

# **External Evaluation Report**

## **Institutional evaluation**

**PAVARESIA University, Vlore**

**Experts: Dr. Holger Kächelein  
Prof.as dr. Kestrin Kasto**

## Introduction

The presented report refers to the application for accreditation of "Universiteti Pavarësia Vlorë": The Private Higher Education Institute "Universiteti Pavarësia Vlorë" is a Higher Education School (ShLUP) established pursuant off Law no. 8461, dated 25.2.1999, "On higher education in the Republic of Albania" repealed by Law no. 9741, dated 21.05.2007, as amended, to the Council of Ministers no. 156, dated 22.3.2001, "On the private schools in the Republic of Albania", a special permit for the opening of this school, the "University Pavaresia", dated 12.03.2009 was licensed by the Council of Ministers no. 279, entered into force after publication in "Official Gazette" No. 41/2009" Universiteti Pavarësia Vlorë " is licensed to open e new programs of study, the second cycle, given by Order of the Ministry of Education and Science No. 388, Prot. 4342, date. 10.08.2011 based on the decision of the Accreditation Agency No.149 dated 18.02.2011, "On opening of new programs of study," Master Professional "and" Master of Science "and the beginning of academic activities for these programs, at the Higher Education School Universiteti Pavarësia Vlorë.

The HEI offers three bachelor programs, eight professional master and seven scientific master, one of them an integrated master Integrated Unique Diploma of Second Level (DIND). Under the process of accreditation are the four bachelor programs: Economy, Law, Political Science and Informatics Engineering and the Integrated Unique Diploma of Second Level (DIND) in Architecture. Based on the self-evaluation report, the HEI has in total 88 employees an overview about the qualification of the academic is provided in Table 1. The HEI is organized in 2 Colleges, College of Economics and Social Sciences and the College of Applied Sciences, UPV has a total of 5 departments and 1 research center.

**Table 1: Academic staff in 2011/12**

	College of Economics and Social Sciences			College of Applied Sciences			<b>Total</b>
	Internals		Total	Internals		Total	
	Total	Female		Total	Female		
Prof. Dr.	0	0	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
Prof. Ass.	1	1	2	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
PhD	0	0	0	3	2	5	<b>5</b>
PhD candidates	9	5	12	5	5	8	<b>20</b>
MA, Msc, MBA, Mag.	11	7	31	11	10	24	<b>55</b>
Without master	0	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Total:	21	13	46	19	17	38	<b>84</b>

In the ongoing academic year 2011/12, 259 students are enrolled in the programs under accreditation. Strongest program by number of student is Law followed by Economy, further details are provided in Table 2.

**Table 2: Student Numbers, Academic Staff and Ratio in 2011/12**

College of economics and Social Sciences			
	Students	Academic Staff	Ratio

Law	139		
Economy	82		
Political Sciences	38		
Total	259	21	12,3
College of Applied Sciences			
Architecture	41		
Informatics Engineering	35		
Total	76	19	4

The Webpage of the HEI is <http://www.unipavaresia.edu.al/>

### **Composition of External Peer Experts (EPE)**

1. Dr. Holger Kächelein. Received a PhD in Economics at the University of Bamberg/Germany in 2006. He is currently a DAAD-Lecturer in the Department of Economics, Faculty of Economic Sciences, University of Tirana in Albania. Before, he worked for 6 years at the University of Bamberg/Chair of Public Economics. He is also affiliated with the Southeast Europe Center for Economic Development (SECED).
2. Prof.as dr, Kestrin Kasto, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Law at Tirana University
3. ...
- 4.

The site visit to place at the May 4, 2012.

## CHAPTER I: STUDY PROGRAMS

### 1) OFFERED STUDY PROGRAMS

#### **Institution offers programs in accordance with its mission and infrastructure conditions.**

The HEI provides opportunities for the public to be informed about offered study programs, via its webpage, leaflets, posters, brochures, as well as visual ones such as television commercials, promotional messages. However, they could improve the quality of information by providing the entire module description instead of the short description. Furthermore, the Institution maintains constant contacts with secondary education institutions of where its students completed their education. This is reached by the organization of seminars, round tables, introductory lectures and other activities with an information-entertaining-learning character with high school students of high schools in Vlova and other cities of the country in the environments of UPV. Institution has not defined or not communicated priority study programs to be offered. The HEI should define priority study programs to clarify the mission of the HEI if not already done up to now. Nevertheless, Institution pursues a defined policy for students' admission in accordance with study programs that it offers. Furthermore, the study programs offered by the HEI are organized so as to harmonize all their components. Finally, the requirements used for testing students' skills are reviewed and classified by institution collegial bodies. The HEI uses defined formats and the pedagogue must submit the exam paper for approval and signature to the relevant Head of Department or in his absence to the Dean of Faculty, a day before their conduction.

**Constant molding is an integral part of study programs.** The requirement of constant molding is only partly fulfilled or often not made explicit. However, we would like to highlight the activities in the framework of the Education and Research Centre 3TreCon IT, EPIC ALBANI, which is attached to the College of Applied Sciences. This offers further education in the sense of short-term specializations, supplementation, deepening and updating of knowledge as a form of lifelong learning. Although UPV doesn't offer part-time programs, (each student needs to accumulate at least 30 ECTS per year in order to attend the following academic year and an attendance rate of 75 % of the subject load in order of being admitted at the final exam of the respective subject whenever he decide to sustain it) the time teaching schedule is organized in order to end the academic teaching at 3 p.m. besides the fact that the academic activity keeps going on. The schedule is arranged in this way to offer students in need the chance to work in the afternoon and support financially their studies. In this spirit a memorandum of understanding with the Procredit Bank- Vlova branch was concluded, aimed at facilitating study-loans procedures. The HEI supports high schools in increasing their teaching capacity. It offers training for the high school teachers in concern to the content of specific subjects, contemporary teaching methods and trainings for the high school assistant directors to develop their career. Finally the university uses a framework to evaluate gained experiences. This is done by round tables and questionnaires at the end of the semester. Here we would like to propose a modification: The students should also have the possibility to comment and not only to tick. It is also previewed to establish internship programs in cooperation with business and institutions.

**Study programs are not offered in line with institution development strategy** as a development strategy is not presented. The HEI formulates objectives in short to long term;

however, a clear dedicated strategy of development is not presented up to now. We acknowledge that this problem exists not only at this HEI, it is a fundamental problem of several HEI in Albania. We advise the HEI to formulate an institution development strategy which can be used as a fundamental guideline for the future development.

**Study programs are offered in accordance with national and international objectives.**

Based on the size of the HEI Institution and the limited numbers of BA programs offered; the HEI pursues a clear policy to ensure coherence in study programs offered. The programs offered are in line with the national policies concerning it is multidisciplinary, promoting reception of foreign cultures and learning foreign languages. The HEI is hosting a summer school in the upcoming summer and furthermore a foreign language is obligatory in the study programs. The HEI does not offer interdisciplinary study programs hence issuing of common diploma by Albanian, European and/or international higher education institutions is not a subject at this report.

**Study programs are offered in accordance with institution capacities** Teaching load of lecturers is assigned in accordance with criteria set in bylaws in force; additional teaching load of lecturers is financed by institution's own resources; study programs are organized in such a way as to provide for academic staff effective harmonization, of teaching load, scientific research work, administrative commitments, as far as it is possible for such a new small university. Obviously the internal academic staff, although accomplishing the criteria set by law and the effective harmonization of the different activities, has the main workload in comparison to the external academic staff (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Share of Teaching Hours Internal / Total Staff**

Teaching Hours	Economy	Law	Political Science	Informatics Engineering	Architecture
Internal staff	1010	1097	1440	1335	1320
Total	1770	1775	1935	1935	2070
Share	57%	62%	74%	69%	64%

**Study programs are easily understandable and objectives are clearly defined.** The HEI provides the content of study programs, curricula, syllabuses, etc. to students in printed form. The content of the study programs are also provided at the webpage of the HEI. However, the access to the information could be improved if the modules descriptions are provided at the webpage of the HEI as already mentioned before. The objectives of the study programs are stated, however, they should be formulated in more detailed manner. The module description must be improved. Each module description must include: Purpose, Minimum skills reached by students, teaching structure (lesson, seminar, exercises), previewed examination, an individual calculation of the workload and an overview of the content of the semester. Students' admission criteria are defined by the HEI. However, transparency of the admission process could be improved by providing precise criteria as a minimum GPA at the state mature and the relevance of other documents as the letter of motivation.

**Study programs of first cycle provide students with basic knowledge, general scientific methods and principles.** The programs offered by the HEI are quite standard ones without specific characteristics at this HEI. This implies on one side that the study programs allow a progressive transition from the first cycle to the second cycle studies, ensure successful completion of first cycle and admission to the second cycle and programs of first cycle studies

provide students with basic knowledge, general scientific methods and principles and specific molding skills. On the other side the external evaluators would like to advise the HEI to think about specific needs which may arise for students in the region. This could be aspects as study skills as developing a topic, critical thinking, learn to learn, acknowledging sources. Often such aspects are included in a module of academic writing or study techniques. The career center cooperates closely with the students as also confirmed by students at the visit. One of the tasks of the career center is to inform and guide students about the possibility of transfer of study programs or credits received during their studies. As already mentioned the programs do not have specific elements or characteristics compared to plenty other Albanian HEI programs. Therefore, it can be concluded that the study programs of the first cycle are drafted in such a way that students who complete the first cycle have opportunities for employment. The HEI may also think about to create more specific profiles which meet the regional needs. An example could be a certain focus on tourism in the economic program.

**Programs of first cycle studies are widely compiled in such ways that facilitate student's acclimatization with university environment; a problem is the high share of external lecturers.** As already mentioned the Career center of the HEI has a central function as a supporting unit. This covers also a support policy for student progress. At the beginning of the study year a registration week reflects the supporting policies for students through orientation activities. Based on the small number of students, close contacts between the study years are frequent. With an increase in the student numbers the HEI should also think about institutionalized tutorships of more advanced students. In class teaching is based on different teaching techniques taking into account its students' interests. Based on the available statistics, the HEI institution recruits with priority the academic staff that engages in scientific research activities, however, we have also to acknowledge the limited supply of qualified scientific staff in Vlora. This problem is also reflected in the high share of external staff up to now, based on head count it reaches about 50% of total academic staff. As presented in Table 3, the situation is less dramatic if we refer to teaching load by lecturer. Based on teaching hours, the standard is already reached or nearly reached in two departments. Critical is mainly the situation in the Department of Economy. Based on latest information, two additional pedagogues were added to this department during the accreditation process.

**Second cycle programs are based on research and institution collaborates with actors in the economic field for their realization; a problem is the high share of external lecturers.** Large part of the academic staff is still in process of gaining the PhD; hence, major part is engaged in research. The HEI states that its Academic staff is always involved in drafting and implementation of study programs. As the HEI is still in a process of creation a clear research policy is not developed, yet. Based on the close cooperation with the private sector, the professional practice and draft thesis of students are conducted in cooperation with private sector and state companies. This cooperation implies also that in teaching and research programs of "Professional Master" studies, institution involves also representatives from business or other fields. Since the HEI has not up to now any graduates it cannot own statistical data for employment of its graduates. However, again as in case of the first cycle programs the academic staff employed with full time comprises less than 70% of staff committed to realize the second cycle academic programs. The evaluators have to state that the HEI does not reach the required share of staff with academic degrees.

**Study programs aim to promote Albanian students' mobility in Europe and beyond.** The Study programs are offered in line with Bologna Process in successive cycles under the

system: Bachelor, Master. The HEI does not offer PhD programs. The curriculum is organized to provide sufficient information for a foreign observer (presentation of its content is detailed (This depends on the long versions of the module descriptions – I asked for them), organized in modules and assessed in European credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), also available in English). Diplomas issued at the completion of study programs of first cycle, second cycle or integrated are associated with diploma supplement, which was provided to the EPE. Study programs are designed to facilitate students' mobility. Learning foreign languages is in line with the studies' internationalization policy. Students of the second study programs undergo the exam of English language, on the basis of internationally known tests. The HEI has finalized the procedures for becoming a TOEFL test center so their students can sustain this test at the HEI. HEIs provide opportunities to transfer credits awarded at home or abroad, through equivalence of parts or complete study programs in terms of the right to continue education in the same or similar study program in a counterpart institution. The HEI has precise regulations for the transfer “Regullore per procedurat e transferimit te studenteve ne programin bachelor”(Regulation for students transferring process) published in the information blackboard.

**Study programs provide practical application of knowledge and skills acquired by students in theoretical courses.** All study programs preview seminar papers, case studies and a diploma thesis is obligatory. Therefore, the study programs are organized in such a way as to enable application in practice of skills acquired in theoretical courses. Furthermore, Study programs include also preparation and presentation of scientific research projects of students, under the regulation of studies. The HEI offers additional activities which are promoted by the HEI to support students' participation in cultural and educational activities. A weak aspect is the mechanical distribution of ECTS points in a standardized manner for all subjects. The evaluators would like to advice the HEI, to calculate the ECTS points separately for each module based on the workload. In a first step this may done based on an estimated workload by the pedagogues, in a second step students should asked to estimate the workload by themselves. This could be included in the module evaluation.

**Study programs aim at preparing students for employment** Study programs offer special modules with professional character and knowledge from socio-economic areas. Furthermore, the study programs offered include knowledge about entrepreneurship and professional practices, also internships are organized.

	Standard is			n.o. n.r. n.a.
	Over- achieved	achieved	Not achieved	
<b>Quality and sustainability of study programs</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.1</b> Institution offers Study programs in accordance with its mission and capacities		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.2</b> Constant qualification is an integral part of study programs		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.3</b> Study programs are offered in accordance with institution development strategy			<b>X</b>	
<b>Standard I.4</b> Study programs are offered in line with local, national and international trends.		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.5</b> Study programs are offered in accordance with institution capacities.		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.6</b> Study programs are easily understandable and their objectives are clearly defined.		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.7</b> Study programs of first cycle provide students with basic knowledge, general scientific methods and principles.		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.8</b> First cycle study programs are drafted in such a way as to facilitate student's acclimatization with university environment.			<b>X</b>	
<b>Standard I.9</b> Second cycle study programs rely on research and institution collaborates with economic field actors for their realization.		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.10</b> Study programs aim to achieve Albanian students' mobility in Europe and beyond.		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.11</b> Study programs enable practical application of knowledge and skills acquired by students in theoretical courses.		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.12</b> Study programs aimed at preparing students for employment.		<b>X</b>		

## 2) ORGANIZATION OF STUDY PROGRAMS

**Announced study programs are applied in appropriate conditions.** Based on the site visit and conversations at the HEI, the evaluators came to the conclusion that the HEI ensures efficient organization and documentation of study programs curriculum. This holds also for the coordination of work of academic staff to ensure coherence content in the programs. Nevertheless in case of documentation is still space of improvement. Institution provides sufficient capacity for the realization of practical professional molding of students. The career center is also in charge as training center to supervise practices, internships. Up to now no experience could be gained about the supervision process of the diploma thesis. At the time of the site visit the library was hosted in a too small surface. However, a move to a larger environment is previewed also to provide more space for additional literature.

### **Higher education institutions provide students who have passed all obligations of a study program, with relevant diploma, which is an official document**

Examination rules and requirements are approved by responsible university structures and they are known to everyone through the regulation of examinations announced publicly. Institution makes known (posting in visible places) graduation criteria and procedures. The general regulation and other relevant documents approved by the Academic Senate are announced publicly in the official website of the institution under the section "Legislation". The HEI uses number codes to respect anonymity during the correction of examinations. The EPE support the idea of HEI to install a barcode system as described in the self-evaluation report, as system is previewed but has not been installed yet. Complaints against examinations' scores are reviewed by a committee set up in compliance with examinations' regulation. The HEI preview that if a student has complains which could not dispel by the pedagogue, the student can request the creation of a review committee by the Department. The committee's decision is final. Students have access to personal exam scores, by observing the confidentiality principle. The announcement of the examination results to the students is made possible through the intranet by entering their personal ID and password.

**Study programs are subject to continuous improvement in order to increase their quality.** Lecturers are regularly assessed by institution structures that pursue qualitative implementation of study programs; in place are four means: self-evaluation by the lecturer, evaluation by the head of department and students as well as class visits by dean and head of department. As mentioned, students are involved in evaluation of lecturers and study programs implementation, the second point is integrated also by round table meeting. Study programs are improved by taking into account the outcomes of the evaluation by academic staff and students. This was also confirmed by the students during the site visit. Outcomes of examinations and competitions are published. The students' evaluation process is made transparent by means of publishing the results on the information blackboard. The students' evaluations are also discussed in the Academic Faculty Council meeting.

**Institution pursues a clear policy for improvement of teaching quality.** As already explained before, the HEI evaluates regularly the programs and has installed structures to promote continuous teaching improvement. Worth to mention is also that the HEI provides to its staff also educational journals beside of pure scientific journals.

Based on the self-evaluation report and the heavy pronunciation of didactical aspects and variety in teaching methods presented, the HEI has supporting mechanisms for experimentation in teaching and give space for implementing new approaches. Academic staff is trained continuously to improve teaching: HEI offers training for familiarization with academic philosophy of the institution and also training methods for young lecturers. For new academic staff also training about the implementation of the Bologna Process are offered. As already explained before, the HEI holds its responsibility for teaching quality, evaluation and monitoring during the whole process. The HEI Institution makes available the necessary infrastructure to realize study programs as the EPE could observe at their visit. Finally the EPE got the impression that academic, teaching-scientific supporting staff and administrative staff are committed to improve teaching and application of study programs.

The HEI has also a Commission of Internal Quality Provision that perform periodic internal assessments, to make a general assessment of the situation in the HEI and deliver feedback through evaluation of the efficiency of different activities of the HEI, as well as through discussion of the internal evaluation report in all units of the HEI, aiming at continuous improvement of quality in carrying out these activities in the future.

	Standard is			n.o. n.r. n.a.
	Over- achieved	achieved	Not achieved	
<b>Organization of study programs</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard II.1</b> Announced study programs are applied in appropriate conditions		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard II.2</b> - Higher education institutions provide students who have passed all obligations of a study program, with relevant diploma, which is an official document.		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard II.3</b> Study programs are subject to continuous improvement in order to increase their quality		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard II.4</b> Institution pursues a clear policy for improvement of teaching quality.	<b>X</b>			

### 3) STUDENTS: FROM REGISTRATION TO EMPLOYMENT

**Institution pursues a correct policy for admission of new students.** Institution informs future students (secondary school graduates) for study programs that it provides through career counseling office. This is done by information materials as well as organization of seminars, round tables, introductory lectures and other activities with an information-entertaining- learning character with high school students of high schools in Vlora and others in the regions as well as with groups of students of first cycle studies who show tendency for the continuation of studies in the second cycle. Institution welcomes and pursues specific policies for absorption and integration of new students and the HEI has established separate structures for reception, information and admission of new student by registration weeks.

The HEI is also linked to Regional Education Directorates and Education Offices. The institution is in a continuous contact with the Regional Education Directorate of Vlora and Education Offices of all the gymnasiums of Vlora in order to establish a direct communication regarding the preservation of the study programs continuity and the having full information on the potential student profile. Obviously these institutions (UPV, Regional Education Directorate of Vlora, and the respective Gymnasiums Education Offices) do collaborate in several aspects in terms of student's learning quality improvement by offering formative training courses for all the potential students. For example, during the three academic years the HEI have been offered courses in: mathematics, drawing, economics, informatics, communication skills and public speech, EU's history. Furthermore, the HEI is assisting in organizing and financing special activities like the Balkan Math's Olympiad of 2012.

The HEI publishes reception time for students in order to meet students' needs. All the pedagogues do offer consulting hours each week according to a preannounced scheduled plan approved by the first staff department meeting at the beginning of each semester. This plan and any possible changes in it due to unpredicted events it is announced at the Information blackboard of the respective faculty. In case of special needs, the pedagogues do offer additional consulting hours to the normal 1-1.5 hours per week. Also, for assisting the students in all his needs and in guaranteeing his carrier continuity, UPV from the beginning of this academic year after analyzing the past years experiences has established the Tutoring program. This program is organized in two directions; the first one is the academic tutoring made by the professors and the second one made by the excellent students' representative of the Program "Students of Excellence in UPV" according to a preannounced scheduled plan approved by the first staff department meeting at the beginning of each semester. This plan is published also in the intra-web of the University. The numerical ratio of academic staff / student is such as to ensure education quality and institution objectives.

**Institution pursues a policy for informing students and guarantees communication between them and academic staff.** With an active and functioning career center the HEI has a structure of information and counseling for students. The HEI Institution owns external communication means with its webpage and also internal communication means with email and intranet and regular meetings. Not only the staff but also the students have an internal email address. During the site visit the EPE could confirm that the HEI holds personal file of each student including address (electronic and postal) and phone number.

**Institution pursues a policy of orientation and mentoring for students.** Institution has a framework for guiding and advising students, which is performed by the career center they provide beside others training in writing job applications and CVs. Based on the discussion with students the HEI engages actively in information and orientation of students. In the frame of the study program progressive adaptation of students with the program is previewed. Institution makes available to students information materials or brochures and organize information days about international scholarship programs. The career center guides students wishing to change study programs and documents the process. The HEI provides guidelines about structuring thesis and writing seminar papers. Hence the existing structure for guiding and advising students supports them in all cycles of study that institution provides.

**Institution pursues a support policy for specific social categories.** Institution pursues a policy of support for students with disabilities, minorities as Roma students and Balkan Egyptians. The HEI supports of students who have suffered the consequences of family or collective tragedies. The HEI has offered full scholarship for the children of policemen died in their service of work, orphans or children of poor families. Institution pursues a policy of support for students engaging in sports activities at high levels; Institution pursues a policy of support for students wishing to pursue part-time studies, see above at I.1.: Constant molding is an integral part of study programs.

**Institution offers basic and support literature for students** Institution provides quality textbooks and supplementary literature in sufficient quantity. The library holds over 1200 book titles, in case of textbook as 2 or 3 copies. The library enriches literature steadily, scientific literature can be ordered on request by the academic staff. The students have the possibility to make photocopies free of charge at the library (not entire books). The library has a structure for documentation maintenance and students have a card for registration and literature provision. The library provides also electronic materials (beside others Questia). The library is opened 12 hours per day during the week beside Sunday, the opening hours are posted.

**Institution offers support to first-cycle students through university services to facilitate their performance.** This covers leadership of new students, introduction seminars to the library and also consulting for students in difficulty. An active role plays again the career center at the HEI.

**Institution encourages students' participation in institutional life** Students are represented in governing bodies of Higher Education Institutions, structures of teaching-research and services. This includes also the Ethic commission of the HEI as far as students are concerned. Student Councils express opinions and proposals for all problems of general interest of Higher Education Institutions as educational plans and research programs, study regulations. The EPE got the impression that student body is well integrated in the structure of the HEI and the opinion of the student is highly appreciated. Round table meetings are installed at which students participate actively. The HEI supports student councils and finances their activities

**Institution pursues a policy of support to ensure quality of student life.** Institution pursues a policy to facilitate student life as mentioned via the career center and another example is a free W-LAN access at the HEI. Institution supports student's cultural life for example with an own student theater group. Institution cooperates with health structures to pursue preventive and curative policies to help students' health. The HEI has taken part in several activities initiated by the Health Regional Directory of Vlore like: the HIV/AIDS campaigns, the

Mental Health Day campaign where the students were involved as volunteers in distributing leaflets, gadgets and taking part in different sensibilizing meetings. Furthermore, regular blood donation days are in place. The HEI has not any own sport facilities in place.

**Institution favors students' employment.** The HEI takes is as part of its mission to facilitate the access to the labor market. Institution provides assistance for integration into employment. As already mentioned several times the career center plays an active role in the institution and provides assistance for integration into employment. Based on the conversations at the site visit, academic, teaching and scientific, administrative staff commit to implementing this policy. Institution follows favoring policies for employment of its graduates as it stays in close contact with potential employers and the HEI also participated at the Regional Fair of Labor.

	Standard is			n.o. n.r. n.a.
	Over- achieved	achieved	Not achieved	
<b>Students: From Registration to employment</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard III.1</b> Institution pursues a correct policy for admission of new students		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard III.2</b> Institution pursues a policy for informing students and guarantees communication between them and academic staff	<b>X</b>			
<b>Standard III.3</b> Institution pursues a policy of orientation and mentoring for students		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard III.4</b> Institution pursues a support policy for specific social categories	<b>X</b>			
<b>Standard III.5</b> Institution offers basic and support literature for students.		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard III.6</b> Institution offers support to first-cycle students through university services to facilitate their performance		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard III.7</b> Institution encourages students' participation in institutional life.		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard III.8</b> Institution pursues a policy of support to ensure quality of student life.		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard III.9</b> Institution favors students' employment		<b>X</b>		

## CHAPTER II SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY

### RESEARCH: RESEARCH OUTCOMES, THEIR DISSEMINATION, ASSESSMENT AND TRANSFER

The HEI under evaluation is a young institution which holds also for the academic merits of the scientific staff. A major part of the internal staff is still in process of gaining the scientific degree and this is done at other HEI. Given this circumstances it is too early to expect a clear research profile at the HEI, which includes also the aspect of research groups. Hence the EPE decided not to evaluate this standard as the outcome would be misleading concerning some aspects.

Nevertheless, we would like to highlight some aspects. Although that the HEI is only established a couple of years ago, several Memorandum of Understanding are signed together with other international HEI as University of Architecture IUAV in Venice, Italy ; EBES Association of Business and Economics Eurasia, Istanbul, Turkey; University "La Sapienza" Roma, Italy, UEJL, the South East European University Tetovo, Macedonia, University of Genova in Italy and Polytechnic University Of Marche Italy. They already participate at Tempus projects and are partner at the CEEPUS the European Community Network. The HEI has already established its own academic journal and was partner in the organization of scientific conferences.

We recommend the HEI to provide the means and to promote the creation of research groups as soon as possible. The recommendation covers also to define scientific research priorities for the HEI. In the next self-evaluation report special concern should be taken to present the research activities, exchange of academic staff and research stays, support for the staff to participate at conferences, a listing of publication (national and international) and so on.

	Standard is			n.o.
	Over-achieved	achieved	Not achieved	n.r. n.a.
<b>RESEARCH: RESEARCH OUTCOMES, THEIR DISSEMINATION, ASSESSMENT AND TRANSFER</b>				n.o.
<b>Standard L1</b> The Department, as Institution basic unit, highlights its strengths and weaknesses in scientific research field				n.o.
<b>Standard L2</b> Institution encourages development, dynamism and scientific research				n.o.
<b>Standard L3</b> Institution concentrates on scientific research internationalization				n.o.
<b>Standard L4</b> Institution determines priority areas of scientific research				n.o.
<b>Standard L5</b> Institution applies scientific research priorities.				n.o.
<b>Standard L6</b> Institution provides continuity in the scientific research field				n.o.
<b>Standard L7</b> Institution publishes outcomes in research field.				n.o.
<b>Standard L8</b> Institution pursues a policy of evaluation and transfer of outcomes in research field.				n.o.

## CHAPTER III INSTITUTION MANAGEMENT FOR FULFILLING ITS MISSION

### 1) AUTONOMY

**Institution and its structures work in accordance with Institution statute.** The HEI has its own status and internal regulations. Institution has drafted the statute in accordance with legislation in force and in accordance with its mission and objectives.

**Institution is organized in such a way as to ensure efficiency in management.** Management bodies exercise Institution's management effectively. Rectorate prepares and submits the budget to Institution's Academic Senate. Rectorate determines composition of experts' committee which develops Institution's economic and budgetary policies. Rectorate formulates criteria for allocation of financial, material and human resources. Board of Ethics (Ethics Council with 3 members plus a student without voting right) is established and discusses issues of university life ethics. It makes proposals to the Rector about their treatment. Faculty Board (College boards) are established as collegial decision-making body which, based on proposals of departments, schedules and determines the use of human and material resources available to faculty. Deans are the faculty management authority and its legal representative. Director is managing authority of the research and training institute and represents it. The deans are appointed by the Rector for a term of 3 years, eligible for reappointment. The Head of Departments and the Head of the Research Centre are proposed by the related Dean and appointed by the Rector. Internal organization and control are made in accordance with provisions in statute and internal regulations. The HEI has clear separation of activity of management bodies and authorities, administrative and academic personnel.

**Institution encourages constructive debate.** Materials for discussion are prepared and made available to members Institution boards, before making decisions. Senate and boards meet periodically. Opinions and proposals of Senate and the council are considered for implementation. Institution monitors their implementation process.

**Institution respects its autonomy limits.** As already discussed before, the HEI has installed structures of supervision and internal evaluation; the HEI has engaged external consultants to assist its proper functioning in form of a board of trust. Institution is organized in such a way as to benefit funding from European programs and beyond. EU programs are already in place.

**Institution has not established a development strategy.** The EPE highly recommend developing a development strategy. As already mentioned before the lack of a clear dedicate strategy is a wide spread problem at Albanian HEI.

**Institution publishes the annual report, submits it to Ministry of Education and Science, academic staff and students.** The annual report reflects internal and external activities, the report is also provided by the leading authorities to the institution staff during the Academic Staff Meeting at the end of each academic year where it is discussed and analyzed. This report is also provided to the students by their representatives who have discussed and analyzed it in their Faculty Council Meetings.

	Standard is			n.o. n.r. n.a.
	Over-achieved	achieved	Not achieved	
<b>Autonomy</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.1</b> Institution and its structures work in accordance with Institution statute		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.2</b> Institution is organized in such a way as to ensure efficiency in management		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.3</b> Institution encourages constructive debate		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.4</b> Institution respects its autonomy limits		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard I.5</b> Institution establishes a development strategy.			<b>X</b>	
<b>Standard I.6</b> Institution publishes the annual report, submits it to Ministry of Education and Science, academic staff and students		<b>X</b>		

## 2) ORGANIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

**Institution establishes appropriate structures to accomplish its mission and purpose; however the EPE would like to draw special attention to the underrepresentation of staff with degrees.** The HEI has established appropriate structures to accomplish its mission and purpose. Autonomy and academic freedom help to accomplish the institution's mission and purpose. The HEI acknowledges that Academic Freedom is expressed in freedom of teaching, freedom of scientific research, freedom of creation. Higher Education Institution is organized in main, basic organizational constituent units for autonomy exercise within its competencies. The HEI offers higher education in studies of first and second cycle and is composed of two faculties (colleges). It offers also applied research. The faculties are the main unit, and are organized in basic units. Each faculty has three basic units, two/three of which are departments. Departments, as the basic unit, consist of at least seven effective members as academic staff, however not always 3 of whom degrees and titles have. The HEI must search actively (e.g. by advertisements in the five most important newspapers at minimum 1/8 page and ongoing calls on the webpage) for academic staff with degree. The HEI has its official web site.

**Institution provides effective management of human resources.** The HEI has implemented clear rules to determine responsibilities according to respective functions. Based on the report presented, this holds for all levels at the institution.

**Management bodies facilitate decision making by favoring debate in Institution.** The HEI puts in operation its boards, organized by levels (Senate, College Councils). These boards give opinions and proposals and make decisions. Their proposals, opinions and decisions are sent to management authorities. Finally, the academic staff is involved in internal debate under institutional procedures prescribed by statute.

	Standard is			n.o.
	Over-achieved	achieved	Not achieved	n.r. n.a.
<b>Organization of higher education institutions</b>		X		
<b>Standard II.1</b> Institution establishes appropriate structures to accomplish its mission and purpose			X	
<b>Standard II.2</b> Institution provides effective management of human resources		X		
<b>Standard II.3</b> Management bodies facilitate decision making by favoring debate in Institution		X		

### 3) PARTNERSHIP

**Institution conducts market research to accomplish its mission and purpose.** Institution is informed constantly about the economic regional development. The HEI is in close contact with the local economy. As far as the EPE can assess it, the HEI respects competition rules.

**Institution pursues an open strategy of collaboration and partnership in a regional, national and international level.** As already mentioned before, the HEI has not established a development strategy and this also holds for the cooperation policy priorities. However, the HEI takes widely into account the needs of local economy and labor market for opening new programs this should be also the case for the drafting of scientific research projects. The HEI cooperates with regional partners as the Municipality of Vlora and Union Bank. The HEI organizes and formalizes agreements with counterpart institutions of higher education. As mentioned at the chapter II Scientific Activities, the HEI has signed several memorandums of understanding with international partners.

**Institution pursues a cooperation strategy of with other supporting institutions.** The HEI collaborates with other instances to provide services to students, as internships and part-time job experiences. Furthermore, the HEI collaborates with other instances to meet its needs for realization of study programs.

**Institution pursues a favoring policy for mobility of academic personnel and students in an international level.** Institution participates in international activities as conferences and TEMPUS programs and exchanges programs. As far as the EPE could assess, the HEI pursues also a favoring policy for mobility of academic staff and students. However, we could not observe the integration policy for foreign students and invited academic staff and researchers as no case came up to now.

	Standard is			n.o.
	Over-achieved	achieved	Not achieved	n.r. n.a.
<b>Partnership</b>		X		
<b>Standard III.1</b> Institution conducts market research to accomplish its mission and purpose		X		
<b>Standard III.2</b> Institution pursues an open strategy of collaboration and partnership in a regional, national and international level		X		
<b>Standard III.3</b> Institution pursues a cooperation strategy with other supporting institutions		X		
<b>Standard III.4</b> Institution pursues a favoring policy for mobility of academic personnel and students in an international level		X		

#### 4) HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

##### **Institution pursues an open policy for employment and recruitment of human resources.**

Institution makes its organization chart public at its webpage. Furthermore, the HEI pursues a policy of part-time employment for its needs and pursues a policy of promotion of full-time, part-time, invited or contracted academic staff. Institution publishes employment criteria for each vacant job position. Furthermore, the HEI pursues a policy of hiring supporting teaching-scientific and administrative staff in accordance with Law No. 9741 of 21.5.2007 "On Higher Education in Republic of Albania", amended and other legal regulations adopted for its implementation. The advertisements for the vacant academic jobs positions have been posted in three local TV-s and newspapers such as: Real TV; 6+1 Vlora TV; Vlora Channel TV and Gazeta Vlora Newspaper. Also these advertisements are published at the institutions official website where is specified the employment criteria and the recruitment procedure. Beyond the fact that jobs positions are held by persons that fulfilled the required criteria by law, the above mentioned advertisement and the recruitment procedure remains opened and activated in cases of job requests by potential qualified academic staff. As an example: even at the end of this academic year, the announcement for job vacancies is still opened in the official website. The HEI provides criteria and procedures for personnel recruitment in the internal regulations. Finally, the HEI recruits with priority qualified academic staff from internationally recognized universities.

**Institution pursues a policy of integration of academic staff, teaching and scientific supporting staff and administrative staff.** Institution engages in implementation of integration policies for its staff, also by special training for new comers. New academic staff generally gets a period of preparation that last a semester. At the beginning of this period the Head of the departments in accordance with the directives of the Dean of the Faculty draft a plan for the preparation period that consists, for each of the new followers, in: lectures of the subject that the new member will follow under the guidance of the lecturer; the several engagements of the candidate in exercise hour or helping the students with the preparation of the essays or presentations; the participation in the academic life of the specific department. The HEI engages its staff in organizing information activities and information materials as

already mentioned before. Institution pursues a favorable policy for integration of its staff in its social life.

**Institution pursues a policy for assessment of its staff skills.** Institution follows a training plan according to priorities defined in its mission. As already mentioned above, the HEI Institution evaluates achievements of its staff. Institution encourages training and promotion of academic staff also in western universities. Each pedagogue has an individual “Academic Advancing Plan” to be submitted at the beginning of the academic year. Teaching obligations are assigned taking into account the academic advancing plan.

**Institution pursues a social development policy.** Institution organizes social activities as blood donation days and the HEI promotes social dialogue also but not only by several activities hold at its premises.

	Standard is			n.o.
	Over-achieved	achieved	Not achieved	n.r. n.a.
<b>Human resource management</b>		X		
<b>Standard IV.1</b> Institution pursues an open policy for employment and recruitment of human resources		X		
<b>Standard IV.2</b> Institution pursues a policy of integration of academic staff, teaching and scientific supporting staff and administrative staff		X		
<b>Standard IV.3</b> Institution pursues a policy for assessment of its staff skills		X		
<b>Standard IV.4</b> Institution pursues a social development policy		X		

## 5) MANAGEMENT OF INSTITUTION ACTIVITY

**Institution provides appropriate facilities and infrastructure for academic and scientific activity.** During the site visit the EPE had the opportunity to take a close look at the premises. Based on the assessment the EPE came to the conclusion that the HEI makes available for teaching facilities, constructed with contemporary quality materials that meet hygienic and sanitary conditions for students, academic and administrative staff, avoiding risk elements. Furthermore, the HEI provides good acoustics in teaching premises and isolation from noise, temperature fluctuations and humidity. The Institution is located in the center of the city of Vlora, far from industrial development zones or areas that are polluted above relevant permitted standards. The HEI owns adequate teaching auditoriums; facilities for labs; facilities for teaching staff, facilities for administrative staff; technical facilities, facilities for the library, for senate, audiovisual rooms and computer labs. The HEI meets the usable surface norm of 3.8 - 4.0 m<sup>2</sup>/student (minimum) and 7.5 - 8.0 m<sup>2</sup>/student (maximum) and the height of premises is not less than 3.0 m (ceiling-floor). As far as possible (exceptions are auditoriums), the HEI meets technical norms of natural lighting, window surface covers at least 15 – 20 % of floor surface and lighting is directed to the student's left arm. The HEI has mandatory emergency exits and stairs and fire protection system and protection system against atmospheric discharges. A functioning heating system is available and it has alternative sources for electric energy supply (inverter and diesel generator) as well as

sufficient reserves of usable water (water tanks) and an electronic disinfecting plumbing system Furthermore, the HEI has installed an emergency guide electronic system (Unplug and visual signaling), and has an medical first aid room combined with an ambulatory quick help system and an electronic emergency hospital system.

**Institution possesses full documentation of academic activity in hardcopy and electronic form.** The student office is responsible for maintaining documentation in hardcopy; furthermore, the HEI has the facilities for data digitalization and documentation storage in electronic form which are in use, it has a database regarding registration of students, matriculation number, etc., in accordance with bylaws in force. The HEI has a structure for collection of statistics. The Institution has general information on its program, form, syllabus, coupled with binding credits for studies and also has a student-based registry with data their own. The HEI has a basic register for students (in a printed and electronics stored permanently), with grades received while following the study program.

	Standard is			n.o.
	Over-achieved	achieved	Not achieved	n.r. n.a.
<b>Management of Institution Activity</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard V.1</b> Institution provides appropriate facilities and infrastructure for academic and scientific activity		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard V.2</b> Institution possesses full documentation of academic activity in hardcopy and electronic form		<b>X</b>		

## 6) FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

**Institution drafts the budget in accordance with defined procedures.** The proposed budget HEIs is subject to discussion in senate and shareholders board. Institution budget is detailed and delegated for management up to department.

**Institution provides the necessary means to implement the financial policy.** Institution has set up the special structure for its financial management and financial policy implementation. Institution pursues a transparent policy for distribution of financial resources and respects accounting rules.

**Up to now, the HEI does not pursue a policy of budgetary and financial control** The HEI is not subject to financial audit, performed by institutions stipulated by law for this purpose. The HEI may consider to request an external financial audit and to make the financial audit outcomes public.

	Standard is			n.o.
	Over-achieved	achieved	Not achieved	n.r. n.a.
<b>Financial management</b>		X		
<b>Standard VI.1</b> Institution drafts the budget in accordance with defined procedures		X		
<b>Standard VI.2</b> Institution provides the necessary means to implement the financial policy		X		
<b>Standard VI.3</b> Institution pursues a policy of budgetary and financial control			X	

## 7) INFORMATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

**Institution has an information system.** The Information systems are coordinated and the management of the system is used to provide strategic information. Institution publishes in the official website all statistical data on academic offer, institution set-up and operation, statute and regulations of its operation. However, the HEI does not provide number of students by programs. The EPE recommends adding this information at the web page.

**Institution coordinates activities in the field of information technology.** Institution conducts its computerization and is well equipped with computer labs which are available for the students and staff. Later have also separate working places. Up to now the HEI does not provide distance education programs.

**Institution manages immovable.** Based on the information provided during the site visit, the EPE confirms that the Institution has a record of immovable. Since the HEI is quite new, the HEI has not yet a master plan for security, rehabilitation, expansion, and/or restructuring of its immovable. The institution aims to enlarge its facilities with a new campus, but obviously this remains a long-term target due to its modest financial resources.

**The HEI is only established some years ago, hence it is too early discuss the question of storage, maintenance and development its academic, cultural and scientific heritage.**

**Institution pursues a policy of management of its assets.** Based on the self-evaluation report and the observations made at the site visit the EPE concludes that the HEI has an adequate infrastructure to conduct its activities. Furthermore, the HEI owns facilities for academic staff activity, in proportion to its staff number.

**Institution establishes a logistics administrative structure to carry out functions of common interest.** Institution provides services in accordance with market needs. As already explained before; the HEI provides beside the core study programs, services in the field of teaching and information technologies. The study programs offered reflect widely the local needs of the market. Less convincing is the offer of study programs for political science at a regional university. The HEI carries out surveys and evaluates its logistic services as already stated above.

## Overall result

	Standard is			n.o.
	Over-achieved	achieved	Not achieved	n.r. n.a.
<b>Information system management</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard VII.1</b> Institution has an information system		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard VII.2</b> Institution coordinates activities in the field of information technology		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard VII.3</b> Institution manages immovable				
<b>Standard VII.4</b> Institution provides storage, maintenance and development its academic, cultural and scientific heritage..				<b>n.o.</b>
<b>Standard VII.5</b> Institution pursues a policy of management of its assets.		<b>X</b>		
<b>Standard VII.6</b> Institution establishes a logistics administrative structure to carry out functions of common interest.		<b>X</b>		

## SWOT analysis on the activity of the Institution of Higher Education

### Strengths

1. The only private HEI beside of a professional school in Vlora
2. Young motivated staff
3. High level of interaction between teachers and students

### Weaknesses

1. Low number of degree holders.
2. Development strategy is not formulated
3. Clear profile in scientific activity is not build up until now
4. Lack of sports infrastructure and other activities
5. Hard to attract qualified staff with degree

### Opportunities

1. Demand on the regional labor market
2. Opportunities for services to third parties such as market analysis, feasibility studies, statistical analyzes, surveys, legal services, communication services

### Threats

1. Decreasing number of registration
2. Opening of branches by other universities

## Recommendations

The EPE advises the HEI to formulate an institution development strategy including cooperation policy priorities. This strategy can be used as a fundamental guideline for the future development of the HEI.

The HEI should define priority study programs to clarify the mission of the HEI if not already done up to now.

The objectives of the study programs should be formulated in more detailed manner. Modules descriptions should be provided at the webpage of the HEI.

The HEI should consider including a module about Learn to Learn, self-study skills and academic writing in its basic programs.

Transparency of the admission process could be improved by providing precise criteria as a minimum GPA at the state mature and the relevance of other documents as the letter of motivation.

The evaluation questionnaire for the students should also provide the possibility to comment and not only to tick.

The EPE highly recommend developing a development strategy. As already mentioned before the lack of a clear strategy is a wide spread problem at Albanian HEI.

The HEI must search actively (e.g. by advertisements in the five most important newspapers at minimum 1/8 page and ongoing call on the webpage) for academic staff with a scientific degree

The HEI should increase its internal staff as soon as possible to reach 70% of total teaching by internal staff.

The evaluators advice the HEI, to calculate the ECTS points separately for each module based on the workload. In a first step this may done based on an estimated workload by the pedagogues, in a second step students should asked to estimate the workload by themselves. This could be included in the module evaluation.

We recommend the HEI to provide the means and to promote the creation of research groups as soon as possible. The recommendation covers also to define scientific research priorities for the HEI, taking into account specific need of the local economy. In the next self-evaluation report special concern should be taken to present the research activities, exchange of academic staff and research stays, support for the staff to participate at conferences, a listing of publication (national and international) and so on.

The HEI should build up a system to keep record of employment of its graduates

The HEI should install a measures for a policy of storage, maintenance and development its academic, cultural and scientific heritage.

The EPE recommends adding the number of students for each program to the web page.

## Overall result

	Standard is		
	Over-achieved	achieved	Not achieved
<b>Study programs offered</b>		X	
I. Quality and sustainability of study programs		X	
II. Organization of study programs		X	
III. Students: From Registration to employment		X	
<b>Scientific activity</b>	Not observed		
<b>Institution Management</b>		X	
I. Autonomy		X	
II. Organization of higher education institutions		X	
III. Partnership		X	
IV. Human resource management		X	
V. Management of Institution Activity		X	
VI. Financial management		X	
VII. Information system management		X	