The standards for Evaluation Area 2: Resources and Partnership are fully met.



Evaluation Area 3: Study programs, Teaching, and Evaluation

3.1. The University College of Business designs and delivers study programs aligned with its institutional mission, national development priorities, and market needs. These programs reflect the strategic objectives outlined in UCB's development strategies (2015–2020, 2021–2026, 2024–2030), as well as national education policies (2021–2026, 2025–2030), aiming to enhance Albania's technological and socio-economic development through modern, labor-market-oriented curricula. UCB's mission, defined in its Statute, commits the institution to offering high-quality programs in compliance with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the Bologna Process. The institution operates through three core academic units: The Faculty of Economics, Law and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, and the College of Higher Professional Studies. Currently, UCB offers 19 accredited study programs: 6 Bachelor programs, 2 Professional Master programs, 5 Master of Science programs, 1 integrated Master of Science in Law, and 5 Level 5 professional programs. These are further subdivided into 20 profiles, resulting in 39 diploma options tailored to national and international labor demands. Originally focused on Economics and Law (VKM no. 651, 2011), UCB has since expanded into informatics, computer engineering, and business-related service fields. All programs are harmonized with UCB's academic profile and strategic vision. UCB has recently applied for licensing Bachelor and Master programs in English in key fields, preparing to welcome foreign students and academic staff, especially within Erasmus+ frameworks. The full academic offer is published on UCB's website, regularly promoted through brochures and updated based on labor market trends to ensure continued relevance and competitiveness. [Ev. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 7.1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 11.1, 16, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 43, 43.1, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 48.1, 49, 86, 113, 114, BM1, BM2, BM5]. *(Annex No. 1, Standard III.1)*

3.2. The University College of Business (UCB) designs and implements its study programs in alignment with national educational priorities and international standards, guided by its Strategic Development Plans for 2015–2020, 2021–2026, and 2024–2030. These strategies ensure a coherent link between UCB's mission, market demands, internal academic capacities, and broader socio-economic trends. In line with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) strategy for 2025–2030, UCB regularly updates and improves its academic offerings. This includes the development of new study programs, the expansion of teaching capacity, and increased focus on professional education in high-demand sectors such as economics, business, computer science, and IT. UCB has significantly advanced its internationalization agenda through sustained participation in Erasmus+ projects. To date, it has signed over 60 cooperation agreements with European universities and institutions, facilitating staff and student mobility and joint initiatives. A key milestone in international cooperation was the signing of a Double Degree Agreement in 2024 with Webster University (USA – Athens Campus). Through this agreement, UCB students in the Economics bachelor program can complete 1–1.5 years

abroad and receive both UCB and Webster degrees. Institutional reforms have accompanied this academic development. UCB established the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science (FISHK) and reorganized the Faculty of Economics, Law, and Social Sciences (FEDSHS). It also expanded its College of Higher Professional Studies (CHPS), which now offers 5 professional programs and 14 profiles. These developments have positioned UCB to offer study programs that are compatible with labor market needs not only in Albania but also across the region and internationally, supporting its mission of academic excellence and professional relevance. **The review team identifies UCB's proactive development and expansion of professional programs through its College of Higher Professional Studies (CHPS).** These programs are closely aligned with national workforce demands and regional labor market trends, particularly in fields such as business, economics, and ICT. UCB's integration of strategic reforms, including the establishment of dedicated faculties and international double-degree agreements demonstrates a well-structured and forward-looking approach to enhancing the professional relevance, employability, and international competitiveness of its graduates. [Ev. 16, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 39, 39.1, 40, 41, 42, 51, 51.1, 51.4, 51.5, 57, 58, 44, 45, 46, 86, 102, 103, 123, BM4, BM5, BM6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.2*)

3.3. The review team identified that UCB has clearly defined objectives, illustrated by overarching institutional objectives and the study programs provided by the faculties. [BM5]. These objectives align with their mission of empowering students to shape their lives with dignity and independence. Moreover, the institution has established processes to ensure the relevance and quality of their programs. The goals of the study programs are clearly stated from the moment it is applied to Ministry of Education for the opening of these programs. Also, UCB has outlined the admission requirements in detail, considering the particulars of each study program. The program's learning objectives are in line with the goals of the unit that is providing it. The bylaws now in effect state that this data is included as a particular component of the curricula. Review team identified that the **study programs have clearly defined objectives and their learning outcomes are consistent with the qualification profile they offer.** [BM5, Ev. 24, 24.1, 24.2, 82, 89, 89.1, 89.2, 89.3, 102]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.3*)

3.4. The review team notes that UCB, adheres to a specific process when introducing new programs. Departments are tasked with creating these programs, which must then gain approval from both the Academic Senate and the Administration Board. This ensures an extensive review process, with the curriculum committee having the main responsibility for the development, review, and improvement suggestions for these programs. Moreover, any new programs or significant changes, including openings, reorganizations, or closures, require approval from the relevant authority, as guided by the law and internal regulations of the institution. The Academic Senate and Dean's Office play crucial roles in proposing new study programs. The Senate proposes these new programs, including changes and closures, to the Administration Board based on the annual draft

budget of the HEI. Bachelor's degree programs aim to provide students with both academic and practical expertise in their subjects through coursework, hands-on training, and scientific research. Students graduate with general and essential knowledge in the relevant subjects. Through coursework, practice, and scientific research, the second cycle program aims to provide students with theoretical and practical expertise in their areas of specialization. Graduates of integrated second cycle study programs are equipped with advanced theoretical understanding and research skills in a particular field of study. As we mentioned UCB considers the needs of the labour market, studies, and available host capacities while creating admission standards and approving student quotas. **The review team affirms that the University College of Business (UCB) has established and follows a structured and legally compliant process for the development, approval, and revision of its study programs.** This process involves active participation from academic departments, the Curriculum Committee, the Academic Senate, and the Board of Administration, ensuring alignment with institutional strategy, regulatory requirements, and labor market needs. Study programs across all cycles are designed to integrate academic knowledge with practical training and research components, equipping students with both foundational and advanced competencies in their respective fields. [Ev. 24, 24.1, 24.2, 25, 26, 27, 44, 45, 46, 102, 103, 86, BM4, BM5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.4)

3.5. The institution can provide study programs based on their institutional capacity. This is evident by the fact that they have sufficient academic staff to cover both academic and administrative responsibilities. The College offers study programs that are fully compliant with the Albanian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and aligned with UCB's institutional mission and academic profile. Each study program has clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes, reflected in both the program regulations and course syllabi, in accordance with DCM No. 41, dated 24.01.2018, as amended by DCM No. 879, dated 18.12.2019. These learning outcomes are tailored to the respective qualification levels (5, 6, or 7), ensuring that students acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies relevant to their academic level and professional field. The syllabi clearly define course content, objectives, competencies, teaching methods, and assessment tools. Study programs are approved annually following MoES guidelines and a structured internal review process. This process begins with the academic departments and is finalized by the Academic Senate. Program content and regulations are published on UCB's official website and are accessible to students and external stakeholders. During the application and registration period, academic and administrative staff assist students with orientation and academic advising. Upon enrollment, students receive comprehensive guidance during orientation week, which includes information on the institutional structure, program requirements, course schedules, evaluation criteria, academic calendar, and student rights and responsibilities. Printed and digital versions of the study programs are also available to ensure transparency and accessibility. Each department (basic unit) is responsible for the management, implementation, and quality assurance of its respective programs. It oversees the formulation of learning objectives, monitors teaching quality, and engages in

continuous improvement based on student feedback and external developments. At the end of each academic cycle, outcome evaluations are shared with stakeholders, which informs curriculum revisions and updates. The review team highlights as a good practice the existence of clear and structured guidelines at the University College of Business for the allocation of academic staff workload across teaching, research, administrative duties, and other responsibilities. This systematic approach enables staff to effectively fulfill their roles while facilitating transparent and measurable performance evaluation at individual, departmental, and institutional levels. [Ev. 21, 24, 24.1, 24.2, 47, 66, 82, 89, 89.1, 89.2, 89.3, 102, 103, 111, 113, BM5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.5)

3.6. The review team notes that UCB complies with the Bologna Agreement, which is evidenced by its organization into study cycles. This is reflected in their use of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) for course description. This system categorizes their studies into a Bachelor program which requires a minimum of 180 ECTS, and a Master program which needs a minimum of 120 ECTS. Notably, the institution has adopted a quarter system to cater to their multinational faculty's scheduling needs. At the end of the second cycle, integrated programs are completed with 300–360 credits and typically last 5–6 academic years such as medicine and dentistry. During the meeting with the managers, we heard about the institution's plans to launch doctoral programs, which will satisfy the university's requirement to provide all three study cycles. [Ev. 82, 89, 89.1, 89.2, 89.3, 102, 103, 3.7, BM4]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.6)

3.7. The review team notes that UCB demonstrates a strong commitment to student support through academic advising and mentoring provided from enrollment through thesis completion, across all study cycles. Study programs at both Bachelor and Master levels emphasize practical training alongside theoretical foundations, equipping students with skills relevant to the labor market. Modules like "Preparation for the Bachelor Thesis" and courses such as "Research Methodology" and "Critical Thinking" promote scientific thinking and research culture. UCB employs qualified academic staff from Albania and Kosovo, ensuring over 70% of the annual teaching load is delivered by full-time faculty. These staff also engage in research, with 10–12% of their workload dedicated to scientific activity. In 2024–2025, UCB established the Center for Research, Projects, and Innovation to further support applied research initiatives. Teaching overloads are compensated, and part-time staff are limited to a maximum of 120 teaching hours annually. UCB regularly updates its infrastructure, ensuring compliance with national standards and a student-centered teaching environment. Overall, the review team notes that the range study programs demonstrate their commitment to providing students with quality guidance and theoretical as well as practical knowledge. [Ev. 21, 43, 43.1, 43.1.1, 44, 45, 46, 47, 75, 76, 77, 77.1, BM5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.7)



3.8. The curriculum at UCB is structured according to the Bologna Process and organized under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). This framework ensures academic coherence, student mobility, and recognition of qualifications across Europe. Bachelor programs (First Cycle) are designed to equip students with solid academic knowledge and professional skills, enabling them to either enter the labor market or progress to Master-level studies. Second Cycle programs—including Professional Master (60 or 120 ECTS) and Master of Science (120 ECTS)—prepare students for professional practice, academic research, or progression to third-cycle studies. Professional Higher Education programs (Level 5, 120 ECTS) prepare students for immediate employment in their respective fields. Advancement to higher academic cycles is possible if students meet the minimum high school GPA as defined by the Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM). Upon fulfilling this requirement, they may enroll in subsequent study cycles. This academic structure ensures vertical and horizontal alignment with European standards and labor market demands. As a means of promoting lifelong learning, the institution provides programs in continuing education. These courses provide quick specialties, additions, knowledge refreshers, and deepening. Programs for continuing education may also be among them. Study programs for continuing education assist people in improving their credentials and professional abilities. At UCB, professional training programs are delivered in collaboration with the Institute for Business Studies and Applications (IBSA), a long-standing NGO partner. These programs focus on key areas such as finance, accounting, auditing, financial reporting, and commercial and fiscal legislation, and are aimed at professionals seeking certifications like “Certified Accountant” and “Statutory Auditor.” Licensed professionals are also required to complete 40 hours of annual continuing education as part of lifelong learning obligations. UCB is licensed by the Ministry of Finance and the Public Oversight Board to offer such professional certification programs. Since 2022, UCB has also been authorized by the Ministry of Justice to deliver mandatory qualification training for Real Estate Broker (REB) licensing. Delivered by qualified academic staff and invited experts, these programs have led to the training and certification of hundreds of professionals in accounting and auditing, and over 2,000 individuals in the REB program. Graduates are now active in the Albanian real estate market as licensed brokers. These continuing education initiatives are highly regarded by both regulatory institutions and participants, many of whom are UCB alumni, citing strong satisfaction with the professional advancement and skills gained. [Ev. 68, 68.1, 68.2, 100, 100.1, 69, 69.1, 69.2, BM5].
(Annex No. 1, Standard III.8)

3.9. The review team found that the study programs rely on the research and professional profile of the unit and are delivered in cooperation with area stakeholders. Representatives from other areas teach in the second cycle study programs, not only to foster cooperation but also to introduce students to best practices. The creation of Labour Market and Career Planning Boards adjacent to each UCB department has been allowed as a means of advancing this collaboration. The programs at UCB are backed by research efforts of the academic staff, all of whom are conducting or have conducted scientific

research. This draws a clear connection between the study programs and the profile of the institution. Additionally, the institution has a robust system for performance evaluation and planning, which includes self-evaluation, student feedback, academic, and professional integrity evaluation. On the other hand, the completion and submission of the self-evaluation form is done at the end of each academic year in order to regularly assess the academic staff for updating and their scientific qualification in relation to the program. This form provides an overview of the staff's teaching, scientific research, and administrative activities throughout the entire academic year. Representatives from other areas teach in the second cycle study programs, not only to foster cooperation but also to introduce students to best practices. [Ev. 43, 43.1, 43.1.1, 43.5, 66, 67, 110, BM5]. *(Annex No. 1, Standard III.9)*

3.10. The review team noted that UCB regularly reviews and monitors its study programs through a well-structured and monitoring system. The review process includes the evaluation of the study programs to ensure up-to-date curriculum, getting feedback from different stakeholders, including students, partner's freshmen, business representatives and faculty. Their methodologies of evaluation are systematic and include performance evaluations, surveys, and feedback meetings. Periodic monitoring of assessment by students or staff also involves external experts from other higher education institutions or students. In particular, an outside expert and a student representative make up the members of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. The teaching load, ethics, and the process for promoting and evaluating the effectiveness or advancement of the study program's components are all covered by various policies and guidelines. One of the topics discussed during the annual analysis at the basic unit level for the programs offered is the execution of study programs. The study programs at UCB are designed to provide students with foundational knowledge and cultural competencies that promote lifelong learning and independent knowledge development. UCB operates several dedicated structures, including the Student and Career Counseling Office the Internal Quality Assurance Unit and the Curriculum Office. These units collaborate to ensure curriculum alignment with labor market needs. The Career Office plays a central role by advising students and contributing to the analysis of employment trends, feeding directly into curriculum improvements in cooperation with the academic structures and student government. Teaching methodologies and academic activities are continually updated to reflect best practices and evolving educational standards. [Ev. 38, 38.1, 38.2, 43, 43.2, 43.2.2, 50, 50.1, 51, 51.4, 52, 66, 110, 113, BM5]. *(Annex No. 1, Standard III.10)*

3.11. The market study, at the study program opening and serves as guidance and proof of the program's necessity, also helps to direct graduates' future employment. Several of additional quality instruments, including the distribution of surveys with students to improve their study programs, have also been planned by IQAU within the framework of ongoing quality improvement and recurring program monitoring. The review team notes that the institution places a great emphasis on the continuous improvement of the study



programs. The institution conducts regular market research every three years to analyse job market needs and adjust their programs accordingly. Also, they collect and utilize feedback from partners during professional practice. This information is then discussed in multiple forums of the departments for the purpose of program improvement. The institution analyses the student achievements during academic year indicating their commitment towards improving the quality of their study programs when they have difficulties in terms of content understanding. **We encourage the institution to continuously monitor and update these programs as they are part of the fields that currently have the fastest development in technology, innovation and implementation. [Ev. 50, 50.1, 50.2, 66, 110, 67, 113, BM5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.11)**

3.12. The institution clearly pursues a policy to improve teaching quality. It implements a systematic application of quality assurance measures aiming to establish an ongoing culture of excellence in higher education. The periodic evaluation of all faculty members twice a year and the involvement of students and other administration members in this process highlights their commitment to foster educational quality. At UCB, over 80% of teaching is delivered by academic staff actively engaged in scientific research. Guest lecturers with advanced degrees and professional experience—many affiliated with international firms such as the Big Four—enhance teaching quality and industry relevance. This academic profile contributes to UCB attracting master's students from public and private universities. The institution conducts annual reviews of academic staff to ensure alignment with legal standards and program requirements. Student evaluations, managed by the IQAU, inform improvements, while periodic external evaluations provide independent quality assessments reviewed by the Academic Senate. Student participation in institutional governance and curriculum feedback is encouraged. Alumni meetings help identify skill gaps and inform program revisions. Curriculum updates are based on market studies, alumni input, and suggestions from partner institutions. These inputs are incorporated into program syllabi, ensuring relevance to labor market demands.

UCB collaborates with over 100 partners—businesses, professional studios, and public/private institutions—to provide internships and gather practical feedback. This collaboration informs curriculum development and institutional reforms. A key outcome was the reorganization of academic structures in 2023–2024, merging existing faculties and launching the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science with new programs and research centers. Study programs are clearly structured by academic departments and aligned with national qualifications. Curriculum development is ongoing, incorporating scientific and technological advancements, and ensuring that academic offerings remain relevant and competitive in both local and international contexts. High-quality instruments are used to do this. **The review team identified as good practice UCB's engagement of academic and administrative staff in structured training programs aimed at improving teaching and institutional processes, delivered through an international quality assurance project. This initiative reflects the institution's**



strong commitment to strengthening its internal quality assurance system in line with international standards and continuous improvement practices. [Ev. 38, 38.1, 38.2, 43, 43.1, 43.1.1, 43.2, 43.2.2, 50, 50.1, 50.2, 51, 51.2, 51.4, 66, 67, 109, 110, BM5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.12)

3.13. The review team notes that the study programs at UCB are implemented according to the structures approved at the institutional and national level. In line with its policy of continuous institutional improvement, the University College of Business (UCB) places strong emphasis on the ongoing professional development of its academic and administrative staff. The institution regularly organizes training sessions aimed at enhancing teaching quality and institutional performance, encouraging broad participation across all levels of personnel. Staff development is supported through systematic updates on institutional processes and through structured training activities both domestically and internationally. UCB leverages its Erasmus+ partnerships with European higher education institutions to promote staff mobility and participation in international training programs. These experiences contribute significantly to strengthening academic qualifications, professional competencies, and administrative capacities. In collaboration with national professional bodies such as the National Accounting Council (NAC) and the Institute of Authorized Chartered Accountants (IACA), UCB also organizes targeted training in the field of economics, supported by projects funded by the World Bank and the Ministry of Finance. Periodic training sessions, facilitated through the Institute for Studies and Applications in Business (IBSA), focus on key areas including National and International Accounting and Financial Reporting Standards (NAS, IAS/IFRS). UCB is also licensed to deliver mandatory training programs for Real Estate Brokers (REB), contributing to broader sectoral capacity building. These initiatives reflect UCB's institutional commitment to maintaining high professional standards and fostering a culture of continuous learning and development. [Ev. 68, 68.1, 68.2, 39, 39.1, 39.1.1, 39.1.2, 39.2, 40, 41, 42, 54, 55, BM5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.13)

3.14. The review team noted that the study programs fully satisfy this requirement in terms of practical application of knowledge and skills acquired by students in theoretical courses. In alignment with its institutional policy for continuous improvement, the University College of Business (UCB) systematically invests in the professional development of its academic and administrative staff. Regular training initiatives are organized to enhance teaching quality and strengthen other core institutional functions. UCB promotes active engagement of all personnel through structured training programs and periodic updates on institutional priorities and processes. Professional development activities are carried out both domestically and internationally, particularly through strategic collaborations with partner higher education institutions under the Erasmus+ Program. These mobility-based exchanges and training opportunities have significantly contributed to strengthening staff competencies and advancing their academic and administrative expertise. UCB further supports staff development through targeted

programs in economics and finance, conducted in partnership with the National Accounting Council (NAC) and the Institute of Authorized Chartered Accountants (IACA), within the framework of projects supported by the World Bank and the Ministry of Finance. Additionally, the institution collaborates with the Institute for Studies and Applications in Business (IBSA) to provide ongoing training in national and international accounting and financial reporting standards (NAS, IAS, and IFRS).

UCB is also authorized by the Ministry of Justice to deliver mandatory certification programs for Real Estate Brokers (REB), ensuring compliance with national regulatory standards and supporting lifelong learning for licensed professionals. UCB ensures the effective implementation of its programs through appropriate infrastructure and academic support. This includes modern classrooms, specialized laboratories, and a well-equipped library with national and international resources. Students receive practical training under the supervision of qualified academic staff and lab assistants, particularly during the preparation of course projects and theses. Professional internship is a compulsory component across study programs. UCB, through designated departmental coordinators, oversees student placements in partner companies and institutions. In accordance with the Internship Regulation, students must present and defend their internship reports before an evaluation committee. **The review team highlights as a good practice UCB's strategic and comprehensive approach to the professional development of academic and administrative staff.** This includes structured training programs delivered through Erasmus+ partnerships, collaborations with national institutions such as NAC and IACA, and international projects supported by the World Bank. UCB's authorization to offer certification for Real Estate Brokers and its active participation in programs such as Horizon Europe and Jean Monnet further reflect its commitment to lifelong learning and professional excellence. The integration of practical training, compulsory internships, and international mobility opportunities demonstrates UCB's dedication to aligning academic preparation with market needs and fostering institutional growth through research, collaboration, and capacity building. [Ev. 68, 68.1, 68.2, 39, 39.1, 39.1.1, 39.1.2, 39.2, 40, 41, 42, 54, 55, 74, 74.1, 74.2, 74.3, 74.4, 83, 100, 100.1, BM5]. *(Annex No. 1, Standard III.14)*

3.15. The review team noted that UCB's programs emphasize student-centered learning, fostering active participation and competency development. This is achieved through small class sizes, accessible faculty, integration of modern technology, and a focus on entrepreneurial and innovative thinking. The teaching staff includes full-time, part-time, and international visiting professors, with guest lecturers contributing to practical expertise. Program assessment is guided by an Assessment Plan and regular student evaluations via online surveys, promoting continuous improvement. Staff engage in ongoing training, including Erasmus+ mobilities, with selections and credit transfers governed by institutional regulations. The Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) monitors teaching quality through surveys, while external evaluations conducted in 2021, 2023, and 2025 provide additional feedback for enhancement of academic and



institutional performance. [Ev. 33, 33.1, 110, 39, 39.1, 39.1.1, 39.1.2, 39.2, 40, 41, 42, 54, 55, BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.15*)

3.16. UCB offers study programs that are designed to meet the needs of the labour market and support national economic and social development. The institution provides study programs that align with the national plan for employment and skills, with the goal of equipping students for the workforce, based on the actual demands of the labor market. From the meeting with the students, especially those of the master's programs, it was evident that they feel professionally capable of serving in different institutions and businesses. Professional practice is incorporated into the curricula of UCB's programs in accordance with the Bologna Charter's stipulations, assisting students in integrating their theoretical and practical knowledge. Moreover, the university's cooperation with national institutions promotes a comprehensive and global perspective on three main fields of study programs that are offering. **We identified as good practice the provision of seasonal employment opportunities for students, especially for students of professional programs who have been employed during the summer or after school.** This helps students to better orient themselves towards the needs of employment and the professional requirements they have.

The review team notes that the combination of theoretical and practical skills, the connection of students with the labour market, and their preparation for employment is good practice. [Ev. 50, 50.1, 50.2, 51, 51.2, 51.4, 52, 95, BM3, BM6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.16*)

3.17. The review team affirms that UCB effectively applies the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), in line with the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), to foster student mobility and international compatibility. Study programs are aligned with national employment and skills strategies, integrating professional practice to meet labor market demands. Through its Center for Scientific Research, Projects, and Innovation (CSRPI) and the Office for International Relations, UCB supports participation in Erasmus+ and other mobility programs via active agreements with European partner institutions. Programs are available across all academic cycles, and detailed information is accessible in Albanian and English. UCB has applied for licenses to offer select programs in English and requires foreign language proficiency for second cycle and mobility students. Credit transfer and study recognition policies comply with national regulations, and clear procedures are in place for both incoming and outgoing students. The institution's strong internationalization policy ensures that students and staff are well-prepared for global academic and professional engagement. [Ev. 40, 41, 42, 54, 55, 123, BM5, BM6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.17*)

3.18. The review team noted that UCB provides students who have met all requirements of their respective study programs with relevant diplomas. The HEI has explicit regulations

published on its website and management system to guide students through their exams and assessment processes. The right to take the diploma defense exam belongs to the student who fulfils all their academic duties. If not, he will be entitled to pay them back the next semester and will graduate once all his academic debts have been satisfied. The appropriate diploma, an official document, is given to the student who has completed all program requirements. The diploma is prepared in legible handwriting using technical ink, and both the faculty dean and the university rector have signed it. Name, surname, rank, and scientific title are listed for each of them. The UCB seal attests to the authenticity of their signatures. Further, upon successful completion of the study program, students are granted their respective diplomas, prepared in Albanian and English in accordance with Law of Higher Education and the by-laws of the Ministry of Education and Sport. [Ev. 85, 91, BM3]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.18*)

3.19. At the University College of Business (UCB), teaching and learning activities are supported by adequate and well-maintained infrastructure. Building B is shared equally among the institution's three main academic units, while Building A—a two-story facility located in the Lapraka area—is exclusively dedicated to the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science. These facilities are equipped to fully support academic activities, both theoretical and practical, ensuring effective communication and interaction between students and academic staff. All lecture and seminar rooms provide a comfortable and conducive environment for academic work. They are equipped with modern air conditioning systems, appropriate lighting, and round-the-clock free internet access for students and staff. Additionally, each classroom is fitted with a laptop and video projector, facilitating the use of contemporary teaching methods and digital learning tools. UCB has also established six fully equipped laboratories that serve various study programs: an Auto Mechanics Lab, an Electrical Lab, an Electrotechnics Lab, and three additional labs focused on Computers, Informatics, and Digital Electronics. These laboratories meet the requirements set by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MES), as confirmed in technical assessment reports prepared by licensed legal experts recognized by MES. **The review team highlights as good practice the University College of Business's investment in dedicated and well-maintained infrastructure that actively supports modern teaching and learning.** The functional distribution of academic units across two specialized buildings, along with fully equipped lecture rooms and six certified laboratories—including Auto Mechanics, Electrical, Electrotechnics, Informatics, and Digital Electronics—ensures an environment conducive to both theoretical instruction and hands-on practice. Classrooms are outfitted with digital tools such as laptops, projectors, and free high-speed internet, facilitating interactive and technology-driven learning. This structured and well-resourced infrastructure reflects UCB's commitment to high-quality education and compliance with national standards. [Ev. 74; 74.1; 74.2; 74.3; 74.4; 83; BM4, BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.19*)



3.20. In order to support the study programs, the institution provided infrastructure, services, and laboratory equipment. The UCB also hosts extracurricular seminars with people who want trainings and professional development. The institution makes sure that the appropriate personnel is trained in the management of each service and piece of technology it purchases. While it is evident from the information presented above that UCB provides appropriate ICT infrastructure and assistance particularly for academic staff and students to ensure full digital connectivity and access across its campus, providing 24-hour internet access to academic staff, administrative personnel, and students. Each lecture and seminar hall are equipped with an air conditioning unit, a dedicated laptop, and a video projector to support modern, technology-assisted teaching. UCB maintains three dedicated Computer Laboratories where these facilities are fully operational and regularly maintained. To further support students in academic research and coursework, internet cafés have been established in both buildings, offering access to online academic resources and lab environments. **We consider the current laboratory infrastructure as quite suitable for covering the needs of the study programs up to this stage. Also, as we have emphasized, the access that students have to the infrastructure of the companies that are part of the network, is available to students for its use in various programs, especially for professional programs.** [Ev. 74; 74.1; 74.4; 83; BM4, BMS, BM6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.20*)

3.21. The University College of Business (UCB) provides a dedicated library facility that supports the academic and research needs of its study programs. The library's collection comprises over 7,000 volumes in both Albanian and foreign languages, covering core and supplementary literature relevant to all academic disciplines offered at UCB.

The reading hall spans approximately 65–70 m² and accommodates up to 50 students simultaneously. The facility is equipped with laptops and offers uninterrupted internet access, enabling students to conduct research and academic work from 09:00 to 20:00 daily. UCB ensures continuous enrichment of its library resources, guided by academic staff recommendations. Each year, new titles—both domestic and international—are acquired, and instructors contribute 2–3 copies of textbooks used in their courses, financed by the institution's budget. In addition to printed materials, the library includes access to conference proceedings, academic staff publications, and contributions from institutions such as the Bank of Albania, the Financial Supervisory Authority, and the Albanian Parliament. UCB maintains collaboration with New Era Publications International (Denmark), which donates books by L. Ron Hubbard. The library also receives Romanian journals and national periodicals. The literature collection is updated annually to reflect current publications. The institution allocates approximately 200,000 to 300,000 ALL annually for new book acquisitions and around 1.5 million ALL for investments in library management software and integrated digital systems supporting student services, administrative tasks, and financial reporting. UCB students and staff also benefit from access to numerous international online libraries and academic databases, such as JSTOR, EBSCO, Project Gutenberg, Read Print, Academia.edu, and

Ebrary. These platforms are accessible on campus, both from staff offices and student library terminals, through institutional subscriptions and partnerships. Overall, the review team note that UCB is committed to offering high-quality academic programs supported by a modern library and access to online literature. [Ev. 116; 116.1; BM3, BM4, BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.21*)

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

1. The UCB's proactive development and expansion of professional programs through its College of Higher Professional Studies (CHPS). These programs are closely aligned with national workforce demands and regional labor market trends, particularly in fields such as business, economics, and ICT. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.2*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.3*)
2. The existence of clear and structured guidelines at the University College of Business for the allocation of academic staff workload across teaching, research, administrative duties, and other responsibilities. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.5*)
3. The range study programs demonstrate their commitment to providing students with quality guidance and theoretical as well as practical knowledge. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.7*)
4. The UCB's engagement of academic and administrative staff in structured training programs aimed at improving teaching and institutional processes, delivered through an international quality assurance project. The approach to the professional development of academic and administrative staff. This includes structured training programs delivered through Erasmus+ partnerships, collaborations with national institutions such as NAC and IACA, and international projects supported by the World Bank (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.12*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.14*)
5. The provision of seasonal employment opportunities for students, especially for students of professional programs who have been employed during the summer or after school. The combination of theoretical and practical skills, the connection of students with the labour market, and their preparation for employment is good practice. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.16*)
6. The current laboratory infrastructure as quite suitable for covering the needs of the study programs up to this stage. Also, the access that students have to the infrastructure of the companies that are part of the network, is available to students for its use in various programs, especially for professional programs. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.20*)



Weaknesses

The review team didn't identify any weaknesses:

Recommendations

The review team didn't make any recommendations:

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following actions are already in progress:

The University College of Business has established and follows a structured and legally compliant process for the development, approval, and revision of its study programs. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.4*). We encourage the institution to continuously monitor and update these programs as they are part of the fields that currently have the fastest development in technology, innovation and implementation. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.11*)

Judgement

The standards for Evaluation Area 3: Study Programs, Teaching, and Evaluation are fully met.



Evaluation Area 4: Scientific/Artistic Activity and Innovation

4.1 The University College of Business (UCB) aims to strengthen its role as a higher education institution engaged in scientific research, innovation, and academic development, aligned with national and international priorities. UCB defines its research priorities based on the institutional strategy and the profiles of its study programs across its three main academic units. Departments play a central role in identifying research areas of relevance to national and regional development. Each academic year, the institution organizes coordination meetings to define key topics for its annual International Scientific Conference, supported by the Rectorate and the Vice-Rector for Research. The Center for Scientific Research, Projects, and Innovation (CSRPI), established at the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Sciences, supports the research agenda and promotes collaboration with external institutions. UCB actively engages in research partnerships with HEIs in Albania, the region, and the EU through conferences and joint initiatives. Academic staff and students are supported through infrastructure, mentoring, and participation in scientific activities, including conferences and competitions. These initiatives contribute to building a research culture and fostering institutional development in line with strategic goals. **The review team affirms that the University College of Business (UCB) demonstrates a clear institutional commitment to strengthening its role in scientific research, innovation, and academic development.** Research priorities are well-aligned with national and international strategies and are developed in coherence with the institution's academic profiles. The establishment of the Center for Scientific Research, Projects, and Innovation (CSRPI), active coordination at departmental and institutional levels, and regular organization of international scientific conferences reflect UCB's structured approach to advancing research. The institution provides adequate support to academic staff and students through mentoring, infrastructure, and participation in scientific events, thereby fostering a growing research culture across its academic units. [Ev. 46.1; 43.1; 43.1.1; 39; 59; BM4, BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.I*)

4.2 UCB has integrated scientific research priorities into its Strategic Development Plan 2024–2030, aiming to enhance academic quality, promote innovation, and strengthen partnerships with local and international institutions. Research and internationalization are core objectives, also outlined in dedicated strategies. Scientific activities are implemented across UCB's three main academic units. Departments play a key role in organizing national and international scientific events, including the annual International Scientific Conference, workshops, and competitions. Research topics align with the institution's academic profiles, such as IT, engineering, and international relations. Support for research is provided by the Center for Scientific Research, Projects, and Innovation (CSRPI), which coordinates project applications and collaboration initiatives. Infrastructure including laboratories, library facilities, and digital resources are accessible for research purposes. UCB also participates in Erasmus+ KA1 mobility, offers



publishing opportunities in journals with ISSN/ISBN codes, and supports joint degrees with Webster University. Scientific output is monitored through annual performance reports, and contributes to staff academic advancement. Review team affirms that UCB meets the priorities of scientific research. The scientific research topics, directions, deadlines or volume of research work are determined by the UCB key units, staying in line with procedures defined in the scientific research regulation. UCB has established support system for research and knowledge transfer, innovation and application of new technologies. This was achieved through continuous staff training, the organization of seminars, workshops, open lectures, and the involvement of students in scientific research activities. **During the site visit, the review team observed that the laboratories were designed to equip students with practical skills in a real-world context and that the teaching facilities were equipped with state-of-the-art technology.** To enhance the quality of education and research, the base units have formed scientific research teams composed of staff members with relevant expertise and experience in research. **During the meeting with staff, review team concluded that staff have academic freedom within their respective departments and are ensured to utilize the infrastructure and financial resources provided [BM6].** The evaluation of their scientific work is performed during the annual performance review. **The allocation of financial support to research groups is carried out in a transparent way.** The review team highlights as good practice UCB's structured and strategic integration of scientific research within its institutional development framework. The establishment of the Center for Scientific Research, Projects, and Innovation (CSRPI), the formation of research teams within academic units, and the alignment of research priorities with national and international agendas reflect a proactive and coordinated approach. The use of modern laboratories, transparent funding allocation, and the active involvement of students in research activities further enhance academic quality. Participation in Erasmus+ and joint degree programs also strengthens the institution's international research profile and innovation capacity. **[Ev. 16; 16.1; 43.1; 43.1.1; 39; 59; 46.1; 74.5; BM4, BMS, BM6]. [Annex No. 1, Standard IV.2].**

- 4.3 The University College of Business (UCB) actively supports research and scientific engagement among academic staff and students across all its basic units. Internationalization is a key pillar of UCB's research agenda, reflected in various initiatives such as double degree programs, participation in international conferences, involvement in scientific boards and organizing committees of partner HEIs across the EU, as well as participation in research projects and academic/staff mobility through Erasmus+ and other frameworks. The institution facilitates project applications in European and international programs, supporting academic staff organized in multidisciplinary working groups according to expertise and project requirements. All staff engagement in research projects is documented and regulated through the Research, Projects, and Innovation Center (CSRPI), which functions as a basic unit within the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Sciences. The transformation of the former Office for Scientific Research and Innovation (OSRI) into CSRPI further illustrates UCB's



institutional commitment to research development and international collaboration. UCB often brings in experts from both within the country and abroad for training to improve staff skills. The institution supports its academic staff and assistants when they take part in scientific events. **Additionally, UCB has built relationships with other research organizations and takes part in joint projects, involving both local and international researchers, through the signing of cooperation or participation agreements or participation in joint activity events.** [Ev. 39; 39.1; 39.1.2; 46.1; 51; 51.4; 40; 41; **BM4, BM5, BM6**]. (*Annex No. I, Standard IV.3*)

4.4 According to UCB's Statute and General Regulation, departments function as the basic units responsible for both teaching and scientific research activities. Each department includes relevant research areas and associated academic disciplines, overseeing the planning, implementation, and evaluation of teaching and research activities within its scope. At the start of each academic year, departments submit their scientific research activity plans, including individual teaching and research plans for academic staff. At the end of the academic year, in collaboration with the Center for Scientific Research, Projects and Innovation (CSRPI), departments evaluate the scientific contributions of each lecturer and compile a formal report. The institution summarizes individual and departmental performance in the Annual Academic and Financial Report. The Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) conducts an impartial evaluation of academic staff performance, publishing the results annually. In addition, the Independent Quality Evaluator (IQE) assesses the quality of teaching and research across all study programs. UCB promotes and financially supports academic staff participation in project implementation and publication of research in international, peer-reviewed journals indexed in Scopus. **The review team finds that the institution ensures the protection of research results, intellectual property, using them to support its financial and economic development.** [Ev. 46.1; 43.1; 43.1.1; 37; 38; 33; 33.1; **BM4, BM5**]. (*Annex No. I, Standard IV.4; Standard IV.5*).

4.5 The review team confirms that the institution directs its research efforts at the departmental level. Within the existing legal framework, the department serves as the primary entity for managing both teaching and scientific research activities, comprising various research groups. UCB's regulatory framework ensures the protection of intellectual property resulting from scientific research activities, in alignment with the mission of higher education to contribute to community development and well-being. The institution actively promotes and disseminates its research achievements and project outcomes. Through participation in nationally and EU-funded programs (e.g., Erasmus+, VET, NASRI), UCB secures financial income to support project implementation, staff and student mobility, and institutional development. In cases where project results have commercial potential, UCB initiates patenting procedures through the General Directorate of Trademarks and Patents. The institution formalizes the commercial use of these patents via financial agreements with interested parties, ensuring legal protection and economic

benefit. (Annex No. 1, Standard IV.6). At UCB, each department drafts an annual plan for scientific and research activities in line with its disciplines and fields of expertise. Departments are responsible for coordinating and supporting staff in both teaching and research, in compliance with institutional regulations. Research activities are enriched through open lectures, laboratory work, conferences, student competitions, and project-based collaborations. Notable initiatives include the International Conference “Albania in International Relations 1991–2023” organized by the Department of International Relations, and the International Student Conference on well-being, co-organized by UCB with 7 other HEIs. Staff members contribute to scientific boards of international partner conferences and support students in preparing and presenting papers. Collaborations with institutions like Webster University (Greece) have led to joint programs and double degrees. UCB departments are also engaged in projects such as ALORG, EKOAL, CO-HOST, RISKMAN, and GRADUA, and participate actively in Erasmus+ mobilities, supporting the university’s internationalization and academic quality improvement. [Ev. 46; 39; 39.1; 39.1.1; 39.1.2; 40; 41; 42; 50; 51; 51.1; 51.4; BM4, BM5, BM6]. *[Annex No. 1, Standard IV.6]*.

4.6 Review team observed that the departments have successfully integrated teaching, scientific research, and extracurricular activities into their planning. This is further supported by establishing dedicated working groups for research, ensuring adherence to legal and contractual obligations. To fulfil the objectives in the field of research, the department sets up working groups for the project design or studies. (Annex No. 1, Standard IV.7). According to the UCB Statute and General Regulation, departments function as basic units for both teaching and scientific research. Each department organizes related academic disciplines and fields of research, forming focused academic groups such as Finance–Accounting, Computer Science, or Civil Law. These groups enable specialization, collaboration, and deepening of knowledge within their respective areas. The institution defines clear annual objectives for academic staff related to scientific research and supports their achievement through contractual obligations, financial incentives, and infrastructural support. Staff are encouraged to publish in journals indexed to Scopus and participate in national and international projects. Departments collaborate actively with the Center for Scientific Research, Projects, and Innovation (CSRPI), which plays a key role in advancing UCB’s research mission. Joint initiatives include conferences, research projects, Erasmus+ mobilities, and student involvement in scientific events. Research ideas for new projects are developed jointly by departmental working groups and CSRPI teams, with responsibilities distributed accordingly. UCB also collaborates with international experts when needed, such as Matteo Guccione, who contributed to NASRI project development and held public lectures with staff and students. [Ev. 46; 39; 39.1; 39.1.2; 40; 41; 42; 51; 51.6; BM4, BM5, BM6]. *[Annex No. 1, Standard IV.7]*.



4.7 UCB outlines its scientific research objectives in its Strategic Development Plan and actively promotes the engagement of both academic staff and second- and third-cycle students in research-related activities. Each academic year includes National and International Scientific Conferences, Student Conferences, roundtables, open lectures, workshops, and competitions, fostering an inclusive and dynamic research environment across all study programs. Through the Center for Scientific Research, Projects, and Innovation (CSRPI), UCB participates in development projects funded by national and international programs. Project teams are composed based on academic expertise relevant to the project's focus. To enhance the institution's research profile and international presence, UCB has established numerous cooperation agreements with partner HEIs and organizations, supporting both academic collaboration and visibility at the European level. Academic staff are encouraged to improve the quality of their research, with institutional support aimed at career development, including doctoral studies and academic titles. UCB fully subsidizes publication fees for high-quality journals such as Scopus and also offers in-house publication through its Scientific Journal and Books of Proceedings. All scientific activities are documented in annual reports reflecting teaching and research achievements. **The review team concluded that UCB is actively enhancing its research activities and securing the involvement of staff and students across the second and third cycles.** [Ev. 16; 39; 39.1; 39.1.1; 39.1.2; 40; 41; 42; 51; 51.6; 59; 59.1; 77; 77.1; BM4, BM5, BM6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.8*).

4.8 The review team confirms that the institution publicly shares scientific research outcomes by maintaining records to organize, track, promote, and transfer the results of its scientific work. These findings are shared with the public through publications, conferences, and other scientific events. The transfer of research outcomes is linked to collaborations with local businesses via diverse informational research initiatives. UCB provides full infrastructural and logistical support for the publication of scientific research outputs, including participation in the Book of Proceedings (with ISBN) and the Scientific Journal of Professional Studies (with ISSN, both in print and online). Each academic year, the institution allocates a dedicated financial fund to support scientific research and project activities involving academic staff, ensuring efficient use of resources. All periodical publications are publicly accessible through the "Scientific Research" section on the official website: [<https://ucb.edu.al/scientific-research>], allowing open access for staff, students, and external collaborators. Additionally, UCB's physical library includes all scientific publications, academic literature by staff, theses, and subject-specific materials across study programs. Intellectual property rights are protected by the relevant legislation. [Ev. 77; 77.1; 43.3; 43.4; 51; 51.6; 59; 59.1; 116; BM4, BM5, BM6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.9*).

4.9 UCB is committed to working towards ethical practices in its scientific research. The university aims to build a culture of integrity, transparency, and accountability to protect the reputation and impact of its academic work. Developing policies on research quality



and setting up systems to check the quality of its publications and research are key parts of its strategy shown in the presented robust documentation. The University College of Business (UCB), in line with its Annual Plan of Academic and Scientific Research Activities, ensures mechanisms to uphold the quality and academic integrity of scientific outputs. For institution-wide and unit-level conferences—such as the 1st International Scientific Conference organized by the Department of International Relations (DIR), FELSS—UCB implements quality assurance procedures for reviewing and selecting papers for publication with ISBN and ISSN identifiers. To guarantee academic standards, members of the Scientific and Organizing Committees include qualified national and international academics with research credentials and experience. These experts assess submissions against the published criteria, ensuring originality, quality, and relevance prior to publication. Furthermore, UCB guarantees the integrity of research through its access to an electronic anti-plagiarism system, secured via its membership in the League of Private Universities, thereby reinforcing compliance with intellectual property standards. **The review team verifies that the Scientific Research Regulation at UCB ensures the quality of research carried out by its staff and students. This regulation covers the basic principles of research organization, and the responsibilities and rights of everyone involved [Ev. 77; 77.1; 43.3; 43.4; 59; 59.1; 109; BM4, BMS, BM, SER]. (Annex No. 1, Standard IV.10).**

4.10 **The review team, through the site visit and review of documentation, observed that UCB outlines the participation requirements for academic staff in research activities [BM12].** The University College of Business has established a structured approach to defining and supporting academic staff obligations in the field of scientific research. Within its organizational structure, a dedicated center coordinates research activity and facilitates collaboration with national and international partners. This structure plays a strategic role in advancing the institution's internationalization goals and strengthening its research profile. Academic staff are actively encouraged to participate in various research-related activities, including the publication of scientific papers, participation in international conferences, involvement in research projects across their full life cycle, and the development of teaching materials and monographs aligned with academic standards. Opportunities are also provided for staff to engage in joint teaching and research activities with partner institutions in the region and the EU. The institution supports the dissemination of scientific output through funding mechanisms for publications and participation in scientific events. It also promotes the use of open-access platforms to enhance the visibility and impact of research outputs. These engagements are not only institutionally promoted but are also considered integral to the contractual responsibilities of the academic staff. This comprehensive framework ensures both accountability and professional development in line with the institution's strategic priorities in scientific research. **[Ev. 77; 77.1; 43.3; 43.4; 39; 39.1; 59; 59.1; 109; BM4, BMS, BM6]. (Annex No. 1, Standard IV.11).**



4.11 **Review team proclaims that UCB has strategically positioned scientific research at the front of its priorities, placing a strong emphasis on the internationalization of research efforts and related activities. This approach aims to cultivate partnerships and enhance the institution's presence on the international level.** Within its broader development strategy, the institution's internationalization policy is positioned as a fundamental pillar for growth. This includes the expansion of joint study programs, dual-degree offerings, academic and administrative staff exchanges, and collaborative research initiatives. The institution promotes international partnerships to foster participation in cross-border projects and funding opportunities in higher education. UCB has established partnerships and agreements with universities and colleges in OECD, EU, or G20 nations to conduct scientific research. All engagements of academic staff are supported by transparent financial and logistical procedures, ensuring accountability and alignment with strategic goals. [Ev. 39; 39.1; 40; 41; 42; 51.1; 51.4; BM4, BM5, BM6] (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.12*).

4.12 The institution places strong emphasis on involving foreign academic staff and members of the Albanian diaspora in its teaching and research activities. UCB is firmly committed to advancing its international profile by fostering collaboration with renowned universities in the EU and beyond. These partnerships aim to align curricula with international standards and incorporate best practices in scientific research and innovation. The institution has established agreements with prominent institutions, such as Webster University, and has facilitated academic exchanges through initiatives like the Erasmus+ staff mobility program. In the framework of implementing awarded projects and participating in consortia, as well as through collaborative efforts in project applications under various EU programs such as Erasmus KA2, VET, and Youth, and national programs like NASRI, WBF, and GIZ ProSEED 2.0, UCB has established active cooperation with international academic staff. This includes joint organization of meetings and roundtables, hosting expert-led open lectures, and exchanging best practices in project implementation, institutional coordination, and financial reporting. A significant added value in advancing UCB's strategic priority of strengthening international collaboration has been the co-authorship of scientific publications by UCB academic staff and their foreign counterparts, presented at conferences organized by the institution and its partners. Involving members of the diaspora in teaching and research activities is an important area for the institution, emphasizing the importance of integrating educational and scientific contributions from individuals in these categories. These professionals participate in a range of scientific and teaching activities, including open lectures, workshops, and seminars. Such involvement could increase the institution's reputation and impact. **The review team notes that UCB effectively fulfills the criteria for engaging foreign staff and diaspora members in its teaching and research activities.** [Ev. 39; 39.1; 40; 41; 42; 51.1; 51.4; BM4, BM5, BM6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.13*).



4.13 UCB places strong emphasis on fostering an international academic environment by promoting mobility for both students and academic staff. The institution continuously works to enhance its mobility capacities and expand opportunities for student exchange across its study programs. Through the coordination of CSRPI and support from the Office of Foreign Relations, UCB actively engages in new exchange agreements with regional, EU, and global partners, facilitating short-term and semester-long mobility programs. The institution ensures that academic staff meet international standards and are fully capable of participating in joint teaching and research activities with international partners. Student and staff mobility under Erasmus+ KA1 is governed by clear internal procedures, while the recognition and equivalence of credits earned during mobility periods are regulated and facilitated by institutional policies that ensure academic continuity and quality assurance.. By actively integrating these international professionals into research or teaching opportunities, including but not limited to, delivering open lectures, conducting workshops, and leading seminars, UCB underscores the invaluable educational and scientific contributions these individuals bring to the institution. This strategic engagement enriches the academic and research landscape at UCB, and also significantly increases the institution's global standing and impact. The review team acknowledges that these mobility efforts are evident and actively integrating these activities into research or teaching opportunities, including but not limited to, delivering open lectures, conducting workshops, and leading seminars. This is considered a good practice. [Ev. 39; 39.1; 40; 41; 42; 51.1; 51.4; BM4, BM5, BM6]. *(Annex No. 1, Standard IV.14).*

4.14 Review team confirms UCB's commitment to sustaining and enhancing its contribution to scientific research through strategic planning and institutional development. As part of its broader Institutional Strategy for 2024–2030, the university has adopted a dedicated Internationalization Strategy that reinforces its orientation toward global collaboration and academic networking. A key objective is the decentralization of research activities by strengthening the role of basic units—departments, research centers, and project-based structures—as engines of scientific advancement. Scientific research is integrated into the institution's development goals, aiming to improve internal capacities and foster a culture of inquiry and innovation. In line with this, the former Office for Scientific Research and Projects has evolved into the Center for Scientific Research, Projects, and Innovation (CSRPI), reflecting both institutional growth and increased engagement in externally funded research. Doctoral students, who are also part of the academic staff, play an active role in research activities, including project implementation, conference organization, and mentorship of student research initiatives. Their involvement supports a continuum between education, research, and innovation. UCB continues to expand its research impact by strengthening collaborations with public and private institutions, nationally and internationally. The institution also organizes high-impact events to consolidate these networks, such as the "1st International Staff Week," which brought together academic stakeholders to explore synergies in artificial intelligence, research, and cultural exchange. This integrated approach ensures that UCB



maintains momentum in scientific research and reinforces its positioning in the academic and innovation landscape. [Ev. 16; 16.1; 39; 39.1; 40; 41; 42; 51.1; **BM4, BM5, BM6**]. *(Annex No. 1, Standard IV.15).*

4.15 UCB integrates scientific research into its Strategic Plan, promoting it through funding, international cooperation, participation in conferences, and student involvement in projects. The institution supports knowledge transfer and innovation, while ensuring compliance with ethical and publication standards. Research outcomes are applied to societal and economic development, exemplified by projects like CO-HOST (Erasmus+), which enhanced vocational education in tourism through staff and student mobility, European training, and institutional co-financing. UCB organizes and co-hosts international scientific conferences, publishing results through its online portal, journal, and proceedings. It actively supports student-led innovation projects such as “Arduino Radar Detector” and “Smart Home,” which combine academic research with practical application. These initiatives demonstrate UCB’s commitment to transferring research into real-world impact and fostering a culture of innovation. **The review team finds that the institution has developed a strong framework to guarantee that its scientific research directly aids the country's social and economic growth.** [Ev. 39; 39.1; 39.1.1; 39.1.2; 42; 59; 59.1; **BM3, BM5, BM6**]. *(Annex No. 1, Standard IV.16).*

4.16 The University College of Business places a strong emphasis on the protection of intellectual property, the prevention of plagiarism, and the originality of scientific work. The institution maintains a well-organized archive containing conference proceedings, staff-authored monographs, scientific publications, and research reports. Each academic staff member bears individual responsibility for the authenticity and integrity of their scientific output. UCB actively promotes scientific research and encourages both academic staff and students to engage in research and publication activities. The institution supports professional development through full staff participation in doctoral programs and academic promotions. At the same time, students are guided to actively participate in research and enter the labor market. UCB ensures the preservation of scientific materials, including student theses—both electronically and in print in the institutional library. The institution has developed strong ties with businesses and local organizations to connect academic research with practice. These partnerships are formalized through cooperation agreements and serve to reinforce knowledge transfer and sustainable collaboration. Scientific achievements are regularly promoted through institutional events and outreach activities. Project outcomes are shared with industry partners and the labor market, enabling practical application and business development. A notable example is the Real Estate Brokers Training Project, which reflects successful alignment between research outcomes and market needs. [SER, p53]. **The review team confirms that the institution guarantees the ownership of the achievements and results in the area of scientific research and uses them to its own economic and**

financial benefit. [Ev. 43.5; 43.6; 100; 100.1; BM3, BM5, BM6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.17*).

Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

1. The establishment of the Center for Scientific Research, Projects, and Innovation (CSRPI), the formation of research teams within academic units, and the alignment of research priorities with national and international agendas reflect a proactive and coordinated approach to research activity in accordance with standards of Quality Code. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.2*).
2. UCB has built relationships with other research organizations and takes part in joint projects, involving both local and international researchers, through the signing of cooperation or participation agreements or participation in joint activity events. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.3*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.5*).
3. UCB is actively enhancing its research activities and securing the involvement of staff, students and alumni. This approach aims to cultivate partnerships and enhance the institution's presence on the international level (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.8*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.12*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.13*).
4. The mobility efforts are evident and actively integrating these activities into research or teaching opportunities, including but not limited to, delivering open lectures, conducting workshops, and leading seminars. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.14*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.16*).

Weaknesses

The review team didn't identify any weaknesses:

Recommendations

The review team didn't make any recommendations:

Affirmation of action being taken



The review team affirms the following actions are already in progress:

The University College of Business demonstrates a clear institutional commitment to strengthening its role in scientific research, innovation, and academic development. *(Annex No. 1, Standard IV.1), [Annex No. 1, Standard IV.7], (Annex No. 1, Standard IV.10).*

Judgement

The standards for Evaluation Area 4: The standards for Scientific/Artistic Activity and Innovation are **fully met**.



Evaluation Area 5: Students and Their Support

5.1 The University College of Business (UCB) conducts its student admission process in full compliance with Law No. 80/2015 "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania" and the relevant bylaws that standardize admission procedures. The institution implements a sustainable development approach, aiming to gradually increase its student population in alignment with institutional capacities and national policies, as outlined in its Strategic Development Plan. Admission to Bachelor programs at UCB is merit-based, primarily considering high performance in the State Matura. At the same time, UCB encourages increased enrollment in professional higher education programs, reflecting the institution's commitment to both academic and vocational pathways. The student body is composed mainly of recent high school graduates, and the institution has actively undertaken initiatives to diversify and internationalize its academic offer. In this regard, UCB has submitted applications to open English-language programs across both study cycles, aiming to attract international students and expand its academic profile. The institution has established dedicated structures to promote its academic offerings and support students throughout their studies. The Student and Career Counseling Office (SCCO) provides prospective and current students with personalized guidance and information. Additionally, UCB develops and distributes promotional brochures and a comprehensive Student Guide to facilitate the integration and orientation of newly admitted students. One of the institution's key outreach efforts is participation in the annual "Work & Study" fair, coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MES) and secondary schools. This event serves as a vital platform for engaging with high school graduates, presenting academic programs, scholarship opportunities, and institutional advantages. During this period, UCB operates a fully functional Admission Office, staffed by administrative personnel, students, and faculty, to provide in-depth information on study programs, admission requirements, tuition fees, scholarship options, and academic structure. All admission activities are carried out in accordance with the quotas and institutional capacities approved by the Ministry of Education and Sports. The institution ensures transparency and accessibility by publishing admission deadlines, office hours, and support services on its official website and notice boards. UCB places strong emphasis on maintaining the quality of its academic process, particularly during the foundational years of study. The involvement of experienced and qualified academic staff is prioritized to guide and motivate students in their academic and professional development. The institution ensures a stable ratio between the number of enrolled students and teaching load, with over 70% of lecture hours covered by full-time faculty. Furthermore, the careful management of class sizes guarantees a conducive learning environment aligned with the objectives of each study program and the institution's strategic goals. **The review team affirms that the University College of Business (UCB) demonstrates a well-structured and transparent approach to student admissions, in full compliance with the national legal framework. The institution effectively aligns its admission policies with its strategic development goals, ensuring a gradual and sustainable**



increase in student numbers. UCB actively promotes both academic and professional study pathways, supports prospective students through dedicated structures like the Student and Career Counseling Office, and ensures inclusive access to information via its official communication channels. The use of qualified academic staff and balanced class sizes further reinforces UCB's commitment to quality education and student success. [Ev. 1; 2; 3; 15; 73; 73.1; 81; 118; BM3, BM4]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.1*).

5.2 The University College of Business (UCB) is committed to supporting the academic, professional, and personal development of its students, academic staff, and administrators. Student success and staff advancement are strategic priorities, achieved through integrated academic, administrative, and social services. UCB provides modern infrastructure—lecture halls, labs, seminar rooms, and a library with over 7,500 titles and JSTOR access—to support quality teaching and research. It also offers dedicated facilities for academic departments and scientific events. Academic guidance is ensured through structured advising and mentoring, while the Student and Career Counseling Office facilitates internships, job placement, and professional development through partnerships with public and private institutions. Administrative services are streamlined via digital platforms, enabling students to manage academic processes efficiently. International students receive additional support to adapt to the academic and cultural environment. UCB fosters a vibrant, inclusive campus life through student clubs, volunteer activities, sports, cultural events, and international exchanges. This holistic support system promotes academic excellence, practical skills, and lifelong success. [BM3]. Review team confirms that UCB offers various scholarships, including excellence and institutional scholarships through partnerships, and special scholarships for certain regions' graduates. [Ev. 15; 17; 73; 73.1; 81; 118; BM3, BM4, BM7]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.2*).

5.3 UCB has established a well-integrated information and management system to ensure efficient academic and administrative operations. All academic and administrative data are managed digitally and in print, in line with institutional regulations. Academic secretariats play a key role in supporting and informing students, ensuring transparency, accessibility, and timely services. Together, these systems support a secure and efficient flow of information, aligned with UCB's goals of modern governance and service quality. *The review team verifies the effectiveness of the information system, which offers ongoing academic assistance. Academic advisors from both core and major units contribute to guiding student advancement.* [Ev. 48; 73; 73.1; 80; BM3, BM7, SER]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.3*).

5.4 Review team affirms that UCB emphasizes a student-centred approach in teaching, research, and social impact, incorporating student representatives into the



Academic Senate and engaging them in essential institutional committees and the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. The University College of Business (UCB) actively promotes student involvement as a vital component of institutional life, recognizing students not merely as recipients of education but as key contributors to the development and enhancement of academic quality. UCB has fostered a culture of open and inclusive participation, enabling students to engage meaningfully in decision-making, governance, and quality assurance processes. Students are formally represented in key institutional structures such as the Academic Senate, the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU), and Internal Evaluation Groups. Through these roles, they voice the perspectives and interests of the wider student body in discussions on academic policies, curriculum development, student services, and overall institutional advancement. Beyond formal governance bodies, student participation is further supported through their presence in both standing and ad hoc committees that address matters impacting student life. UCB also operates a democratically elected Student Government, which plays a pivotal role in organizing student-led initiatives, including cultural, scientific, and extracurricular activities. This structure also contributes to leadership development and promotes active dialogue between students and institutional leadership. Students are also central to the institution's quality assurance efforts. As members of the IQAU, they participate in monitoring and evaluating educational and administrative processes. One of their most important contributions is through the administration and analysis of teaching evaluation questionnaires, which are completed confidentially and anonymously. These evaluations provide essential feedback that helps assess academic staff performance and guides improvements in teaching and support services. Overall, UCB exemplifies a collaborative model where student engagement is institutionalized, valued, and instrumental in shaping a responsive and quality-oriented academic environment. This approach reflects UCB's commitment to national and international standards of good practice in higher education, governance and student empowerment, etc. The students highlighted that what makes this institution unique is the EPIC program and the opportunity to work and get paid at the American Hospital during the summer. [Ev. 130; 110; 38; 38.1; BM3]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.4*).

- 5.5 The University College of Business has established a structured and institutionalized policy for student orientation and counseling, implemented through the Student and Career Counseling Office (SCCO) and the Faculty Academic Secretariat. These structures provide continuous academic, professional, and administrative guidance to students throughout their studies. SCCO plays a key role in informing students about study programs, internship opportunities, and employment pathways, while also maintaining links with the labor market to support graduate employability. The Academic Secretariat ensures students receive timely assistance on academic procedures and documentation. To enhance communication and orientation, UCB offers a comprehensive digital infrastructure, including the UCB Electronic Portal, official email accounts, social media platforms, and dedicated online groups. These tools ensure real-time updates and effective interaction between students and institutional structures. Students also benefit



from on-campus support such as access to the library, bookstore, and informational corners. From admission to graduation, academic staff and support offices assist students in academic planning, thesis selection, and career development. The Student Guide and dedicated regulations further ensure that orientation and counseling services are accessible, transparent, and student-centered. Overall, UCB's orientation and counseling policy ensures continuous support, empowering students to navigate their academic journey and career development with confidence. [Ev. 81; 73; 5; 22; BM3]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.5*).

5.6 UCB follows an inclusive policy for all students, irrespective of race, colour, nationality, or religious beliefs. Students coming from minorities are ensured to have the same opportunities as all other colleagues. To support this, the institution has allocated specific quotas in its study programs for students from these groups. The building is accessible to individuals with disabilities. Over the past years, more than 80 students from these groups have been admitted under dedicated admission quotas, with tuition fee reductions granted to those with family members in vulnerable conditions (e.g., disability, social assistance, or fallen in service). The institution allocates approximately €100,000 annually to support these students, demonstrating its long-term financial commitment. In addition, students engaged in institutional events and support activities benefit from fee reductions and opportunities for temporary employment within UCB, gaining both financial relief and practical experience. UCB also promotes a vibrant student life by organizing sports, cultural, and creative events. Talented and active students are often involved in academic or administrative roles, further supporting their development. Through targeted financial measures, personal mentoring, and inclusive engagement, UCB ensures that no student is left behind, affirming its mission for equity, inclusion, and active student participation. [Ev. 72; 72.1; 72.2; 125; BM3, SER, p59]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.6*).

5.7 The UCB institutional library offers a wide range of quality textbooks and additional literature, both in electronic and physical formats, to students and staff. UCB ensures access to updated core and supplementary literature through a structured system, including approved syllabi, a digital portal, and a physical library with over 7,500 titles. Course materials and syllabi are regularly uploaded to the UCB Portal, accessible to all students. The library is enriched annually, including donations from institutions and a subscription to JSTOR, offering access to over 12 million academic sources. Students can borrow books or use digital resources to support research, critical analysis, and academic work. Access to library facilities and services is provided to students based on schedules that are both approved and made public. Students can borrow physical books, access online resources at no cost, or book study rooms for specific periods. [Ev. 116; 116.1; 73; 82; BM3]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.7*).



5.8 UCB prioritizes student employment as a core institutional objective, integrating career development within its academic strategy. Through the Student and Career Counseling Office (SCCO), students receive guidance, internships, and access to job opportunities via job fairs, training, and partnerships with employers. Over 90% of master's graduates and 50–83% of bachelor's students are employed, many within their professional fields. UCB mandates internships in all programs, enhancing employability. The newly established Faculty of Engineering and Computer Sciences aligns programs with labor market needs. The institution maintains active alumni networks and strong ties with public and private sectors, supporting graduate integration into the workforce and promoting ongoing career development. We encourage the university to preserve the relevant data from the graduate students and use these for wide analyses, feedback and other contributions. [Ev. 17; 125; 125.1; BM3, SER, p64]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.8*).

5.9 The University College of Business (UCB) prioritizes maintaining active and long-term relationships with its alumni, recognizing them as vital contributors to institutional life and development even after graduation. This connection is sustained through a structured alumni network coordinated by the Student and Career Counseling Office (SCCO), in line with UCB's mission and strategic goals. SCCO tracks graduates' career progress and maintains ongoing communication through email (active post-graduation), social media, phone, and in-person meetings. It also organizes alumni-focused events, training sessions, career forums, and publishes activity reports. Regular surveys collect feedback on employment outcomes and program effectiveness, helping UCB align academic offerings with labor market needs. High employment rates and positive alumni feedback highlight the success of these efforts. Through strong partnerships with local and international institutions and businesses, UCB facilitates career opportunities and internships, reinforcing the alumni network and supporting graduates in their professional growth. [Ev. 125; 125.1; 113; 121.8; BM6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.9*).

Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

1. The institution effectively aligns its admission policies with its strategic development goals, ensuring a gradual and sustainable increase in student numbers. UCB actively promotes both academic and professional study pathways, supports prospective students through dedicated structures like the Student and Career Counseling Office, and ensures inclusive access to information via its official communication channels. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.1*).



2. UCB offers various scholarships, including excellence and institutional scholarships through partnerships, and special scholarships for certain regions' graduates. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.2*).
3. The effectiveness of the information system, which offers ongoing academic assistance. Academic advisors from both core and major units contribute to guiding student advancement. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.3*).

Weaknesses

The review team didn't identify any weaknesses:

Recommendations

The review team didn't make any recommendations:

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following actions are already in progress:

UCB emphasizes a student-centered approach in teaching, research, and social impact, incorporating student representatives into the Academic Senate and engaging them in essential institutional committees and the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.4*).

Judgement

The standards for Students and their Support are fully met



Evidence. List

List of evidences provided as part of self-evaluation documents, annex ...of SER. These evidences on EER are referred using the abbreviation **Ev. 1, ... Ev. 2**, etc. For meetings we use **BM1, BM 2** etc.

Letter initiating the accreditation procedure.pdf

Rector's Opinion.pdf

Self-Declaration Rector.pdf

1. Decision of the Board of Administration and the response letter for the fulfillment of recommendations.
2. Letter initiating the accreditation procedure.
3. Confirmation of accreditation application from Quality Assurance In Higher Education.
4. Proposal of IAG members from faculties
5. Proposal of IEG members from the faculties.
6. Deadlines from Quality Assurance In Higher Education.
7. IEG work plan.
8. DCM No. 651 dated 14.09.2011.
9. Order of the Ministry of Education granting permission to begin academic activity.
10. Accreditation decision and MES order of 2012.
11. Periodic accreditation decision. Decision No.100 of the Board of Administration.
12. Order No. 139 for the opening of CHPS.
 - 12.1. Order for the opening of the Tourism and Hospitality program.
 - 12.2. DCM No. 185 dated 25.03.2020 on Professional Higher Education.
13. Decision BA 03 dated 07.01.2022 on periodic accreditation.
14. Order No. 165 dated 16.04.2024 on the reorganization of UCB and the opening of FECS.
 - 14.1. Report No. 490 dated 23.10.2023 sent to MES regarding the need for UCB reorganization.
15. List of study programs at UCB.
16. UCB Strategy 2024–2030
 - 16.1. Strategic Plan of UCB for the years 2020–2025
 - 16.2. Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education for 2025–2030
 - 16.3. Quality Development Policies of UCB – January 2024
17. Student statistics over the years at UCB.

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18. Order No. 330 dated 04.07.2024 Opening of the Bachelor program in Engineering
19. Order No. 567 dated 12.11.2024 Approval of amendments to UCB Statute
 - 19.1. Law No. 80/2015, Articles 103, 104, 105
20. Statute of UCB
21. Internal Regulation of UCB
22. Organizational structure of UCB
23. Example of decision-making procedure of the Senate and Board
24. Senate Decision No. 11 dated 30.09.2024 for curricula 2024–2025
 - 24.1. Computer Engineering Curriculum
 - 24.2. Information on curriculum changes in Bachelor and Master cycles in FE academic year 2022–2023
25. Procedure for amending the Statute and related acts
26. Senate Decision No. 24 dated 25.11.2024 approving regulation updates
27. Decision No. 23 dated 25.11.2024 approving UCB regulations
28. Action plan for the completion of the academic year
29. Regulation on labor relations
30. Annual Report of FE
31. Letter to MESR regarding infrastructure and quotas and the approval from MESR
32. Grand Thornton Report (External Audit)
33. IQE Report on academic quality evaluation
 - 33.1. IQE questionnaires
34. Annual Report 2023–2024
35. Senate meeting agenda (example)
36. Senate Regulation
37. Decision on the establishment of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU)
38. Summary Report of IQAU
 - 38.1. Action Plan for recommendations
 - 38.2. IQAU Report for the First Semester, Academic Year 2024–2025
39. Example of international funding acquisition
 - 39.1. Project Report for the years 2020–2025
 - 39.1.1. Financial Benefit Report from Project Implementation
 - 39.1.2. International Staff Week Program
 - 39.2. Meeting aspects of the Clean Energy Projects at Ports and Airports
40. Erasmus+ Projects 2019–2025 (KA107/student and staff mobility)
41. Summary Report E+ KA1 – Mobilities 2020–2025



42. Evidence of activities under Erasmus+ agreements
43. Annual reports of main units
 - 43.1. Scientific activity report for academic staff
 - 43.1.1. Individual Scientific Research Work Report
 - 43.2. List of social and cultural activities
 - 43.2.1. Documents and aspects of participation in sports events
 - 43.2.2. List of extracurricular activities at UCB 2020–2025
 - 43.3. Book Proceedings and Journal Covers
 - 43.4. Book of Proceedings and the Scientific Journal for Professional Studies
 - 43.5. Report on Benefits from UCB Agreements
 - 43.6. Report on Other Activities Organized at UCB in 2024
 - 43.7. List of UCB events 2020–2025
44. Procedure for opening the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science
45. Faculty Regulation
 - 45.1. CHPS Regulation
46. Departmental Regulation
 - 46.1. Regulation of the UCB Research, Project and Innovation Center
47. List of academic staff for each faculty and department
48. Data on UCB's online portal
49. Decision-making practice in Senate meetings
50. Market study in support of FE-FLSP reorganization
 - 50.1. Market study in support of FAPS reorganization
 - 50.2. Market study for the opening of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science
51. List of agreements
 - 51.1. UCB Agreement with Webster University for Dual Degrees
 - 51.2. List of cooperation agreements with businesses, firms, and professional studios
 - 51.3. Template model for cooperation agreement with companies, NGOs, professional studios
 - 51.4. Report on Partnerships with HEIs 2020–2025
 - 51.5. List of Agreements with Domestic Partners
 - 51.6. Agreement with Matteo Guccione
52. Employment statistics (tracing and results)
53. List of assistant lecturers who graduated from UCB
54. Benefits from Erasmus+ KA1 agreements
55. List of Erasmus+ collaborators
56. Agreement with Confindustria, Benz, etc. (Models)



57. Future projects from Erasmus+ KA2 agreements
58. UCB students in Erasmus (mobility)
59. Conference Report 2020–2025
 - 59.1. Model Call for Scientific Papers and Procedure for Organizing the Scientific Conference
60. Full list of UCB personnel
61. Rector's Order for establishing the ad-hoc recruitment group
 - 61.1. Employment Procedure (Announcement, Rector's Order, competition, interview, evaluation, classification, and announcement of the winner)
62. Sample contract for academic and administrative staff
63. List of qualified staff abroad
64. Scientific activity plan for academic staff
65. Annual Report on Teaching and Scientific Research Performance
66. Academic staff performance evaluation template
67. Student questionnaire on the quality of training (Real Estate Agent)
68. Training programs for SKK/SNK and Training Certificate
 - 68.1. Training programs for Real Estate Agent and Training Certificate
 - 68.2. Establishment Act and Statute of ISAB
69. Employment contracts for full-time staff
 - 69.1. Employment contracts for part-time staff
 - 69.2. Employment contract of Dr. V. K as Coordinator of the Erasmus+ Program Office
70. Decision for approval of financial statements information 2024 at UCB
71. Report on the realization of financial indicators
 - 71.1. Report for the approval of UCB Budget Plan 2024 and midterm
 - 71.2. Senate and Board decisions on Budget Approval 2024
 - 71.3. Report on actual budget realization 2023 and Plan 2024
 - 71.4. Senate Decision on approval of 2023 financial statements at UCB
 - 71.5. Board Decision on the approval of the 2023 Financial Statement Report
72. Senate decision on staff approval and tuition fees
 - 72.1. Board Decision "On financial aid in cases of illness and hardship"
 - 72.2. List of financial aid cases for illness and hardship
 - 72.3. Procedure for reimbursement of publication costs for impact factor articles
 - 72.4. Board Decision on funding staff publications with impact factor and Scopus
 - 72.5. Support with 80% of the price for sale of textbooks authored by UCB staff
 - 72.6. Promotion approval: E. Qose, B. Bezo, E. Danaj, E. Elezi, E. Shehu, A. Melishta
 - 72.7. List of staff promoted in Doctoral Program or awarded academic titles



- 72.8. Board Decision for academic, financial offer and study programs 2022–2023
- 72.9. Payment list for REAL ESTATE AGENT training staff
- 73. UCB portal services
 - 73.1. User guide for the UCB electronic portal
- 74. Infrastructure and capacity
 - 74.1. Report on infrastructure and hosting capacities
 - 74.2. Risk assessment report and electrical inspection certificate
 - 74.3. Hygiene and Fire Safety Certificates
 - 74.4. Technical Reports of Experts for UCB Buildings A and B
 - 74.5. Ministry reports on student capacity quotas for 2023–2024
 - 74.6. Lease contracts for UCB Buildings A and B
- 75. Engineering data and equipment for buildings
- 76. Infrastructure certificates
- 77. UCB scientific performance
 - 77.1. Report and Budget for Scientific Research UCB 2024
- 78. Library regulation
- 79. Archive regulation
- 80. Secretariat regulation
 - 80.1. Coordinator regulation at UCB
 - 80.2. Regulation on recognition and equivalency at UCB
- 81. Student guide, brochures
 - 81.1. List of open lectures
- 82. Program file including syllabus
- 83. Infrastructure and laboratories
- 84. Bachelor and Master program regulation (sample)
- 85. Bachelor diploma + Diploma Supplement (Format)
- 86. Senate and Board decision on quotas and capacities 2024–2025
- 87. Teaching load for academic staff 2024–2025 FELSS
- 88. Program reorganization in FL
- 89. Syllabus template as per DCM
 - 89.1. Syllabus for Applied Accounting, Human Resources Management – bachelor's in economics
 - 89.2. Syllabus for Office Management – Higher Assistant Program
 - 89.3. Syllabus for Auto Braking System – Higher Technician Auto Program
- 90. Program teaching file (e.g., teaching plan, syllabus for one subject)
- 91. Diploma and diploma supplement format

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92. FLSP Annual Report
93. Student services schedule
94. Example of Master study plan
95. Student tracking, graduate employment statistics
96. Outstanding students appointed as assistant lecturers at UCB
97. Report on Student Conferences and Competitions 2020–2025
98. Academic structure of a study program at UCB
99. Regulation on teaching practicum
 - 99.1. Guide for the preparation of Professional Practice
100. Public Oversight Board Authorization for SKK and SNRF Trainings
 - 100.1. Minister of Justice's Order authorizing UCB for REAL ESTATE AGENT training
101. Example of market study
102. Academic structure, teaching plan and schedule for a study program (Decision)
103. Guidelines and action plan for the teaching process 2024–2025
104. Example of a lecture cycle prepared by a UCB lecturer
 - 104.1. Monograph by Prof. Shpëtim Çami
105. Exam regulation and Rector's Order for exams
106. Guidelines for diploma thesis defense
107. Dean's Order for Bachelor thesis defense, qualification exam or diploma topic
 - 107.1. Dean's order for appointing lecturer tutor for students
108. Syllabus of subjects reflecting changes
109. Regulation of Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU)
110. Questionnaire for students and lecturers by IQAU
111. Academic staff evaluation template
112. List of guest lecturers
113. Regulation of the Student and Career Counseling Office
114. Announcements, social media, websites, brochures
115. Example of online learning materials
116. Book fund in the library
 - 116.1. Address and contract of electronic library "JSTOR"
 - 116.2. Book withdrawal request
117. Rector's Order on exams



- 118. Work and Study Fair calendar
- 119. Approved list of scholarship beneficiaries 2022–2023
- 120. Certificates for prizes in championships held in 2023–2025
- 121. Print Screens:
 - 121.1. MES Website
 - 121.2. Quality assurance in higher education website
 - 121.3. RASH Website
 - 121.4. U Albania Website
 - 121.5. UCB Facebook Page
 - 121.6. UCB Website
 - 121.7. UCB Website – Financial Statements
 - 121.8. Published activity screenshots
 - 121.9. Screenshots from UCB Website and social media with training participants
 - 121.10. Screenshot: Student project presentations at FISHK 2024–2025
 - 121.11. Screenshot: Student project presentations at FISHK 2024–2025
 - 121.12. Screenshot: Website menu sections UCB in Albanian & English
- 122. Guide for using Google Education
- 123. Application to study programs in English
- 124. 2023–2024 Service Calendar
- 125. Alumni list
 - 125.1. Report on Student Employment
- 126. Appointment Order for the E.D
- 127. Appointment Order of K.M
 - 127.1. Appointment Order of Dr. M.M, Coordinator of Office for Foreign Students
- 128. Composition of the Academic Senate
- 129. Senate Decision on Supportive Structures
- 130. Student Government List

List B: Meetings held during the visit

Meetings are referred to throughout the report using the abbreviation **BM1**, **BM2**, etc

BM1: Review team meet with the Institutional Coordinator.

BM2: Review Team meet with the Rector.

BM3: Review team meet with a sample of students.

BM4: Review team meet with senior university managers.

BM5: Review team meet with a sample teaching staff.

BM6: Review team meet with external partners and alumni.




BM7: Review team meet with a sample of support/administrative staff.

BM8: Review team meet with the Institutional Coordinator.

BM9: Review team meet with the Self-evaluation team.

BM10: Review Team meet with the Rector to summarize the major lines of enquiry and related matters pursued during the review.

List C: List of evidence provided during the visit

C1: Data on budgetary expenditures for the implementation of the first recommendation (support for the scientific promotion of academic staff), from the date of receipt of the recommendation until the end of the last fiscal year;

C2: A concrete example of an international agreement or project implemented or in the process of implementation, which contributes to the academic and financial development of the institution, excluding those related to mobility and Erasmus+ programs;

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