

**REPORT
OF
EXTERNAL EVALUATION
FOR
PhD. STUDY PROGRAMMES
AT DOCTORAL SCHOOL
IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

Tiranë, 2015

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

FOR STUDY PROGRAMME: PHD IN ECONOMICS. PROFILES IN ECONOMICS AND FINANCE AND BANKING

INTRODUCTION

This External Evaluation Report (EER) contains an evaluation of the quality of the doctoral programme “Doctorate (PhD) in ECONOMICS with two Profiles: ECONOMICS and BANKING AND FINANCE” provided at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences (FEAS) by EPOKA University in Tirana. EPOKA University is a small private university, founded in 2008 by Turgut Özal Education Company having around 1200 students and 157 employees.

This is the first external evaluation of this study programme. It has three main objectives. Firstly, to establish how the HEI ensures the quality of doctoral programmes. Secondly, to help the university with the identification of factors likely to improve and raise the quality of doctoral programmes. And thirdly, to investigate whether the state quality standards and doctoral programme regulations are observed. The programme itself was launched in 2012 on the strength of Ordinance No. 565 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Albania issued on 19 November 2012. In 2011, EPOKA University received a positive rating following an institutional evaluation performed by the Albanian Public Agency for the Accreditation of Higher Education (PAAHE) and in the same year it also obtained accreditation for the Economics and Banking and Finance Bachelor’s degree programme. In 2012 – in Banking and Finance degree programme at the Master’s level (both Master of Science and Professional Master) was accredited.

On 11 February 2014, Epoka University asked PAAHE to accredit its doctoral programmes, including those in the domain of Economics. PAAHE started its external evaluation and accreditation procedure in October 2014. An Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) composed of 6 persons including a doctoral student was appointed on the strength of the Decision of the Administrative Board of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences No. 04 of 13 March 2015. IEG prepared a 79-page (plus annexes) Self-evaluation Report (SER) which was sent to PAAHE in April. This extensive document with some annexes, prepared in accordance with the requirements of PAAHE, contains several hundreds of pages. It is a valuable source of information about the study programme under evaluation. However, it has to be said that the quality of this document could and should be better. Some information contained there was conflicting or aggregated at the level of the HEI and not the faculty or the doctoral programme. The veracity of some of this information was questioned and subsequently corrected ad hoc by employees talking to the PAAHE experts. The self-evaluation of a number of criteria was performed in a superficial way, and sometimes described in one sentence. Not all doubts were dispelled during the site visit. The Review Team suggests that the HEI authorities develop a more efficient procedure for the purpose of verifying the contents of SERs.

PAAHE appointed experts to form the External Evaluation Group (EEG) and set the site visit date for 1-2 October 2015. The formal basis for the external evaluation process is provided in the regulations of the Minister of Education and Science laid down in Order No. 136 of 21.03.2011 on Approval of State Quality Standards for Evaluation and Accreditation of Third-Cycle Study Programs of Higher Education Institutions, as well as in PAAHE’s standards and procedures. Whenever possible, the relatively short history of this doctoral study programme and little experience in its provision were taken into consideration in the process of analysing individual standards and criteria. It is important to note that a new law on higher education is to be enacted soon. Some external evaluation standards applied to HEIs and programmes are expected to change. All of these factors could sometimes explain failure to make the most of the existing opportunities that the university has created for the development of its doctoral programmes.

During the site visit, the experts met the authorities of the University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Banking and Finance, Department of Economics, Council of Professors and Scientific Committee of the doctoral program, doctoral students and their research supervisors (thesis supervisors) and the academic staff involved in the educational process. The experts visited the teaching facilities and research infrastructure and some HEI units (Admission Office, Registration Office). The experts’ opinions expressed in this report are formulated on the basis of the analysis of SER, documents posted on EPOKA’s webpages and documents presented during the site visit. Explanations provided by the key stakeholders of the study programme during their conversations with the experts were an essential contribution to the process of evaluating and verifying information contained in



SER. The Review Team wishes to thank the authorities of the HEI, all the persons interviewed and above all – all the doctoral students and academic staff for their hospitality and for creating a friendly atmosphere during the site visit, openness in presenting their views and providing additional information about the programme under evaluation.

MEMBERS OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION GROUP (EEG)

1. Mieczyslaw W. Socha
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MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATION OF DOCTORAL STUDY PROGRAMMES

1. Mission and objectives of doctoral study programme

Description part

SER offers a description of the mission and objectives of the Economics doctoral programme: *The programme offered as part of the Economics profile aims to equip students with general economic knowledge "...and the ability to make scholarly contributions in fields of specialisation"*. The objective of the Banking and Finance programme *"...is to prepare academicians with specialized knowledge in their fields of interest"* (SER p. 8). Seven sub-specialities to be pursued by doctoral students are listed. The official documentation does not mention the existence of a short- or long-term strategy developed for the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences. Therefore, it is difficult to take a clear stance on the intentions and motivation that were behind the launch of these programmes. Unfortunately, no information about the needs of the doctoral programme graduate labour market was provided.

Two modes of doctoral programmes are provided – full-time and part-time. The full-time programme lasts from 6 to 8 semesters (3-4 years) and the part-time programme – from 6 to 12 semesters (3-6 years). In the course of the programmes, students are expected to be awarded 180 ECTS credits (60 in the first year) and finish their PhD thesis. The first year concentrates on *"...research methods and deepen understanding of theory..."* (SER p. 8) The remaining two years – solely on the preparation of PhD theses. Having no classes whatsoever in the second and third year does not seem justified. That solution would be something quite unusual if it applied to doctoral programmes offered by other European universities.

So far only three students have been recruited for the doctoral programme one in Economics and two in Banking and Finance, and neither of them has been awarded their PhD yet. This small number of students may be indicative of unsuccessful student recruitment and failure to recognise the needs of the labour market. In the course of an interview an explanation was offered that high substantive requirements and the provision of the programme in English were the reasons why the number of students was so small. In anticipation of the new law on higher education, doctoral programme recruitment for 2015/2016 has been suspended.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards ¹
Standard I.1 - General framework	
Criterion 1 The study program of third cycle (doctorate) is a new program or a reorganized program;	The Economics doctoral programme is a new study programme launched in the academic year 2012/2013. Therefore, it has not been modified yet.

¹EEG must writing for the fulfillment of each standard (based on the criterions which are in the left). At the end of their, need to write his opinions (summary), if is fulfill the standards or not.



<p>Criterion 2 If it is reorganized, the extent to which it affected the previous program;</p> <p>Criterion 3 The total number of students studying how doctor eight and number of those who attend this study program each year is in line with the policies of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) where the program is conducted as well as state policy for higher education and scientific research regarding recognition and validation of diploma and number of students studying for doctorate to one scientific mentor;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Doctorate study program is supported by national or international research groups accredited for research in relevant field or fields of studies;</p> <p>Criterion 5 Internal evaluation report of study program of the third cycle is reviewed by the Council of Professors.</p>	<p>The three doctoral students mentioned before meet the requirements provided in national regulations concerning higher education. The doctoral programme complies with the adopted strategy and policy aimed at the development of EPOKA university, whose ambition is "to become a pioneer and a model of learning and research at the local and international level". The university provides at least the minimum number of staff directly involved in the teaching process. Six academic teachers holding a PhD degree are employed full-time and the one holding the title of Professor works part-time. Three persons gained their PhD degree at Georgian, Turkish and British universities. Therefore, the legal requirements that full-time academic teachers supervise not more than two doctoral students, whereas part-time professors – one, have been met.</p> <p>There is no evidence that the Economics doctoral programme is directly supported by national or foreign universities or research groups. The university declares that the doctoral study programme under evaluation is supported by two Turkish universities - Istanbul University and Pamukkale University. The unit also possesses cooperation agreements with several dozens of other HEIs, companies and institutions. The protocols on cooperation with the Turkish universities do not, however, contain direct references to the doctoral programme provided. They only mention possibilities of joint research projects as well as academic staff, student and doctoral student exchange. We were told that students have an access to data bases offered by these universities.</p> <p>The doctoral programme is regularly monitored and reviewed by the Council of Professors (CP). Documents shown to experts contain information that CP evaluates the programme at least twice a year.</p>
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Conclusions of EEG:

EPOKA University is a young, private university aspiring to play a leading role in Albanian education and research. The launch of the doctoral study programme is the right step towards building the reputation of this academic institution. The objectives of this programme are formulated in quite a vague way, therefore, they do not reflect the specificity of FEAS. No attempt to identify employers wishing to employ doctoral programme graduates has been made. As required by the Law on Higher Education, the basis for the development of the Economics doctoral programme, with two profiles has been provided. There is no accreditation for Economics provided as part of the second-cycle programme. It was impossible to the review team to judge to what extent the doctoral program meets needs of Albanian economy and society.

However, the fact that three doctoral students have been recruited indicates that the University should thoroughly evaluate national needs in this respect. It may be that the tuition fee to be paid for this study programme is too high for Albanian candidates. In the long run, it is difficult to expect any development of academic potential of the programme when the number of doctoral students is so small. The University is potentially able to request considerable support for the programme from national and foreign universities but so far this option has not been exercised.

Recommendations and suggestions: The review team suggest to provide a self-analysis of the both departments' position in teaching and research, and prepare the more sound mission and strategic lines, as well as the study program having in mind the legal changes expected by the end of 2016. The aims and objectives should be clearly identifiable and defined more explicitly with a stronger links with the strategic objectives of the university. In the case of the two programmes profiles it would be appropriate to consider better focussing on the specialities/disciplines in which departments staff has significant achievements. The support of the program from foreign universities is highly advisable.



Judgment on the area: Taking into consideration the initial stage of the doctoral programme it can be said that the degree of satisfaction of Standard I.1 is full.

2. Academic Organisation chart of the Doctoral School

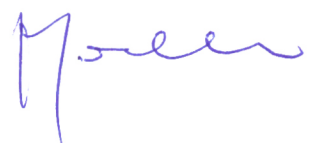
Description part

The doctoral programme is provided at the Faculty of Economics and Business Services, where there are four departments: Economics, Banking and Finance, Political Sciences and International Relations, Business Administration (see Chart 1, Annex 1). The first two units provide the direct academic facilities for the doctoral programme in Economics. The programme is managed by Council of Professors, and the Scientific Committee for doctoral programmes and academic coordinator. Final decisions are made by the Council of Professors (CP) composed of 7 persons (see Table 1, Annex 1). The structure of the doctoral programme does not include external stakeholders. It is important to note that no strategic stakeholders have been identified at faculty level.

The study programme can be provided by 16 persons including 13 holding PhD degrees and the title of Professor. One person is employed part-time. 6 full-time teachers, and one part-time professor are employed at the PHD program in Economics. Two workers supports the program from the administrative side. Therefore, the formal requirements for the organisation of doctoral study programmes have been fulfilled.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard III.1 - Management and financing tools for doctorate study program	
Criterion 1 Unit that organizes doctorate study program has accredited two first cycles of studies in the field, in which it offers the doctorate study program;	<p>The faculty providing the doctoral programme gained PAAHE's accreditation for its Banking and Finance first (BA) - and second-cycle (MA) programmes in 2011 and 2012 respectively. Only the Bachelor's degree Economics programme was accredited. Therefore, the criterion 1 requirements are not fully met. The present review was the first evaluation of doctoral study program by PAAHE. There were no follow-up actions following earlier reviews for the Review Team to examine.</p> <p>On the basis of the documentation presented and the direct inspection of the facilities it appears that the doctoral programme offers sufficient opportunities for research and the academic as well as didactic development of its students. Due to the small number of doctoral students, the number of support workers is sufficient. The number of doctoral students is suitable for the current staffing potential of FEAS.</p> <p>The doctoral programme management structure is slightly too complicated as for such a small number of students. The Council of Professors which includes all full-time professors substantively supervises all the PHD programmes. The formal requirements relating to the number of CP members at FEAS have been fulfilled. All the 7 members hold a PhD degree, 6 persons are employed in the capacity of professors, one as an associated professor. The work of CP is managed by its President. CP members represent various scientific domains and have extensive academic experience gained at other HEIs, therefore, they are well prepared</p>
Criterion 2 Unit that organizes the doctorate study program has adequate administrative premises to realize its good functioning;	
Criterion 3 In order to carry out the doctorate study program, the unit that proposes its opening engages the necessary personnel, ranging from teaching secretary that follows the third cycle progress;	
Criterion 4 Responsible bodies for its supervision are established in doctorate study program regulation;	
Criterion 5 Board of Professors, which is responsible for organizing and supervising doctorate study program has a sufficient number of members that cover all its issues. Minimum number of professors in PC should be 7 (seven). Board of Professors may be also raised to the level of higher education institution, when its main units do not meet the required number of full-time professors;	



<p>Criterion 6 Board of Professors of the main unit that organizes and manages the doctorate study program meets periodically throughout the year;</p>	<p>for the organisation and supervision of study programmes. In the course of the site visit documents were shown to prove that CP meets every semester to analyse progress made by the doctoral students in the process of preparing their PhD theses. CP may contact the thesis supervisors if need be. Recommendations for the doctoral students are recorded in the minutes of a meeting.</p> <p>For each doctoral programme CP appoints a Scientific Committee composed of a minimum of 3 persons. The Scientific Committee defines doctoral programme recruitment criteria, performs initial candidate selection and approves or rejects doctoral students' applications to be exempt from the theory component of a programme, offers suggestions to CP as to candidates for PhD thesis supervisors, evaluates doctoral student progress reports and verifies the fulfilment of all the requirements needed for the final examination. Moreover, academic coordinators deal with the coordination of work relating to doctoral programmes.</p>
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Conclusions of EEG:

The following formal requirements for doctoral programmes have been met: obtaining accreditation for Bachelor's degree programmes for Banking and Finance. The Economics programme was accredited only on the first-cycle level, therefore, not all formal conditions have been fulfilled for this profile. The Council of Professors and the Scientific Committee - academic bodies supervising the programme - have been set up. CP performs its tasks by carrying out regular analysis of the study programme. The Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences meets the basic financial and staffing requirements needed for the development of doctoral programmes. A diversified group of researchers specialising in various disciplines constitutes a good academic environment in which to develop third-cycle programmes. It could be argued whether or not the creation of two academic bodies monitoring doctoral programmes – CP and Scientific Committees – is justified in such a small unit as FEAS. However, the Review Team has been informed that that kind of organisational structure is imposed by state regulations.

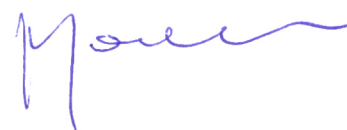
Recommendations and suggestions: In the context of a small total number of all doctoral students (26) in the HEI and at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, it would be advisable to consider a consolidation of efforts leading to the creation of one Doctoral School at university level or in cooperation with other HEIs, or perhaps a School of Graduate Studies at FEAS for students holding MA, MBA and for doctoral students. This idea was supported by teachers at a meeting with the PAAHE experts. The Review Team also suggests that the HEI should set up an advisory council with the participation of external stakeholders both from the country and abroad advising the dean on doctoral programme issues.

Judgment on the area: fully comply

3. Quality of Academic and administrative (support) staff

Description part

Academic staff involved in the provision of the Economics doctoral programme is composed of 6 full-time research workers and one part-time. CP is composed of 6 full-time academic teachers holding a PhD degree and one part-time professor. Therefore, such indicators as FAS/PAS (7/1), FAS/AE (6/2), PAS/AE (1/2) have achieved favourable levels. The number of academic advisers per one doctoral student is 2,3. SER describes only the procedure of staff recruitment. However, it does not mention any principles or criteria applicable in the process of making decisions concerning recruitment. In reaction to the Review Report the University provided the detailed description of the procedure for the recruitment of the new academic teachers. The University concludes employment contracts for a period of one year with those working full-time and for a period of one semester with those working part-time. No tenure is offered. Research supervisors and doctoral students should hold an hour's meetings every week to discuss



progress in the preparation of their PhD thesis. No lecturers from foreign HEIs are employed, however some teachers were employed abroad in the past.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.1 - General framework	
<p>Criterion 1 The number and level of researchers engaged in this program constitutes a guarantee for program implementation (60% of them should be internal academic staff, engaged in research and holders of academic titles "Professor", "Associate Professor" or scientific degree "Doctor" or "PhD" awarded in universities well known in the world for quality and rich research and publishing activities in the relevant field;</p>	<p>SER mentions 7 academic teachers involved in the doctoral programme teaching process. Six of them are employed full-time and. Some teachers were awarded their PhD at British, Georgian, Polish and Turkish universities. The part-time teacher holds the title of professor. Therefore, the formal requirements relating to the structure of staff have been met. The employees' age structure is good as most of those teachers are under 55 years old. It is worth stressing that the teachers have extensive academic and practical experience gained from working at universities and companies in other countries. Their command of a number of foreign languages is worth mentioning.</p>
Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research	
<p>Criterion 1 The institution that offers programs of study of third cycle (doctorate), has sufficient academic staff with scientific titles and degrees;</p> <p>Criterion 2 The institution has sufficient administrative and research structures for activities provided in the study program to conduct research. The institution may organize joint programs of doctorate study with one or more other institutions, based on agreements between them;</p>	<p>In light of the applicable regulations, the current number of academic teachers allows for recruitment of seven more students. The structure of employment in respect of titles and academic degrees is not called into question. However, it has to be said that the academic potential of the Department of Economics and Department of Banking and Finance is rather modest as only 6 full-time teaching staff holding academic degrees are currently employed. Moreover, the teachers are employed for a period of one year only which may pose a threat to the stability and continuity of the programme. The experts showed a particular interest in this issue. Analysis of documentation and interviews held in the course of the site visit show that there is no formal procedure of securing the continuity of the programme or research supervision should the teachers decide to give up their employment following the expiry of their employment contracts. Some doctoral students were asked this question and said that their supervisors had assured them that their supervision would be continued should they be employed by a different HEI.</p> <p>So far the Faculty has not provided joint doctoral programmes with partner HEIs. One members of academic staff working at partner HEIs is involved in the doctoral programme second academic co-adviser).</p> <p>The fact of employing two administrative workers for the purposes of the doctoral programme is more than enough to meet this criterion. The doctoral students may use the services of units at university level, for example the Research and Project Office.</p>
Conclusions of EEG:	
<p>The basic needs of the programme in respect of the minimum staffing requirement have been met. The formal requirements concerning the number of thesis supervisors and the ratio of full-time to part-time employees have been exceeded. Another 7 doctoral students could be annually recruited. The academic teachers possess the required academic degrees and teaching as well as academic achievements and experience. The ratio of the number of academic teachers to the number of doctoral students is good. Therefore, the conditions for the individualisation of the study programme and for ensuring its good quality have been fulfilled. The support that the 2 administrative workers offer to the doctoral programme can be regarded as sufficient. However, in the long run the Faculty authorities should consider the development of the academic potential of the both Departments by increasing the employment of academic teachers representing diversified scientific</p>	



domains. Involving foreign partners in the doctoral programme could significantly strengthen the research potential of both Departments necessary for the development of the doctoral programme. The HEI has in place an up and running system of financial incentives for the best researchers. However, the fact that a large number of employees are motivated in this way makes us sceptical about its impact.

There are certain worries over the necessity to renew full-time employment contracts every year and part-time employment contracts – every semester. This situation does not favour teaching staff retention and may cause significant disturbances in supervising the University’s doctoral students in the case of high staff turnover.

Recommendations and suggestions: It is recommended that employment contracts with academic teachers delivering classes, and at least with academic advisors, be concluded for a period not shorter than the doctoral programme itself. It would be beneficial to perform a risk assessment of the doctoral programme. Library opening hours should address the students’ needs.

Judgment on the area: fully comply

4. Facilities, infrastructure, logistics and other services of doctoral program

Description part

The HEI has a nice campus with two new buildings serving administrative as well as teaching and research purposes. The campus and its car parks are situated outside the centre of Tirana not far from the airport. The buildings were commissioned a short while ago and they contain modern equipment necessary for students and employees. A small library grants students free access to its collection.

As regards teaching facilities and research infrastructure, SER quotes only aggregated data for the whole faculty. Therefore, the two doctoral programme students have to share the facilities with doctoral students of other programmes, students and academic staff. Having said that, there is not much point in detailed analysis of individual indicators, such as the number of computers per doctoral student or square meters per student.

Data contained in SER and a direct inspection of the facilities show that the needs of the doctoral students are well taken care of. This refers to the lecture rooms and their equipment, computers and general or specialised software (for instance Turnitin which is used to prevent plagiarism, statistical package SPSS), student access to the Internet as well as to social infrastructure. The library grants access to JSTOR (as a full member of the network), Elsevier Science Direct and Thomson Reuter Eikon.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard II.2 - Didactic basis and technical support	
<p>Criterion 1 Students admitted in the third cycle study program have necessary conditions to realize the study program with academic and research character;</p>	<p>The doctoral students admitted to the programme have appropriate qualifications to participate in third-cycle programme in Economics, Finance and Banking. When interviewed, they displayed considerable professional orientation in their research, its methodology and place in theory, etc. They were outstanding students during their Master’s and Bachelor’s degree programmes. In their opinion, the conditions offered by the modern teaching facilities and research infrastructure are good. Various university documents show that the University is creating potential opportunities to align its doctoral students’ research interests with its current research projects. However, the three students are not involved in any collective research projects</p>
<p>Criterion 2 Doctorate studies program provides harmonization of student's goals in scientific-research field, approved research projects and, at its conclusion, even the possibility of academic career and employment;</p>	

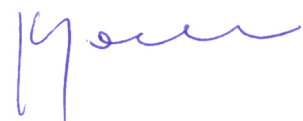


<p>Criterion 3 A scientific library with publications in hardcopy and electronic form and complete IT infrastructure available to of third cycle study program;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Students have sufficient technical support for scientific research development;</p> <p>Criterion 5 Researches that include laboratory researches are supported by sufficient scientific laboratory basis.</p>	<p>implemented at FEAS. They cooperate only with their thesis supervisors in the implementation of their individual projects.</p> <p>Doctoral programmes are to enable their graduates making contributions to the development of the domain in which they will specialise. Therefore, it is assumed that they will take up employment in HEIs or research centres. Interviews with the authorities of the HEI and the Faculty show that doctoral programme graduates are supposed to join FEAS's academic staff. One doctoral student present at the meeting with the experts is already employed at Epoka University and one student is conducting classes part-time.</p> <p>The library collection includes material, allowing for the development of research in the field of Business Administration. However, it does not contain a number of manuals, monographs and handbooks offering advanced knowledge. That kind of criticism also came from doctoral students. The doctoral students have been ensured access to the latest research results published in international journals. In the opinion of the doctoral students the fact that the library is open for 5 days a week only and closes at 5.30 PM is an inconvenience.</p> <p>The University offers technical support to researchers by providing basic and some specialist software (SPSS) and granting access to certain worldwide databases. The HEI does not finance access to statistical databases important for economic research and containing individual data which is, however, offered by international organisations such as EUROSTAT, OECD, WORLD BANK. It was clear from the interviews held that there is no major problem with access to domestic statistical databases. No laboratory research is conducted at the current stage of the doctoral program.</p>
<p>Conclusions of EEG: The University's didactic infrastructure is in a very good order. Certainly it is one of the strongest point of the Epoka University. The three doctoral students' needs related to the facilities and learning resources are sufficiently satisfied. This refers in particular to access to the latest publications listed in international databases, general and specialist software.</p> <p>Recommendations and suggestions: It would be advisable to ensure that they have access to international statistical databases and to install econometric modelling tools which would be more advanced than SPSS. Library opening hours should address the students' needs.</p> <p>Judgment on the area: fully comply</p>	

5. Financing and management of financial resources

Descriptions part

The authors of SER declare two priorities relating to the policy of research activity funding: promoting publications in good international journals and the participation of employees in scientific conferences. Information gathered in the course of the site visit shows that the HEI generates a financial deficit. Research at FEAS receives mostly internal university funding. Page 24 of SER reveals that in the academic year 2013/2014 € 20 000 was earmarked for the research needs of the HEI's all doctoral students. The Review Team was unable to verify this data on the basis of documents. The HEI's internal regulations provide information that only doctoral students being its employees can receive funds to cover their participation in conferences.



The data shown in SER and relating to funding refers to the university and not to the Economics doctoral programme or Faculty of Economics and Administrative Services. To be able to evaluate the financial policy and financial resources at least at FEAS level, during the site visit the Review Team asked for amended data. At the end of the site visit a table entitled "Scientific Research Budget Line" was shown to evidence the 2014/2015 expenditure. The Review Team was, however, unable to use this information to evaluate the financial stability of the programme and expenditure priorities as it was impossible to compare it with information contained in SER. Generally, there is a lack consistency in all documents containing data on financial flows. Therefore, it is impossible to analyse individual indicators at the program level. Also, no principles of funds allocation to various programmes, units or research projects have been provided. From the documentation and discussions with the authorities of the Faculty and of the doctoral study programme review team came to the conclusion that financial risk awareness of the program is low. No risk analysis is conducted by the university. The HEI's financial audit is performed on a yearly basis by the owner of the school, that is Turgut Ozal Education Company.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.1 - General framework	
<p>Criterion 1 Doctorate study program is supported by a sufficient budget for research;</p>	<p>According to information provided in SER, in the academic year 2013/2014 the University earmarked EUR 20,000 for research. However, there is no information how much was spent on research conducted by the Business Administration doctoral students or research workers involved in the programme. Therefore, it is impossible to identify the degree to which criterion 1 has been satisfied.</p>
Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research	
<p>Criterion 2 External funding received for scientific research is indicative of high level research activity and they are administered for the progress of relevant study program.</p>	<p>Data quoted in SER in table 7 (p.24; see Also Annex III to this report) shows that the University receives significant funding in the form of research grants. There is no detailed information how much of the funding is spent on support offered to research conducted by the FEAS researchers or Economics doctoral students. No principles of research fund management have been presented either in the SER or during the site visit, so it is impossible to clearly evaluate criterion 2.</p>
Standard III.1 - Management and financing tools for doctorate study program	
<p>Criterion 1 Financial budget of doctorate study program is sufficient to achieve research objectives for each doctorate student;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Financial budget distribution structure of doctorate study program matches with scientific research policy and needs.</p>	<p>It is difficult to evaluate criterion no. 1 as there is no detailed data and the preparation of doctoral theses is at initial stages. Information obtained in the course of the site visit proves that one doctoral student's participation in an international conference received funding.</p> <p>Also, the criterion no. 2 cannot be evaluated as there is no information about the structure of expenditure (and even about the principles of allocation of research funds) relating to the doctoral programme, or about the research policy of the faculty and its related needs.</p>
Standard III.3 - Financing of doctorate study program	
<p>Criterion 1 Number of research works funded by the ministry;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Distribution of funds to host and supervision teams of scientific research works is done in a balanced way;</p>	<p>No research project implemented by the doctoral students is financed by the Ministry. And no other national grants have been used to finance research. No scientific project have been financed by international sources. SER declares that maintaining a balance in the allocation of funds mentioned in criterion 2 is ensured by the supervision of FEAS and the Finance Office. As there is no reliable information available it is impossible to see whether or not</p>



<p>Criterion 3 Number of research works funded under national research projects, benefited by scientific supervisors of doctorate students for this study program;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Number of research works funded under international research projects benefited by scientific supervisors of doctorate students for this study program;</p>	<p>the allocation of funds is performed in the way suggested in criterion 2.</p> <p>The poor involvement of the doctoral students in research projects is explained with a number of reasons, first of all by the initial stage of the research conducted, limited information on available domestic and international grants (the doctoral students gain this kind of information from their supervisors) and by FEAS employees' insufficient interest in external projects.</p>
<p>Conclusions of EEG:</p> <p>The University conducts research, receives research grants and earmarks funds for its doctoral students' research needs. The Economics doctoral students may finance their research using university, national and international funds. In reality, they only use their internal university funds to a limited degree as their research is at initial stages. The review team discussed the process of the internal allocation of financial resources with administration of the university, however could not find clear rules in this area. Given the lack of the sufficient statistical information at the time of its visit, the review team cannot comment on the financial effectiveness of the doctoral program in Economics, Banking and Finance. FEAS seems to have enough resources to provide doctoral studies in the short-term. However, there is no guarantee of its continuation in the longer period because the HEI generates a financial deficit.</p> <p>Recommendations and suggestions: Therefore, the Review Team suggests the diversification of the financial flows of FEAS revenues. We strongly recommend the preparation of a financial balance and cash flows statements for the HEI and the faculty in accordance with established accounting standards, which would allow for the clear identification of revenue sources, expenditure structure, cash flows and education costs at least at FEAS level. This will constitute the basis for a financial risk assessment of the doctoral programme. The performance of such a risk assessment seems indispensable in light of information relating to the HEI's persisting budgetary deficit.</p> <p>Judgment on the area: partially comply</p>	

6. Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)

Description part

The university has implemented basic elements of the internal quality assurance system (IQAS) in respect of education, and research. The basic provisions relating to quality assurance are laid down in a university document entitled "Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Directive" published in 2009. "The Guide on the Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Epoka University" is another document helping to understand IQAS. The same year saw the establishment of the Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Board (AEQIB) whose tasks and procedures were identified. It is composed of 7 persons including 3 academic teachers and one representative of each of the following groups: university administration, students (head of the Student Council), graduates and employers. The powers of this academic body are extremely wide. It is authorised to determine the mission and vision of the university, prepare strategic plans, conduct monitoring, evaluate the internal quality assurance system, coordinate work related to internal and external evaluations of the internal quality assurance system. The preparation of internal evaluation annual reports and their presentation to the Higher Board of the University deserve recognition. There are also various bodies dealing with different aspects of quality management, among them: The Councils of the Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement, The Councils on Evaluation and Quality Development of the Administrative Units. Evaluation Groups preparing self-evaluation reports for the needs of institutional or programme evaluations are appointed for the purposes of external evaluations.

Since 2010, EPOKA University has held a quality certificate (ISO 9001: 2008 certificate on Quality Management Systems) ISO system. The Internal Audit Group (IAG) supervises the implementation of ISO quality standards in relation to other services and management. This group prepares periodical internal audit reports and presents them to the



rector. It also organizes informational and training seminars on quality management for representatives of individual university units.

The experts have read the latest IAG report summing up the results of inspections carried out in all University units last January. This is a valuable document evidencing an exceptionally thorough and even detailed review of procedures applied by individual units. Almost each of those procedures contains cases of failing to meet ISO standards. The Report contains documentation and explanations offered by the authorities of the units and relating to the implementation of the standards. Unfortunately, this analysis can be used for the purpose of education quality assessment solely to a limited extent due to its technical character focussing on the procedures only. For example, it was noted that students sign the register with pencils. When interviewed, AEQIB representatives said that no work on the integration of both systems – IQAS and ISO – had been started yet although information gathered in the course of audits was used.

No comprehensive analysis was performed of how the University IQAS functions at the level of the faculty and its units. AEQIB members did not offer the experts clear explanations relating to this important issue. The Guidelines on IQAS in Higher Education offer a suggestion that a quality management system should be created, including quality assurance committees at both Faculty and department levels. HEIs are also to monitor stakeholder satisfaction rates. SER does not identify the key stakeholders of the doctoral study programme at FEAS.

At study programme level, asking students' and doctoral students' opinion on teachers providing classes seems the most essential part of university IQAS. There is an anonymous questionnaire to be completed by students after each semester where they rate 14 elements on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest). The questionnaire has not been modified for 1st year doctoral student purposes. On the basis of the results of such surveys AEQIB makes recommendations on education quality improvement to the rector who, in turn, ensures that they are implemented at faculty and department levels. Moreover, after each semester AEQIB analyses student learning outcomes presented in the course of examinations, projects, etc. However, in the case of the PHD programme in Economics, Banking and Finance this practice does not applied as there is not much point in asking the three doctoral students to complete the questionnaire. The learning outcome assessment system is not reflected in salaries and other incentives. Therefore, there is no motivation to implement teaching innovations and modernise the teaching/learning process. The experts were interested how other feedback mechanisms worked. The doctoral students say that they see their supervisors about their problems. According to the internal Regulation the Dean or the Head of the Department may also inspect classes. Interviews held with the teachers show that such inspections are conducted and one teacher has not been inspected for the last years.

When asked, AEQIB representatives were unable to convincingly explain the current level of development of IQAS, its long-term objectives, the concept being its basis and the degree of its compliance with ENQA ESG (chapter one). ESG knowledge and awareness displayed in the course of interviews seems poor. There is an impression that the current quality assurance policy is based rather on the concept of its control than on its improvement and development. There is no systemic platform and methodological basis for reflection on IQAS development and on the results it brings. Failure to understand the significance of that kind of evaluation was evident in one AEQIB representative's statement that the efficiency of IQAS was guaranteed by the timely following of procedures. During a meeting with the Review Team, members of CP and the Scientific Committee were unable to indicate what changes had been made to their Masters' and Bachelor's degree programmes following their most recent evaluation. This may suggest that there are no effective plans relating to the implementation of PAAHE experts' recommendations. The inconsistencies, lack of clarity and some superficiality in the process of analysing quality criteria and standards displayed in the SER suggest that there is no solid AEQIB supervision of the preparation of such reports.

To sum up – the solutions that have already been implemented and relate to IQAS are in the initial stage. They do not form fully coherent system of quality assurance or quality improvement. In its current form IQAS does not favour the development of quality culture. Unfortunately, by reading SER and the publications posted on the university's webpage, as well as talking with AEQIB representatives it was impossible to see to what extent IQAS contributes to assuring and improving the quality of the doctoral programme. A foreign expert is unable to give his/her opinion on any activities taken as a result of external evaluations and accreditation of the Business Administration doctoral programmes, both at Bachelor's and Master's degree levels, as the necessary material including EERs is prepared in Albanian.

Recommendations and suggestions: The substantive and methodical preparation of people responsible for designing, implementing and monitoring IQAS should be strengthened. The panel suggests that AEQIB reflect upon what educational quality is and what indicators reflect good quality. Systemic procedures ensuring the clarity and accuracy of information about education and its quality should be developed, also at doctoral programme level. The same refers to mechanisms involving all key stakeholders in the introduction of measures serving quality improvement. The full cycle of education of this demographic cohort of doctoral students should undergo overall analysis and AEQIB should be involved in the process of the verification of self-evaluation report quality. Procedures for the implementation of Review Teams' recommendations linked to university or programme external evaluations should be developed.

STUDY PROGRAMME

7. Study programme, its organization

Description part

The doctoral programme under evaluation has certain features in common with similar programmes in other countries, but there are also significant differences. This is a three-year course (4 –year for part-time students) and in certain cases it may be extended to 4 years (to 6 years for part-time students). Doctoral student have to be awarded 180 ECTS credits and present a PhD thesis at the end of the course. The curriculum and the intended learning outcomes of the program are not linked to the National Qualification Framework, or Qualification Framework used in European Higher Education Area. In the first year, doctoral students develop their theoretical skills and in the second and third they do research and prepare their PhD thesis. Such theses are prepared under the supervision of a thesis supervisor and in certain situations an additional thesis supervisor may be appointed. Analysis of the syllabuses shows that in most cases there are no advanced level classes in the study programme. Only one syllabus of the programme under evaluation contained literature, namely one handbook. Doctoral students can carry out some of their research outside the university but SER does not stipulate which conditions have to be fulfilled.

Two fundamental differences are evident when this study programme is compared with programmes at foreign HEIs. The first of them being that in the second and third year doctoral students do not participate in any kind of classes, but they work individually on their thesis under the supervision of thesis supervisors. The second difference is that doctoral students are exempt from first year classes as they are thought to have participated in them during their Master's degree programme. As there are no graduates yet, it is difficult to evaluate the efficiency of the study programme and the quality of doctoral students' final qualifications evident in their PhD thesis.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.4 - Design and realization of theoretical course of third cycle studies (Doctorate)	
<p>Criterion 1 Programs of third cycle studies include 60 credits for theoretical organized studies;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Theoretical organized studies anticipate balanced ratio of classes for academic and scientific general and specific training;</p> <p>Criterion 3 Detailed teaching program is approved pursuant to bylaws in force;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Theoretical doctorate course is evaluated with a general theoretical examination in relevant field of study, organized by Dean's office and</p>	<p>The Economics, Banking and Finance doctoral programmes carries 60 ECTS credits for the development of theoretical competencies of doctoral students, therefore, this requirement of criterion 1 has been met. The doctoral programme complies with the formal requirements contained in the relevant ministerial and university regulations relating to third-cycle programmes.</p> <p>The development of theoretical competencies of students mainly consists in preparing literature reviews. It is striking that there are no many advanced level classes offered by the programme. The study programme provides no classes covering advanced Microeconomics, Macroeconomics or Modern growth theories,</p>



Professors' Council, with a commission consisting of 5 (five) professors in the relevant research field or approximate to it. Candidates who achieve over 80% points are allowed to attend the doctorate research studies. Those who do not reach this result receive a certificate for conducted modules, together with accumulated credits and interrupt doctorate studies.

developing skills in creativity and critical thinking or pedagogical competencies. Lecturers explain that the shaping of those competencies occurs as part of classes included in the programme. However, a closer analysis of staff conducting the classes shows that some classes are held by academic teachers without significant achievements and usually not conducting research in the discipline(s) linked to the course. Therefore, the process of transferring state-of-the-art knowledge and research results occurs to a limited extent. For example, the theory module of Economics offers eight lectures and as many as four of them are delivered by one professor (Applied Econometrics, International Monetary Policy and Theory, Open Economy: Theory and Application, Labour Market Studies).

The implementation of the new paradigm of shifting from teaching to learning seems a bit limited. All classes in the programme of study are solely in the form of lectures. Students cannot choose modules. The lecturers said that they held individual discussions due to the number of doctoral students, but keeping this provision is all the more surprising. Analysis of the syllabuses shows that a significant part of the programme consists in students' independent work. No way of verification of the outcomes of that work has been defined.

In the case of the doctoral programme under evaluation its lecturers apply diverse learning outcome assessment methods, ranging from quizzes and essays to examinations. However, it is difficult to indicate the source of this diversification. It seems that preserving the specificity of learning outcome assessment linked to individual classes still needs certain unification of assessment principles to guarantee the comparability of assessments relating to various subjects. No inference that FAES appoints examination committees can be drawn from SER. Conditions for crediting the first year of study have been formulated. Doctoral students should participate in at least 80% of theory classes. If this condition is not fulfilled, they should make another attempt to have them credited. Another condition of being accepted as a second year student is a CGPA of at least 3.00 and no FD or FF grades.

Standard II.3 - Drafting and approval of proposed research project

Criterion 1 Applicant who requires to be admitted to doctorate studies program has submitted the request for a particular research area and this has been discussed with him in the interview;

Criterion 2 Scope of research is selected in such a way that doctorate studies program can support it;

Criterion 3 Proposal is approved by Professors' Council if criteria prescribed and announced in regulation of doctorate studies are met.

The following should be also confirmed:

- a) Duration of study program;
- b) Modalities of verification of research or creative activity of doctorate students;
- c) Manner of final presentation of scientific research result that doctorate student will achieve;

Doctoral programme candidates have to present proposed research to be carried out in a scientific domain linked to Business Administration. Their proposed projects are discussed with the Recruitment Board. The topic of proposed research must be in line with a potential supervisor's scientific interests and research needs in that scientific domain.

The information given so far confirms that the length of the regular and extended study programmes has been correctly determined both for full-time and part-time students.

An initial evaluation and verification of doctoral students' research results and work is carried out by their thesis supervisors and the Council of Professors, as well as participants in conferences where doctoral students present the results of their research, etc. However, the final verification is carried out by those who review doctoral students' scientific publications and PhD theses.

The presentation of a PhD thesis must fulfil the requirements laid down in the University's Guidance for the Presentation of Theses.

<p>Criterion 4 A member of academic staff with the title "Professor", "Associate Professor" or with scientific degree "Doctor" or ("PhD") awarded in the scientific field in which doctorate student follows the studies in universities known in the world, for quality and rich researching and publishing activities in the relevant field, is appointed by Board of Professors to supervise and support student's research work;</p> <p>Criterion 5 Doctorate student presents to Board of Professors the research development plan, designed by him and discussed with his supervisor;</p> <p>Criterion 6 Supervisor has advised repeatedly the students that he supervises for didactic duties and research activities as well as research methodology to ensure the progress of his studies in this program.</p>	<p>PhD theses are written in English but other languages are acceptable in certain exceptional cases when the nature of research justifies using them.</p> <p>At EPOKA University, an academic teacher holding the title of a professor or a PhD degree and employed as Assistant Professor or holding a PhD degree conferred by Western universities may be a doctoral student's thesis supervisor. In accordance with the relevant directive of the Minister of Education and Science each supervisor, depending on their title, degree and academic title and the type of their employment (full-time or part-time) has been allocated the maximum number of doctoral students.</p> <p>Following a discussion between a doctoral student and their thesis supervisor on the doctoral student's proposed research, the supervisor is to present a supervision plan to the Council of Professors within 6 weeks of appointing him/her to act in this capacity.</p> <p>SER offers quite a laconic description of forms of supervisor assistance. Progress made in research is to be discussed at weekly meetings between doctoral students and their supervisors. Supervisors supervise the compliance of research with the standards, codes of ethics and the principles of academic freedom accepted at the university or in the scientific discipline. During interview students expressed high level of the satisfaction from the quality of academic advisors assistance and support. Doctorate students submit periodical progress reports to be approved by CP. So far two reports of that kind has been submitted and positively assessed by the CP. One student not admitted to the second-cycle programme has to repeat the first year theory course.</p>
<p>Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research</p>	
<p>Criterion 1 A third cycle study program (doctorate) is integrated in research activity of Higher Education Institutions;</p>	<p>As early as at the stage of applying for doctoral programmes, doctoral students must include FEAS research directions in their proposed research. In practice it means that the scientific issues that a doctoral student's project covers are adjusted to his/her thesis supervisor's research interests.</p>
<p>Standard II.4 - Doctorate student's supervision and continuous evaluation of progress of doctorate studies</p>	
<p>Criterion 1 Scientific supervisor of student is responsible for directing, advising, assessment of student's needs and for developing and monitoring progress of student's research work. He has the academic title "Professor", "Associate Professor" or the scientific degree "Doctor" or ("PhD") awarded in Western universities and has a rich research and publishing activity;</p> <p>Criterion 2 All scientific supervisors have had the expertise, instruction and proper guidance for their role in realization of scientific research project of doctorate students;</p> <p>Criterion 3 Scientific supervisors work to update their knowledge and skills, based on institutional arrangements in order to enable the exchange of best practices and providing advice to support students effectively;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Board of Professors selects scientific supervisors, capable to supervise doctorate students' research work, based on assessment of</p>	<p>The criterion 1 requirements have been met. The kind of academic qualifications and other conditions to be met by academic teachers wishing to play the role of a supervisor have been determined in accordance with the regulations. There is a functional system of monitoring doctoral student research progress.</p> <p>To be allowed to act in the capacity of thesis supervisors, academic teachers must possess extensive experience in research projects and achievements in the domain where doctoral students conduct their research.</p> <p>SER states that academic teachers are encouraged to conduct research in line with their qualifications and the university's strategic plans. The Review team is less assure on this issue, as FEAS has not outline the main research strategic plans.</p> <p>The annual reviews of academic staff's latest achievements are a form of research quality assurance. The risk of not extending their employment contract probably inclines them towards demonstrating their active participation in research. Analysis of the supervisors' scientific publications shows that they are actively developing their scientific productivity. Therefore, they are able to be effective mentors and transfer state-of-the-art knowledge to the level of the doctoral programme.</p>

their publishing and research activities inside and outside the country;

Criterion 5 The main scientific supervisor and the other supervisor (when program of doctorate studies is offered by more than one university) guarantee that doctorate students receive sufficient support and guidance to facilitate their work to achieve success;

Criterion 6 In all cases, the student must have only one identified contact point, who should be his main supervisor. If his main supervisor is not available, the student must know who will be the person to replace him;

Criterion 7 University ensures that supervisor has enough time to supervise doctorate student; If the main leader is unable to continue supervision of student, or will be absent for a considerable period, he should be replaced by another his main supervisor before the period of awarding the diploma for scientific degree "Doctor";

Criterion 8 If relationship student-supervisor does not function well, at the request of student or his supervisor, supervisor is changed, provided that this does not affect the project progress;

Criterion 9 Clear and transparent procedures are set for verification of knowledge or periodic evaluation of student (for example, an annual review by a panel called for this purpose or by a special commission set up by Professors' Council);

Criterion 10 Doctorate student and his supervisor should be present during this process. The manner and periods of verification of knowledge or periodic evaluation of doctorate student are stipulated and specified in the beginning of doctorate studies program;

Criterion 11 Continuous evaluation conclusions for realization of scientific research project of program of doctorate studies are clear and transparent including suspension, extension or withdrawal from doctorate studies;

Criterion 12 Meetings between supervisors and doctorate students are documented, especially during the review of progress reports.

Appropriate thesis supervision is ensured by the appointment of persons holding titles or degrees and by ensuring the alignment of the topic of a PhD thesis and a doctoral student's research with his/her thesis supervisor's research interests. The quality of supervision is subject to double control. Firstly, it is evaluated by CP in the process of analysing progress reports to be submitted by doctoral students. Secondly, it may be evaluated by doctoral students in anonymous questionnaires. Due to the small number of doctoral students they do not fill in the questionnaire.

There is one supervisor assigned to each doctoral student. Technically, there may also be another auxiliary supervisor. All doctoral students may use the research-related assistance of each FEAS academic staff. Should their supervisor be unavailable, they report this fact to the head of the chair or to the dean. The dean appoints a new supervisor. However, in such a small institution it may be difficult to find an equally competent professor conducting research in the same discipline. So far there has been no occurrence of the kind

The University regulations envisage weekly hour-long meetings of supervisors and doctoral students. As the number of doctoral students per supervisor is small, this solution seems to secure the doctoral students' interests. In the case of problems with carrying out thesis supervision, another supervisor should be appointed.

It is possible to change a supervisor following a request made by the current supervisor or his/her doctoral student. Following CP's approval, the Doctoral Programme Scientific Committee proposes another supervisor. The expert is not clear on how the continuation of the existing research projects is ensured if at the University or on the market there are no specialists in the scientific domain in question.

Every six months doctoral student progress reports are prepared by the supervisors and analysed by the Doctoral Programme Scientific Committee and CP. At a meeting with CP doctoral students are to present information about their research progress, participation in conferences and about their publications. The doctoral students said that their meetings with the Scientific Committee and CP members take on the form of a serious scientific discussion during which the professors thoroughly analyse progress made in the preparation of theses, problems encountered and the prospects for their completion.

Doctoral students obtaining two negative progress reports from the Scientific Committee are taken off the doctoral student register by CP following an application. Doctoral students are to notify the Head of the Scientific Committee and the Head of the Department of any problems with conducting research.

All meetings between the doctoral students and their supervisors are documented, also in the course of reviewing progress reports.



	Documents shown to the expert give an indication of what kinds of problems are discussed at such meetings.
Standard II.5 - Final evaluation of students in this cycle of studies	
<p>Criterion 1 Student provides evidence that he has acquired:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Profound knowledge in relevant scientific field; b) Profound knowledge in some areas approximate to it; c) Professional skills in using modern technology to solve critical problems related to his field of scientific research; d) Innovation, to expand and update existing knowledge; e) Autonomy, scientific, professional integrity and dedication for development of new ideas that encourage scientific research; <p>Criterion 2 Student provides evidence that he has brought original scientific products, scientific works of a high scientific level through conducted scientific research, some of which have deserved or deserve publication in scientific national and international magazines;</p> <p>Criterion 3 Final evaluation of doctorate students is based above all on an assessment of their scientific research product;</p> <p>Criterion 4 On the basis of an agreement reached in the phase of the study program approval, scientific research result is presented as a dissertation thesis, or cumulative with 3 scientific articles published in international journals with impact factor coefficient above 1;</p> <p>Criterion 5 In case of doctorate examination with dissertation thesis, doctorate student meets the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) He has realized as first author at least three scientific papers or presentations (poster), of which two papers or presentations are held in a international scientific event, in a western country (symposium, conference, congress), accepted on the basis of a preliminary scientific assessment, published in "Proceedings", indexed with an ISBN code; b) He has published as first author, at least three scientific articles in scientific journals. At least two of the articles have been published or accepted for publication in well-known western journals with editorial board; c) He has prepared and presented to Faculty Board of Professors the dissertation, along with a summary, approved by scientific supervisor. Structure of dissertation and its summary are defined in doctorate study regulation; <p>Criterion 6 Board of Professors defines two or three opponents, one of which is from outside the institution. Opponents are also members of the jury</p>	<p>It is impossible to evaluate in a comprehensive way criterion no. 1 as so far no PhD thesis has been presented. The criteria for the assessment of doctoral students' final learning outcomes, including those demonstrated in their PhD theses, have been laid down in the publicly accessible and extensive Regulation "On PhD study programs". The fulfilment of those criteria is tantamount to meeting the requirements of criterion 1.</p> <p>The above mentioned document points towards high expectations relating to PhD theses and doctoral students' achievements before the completion of doctoral programmes. Under Article 28, doctoral students are expected to publish 3 scientific conference presentations in ISSN journals as primary authors and 3 scientific articles including two in reputable international journals (or to prove that their articles have been accepted for publication). Our interviews with the teaching staff show that the requirement of publishing in prestigious journals is treated rather liberally.</p> <p>At EPOKA University, under Article 26 of the Regulation on Ph.D. Studies, doctoral students' research results are presented in their PhD theses. Doctoral students' individual research or their significant contribution to group research may be the basis for a PhD thesis. In the case of the Business Administration doctoral programme it is agreed at the time of submitting a research project that a PhD thesis will be prepared. PhD theses assessed by the PhD Jury are the basis for doctoral students' final mark and CP makes the final decision to confer a PhD degree.</p> <p>As there are no graduates of the programme under evaluation yet, criteria 5-18 can be evaluated only on the basis of the HEI's documents regulating the provision of doctoral programmes. The Regulation "On PhD study" is such a document at EPOKA University. In light of this document all requirements set out in criteria 5-18 can be regarded as met. All criterion 5 requirements are provided in Article 28 of the a/m Regulation on Ph.D. Studies. The requirements of criterion 6 are stipulated in Article 42 of the a/m document. Reviewers are appointed by the Council of Professors. The requirements of the criteria 7 and 8 criterion are stipulated in Article 42 of the a/m document. The issue covered by criterion 9 is regulated by Article 23 of the a/m document. Moreover, PhD theses and student papers are verified for plagiarism by the University system Turnitin.</p> <p>At EPOKA University all PhD theses are written in English and posted on the University webpage, so there is no need to publish abstract in English (criterion 10).</p> <p>According to the authors of SER, the solution proposed by criterion 11 results from the wording of Article 41/2 of the a/m document. A thorough analysis of its provisions provides no grounds for such a statement. One of the opponents must be a specialist from outside the university and the other one has only to hold an appropriate degree and have achievements in a particular domain.</p>



to assess dissertation. They have required academic titles and rich research and publishing activities inside and outside the country in the relevant field of study in which program doctorate studies is offered;

Criterion 7 Opponents who have had a substantial involvement in the work of doctorate student, or whose work is the very focus of research project;

Criterion 8 A dissertations copy is given to every opponent, giving enough time to read it and to write a separate report. Opponents should not communicate among themselves, with doctorate student or its scientific supervisor during this period. Opponents must verify the authenticity of data used in dissertation, observance of scientific research practice as well citations of scientific research works and articles of other authors;

Criterion 9 Opponents express clearly that scientific paper is free of plagiarism. If they notice and find that this has happened, they ask for termination of dissertation assessment;

Criterion 10 Dissertation is accompanied by a summary, about 10 pages in English. This review is published in the official website of the institution, in the section designated for information for this study;

Criterion 11 Scientific supervisor of the student should not be an opponent;

Criterion 12 When opponents have completed their reports, they are called by the Dean and Head of Board of Professors to agree to conduct oral examination;

Criterion 13 It is recommended, that a jury member of doctorate examination be from universities known in the world for quality and rich research and publishing activities in the relevant field, which has at least the scientific degree "Doctor" awarded in the scientific field in which doctorate student follows the studies and over 5 years academic and research experience. This criterion may not be applied to Albanological sciences. Assessment of doctorate student in examination is made open by consensus, provided that all members are pronounced for a passing grade. Even if one member has evaluated doctorate student by convincing arguments, with a failing grade, the final outcome will be failing;

Criterion 14 Opponents submit to dean of unit that organizes the program of doctorate studies and chairperson of doctorate examination jury a copy of their individual reports;

Criterion 15 Dissertation defence for obtaining the diploma for scientific degree "Doctor" is public. It is announced at least 4 weeks before and it is done in the presence of department interested members,

The relevant provisions related to the criterion 12 are stipulated in Article 42 of the a/m document.

The criterion 13a requirements are principally met. Article 41/3 of the a/m document allows for the appointment of one Jury member from a university known for its research and scientific publications. Moreover, numerous professors employed at FEAS have been conferred scientific degrees by foreign universities. Article 42 of the Regulation provides that the Jury's and CP's decision-making process requires a majority of votes. This provision is in contradiction with the requirement of consensus mentioned in state Criterion 13. At the meeting with the Review Team, academic teachers presented the view that there were no differences between the two principles of decision making.

SER refers to Articles 40 and 41/2 of the Regulation "On PhD study programs" which determine the procedure of submitting a copy of a review to the dean and the examination jury. However, it is difficult to find the justification for that kind of interpretation in the articles referred to. The public character of thesis presentation is guaranteed by the provision of Article 3h. The authors of SER only state that academic staff members and students may participate in thesis presentations. The provisions of Article 43/2 meet the requirements of criterion 16. The issues mentioned in criterion 17 is regulated in Articles 39/2, 44/1, 44/3 and 45 of the Regulation "On PhD study programs". Under the provisions of Article 4.3.3. of the Regulation "On ethics in research and publishing activities", approved by the Ordinance No. 105, dated 23.03.2012, issued by the Minister of Education and Science, the University declares that all dissertation should be posted on the its webpage. SER does not mention problems concerning the protection of the intellectual property rights of the authors of those theses. No diploma confirming the award of a PhD degree may be issued without its previous registration with the National Register of Doctorates of Securities Commission Academic Assessment (KVTA) in MES.



<p>students and teachers in the relevant Higher Education Institution;</p> <p>Criterion 16 Evaluations that opponents can make include: granting diploma of scientific degree "Doctor", or resubmission of written scientific research paper after completion of their recommendations, or a further extension of study program, or denial of diploma for scientific degree "Doctor";</p> <p>Criterion 17 A copy of dissertation of student who received a diploma for scientific degree "Doctor" is deposited in library of faculty, research institute, university research centers, university where study program is carried out and scientific paper and a copy in National Library. Scientific degree "Doctor" is not issued without dissertation being deposited in aforementioned institutions, published in paper and on disk (CD) and without making it public in the official website of respective higher education institution;</p> <p>Criterion 18 Scientific degree "Doctor" is not issued without being registered in National Register of Doctorates of Securities Commission Academic Assessment (KVTA) in MES</p>	
<p>Conclusions of EEG:</p> <p>The programme under evaluation is designed in accordance with the formal requirements that are contained in the relevant state regulations. Admission principles have been identified and an evaluation of a doctoral programme candidate's research is their significant part. Conditions to be met by thesis supervisors have been formulated, just like tasks to be performed in the process of mentoring a doctoral student. There are certain worries over failure to provide a systemic solution ensuring the continuity of doctoral student supervision is cases where supervisors change their place of employment. The University's system of assessment and verification of doctoral students' partial and final learning outcomes is well designed. Student progress in thesis preparation is regularly reviewed, also in the form of independent reviewers' evaluation of their publications. At this stage of the programme it is impossible to comment on learning outcomes and research competencies demonstrated in PhD theses.</p> <p>Recommendations and suggestions: It is these experts' opinion that the programme itself and its implementation need certain corrections. This refers mainly to the necessity to ensure that classes are conducted at an advanced level and make references to the latest theoretical concepts. It would be advisable to review the intended learning outcomes from the perspective of the National Qualification Framework. The syllabuses have to be organised and the uniformity of learning outcomes assessment has to be ensured. As PhD theses are supposed to be written in English we recommend that professors employed at foreign universities be appointed as reviewers.</p> <p>Judgment on the area: substantially comply</p>	

8. Teaching – Learning outcome (in first year)

Description part

It has been already mentioned that in the first year of study theory is taught only by way of lectures – a passive form of instruction. In practice, the small number of students allows for the conduct of seminars involving active student participation. The shaping of research competences in the second and third year of study involves – among other



things – the participation of doctoral students in research projects, research work of the university and faculty research teams, scientific seminars, etc. Participating in debates and result presentations in various fora are meant to develop skills needed for communicating with discipline representatives and wide audiences. Pedagogical skills are to be developed through classes conducted independently or with the participation of supervisors in the case of first- and second-cycle programmes. Sometimes lecturers from other HEIs -also foreign- are invited.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard 1.2 - Continuous increase of theoretical level and promotion of students' team work are targets of a study program of third cycle, doctorate.	
<p>Criterion 1 Level of scientific research development helps in student training to complete the study program successfully;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Students have the opportunity to participate in various research activities closely related to the specific area in which they attend doctorate studies, which help him/her to be trained for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Acquisition of research methodologies for independent creative activities, such as scientific articles, presentations, standard approach for references, bibliography, indexes and content writing as the basis for doctor a thesis processing; b) Independent work in laboratory; c) Use of information resources (e.g. libraries and Internet) and information management; d) Use of modern technologies for public presentations; e) Acquisition of advanced methods of analysis and data processing; f) Learning and mastery of specialized terminology associated with the research field of doctorate student; <p>Criterion 3 Doctorate students participate in foreseen activities young and their research work. A doctorate student is free to participate as a listener or as a speaker in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Lectures; b) Seminars; c) Interdisciplinary debates, organized in the framework of doctorate study program; d) Other possibilities of learning such as following presentations of post doctorate students and research projects, even when it is not related directly to the student's research interest. e) Scientific mentors advise students to take part in scientific activities and conferences that help them in their scientific research; <p>Criterion 4 Students have gained skills for appropriate communication with a scientific level (<i>Student's communication skills include: the competency to write</i></p>	<p>Basically, FEAS is not conducting large group research projects with the participation of its doctoral students. The fulfilment of the criterion 1 requirements depends on the competences and research achievements of the thesis supervisors which will naturally differ. Such a small HEI cannot offer its doctoral students many opportunities of active participation in diversified forms of research activity. The authors of SER are of the opinion that one of the obstacles is the absence of tradition of team work in research conducted by scientists within the university and the country. This opinion was strongly challenged by teaching staff at the meeting with the Review Team. Another obstacle is the lack of sufficient funds for the development of the doctoral students' scientific activity listed in criterion 2. This argument is somewhat in contradiction with the self-evaluation of standard 5. In the opinion of the expert the University has failed to make use of certain opportunities, for example activities mentioned in points 2e and 2f of criterion 2 could be incorporated into the doctoral study programme.</p> <p>The format of the syllabuses is more or less uniform but individual lecturers formulate intended learning outcomes in different ways. Not always do subject titles reflect their teaching contents, some content is omitted. Intended learning outcomes are vaguely formulated, e.g.; "They have a knowledge about banking and finance". Moreover, the same descriptions of learning outcomes are mechanically inserted into other syllabuses. In the Applied Econometrics I syllabus 6 classes are to deal with "Journal article examination" but there is no recommended literature. The same refers to the syllabuses for Open Economy, Current Issues in International Economics, Research techniques in Banking and Finance, International Monetary Policy and Theory, Applied Econometrics II. The analysis of the syllabuses shows that the level of some lectures can be less than advanced. The Research Techniques in Banking and Finance for PhD Theses syllabus is to equip doctoral students with skills needed for creating bibliography lists, quotations and searching for information sources. The description of one intended learning outcome says that students will know how to use computers in everyday office work. It seems that such skills should have been developed as early as in the course of the Master's and even Bachelor's degree programme. The fact that no prerequisites have been defined may point towards a lower level of classes which suggests that skills acquired in the course of Master's or Bachelor's degree programmes are not required. Some syllabuses contain a clear statement that they are aimed at the shaping of practical competences needed by those working in business. The Finance Theory and Management syllabus does not offer an explanation</p>



clearly and with an appropriate style, use of persuasive arguments and clear articulation of ideas before the public concerned; the ability to debate and support others, involved in teaching, supervision or demonstrations);

Criterion 5 Students have acquired the ability to communicate correctly with others, and necessary skill for a scholar, but also in other situations (*being able to develop and maintain cooperation and working relationships with others, awareness that their behavior affects them and others and be willing to listen, to give and to take reactions and responses with sharpness*);

Criterion 6 Development of communication skills of doctorate students encouraged them to be engaged in teaching in study programs of first and second cycle (e.g. by engaging in teaching as lecturers, in support of professors guiding their thesis).

which contents will be taught or what literature will be used. It only contains a vague statement that "academic articles on the field from different sources" will be used. Information provided by one lecturer that Mankiw's textbook usually associated with undergraduate programmes is used in Macroeconomics classes may point towards a level slightly lower than advanced.

It is this expert's opinion that the University facilitates the development of scientific activity forms listed in criterion 3 to a limited extent. It is not clear, either, how these doctoral students are motivated to participate in these forms of scientific development. A small number of doctoral students and the provision of classes on an individual basis make it more difficult to develop skills needed for conducting scientific discussions, defending one's position or clashing with other approaches. FEAS provides several doctoral programmes but there is no platform on which to present one's research results or exchange experiences, for example at special doctoral seminar, doctoral students' conference, etc. It also seems that the doctoral students aren't sufficiently involved in the scientific activity of the Business Administration Department. The doctoral students told the Review Team that they had not presented the results of their research at faculty or department levels apart from their meetings with CP.

The doctoral study programme includes no classes developing its students' communication with the academic environment. In the opinion of the lecturers such skills are shaped during the classes they conduct. However, it is difficult to admit that classes with the participation of one person or two facilitate team work and develop sensitivity to other students' behaviour which is the case during classes with large groups of students. In principle, this is a case of learning by doing. This assumption would be correct if those doctoral students participated in a number of scientific debates. However, it is clear from SER that they are doing this to a small extent. However, in the history of the programme doctoral students presented their research results at an international conferences.

Just like in the evaluation of the previous criterion, it is to be said that the study programme does not allow for the development of communication with persons from outside the academic environment and the opportunities of developing such competences by way of practising them are limited. The expert has been shown no evidence that the doctoral students present their research results to non-specialists, for example in the form of expert opinions.

Conclusions of EEG:

The fact that for whatever reason the classes provided are at a level lower than advanced and the fact that they are poorly oriented towards theoretical skills hinder the systematic increase of theoretical knowledge. This may result in problems with preparing original theses being a real contribution to the development of a discipline and in diminishing student chances of employment at good universities.

At this stage of doctoral programme development and the number of doctoral students, it is difficult to ensure that conducting research involves team work as required by the standard. The SER declarations suggest that the University is promoting various forms of including its doctoral students in work requiring cooperation with other researchers, encouraging them to participate in conferences, seminars and scientific debates. However, the doctoral programme does not provide a basis for the development of so-called soft skills competences. The doctoral students of the programme under evaluation are working in some isolation and they are making use of what is available to a small extent only. For example, they have not systematically participated yet as

presenters in conferences organised by their home university. Only one reviewed student informed team that he teaches classes.

Recommendations and suggestions: The Review Team recommends a review of the study programme and syllabuses from the perspective of increasing theory workload and improving research skills involving the latest methods and effective communication of research results to specialists and the general public. It would be desirable to create more opportunities for presenting doctoral student achievements in the HEI and at domestic and international conferences. A revision of learning outcomes and adjusting them to the specificity of a course seems necessary. It is also indispensable to present clear information about teaching contents and at least compulsory reading items. A syllabus is a kind of a lecturer's obligation towards his/her students and should inform them in no uncertain terms what they are expected to gain by completing the course. It would be desirable to create more opportunities for presenting doctoral student achievements in the HEI and at domestic and international conferences.

Judgment on the area: partially comply

9. Doctoral students

Description part

The Unit has developed detailed criteria for admission to third-cycle programmes, similar to those applied at other universities. Only three doctoral students have been recruited in the whole history of the programme. Neither of them has been awarded a PhD degree yet.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.3 - Admission of students in a doctorate study program	
Criterion 1 The student admitted to doctorate study program has completed second study cycle with average grade (> 80% of points) and was awarded the university degree "Master of Science"/ "Master of Fine Arts" or an equivalent degree, following completion of university studies that include a scientific thesis evaluated with 30-40 ECTS;	Candidates are able to access information on study programmes by visiting the university's webpages. Detailed information is provided in the Regulation "On PhD study programs" available online.
Criterion 2 Candidate who applies to continue the third cycle program, the doctorate, has profound theoretical knowledge in the relevant field of study. Some basic knowledge that doctorate student has is: a) Creative thinking; b) Development of critical sense about research; c) Connections between different fields of research; d) Skills developed for solving problems arising during research work; e) Competence to manage research complexity and to propose new ideas in research field;	Article 10 of the Regulation "On PhD study programs" lists the criteria for admission to doctoral programme. CP has determined detailed admission criteria on the basis of the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Science and its own University regulations. In the case of the three participants of the doctoral program criterion 1 has not been fully met. The candidates that have been admitted to the programme attained CPGAs amounting to 95% (at Epoka University 70%), 91% and 62.5% respectively (SER quotes different values 2.81/4 or 2.5/4 which amounts to 74.5% or 70% respectively) in the previous cycle of study. Two doctoral students are exempt from theory classes as one holds a Master of Second Level degree and the other one was transferred from another doctoral programme.
Criterion 3 The student admitted to doctorate study program is ready to apply in practice the knowledge gained from research in relevant field of studies;	When recruiting doctoral programme candidates EPOKA University does not require them to sit examinations. However, an interview with a candidate is an essential element of the admission procedure. The Scientific Committee discusses research proposed by him/her. This can be seen as a form of examination testing his/her research competences needed for the preparation of a PhD thesis. Candidates are expected to

Criterion 4 Student owns the English language certified in the international level, at least "C1", based on internationally recognized tests and a second foreign language as French, German, Italian, Spanish or Russian. In social sciences it may be Latin, Ancient Greek, Persian or other languages needed for research in the area;

Criterion 5 Professors' Council set the criteria for admission to program of doctorate studies contained in regulation of doctorate program of studies;

Criterion 6 The applicant has received detailed information about doctorate program of study, before being admitted into it. He is fully informed regarding:

- a) Duration of study program;
- b) Conditions that student should meet before appearing in doctorate exam;
- c) Support that institution provides to the student through administrative and research structures for activities envisaged in the study program (laboratories, libraries, etc.).
- d) Modalities of exercise of research or creative activity of doctorate students, especially with regard to preparation of doctorate thesis;

Criterion 7 Admission criteria include also interviews and supports that can be provided by references and additional documents;

Criterion 8 Admission policies include also doctorate admission exam.

present two academic opinions. EPOKA University does not require an English language certificate at a level not lower than C1. Instead, it has determined certain numbers of points to be scored at TOEFL or equivalent certificate examinations.

A review of the documentation of the Council of Professor shows that not all candidates are accepted, so there is a selection of doctorate programme candidates in the process of recruitment.

The Review team have a problem with the evaluation of the criterion 2. It is difficult to require profound theoretical knowledge of a doctoral student. In accordance with the National Qualification Framework that kind of attribute should be developed in the course of doctoral programmes. However it is clear from the university doctoral programme regulations that the HEI requires these competences of its doctoral candidates.

Standard III.2 - Quantitative aspects of doctorate study program

Total number of registered doctorate students and doctorate number for each year;

Number of registered doctorate students coming from outside the unit that has opened the doctorate study program;

Number of diplomas issued to receive "Doctor" degree for each year;

Average duration of doctorate studies and trend of this indicator;

Number and percentage of those who gave up doctorate studies in the level of study program.

Two students were enrolled in 2012/2013 and one in 2013/2014. In the current academic year recruitment has been suspended in anticipation of the new regulations of the Law on Higher Education. The doctoral students admitted to the programme are still studying, neither of them has been taken off the student register. Neither of the doctoral students has been awarded a PhD degree yet. It is difficult to talk about a tendency in the face of such a small number of doctoral students. The doctoral students' progress reports do not contain references to problems with completing the programme on time.

Standard III.4 - Internationalization of doctorate study program



Number, expressed in percentage, of registered doctorate students coming from Kosovo and other areas where Albanians live and Albanian Diaspora;
Number, expressed in percentage, of registered doctorate students coming from Balkans region.
Number, expressed in percentage, of registered doctorate students coming from the EU countries;
Number, expressed in percentage, of registered doctorate students coming from other countries of the world;

One student comes from Turkey and one from Balkan countries. The doctoral students do not participate in student exchange programmes in any way.

Conclusions of EEG:

The current principles of admission to doctoral programmes are in line with the ministerial and University regulations and with established academic standards. Some requirements formulated in the evaluation criteria seem too ambitious for candidates holding a Master's degree. The fact of recruiting only 3 doctoral students within the three-year history of the programme is indicative of the poor effectiveness of the promotion policy. The admissions policy currently in force allows for recruitment of candidates with a lower percentage of CPGA points than required. The necessity to adjust the level of classes to the intellectual capacities of students points towards their unsatisfactory preparation for the programme as reported by some lecturers. The fact that there is no doctoral student participation in mobility programmes is a drawback.

Judgment on the area: fully comply.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH POLICIES

10. Research in doctoral school and involvement of doctoral students

Description part

The HEI has a detailed development strategy for 2013-2017. Its individual objectives have been allocated funds for their achievement. It is not known how the objectives of the science policy of Epoka University are transferred to the faculty level. The above mentioned document contains a provision that the number of "projects supporting doctoral studies will increase by the end of 2017 by 25%". The rector explained that this refers to financial projects. However, the experts have not been told the degree of implementation of this objective in 2015. FEAS has not created a separate document containing its objectives and tasks relating to the research policy at the Faculty or Department levels.

Analysis of documents and researchers' achievements shows that research is conducted mainly on an individual basis financed from the internal funds of the university. Academic teachers publish articles in various journals, also those with an impact factor, listed in international bibliographical databases (SCOPUS, ISI Thomson Reuters, Copernicus). The HEI has provided no number of citations or synthetic indexes, for example h-index values, that is no indicators showing FEAS workers' aggregated scientific achievements. Most of their publications appear in one journal entitled *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. Scientists take part in domestic and international conferences. At the FEAS there are now research groups dealing with particular research projects. The unit has made applications for national or international grants.

The Faculty is an active organiser of scientific conferences, however, mobilities abroad are rare. As a relatively new unit FEAS is not recognisable as a research unit by other European HEIs yet. A special incentive fund rewarding publishing achievements is to boost scientific achievements. Every year academic staff's achievements evidenced by publications are evaluated. Documents shown during the site visit show an increase of the number of University employees applying for international grants in the last academic year. One of such grants will be financed by the Erasmus Plus programme.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research	
<p>Criterion 1 A third cycle study program (doctorate) is integrated in research activity of Higher Education Institutions;</p> <p>Criterion 2 The institution has the capacity to perform supervision of each doctorate student in research activities and respective didactic duties;</p> <p>Criterion 3 Academic staff must show achievements in the research field through such creative activities as: presentations, scientific publications, magazines, books or monographs;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Indicators of high level research activity are publications that contain statements from publishing and scientific research activity by other scholars outside doctorate study program, especially international, regarding the outcome of scientific research in the institution that offers doctorate programs;</p>	<p>Two mechanisms ensure the integration of the doctoral programme with the university's research: as early as at the stage of candidate recruitment care is taken to ensure that doctoral students' research is in line with their supervisors' specialisation; academic teachers transfer state-of-the-art knowledge to the teaching/learning process. Staff's academic qualifications evidenced by their degrees and academic titles, achievements and teaching experience are sufficient for acting as research supervisors and conducting classes for third-cycle students. There are more than enough workers who are able to act as supervisors.</p> <p>By conducting its annual evaluations of each academic teacher's scientific achievements and introducing the requirement to publish articles in reputable international journals, the University has created incentives for developing research. The University funds publications and participation in conferences. The University's teaching staff members have a significant number of publications under their belt, however, most of those papers are published in national and regional journals. The University has provided no number of citations, h-index values, etc., that is no indicators showing the degree to which FEAS workers' publications are known in academic circles.</p> <p>It could be seen at the meeting with academic staff that not all teachers were interested in publishing their articles in the most prestigious journals pertaining in their discipline. Heavy teaching workload (16 hours per week) hindering the intensification of research activity was also reported.</p>
<p>Conclusions of EEG: FEAS employees are involved in scientific activity and publish its results in national and international journals. Some articles are published in prestigious international journals. That kind of policy makes it difficult to achieve the status of an internationally recognised research centre. Another drawback is that there are no research groups effectively applying for research grants in the country and abroad. Therefore, the doctoral students have limited opportunities to develop their research competencies by working in international research teams. The academic qualifications and research experience of the doctoral programme teaching staff members are sufficient to support the doctoral students' development. However the team is less assured of the effectiveness of students and other, than academic advisors, faculty staff cooperation.</p> <p>Recommendations and suggestions: The Review Team recommends analysis of the current science policy and above all – an evaluation of the reasons why there are no large research projects funded by sources other than the university and integrating FEAS, Economics, Banking and Finance departments and workers as well as students. It seems that the incentive fund and the pay policy should be linked more closely with the promotion of high quality publications. In the case of researchers achieving success in strictly research activity, a periodic reduction of the number of teaching hours could be taken into consideration.</p> <p>Judgment on the area: This standard has been substantially met.</p>	



11. National and international cooperation, in function of doctoral study

Description part

EPOKA University has an extensive contact network involving several dozens of HEIs, companies and institutions both in the country and abroad. The University is a member of 9 international academic organisations. SER mentions that the doctoral programme is supported by two Turkish universities – Istanbul University and Pamukkale University. The agreements that have been concluded with those universities provide for diversified forms of cooperation also in the scope of doctoral student and staff exchange. However, there is no explicit provision regulating cooperation in the development of FEAS doctoral programmes, with the exception of one co-adviser from the Istanbul University. No evidence is available that FEAS and the doctoral programmes have recently been beneficiaries of those agreements.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard III.4 - Internationalization of doctorate study program	
<p>Criterion 5 Doctorate study program encourages doctorate mobility by paying a considerable amount of expenditures for academic training outside doctorate study program;</p> <p>Criterion 6 Doctorate study program encourages mobility of doctorate students by paying a considerable amount of expenditures for presentation of research results in national and international scientific activities (symposium, conference, congress);</p> <p>Criterion 7 The institution has an agreement, at least with one Western university, guaranteeing programs of exchange of academic staff and doctorate students and realization of joint research projects. For Albanological Sciences cooperation could also be with a Higher Education Institution or research centre in Kosovo and lands where Albanians live;</p> <p>Criterion 8 Doctorate study program creates the necessary space to develop joint doctorate study programs with homologous universities in the region, Europe and beyond;</p> <p>Criterion 9 Doctorate study program provides for 3-4 modules (not less than 15 ECTS) to be conducted, organized in theoretical studies and doctorate students have the exam by professors of partner universities, known in the world, for quality and research, publishing activities in the relevant field of study. Exception cited in criterion 7 applies for Albanological Sciences;</p> <p>Criterion 10 Doctorate study program promotes involvement of professors from foreign universities as scientific supervisors or as scientific collaborators of doctorate students.</p>	<p>The University provides a formal option to do part of the doctoral programme abroad (Article.....Regulation on PH.D. Studies). The introduction of ECTS credits ensures that the authorities of the Business Administration programme are able to recognise classes and research done at a foreign university. The doctoral students could go to the Turkish universities with which there are cooperation agreements. So far the students have not used this opportunity, the reason being that there are no sufficient funds for mobility programmes. Family obligations and combining studying and working is another reason reported by the doctoral students. Nevertheless, the doctoral students expressed their readiness for mobilities lasting for a short period of time to establish academic contacts with professors doing similar research.</p> <p>The three doctoral students' current research progress is rather modest. Therefore, no wonder that the results of their research have not been intensively presented at international conferences. Another reason is linked to the fact that only doctoral students employed by the university can have their mobilities funded. During interviews lack of funding was brought up as one of the main reasons of it.</p> <p>EPOKA University has cooperation agreements with 65 HEIs, including those from Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Turkey, USA, Great Britain and Italy. Therefore, it is possible to operate staff and student exchange and work on joint research projects. The University offers financial support only to doctoral students already employed by the University. Staff members involved in international cooperation are eligible for sabbatical and financial support. So far no academic teacher involved in the Business Administration doctoral programme has taken advantage of that kind of support.</p> <p>There are also European HEIs with a profile similar to the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences among the 65 HEIs that the University has cooperation agreement with. Therefore, there exist potential conditions for the provision of joint doctoral programmes or for involving another supervisor from</p>



	<p>a foreign HEI. Study programme contains no obligation to cooperate with professors of foreign HEIs. There have been, indeed, cases of delivering lectures by visiting professors but that is the initiative of individual professors rather than formal provisions.</p> <p>The theory component of the programme consists of 8 classes worth 60 ECTS credits. No foreign lecturers are employed to provide the doctoral programme. Some of the teachers involved in the programme were awarded their academic degrees at universities abroad. The Team wishes to encourage the authorities providing the programme to include foreign professors in the evaluation of partial learning outcomes demonstrated by doctoral students at examinations and in their essays, etc.</p>
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Standard II. - Capacities for scientific research	
<p>Criterion 5 The institution has agreements with other academic or research institutions at home and abroad, supporting the exchange of academic staff and doctorate students and academic and research activities of doctorate school;</p>	<p>It has already been mentioned that the University has cooperation agreements with 65 HEIs and 15 companies and institutions, both in the country and abroad (mainly Turkish ones). There are plans for staff and doctoral students exchange as well as for research activities. The two Turkish universities – Istanbul University and Pamukkale University – are identified as those which are able to offer direct support to the doctoral programme under evaluation. However, the cooperation agreements do not directly provide that the doctoral programme is a beneficiary of this cooperation.</p>

Conclusions of EEG:

The University’s doctoral student mobility regulations create potential conditions for studying and conducting doctoral student research in other HEIs, including those abroad. The University has an extensive contact network involving several dozens of HEIs from a number of European countries and other parts of the world. However, the internationalisation of the doctoral programme is practically non-existent. No foreign lecturers are employed in any form. No doctoral student has served even a short-term placement in a partner HEI abroad. The mobility policy of the University favours doctoral students who are its employees. Moreover, it is not known to what extent and when the Faculty is to be involved in the implementation of those numerous agreements. Today’s competition on the global education market is extremely keen and without serious investments in internationalisation it will be difficult to achieve academic recognition, also at doctoral programme level. Higher education internationalisation cannot be limited solely to student and staff exchange but it should involve other elements as well, such as the shaping “of intercultural and international competencies of doctoral students, their ability to function at the global research and educational market”. These competencies are crucial for PhD degree holders wishing to take up employment abroad.

Recommendations and suggestions: Therefore, the Team recommends that the HEI and Faculty authorities evaluate the viability of their internationalisation policy and make sure that their doctoral students have the opportunity to effect at least 1-2 short mobilities for placements in foreign research centres.

Judgment on the area: partially met.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

1. Determination of the University and FEAS leaders to pursue the development of doctoral programmes.
2. Individualisation of the study programme based on the master-disciple model.
3. Teaching staff’s diversified experience in research and teaching gained at other, predominantly foreign HEIs.



4. Doctoral students' good communication with teaching staff.
5. Very good teaching facilities and research infrastructure.
6. A diversified academic environment at the Faculty facilitating interdisciplinary research and a wide profile of doctoral student education.
7. Fulfilment of the legal and formal conditions for doctoral programme provision.

Weaknesses

1. Low awareness and poor recognition of the strategic objectives that FEAS, Economics, Banking and Finance departments and the doctoral programme are supposed to implement. Poor effectiveness of the doctoral student recruitment policy.
2. Small number of doctoral students prevents the development of doctoral programme academic potential.
3. Problems with preserving the core identity of the programme in the case of high fluctuation among academic teachers.
4. Fixed and inflexible programme of study precluding students from module choice.
5. A few advanced level classes developing doctoral students' scientific research competencies.
6. No research plans indicating future directions of research, no research groups.
7. Insufficient forms of doctoral students' integration with the scientific activity of the faculty and chair.
8. No inclusion of doctoral students in national and international grant programmes implemented by FEAS research groups.
9. Non-existent internationalization of education.

Opportunities

1. EPOKA University's reputation as a HEI offering all programme cycles in English.
2. Considerable FEAS staff potential allowing for recruiting more doctoral programme candidates.
3. Intended establishment of a research centre
4. Intensive academic cooperation with foreign HEIs facilitating the internationalisation of doctoral programmes.
5. A growing number of contacts between academic teachers and their peers working at HEIs abroad.

Threats

1. Closing down the programme due to lack of interest.
2. Study programme stabilisation endangered by the risk of high fluctuation of staff having only short-term employment contracts.
3. Lack of sufficient funds earmarked for financing doctoral students' needs, particularly in the scope of research, placements abroad and employing foreign lecturers.
4. Risk of doctoral students' insufficient theoretical education resulting in their reduced employability as academic teachers.
5. Excessive involvement of the Ministry of Education and Science in the legal regulation of doctoral programmes.

Recommendations



1. Define the aims and objectives of the Economics doctoral programme, especially in the context of the needs of the labour market. An assessment of demand - especially in the context of the needs of the labour market - for Economics doctoral programme graduates should be performed.
2. Ensure that the study programme is flexible and students can choose modules.
3. Theory classes should be evaluated from the perspective of their compliance with level 8 of the National Qualifications Network. Advanced level classes should be introduced to the programme.
4. Use the services of foreign reviewers in the process of doctoral student learning outcomes assessment, including PhD thesis quality evaluation.
5. Organise and standardise the syllabuses.
6. Ensure the participation of doctoral students in research Project implemented at the HEI and provide better opportunities for academic integration of doctoral students with academic staff of FEAS.
7. Increase the academic potential of the FEAS and the doctoral programme by employing professors possessing qualifications and specialisations needed for the further development of the doctoral programme.
8. Diversify the incentive system (also by reducing the number of teaching hours) rewarding academic staff for their research achievements from the perspective of promoting publications and applying for research grants.
9. Consider the creation of a university unit of the School of Doctoral Studies type or a Graduate School of Business at Faculty level providing Master's and PhD degree programmes.
10. The real opportunities to do part of doctoral programmes at foreign HEIs should be provided. The issue of doctoral programmes provision together with a national or foreign partner should be considered.
11. Identify the principal mechanisms of education quality assurance, including at FEAS doctoral programmes.
12. Implement follow-up procedures using the quality improvement recommendations of review teams and those relating to ensuring self-evaluation report quality.
13. Perform an evaluation of doctoral programme effectiveness.
14. Ensure staff and financial stability to the programme. Perform a financial risk assessment.

External Evaluation Group:

1. Prof. Dr. Mieczyslaw W. Socha
2. Tilda Cani

Annex I

Chart 1 Organizational structure of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences

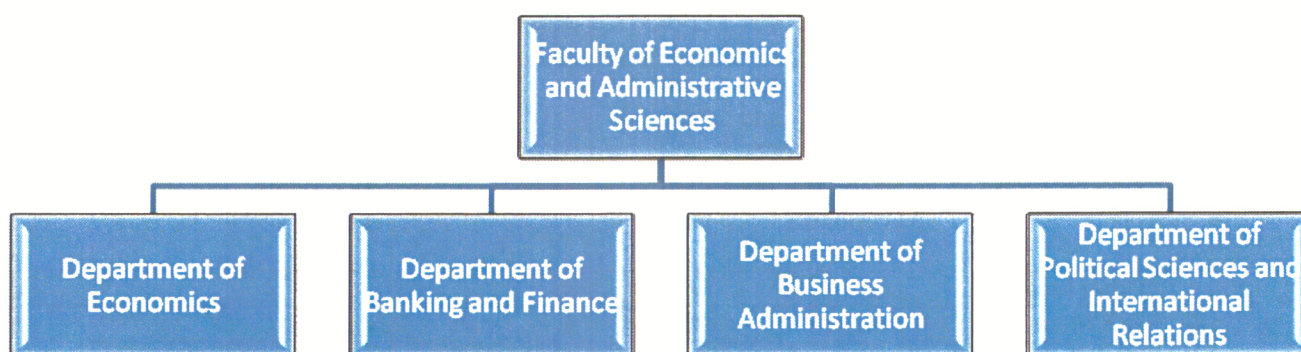


Table 1 The Composition of the Council of Professors

Name /Surname	Degree	Position (Member / Chairman)
Güngör TURAN	Prof. Dr.	Chairman
Remzi ALTIN	Prof. Dr.	Member
Omer EROGLU	Prof. Dr.	Member
Arif YAVUZ	Prof. Dr.	Member
Ahmet BARDAKCI	Prof. Dr.	Member
Ekrem KARAYILMAZLAR	Prof. Dr.	Member
Bekir ÇINAR	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Member

The academic coordinator of the PhD program in Economics is Prof. Dr. Güngör Turan.

Annex II

Table 2 Number of academic staff

Doctoral School / Faculty staff involved in Ph.D. program	Number of FAS		Number of PAS		Number of AE		Total number	
	Total number	Number of Degrees	Total number	Number of Degrees	Total number	Number of Degrees	Total number	Number of Degrees
Staff of Banking and Finance and Economics Departments involved in Ph.D. program	12	12	1	1	3	0	16	13
Staff of Banking and Finance and Economics Departments involved in Ph.D. program	6	6	1	1	2	0	9	7

Table 3 Teaching and managerial staff

Institution / Basic Unit / Doctoral School							
Full-time Academic Staff (Name/Surname)		Position in the Department	Degree	Part-time Academic Staff (Name/Surname)		Degree	Institution where he/her works full time
1	Güngör Turan	Dean	Prof. Dr.	1	Sulo Haderi	Prof. Dr.	Tirana University
2	Urmat Ryskulov	Head of the Banking and Finance Dept.	Assist. Prof. Dr.	2			
3	Eglantina Hysa	Head of the Economics Dept.	Assist. Prof. Dr.	3			
4	Omer Eroglu	Lecturer	Prof. Dr.	4			
5	Arif Yavuz	Lecturer	Prof. Dr.	5			
6	Abdulmenaf Sejdini	Lecturer	Assist. Prof. Dr.	6			

7	Erda Cani	Lecturer	Dr.			
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Table 4 Academic teachers by the academic degrees, employment status and country origin

Academic and administrative staff	FAS	PAS		FAS/PAS rate
		Albanian	Foreign (invited)	
Professors	3	1		3/1
Associate Professors				
Doctor Degree or PH.D. degree (taken at European Universities)	4			4/0
Administrative employees	2			2/0

Table 5 Academic teachers by the academic degrees, employment status and age

Academic and administrative staff	Data by age (years old)							
	(36-45)		(46-55)		(56-65)		(66-68)	
	FAS	PAS	FAS	PAS	FAS	PAS	FAS	PAS
Professors	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0
Associate Professors	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Doctor Degree or PH.D. degree (taken at European Universities)	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative employees	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Annex III

Table 6 Faculty didactic and research infrastructure

Types of facilities	Number or Square m ²
Auditoriums	130.5
Classrooms	453.5
Laboratories	78
Computer/internet laboratories	78
Library buildings	322
Corridors / halls	2707.4
University sports facilities	463
Buildings for tertiary services	56
Rooms for student government activities	97
Recreational facilities such as cafeterias / fast-food/etc	337
Toilets for students	309
Logistics Room (for photocopying machines, etc.)	85
Offices for Dean/ Chancellor/etc	86
Administrative offices	148.5
Departmental offices	130.5
Quality assurance Unit Office	50
Meeting halls	98.37
Toilet units for staff	213
Toilet units for students	309
Etc... Graduate study office	10.67

Ratio m ² /per student	217
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Other logistics database:

- number of PC per doctoral students: 82
- number of PC furnished labs per students: 2
- number of PC for academic staff: 83
- number of PC for administration: 47
- number of printers for each one: 15
- number of photocopying machines for each one: 15
- number of video-projectors: 26
- number of scanners: 9

Table 7 Financial resources

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
NON-PUBLIC FUNDS:		-	
Central government	-		
Local government	-		
NON-PUBLIC FUNDS:			
Grants on research and contracts	30436 EUR	21.485 EUR	
Consultations, services	-		
All kinds of tuition fees	1.423.885 EUR	1.645.000 EUR	1.696.200 EUR
Sponsorships	-		
Donations, assurance activities, foundations etc.	-		

Spending on International Conferences in 2012-2014 in euro

International Balkan Annual Conference - [IBAC 2012](#): 978 €

Education Conference: 7.989 €

4th International Conference on European Studies - [ICES 2013](#) : 4565 €

Challenges of Innovative Enterprises in the Global Competitive Market 2014 - [ISCoIE 2014](#)

Unit cost (euro per one student of the Epoka university)

2011-2012 Academic year 1.816 €

2012-2013 Academic year 2.049 €

2013-2014 Academic year 1.446 €

Annex IV

Table 8 Doctoral students characteristics

	Statistical data
The total number of PhDs students and the number for each year:	There are 2 students enrolled during the 2012-2013 academic year. There is 1 student enrolled during the 2013-2014 academic year.
The number of PhDs students coming from outside of the university:	There are 3 students coming from outside of the university.
Number of graduates each year:	There are no graduated students.

The average duration of doctoral studies and what has been the trend of this indicator:	The education period of PhD studies is 3 academic years.
Number and percentage of students, who have interrupted his doctoral studies:	There are no students that have interrupted their studies in the PhD study program.
Number and percentage of students, who come from Kosovo, Albanian territories, as well as from the Albanian diaspora:	0% of students come from Albanian territories
Number and percentage of foreign students, who come from the Balkan region:	33% of students come from Turkey
Number and percentage of students, who come from EU countries:	0%
Number and percentage of students, who come from other countries of the world:	0%

Table 9 Faculty engagement in research activities with doctoral students

HEI scientific activity	Number of students activate
For individual Papers of teachers	-
For scientific projects of Faculty / Department / Doctoral School	-
For research projects, in collaboration with other	<p>1) A. Lleshanaku and M. Üc: From the Perspective of Accounting Theory: Banks' Loan Loss Provisions and Tax Legislation in Albania "4th International Conference on European Studies, Social, Economic and Political Transition of the Balkans." November 8-9, 2013, Tirane, Albania. ISBN: 978-9928-135-09-4</p> <p>2.) M. Can: Symposium: "Improving the Economic Relations Turkey and Albania" Tirana/Albania, UKID, TIKa, Economic Research foundation, Vitrina University, November, 2013.</p> <p>3) A. Lleshanaku: From The Perspectives Macroeconomic Factors: The past and future of problematic loans in Albania, <i>Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies</i>,</p>

		<p>7. International Student Conference on Economics and Finance - <u>ISCON 2011</u></p> <p>8. International Balkan Annual Conference - <u>IBAC 2012</u></p> <p>9. Education Conference</p> <p>10. 4th International Conference on European Studies - <u>ICES 2013</u></p> <p>11. Challenges of Innovative Enterprises in the Global Competitive Market 2014 - <u>ISCoIE 2014</u></p>
5.	Participants in scientific activities	<p>Ph.D. students have to participate in the scientific activities especially during the thesis preparation. According to Regulation “On Ph.D. Study Programs”, Article 28, students should have conducted as first author at least three scientific proceedings, presentations or posters in an international scientific activity (symposium, conference, congress) and submitted three scientific articles in scientific journals. Based on the above-mentioned Regulation, all the Ph.D. students have conducted scientific proceeding as it is a requirement for the graduation.</p>
6.	Students involved in research	<p>Ph.D. students have to be involved in research during the thesis preparation.</p>

Table 10 List of HEIs cooperating with the Epoka University

Universities	Type of cooperation	Date of events
1. Istanbul University	Cooperation between faculty staff in the offering of PhD study programs at Epoka University	
2. Pamukkale University	Cooperation between faculty staff in the offering of PhD study programs at Epoka University	
3. Erciyes University	Cooperation between faculty staff	
4. Yildiz Technical University	Organizing of Conference	
5. University of Aleksander Moisiu	Organizing of Conference	“ISCM 2011”, June 2-4, 2011
6. University of Texas at Austin	Cooperation between faculty staff	
7. Polytechnic University of Tirana	Organizing of Conference	“ISCCE 2012”, May 10-11, 2012



32	International Ataturk Alatoo University	Kyrgyzsistan
33	International Balkan University	Macedonia
34	International Black Sea University	Georgia
35	International Burch University	Bosnia and Herzegovina
36	Ishik University and University of Technology	Republic of Irak and Switzerland
37	Istanbul University	Turkey
38	Leeds Beckett University	UK
39	Marmara University	Turkey
40	Kubolashak University	Kazakhstan
41	Mediterranean University	Montenegro
42	North American University	U.S.A
43	Pamukkale University	Turkey
44	Qafqaz University	Azerbaijan Republic
45	Sam Houston State University	U.S.A
46	Shkodra University "Luigj Gurakuqi"	Albania
47	South-East Europe Lumina University	Romania
48	Suleyman Demirel University	Kazakhstan
49	Suleyman Demirel University	Turkey
50	University of Texas at Austin	U.S.A
51	The Faculty of Artitecture, Polytechnic of Bari	Italy
52	The Faculty of Civil Engineering And Architecture, University of Prishtina	Kosovo
53	Trakya University	Turkey
54	Technical University of Gobrovo	Bulgaria
55	Durres University "Aleksander Moisiu" Faculty of Information And Technology	Albania
56	University of Gaziantep	Turkey
57	Public University of Tetova	Macedonia
58	University of Tirana	Albania
59	Ozyegin University	Turkey
60	Institute of Geosciences, Polytechnic University of Tirana	Albania
61	Kirklareli University	Turkey
62	Eada Business School	Spain
63	Tallinn University of Technology	Estonia
64	Bursa Orhangazi University(BOU)	Turkey
65	Zaman University	Cambodia

Table 12 List of international organisations with Epoka University memberships

No	Institution
1	International Association of Universities http://www.iau-aiu.net/
2	Magna Charta Observatory http://www.magna-charta.org/
3	International Universities Council http://www.unibir.org/
4	Eurasian Silk Road Universities Consortium esruc.atauni.edu.tr

	ISSN 2281 3993, Vol. 4, No. 1, Rome, Italy, 2015. 4) G. Turan, C. Sherifi: The Driving Forces behind Albania's Growth, International Conference on Economic and Social Studies, ISSN 2303-4564, 2014.
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Planned activities, individual and institution, who are involved in doctoral students		Number	The titles of scientific journals, projects, research activities
1.	Publications, where students have scientific articles		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A. Lleshanaku and M. Üc: From the Perspective of Accounting Theory: Banks' Loan Loss Provisions and Tax Legislation in Albania "4th International Conference on European Studies, Social, Economic and Political Transition of the Balkans. November 8-9, 2013, Tirane, Albania. ISBN: 978-9928-135-09-4 2. A. Lleshanaku: Forced Tax Collection: Bank Accounts' Blockage and Its Impact on Taxpayers' Fiscal Behaviour in Albania, Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies - MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy, Vol 3 No 3, June 2014, pp. 310-313, E-ISSN 2281-4612, ISSN 2281-3993 3. Muharrem Can: Symposium: "Improving the Economic Relations Turkey and Albania" Tirana/Albania, UKID, TIKA, Economic Research foundation, Vitrina University, November, 2013.
or	Research projects, acquired by leading professors or doctoral students	1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Güngör Turan, Administrative Employment of Graduates of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, July 2014 – July 2015
3.	Projects Implemented	-	-
4.	Scientific activities organized by the HEI		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First International Conference on Management and Economics - <u>ICME 2008</u> 2. 1st International Conference on Balkans Studies 2008 - ICBS 2008 3. the 2nd International Conference on European Studies - ICES 2009 4. Albanian Foreign Policy - AFP 2011 5. International Certificate of Quality Management - ICQM 2011 6. The 3rd International Conference on European Studies -<u>ICES 2011</u>



5	International Association of Universities (UniBir) http://www.iau-aiu.net/
6	The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE) www.iaeste.org
7	Eurasian Universities Union http://www.euras-edu.org/
8	Balkan Libraries Union http://balkanlibraries.org/
9	Balkan Universities Union http://www.baunas.org/

Table 13 List of MoUs signed by Epoka University with other institutions

	Cooperating Institutions	MoUs	Year of Agreement
1	Albtelecom& Eagle Mobile	MoU on Bilateral Cooperation	May 12, 2009
2	Kurum International sh.a	MoU	June 07, 2010
3	American Hospital	MoU Regarding Karta Vital	January 13, 2011
4	Bank Asya	MoU on Bilateral Cooperation	April 15, 2011
5	BKT (Banka Kombëtare Tregtare)	MoU on Bilateral Cooperation	June 06, 2011
6	ProCredit Bank	MoU	April 23, 2012
7	Public Administration Institute for Turkey and the Middles East	MoU	June 13, 2012
8	British Council Albania	Registration Center and Testing Venue for IELTS	November 01, 2013
9	Everest IE	MoU	November 20, 2013
10	ACITAD (Albanian Chamber of International Trade and Development)	Cooperation Agreement	December 06, 2013
11	KONFINDUSTRIA SHQIPTARE (KISH), Tirana, Albania	MoU	February 20, 2014
12	Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism, Tirana, Albania	MoU	March 03, 2014
13	British Council Albania	Agreement for the Supply of APTIS Test	June 20, 2014
14	Deloitte Albania sh.p.k	Cooperation Agreement	November 03, 2014
15	Raiffeisen Bank	MoU	October 07, 2014
16	Albanian Mobile Communication Sh.a (amc)	MoU	March 05, 2015
17	Albanian Diplomatic Academy	MoU	January 25, 2015
18	Plus Communication Sh.a	MoU	February 06, 2015
19	Communication Progress	MoU	March 06, 2015
20	Fondacioni Arsimor Shqiptar (FASH)	MoU	March 06, 2015

8. University of Prishtina	Organizing of Conference	“ISCCE 2012”, May 10-11, 2012”	
9. Izmir Katip Celebi University	Organizing of Conference	“IBCCC 2013”, May, 23-25, 2013	
10. Suleyman Demirel University	Organizing of Conference	“Friendship and Collaboration in the Balkans”, October, 5-7, 2012	
11. University of Tirana	Organizing of Conference	“IBAC 2012” October, 10-12, 2012	
12. Celal Bayar University	Organizing of Conference	“ICES 2013” November, 8-9, 2013	
13. University of Gaziantep	Organizing of Conference	“BCCCE”, May 19-21, 2011	

Table 11 List of Universities cooperating with Epoka University on the basis of mutual agreements

No	University	Country
1	Hitit University	Turkey
2	The American University in Bulgaria	Bulgaria
3	Namik Kemal University	Turkey
4	Hasan Kalyouncu University	Turkey
5	Ordu University	Turkey
6	Istanbul Technical University	Turkey
7	Yildiz Teknik University	Turkey
8	Suleyman Sah University	Turkey
9	Turgut Ozal University	Turkey
10	Mevlana University	Turkey
11	Gediz University	Turkey
12	Hena e Plote (Beder) University	Albania
13	Izmir Katip Celebi University	Turkey
14	Academy of Science	Albania
15	Afyon Kocatepe University	Turkey
16	Akdeniz University	Turkey
17	American University In The Emirates	U.A.E
18	Ataturk University	Turkey
19	Baku State University	Azerbaijan Republic
20	Balikesir University	Turkey
21	Batman University	Turkey
22	Bingol University	Turkey
23	Bitlis Eren University	Turkey
24	Canakkale Onsezik Mart University	Turkey
25	Cumhuriyet University	Turkey
26	Dicle University	Turkey
27	Dumlupinar University	Turkey
28	Fatih University	Turkey
29	University of Applied Sciences, Mainz	Germany
30	Firat University	Turkey
31	Illinois Institute of Technology	U.S.A