



REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRISË
AGJENCIA E SIGURIMIT TË CILËSISË NË ARSIMIN E LARTË
BORDI I AKREDITIMIT

VENDIM

Nr. 55, datë 16.12.2021

PËR
AKREDITIMIN PERIODIK TË INSTITUCIONIT TË ARSIMIT TË LARTË
UNIVERSITETI "EQREM ÇABEJ", GJIROKASTËR

Bordi i Akreditimit, bazuar në Ligjin Nr. 80, datë 17.09.2015, "Për arsimin e lartë dhe kërkimin shkencor në institucionet e arsimit të lartë në Republikën e Shqipërisë", Ligji Nr. 8480, datë 27.5.1999 "Për Funksionimin e Organeve Kolegjiale të Administratës Shtetërore dhe Enteve Publike", Vendimin e Këshillit të Ministrave Nr. 109, datë 15.02.2017 "Për organizimin dhe funksionimin e Agjencisë së Sigurimit të Cilësisë në Arsimin e Lartë e të Bordit të Akreditimit dhe për përcaktimin e tarifave për proceset e sigurimit të cilësisë në arsimin e lartë", i ndryshuar, Vendimin e Bordit të Akreditimit, Nr. 1, datë 07.04.2017, "Për mbylljen e procedurave të mbartura për shkak të riorganizimit të Institucioneve të Sigurimit të Cilësisë në Arsimin e Lartë", Vendimin e Bordit të Akreditimit, Nr. 2, datë 07.04.2017, "Për përcaktimin e kohëzgjatjes dhe afateve të vlefshmërisë së akreditimit në kuadër të vendimmarrjes për akreditimin e Institucioneve të Arsimit të Lartë dhe Programeve të Studimit", dhe Vendimin e Bordit të Akreditimit, Nr. Ekstra 1, datë 02.02.2018 "Për miratimin e Rregullores së Bordit të Akreditimit", në mbledhjen e tij të datës 16.12.2021, në kuadër të vendimmarrjes për akreditimin periodik institucional të **institucionit të arsimit të lartë, Universiteti "Eqrem Çabej", Gjirokastrë, me të dhënat si më poshtë:**

- a) Emërtimi i institucionit të arsimit të lartë: **Universiteti "Eqrem Çabej", Gjirokastrë**
- b) Organizimi i institucionit: **Publik**
- c) Lloji i institucionit: **Universitet**
- d) Njësitë kryesore të institucionit:
 - a. Fakulteti i Edukimit dhe Shkencave Shoqërore
 - b. Fakulteti i Ekonomisë
 - c. Fakulteti i Shkencave Natyrore
- e) Akti zyrtar i hapjes/licensimit: Vendim i Këshillit të Ministrave Nr. 04, datë 08.01.1971
- f) Akreditimi i parë: Vendim i Bordit të Akreditimit Nr. 67, datë 21.09.2017

pasi mori në shqyrtim:

- a. Dokumentacionin e Vetëvlerësimit, përfshirë të dhënat e përgjithshme institucionale, Raportin e Vetëvlerësimit dhe dokumentacionin mbështetës;
- b. Dokumentacionin e Vlerësimit të Jashtëm, përfshirë Raportin e Vlerësimit të Jashtëm, dhe dokumentacionin shtesë;
- c. Vlerësimin e cilësisë në përmbajtje, të kryer nga Grupi i Vlerësimit të Jashtëm, i përbërë nga ekspertë të huaj dhe vendas;
- d. Raportimin e Ekspertëve të Vlerësimit në mbledhjen e Bordit;
- e. Rezultatet e Vlerësimit të Jashtëm Institucional;
- f. Procedurën e vlerësimit të ndjekur dhe monitoruar nga ASCAL;
- g. Komunikimin e vërejtjet e institucionit në kuadër të këtij procesi;
- h. Raportin e Vlerësimit të Jashtëm dhe rezultatet e akreditimit të parë të këtij institucioni të Arsimit të Lartë;

konstaton se:

- a. Procedura dhe procesi i vlerësimit janë kryer në përputhje me parashikimet ligjore dhe nënligjore, procedurën dhe afatet e përcaktuara nga ASCAL për këtë proces;
- b. Vlerësimi në përmbajtje është i mbështetur në Dokumentacionin e Vetëvlerësimit, Vlerësimin e Jashtëm dhe gjetjet e verifikimit gjatë vizitës në institucion;
- c. Raporti është hartuar në përputhje me kërkesat dhe i mbështetur me fakte, të dhëna e dokumentacion plotësues;
- d. Institucioni ka ndërmarrë masa për të përmbushur rekomandimet e lëna nga akreditimi i parë;
- e. Rezultatet e vlerësimit të akreditimit periodik janë nxjerrë në përputhje me gjetjet: pikat e forta, pikat e dobëta dhe afirmimet e identifikuar e verifikuara përmes dokumentacionit dhe vizitës në institucion;
- f. Rekomandimet e lëna janë në koherencë me gjetjet si dhe shkallën e përmbushjes së standardeve të cilësisë për institucionin në fjalë;
- g. Rezultatet e Vlerësimit të Jashtëm në lidhje me shkallën e plotësisht të Standardeve Shtetërore të Cilësisë për Akreditimin e Institucioneve të Arsimit të Lartë në Republikën e Shqipërisë, sipas fushave janë: Fusha 1 **“përmbushen plotësisht”**, Fusha 2 **“përmbushen kryesisht”**, Fusha 3 **“përmbushen kryesisht”**, Fusha 4 **“përmbushen kryesisht”**, Fusha 5 **“përmbushen plotësisht”**, me mangësitë si më poshtë:

- 1. Mungesa e një procedure të institucionalizuar për shpërndarjen e fondeve për kërkimin shkencor.
- 2. Angazhim i ulët i institucionit për rekrutimin e stafit akademik me tituj dhe grada.
- 3. Mungesa e një strategjie të qartë për kualifikimin e vazhdueshëm të stafit akademik.
- 4. Tre programet e studimit Bachelor, të Fakultetit të Ekonomisë kanë kurrikul të njëjta në dy vitet e para.
- 5. Qasja aktuale e rekrutimit të studentëve nuk është e mjaftueshme për të balancuar ndryshimet demografike në rajon.
- 6. Mungesa e mekanizmave identifikues për mundësitë e realizimit të praktikës

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- b. Dokumentacionin e Vlerësimit të Jashtëm, përfshirë Raportin e Vlerësimit të Jashtëm, dhe dokumentacionin shtesë;
- c. Vlerësimin e cilësisë në përmbajtje, të kryer nga Grupi i Vlerësimit të Jashtëm, i përbërë nga ekspertë të huaj dhe vendas;
- d. Raportimin e Ekspertëve të Vlerësimit në mbledhjen e Bordit;
- e. Rezultatet e Vlerësimit të Jashtëm Institucional;
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- c. Raporti është hartuar në përputhje me kërkesat dhe i mbështetur me fakte, të dhëna e dokumentacion plotësues;
- d. Institucioni ka ndërmarrë masa për të përmbushur rekomandimet e lëna nga akreditimi i parë;
- e. Rezultatet e vlerësimit të akreditimit periodik janë nxjerrë në përputhje me gjetjet: pikat e forta, pikat e dobëta dhe afirmimet e identifikuar e verifikuara përmes dokumentacionit dhe vizitës në institucion;
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- 3. Mungesa e një strategjie të qartë për kualifikimin e vazhdueshëm të stafit akademik.
- 4. Tre programet e studimit Bachelor, të Fakultetit të Ekonomisë kanë kurrikul të njëjta në dy vitet e para.
- 5. Qasja aktuale e rekrutimit të studentëve nuk është e mjaftueshme për të balancuar ndryshimet demografike në rajon.
- 6. Mungesa e mekanizmave identifikues për mundësitë e realizimit të praktikës

profesionale.

7. Mungesa e projekteve kërkimore dhe numër i ulët i publikimeve në revista ndërkombëtare.

h. Vlerësimi përfundimtar i Grupit të Vlerësimit të Jashtëm për cilësinë akademike për këtë institucion është pozitiv.

Mbështetur mbi rezultatet dhe arsyetimin e mësipërm, Bordi i Akreditimit,

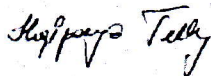
VENDOSI:

1. Vlerësimin përfundimtar **POZITIV** për institucionin e arsimit të lartë, **Universiteti “Eqrem Çabej”, Gjirokastrë**, me rekomandimet sipas shtojcës së këtij vendimi.
2. Akreditimin institucional të institucionit të arsimit të lartë, **Universiteti “Eqrem Çabej”, Gjirokastrë**, me kohëzgjatjen prej **4 (katër)** vite.
3. Afati përfundimtar i vlefshmërisë së akreditimit të institucionit është **15/12/2025**.
4. Ngarkohet Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë në Arsimin e Lartë për zbatimin e këtij vendimi, publikimin dhe lëshimin e certifikatës së akreditimit brenda një muaji nga data e marrjes së këtij vendimi, si dhe monitorimin e rekomandimeve sipas shtojcës bashkëlidhur.

Ky vendim hyn në fuqi menjëherë.

BORDI I AKREDITIMIT

SHQIPONJA TELHAJ



Kryetare

ALEXANDER KOHLER



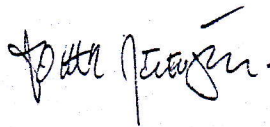
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AYŞEN SAVAŞ SARGIN



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TOMASZ JELENSKI



Anëtar

IRAJ HASHI



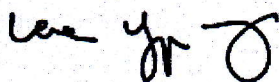
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MAURICE OUDEJANS



Anëtar

LEA YPI



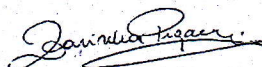
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KITA SALLABANDA DIAZ



Anëtar

DARINKA PIQANI



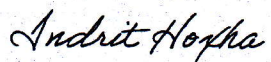
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DRITAN NAÇE



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INDRIT HOXHA



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AGJENCIA E SIGURIMIT TË CILËSISË NË ARSIMIN E LARTË

**Institutional Review of Higher Education Institutions in
Albania**

**Draft Report of the Periodic Institutional Accreditation
of University of Gjirokastra “Eqerem Çabej”**

June 2021

REVIEW TEAM:

1. Dr. Niko Hyka Lead Reviewer



2. Prof. As Arben Mehmeti Reviewer



3. PhD. Gert Guri Reviewer

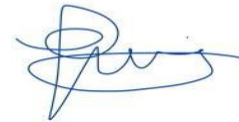


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About this review

The overall aim of Institutional Review is to assess the extent to which each higher education institution (HEI) meets the Albanian State Quality Standards which came into force in 2011. Institutional Review is a peer review process with each review team composed of a mix of experienced higher education reviewers appointed by ASCAL.

The resulting reports will serve not only for institutional accreditation based on the extent to which the HEI meets the standards, but will also inform the HEIs, Albanian government, the public and students of how each HEI meets the standards. This report also helps the HEI to identify priorities for enhancement (the process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported).

The Albanian State Quality Standards have been grouped under five headings, the Evaluation Areas: the Organisation and its Management; Resourcing; the Curriculum; Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research; and Students and their Support. This report identified features of good practice, recommendations, affirmations of actions in progress and weaknesses for each Evaluation Area, together with a judgement as to how well the HEI meets the standards. The judgements that the reviewers may assign are: standards are fully met; standards are substantially met; standards are partly met; or standards are not met.

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

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

As part of the report writing process, ASCAL has provided expert advice and assistance to the review team by ensuring that the findings made in the report are underpinned by evidence, and also by proofreading and summarising the full report for the summary below.

The context of this review

The University of Gjirokastra “Eqerem Çabej (UGJ) is established on November 1991, following the Higher Pedagogical Institute which was opened in 1971. Over the years in Gjirokastra several Branches of University of Tirana was opened, like the branch of the Faculty of Economics branch of Higher Agricultural Institute etc. **[A1, SER, p7-8]** Later in the years also other branches was opened and the institution is reorganized several times.

Actually, the university is composed of 3 faculties, 12 departments and 11 administrative units. Faculty of Natural Sciences (9 programs), Faculty of Economics, (9 programs), Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, (27 programs) **[AE1.42], [A1, SER, p10]**. UGJ offers study programs of professional character, first, second and third cycle (suspended). In total there are: 18 Bachelor study programs, 13 Master of Science, 7 Professional Master, 6 2-year professional programs. All the programmes are reorganized in accordance with the law 80/2015 and DCM No. 41.

The mission of the university is to transmit, develop and generate knowledge through teaching, research and other services for students and stakeholders. **[A1, SER, p10-12]**

The vision of the university is to be identified as an important national and regional reference centre for academic cooperation, research and other activities of HE. UGJ also is focused on the professional training of the senior specialist covering all the fields of the study programs offered **[AE1.1]**. The target group of UGJ as a regional university, are the students coming from the south of Albania. In the future the university aims to offer joint degrees and to establish an interdisciplinary research and development center prioritized in the areas of cultural tourism, agro-tourism, eco-tourism etc, aiming to increase the contribution of UGJ in the sustainable development of the south Albania Region. **[A1, SER, p12], [AE1], [AE1.33]**

UGJ is engaged in a number of recognised academic networks and has established relationships with other education institutions in Albania and from different countries. Locally, UGJ has established links with a large number of companies throughout Albania and the wider region.

The University employs 252 employees where 186 are academic staff. In UGJ are studding 1489 active students, (Faculty of Education and Social Sciences – 506 students, Faculty of Economy 570 students, Faculty of Natural Sciences 413 students) **[AE5.2]**. Last years the university has been affected by the declining population in the Gjirokastra region. It has reduced the number of students and this is one of the main challenges facing the university now.

Summary report

The “Eqerem Çabej” University of Gjirokastra is a public higher education institution based in Gjirokastra in south region of Albania. Gjirokastra is a very important city of Albania for its history and culture. Despite the continuous decrease of the population over the years, it remains one of the most important cities not only of Albania but also of the global culture as it is part of UNESCO Heritage Programme.

The university has been an integral part of the Gjirokastra since 1971 and has consistently played an important role in the development of this city¹. Most university students and graduates are part of region of Gjirokastra which makes it the main provider of university education and vocational training.

The University works closely with others local governing institutions, businesses in the region in promoting regional priorities. It has a close partnership with the University of Ioannina in Greece to their mutual benefit and to the benefit of the Greek minority people living in Albania. This and the UNESCO designation has strengthened the very important work on cultural heritage which the University is central to.

The University is organised by 3 faculties and offers 44 study programmes in three cycles of studies across its faculties and uses the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

This is the second Institutional Review of the University to assess the extent to which the Albanian State Quality Standards, which came into force in 2011, have been met. The report of the first review in May 2017 identified 5 features of good practice, made 3 recommendations for the University to consider addressing identified areas of 3 weakness.

Based on the first accreditation report², UGj, the summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area were:

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

The review team recommended to the Accreditation Board (AB) that at the University of Gjirokastra, State Quality Standards were substantially met and as a consequence the University was granted accreditation by the Board for a period of three years with decision Nr. 67, date 21.09.2017³. In this decision, the institutions were obligatory to provide an action plan in six months to address five recommendations.

The institution provided information for three recommendations [A1, SER, p5-6], made from review team but not addressed the recommendations of AB decision.

1. [RT evaluation report] - the University should establish and implement a system to enable analysis of graduate employment in order to inform programme design and development (undergoing)

¹ <https://uogj.edu.al/>

² www.ascal.al/media/documents/qaa%20eer/University%20of%20Gjirokastra%20EER%20AL.pdf

³ <https://www.ascal.al/sq/bordi-i-akreditimit/vendimet/vendimet-e-mbledhjes-21-22-shtator-2017>

2. [RT evaluation report] - the University should take steps to embed the use of information technology in the delivery of its programmes (fully addressed)
3. [RT evaluation report] - the University should develop an institutional strategy in which priorities are identified and supported (undergoing)
4. [AB decision] - In the framework of the institutional development strategy based on the mission and objectives of the university, the promotion and increase of the level of the academic staff should be based on criteria and standards which enable real promotion on the basis of standards; (undergoing)
5. [AB decision] - The University of Gjirokastra should increase the financial support for investments in the library of the institution for the increase of the fund of scientific books and contemporary textbooks and the online library (fully addressed).

The review team judge that the institution has addressed the recommendations 2, 3, 5 left by the previous accreditation. There has been some progress to address the weaknesses 1 & 4 of the Accreditation Board decision (Decision 67) but the review team have still identified as weaknesses.

A Self-evaluation Report was developed by an internal Self-evaluation Working Group, which included six representatives from university with an in-depth knowledge of the University including a student representative **[AE1.30]**. The desk-based evaluation phase took place during a very difficult period of the Covid 19 pandemic. The Self-evaluation provided with internal documents, statutes and regulations of the University along with relevant statistical data and reports. Drafts were circulated to a wider audience within the University before being finalised. The Academic Senate authorised the release of the final report and for sending this to the ASCAL.

The review team was made up of three reviewers, two from outside of Albania and one member of staff from an Albanian institution. The review team was supported by the Review Manager provided by the Albanian Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (ASCAL). The review team received the Self-evaluation Report, the supporting evidence and additional requested documentation during the meetings.

Due to the limitations of the Covid 19 pandemic, the review visit took place virtually (Virtual Meetings) over two days on the 26 and 27 April 2021. On 28 April 2021, Albanian member of RT, Director of ASCAL and Review manager of this process, visited the institution to see the infrastructure and laboratories and other facilities of UGJ.

The wide range of supporting information provided by the University enabled the team to familiarize themselves with the structure, policies, management procedures and nature of teaching and research activity undertaken. Evidence included the Statute and Regulations, internal reports, the annual report to the Ministry, admission and orientation procedures, list of external agreements and memoranda, examples of programme information and evidence of deliberative meetings.

The review team met with senior managers, students, lecturers, administrative and support staff, as well as alumni and external partners during two days of meetings. Discussion supported the clarification of procedures, responsibilities and findings. Minutes were taken at all meetings and are referred in this report.

Due to Covid 19 pandemic, the review team recognizes the difficulties that the university went through in this assessment and acknowledge the University's level of engagement

with the process and the cooperation provided to the review team throughout all phases. In particular, the review team commend the work of the Self-evaluation Group in providing a comprehensive evidence base documentation and information, academic staff and students, who participated in the meetings.

The review team thanks ASCAL, Review Manager and director for support in this process. The review team consisted of Niko Hyka (Lead Reviewer), Arben Mehmeti and Gert Guri (External Reviewer).

The review team judges that:

The Standards for the Organisation and its Management are **fully met**. In reaching this judgement, the review team identify two good practice, one affirmation and one recommendation. The review team found that the University is managed efficiently in accordance with the Albanian law and the University's Statute and Regulations and good collaborations with regional institutions. There is a concern about the limited information that student representatives in the academic senate possess. We understand the difficulties that students had to attend these meetings during the pandemic as well as the short time since their selection in the academic senate.

The Standards for Resourcing are **substantially met**. In reaching this judgement, the review team did not identify any feature of good practice, identified two weakness and associated recommendations and made two affirmations. A good example is the staff / student report which is about 1/10 in some study programs but mostly this is caused by the low number of students in these programmes. The weakness concerns relate to the fact that UGJ has difficulties to recruit high qualified academic staff. This impacts the strategy for promotion of the academic staff regarding the academic titles. The review team therefore recommends that the University should identify and implement a strategy of increasing the quality of academic staff and improving the system of staff performance evaluation. The affirmations are made regarding the measures taken by the institution for the implementation of the system for online teaching and the establishing of a new laboratory for archaeology.

The Standards for the Curriculum are **substantially met**. In reaching this judgement, the review team identified four features of good practice, five weaknesses and associated recommendations, while making one affirmation. The feature of good practice related to the LLL education system, collaboration with institutions for practical trainings, program improvement etc. The concerns are related to the content of the Bsc programs at the Faculty of Economics, low number and quality of students, low practical hours, procedure of receiving feedback from students and stakeholders on curriculum improvements etc. The associated recommendations are to review the content of the programme in economics, development and improvement of the practical orientation of the programmes, monitoring the student's employment, specific strategic steps on students' recruitment, etc.

The Standards for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are **substantially met**. In reaching this judgement, the review team identified two weaknesses and associated recommendations and made three affirmations. The weaknesses relate to the lack of research projects and laboratory equipment, small budgeted at department level. The

associated recommendations are focused on how the institution increases the associated research budget and develops a system for monitoring and evaluating the impact of research outputs. The review team affirms that the University has made progress in the number of teaching trainings and this should continue.

The Standards for Students and their Support are **fully met**. In reaching this judgement, the review team identified no feature of good practice and made one affirmation. The review team affirms the progress made in library digitalisation will help students on their studies. Also review team made some suggestions regarding alumni regulation and awareness raising of plagiarism.

Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- UGJ has established collaboration with local public and private institutions for students support during the practical training, which is key for their future employment. It has also managed to establish international collaborations in some specific areas such as Greek Language and Literature and Albanology (**Chapter III Standard III.3**)
- LLL education initiated from a successful project on teachers' training, a good starting point to establish a fully functional LLL centre (**Chapter I Standard I.2**)
- The website offers course syllabi for each study programme, allowing students and prospective students to access quickly such info. (**Chapter I Standard I.6**).
- UGJ organizes in cooperation with labour office financially supported trainings for students (**Chapter I Standard I.11**)
- Curricula in some departments such as teaching studies is improved up to 80% thanks to students and stakeholders' feedback. New programmes, such as the Second cycle programme in nursery are also established in response to market needs. This is an experience that needs to be expanded also in other departments, (please see the recommendation below). (**Chapter I Standard I.1**)
- The provision of individual tutors for first-cycle students to facilitate their progress through their programme. (**Chapter I, Standard III.6**).

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- Insufficient commitment by the institution in recruitment of high-qualified academic staff. (**Chapter III, Standard II.2**)
- The performance evaluation mechanisms of the activity of academic staff are insufficient. (**Chapter III Standard IV.3**)
- Three bachelor study programmes of Faculty of Economics have the same curricula in the first two years and the specialization is concentrated only in the third year.

Regardless shared concepts - such similarity reduces the specialization impact of the respective study programmes. (**Chapter I Standard I.1**)

- The current students' recruitment approach is not sufficient to balance the result of demographic changes in the area. The low number of students limits the financial revenue streams from students' fees and UGJ's research and internationalization capacity. (**Chapter I Standard I.1**)
- Students' inclusion in research projects is usually focused on questionnaires and field-work, but not in completing papers or projects (**Chapter I Standard I.11**)
- Lack of identification mechanisms for internship opportunities, which is principally completed thanks to the pedagogues (**Chapter I Standard I.9**).
- Limited data on employed students' profiles limits the quality of feedback on how to improve study programmes based on market needs (**Chapter I Standard I.10**)
- Lack of research projects and laboratories equipment for the research, which enable the publication of papers in journals with an impact factor. (**Chapter I Standard II.4**)
- The budget for the small research projects is used a little, mainly used for the common departmental activities (conference participation, co-financing of some projects). There is a lack of regulation for proper allocation of funds for the research. The university should find better ways to allocate the fund for research. (**Chapter II Standard I.1**)

Recommendations

The review team made the following recommendations:

- University should consider establishing a strategy of academic staff recruitment and developing incentive mechanisms for the employment of qualified staff at the university (**Chapter III, Standard IV.1**)
- The institution should focus in developing internal quality assurance system where the performance evaluation of academic staff activity, should be part of it. (**Chapter III Standard IV.3**)
- Better distinguish study programmes curricula in the first two years of the BA in the Faculty of Economics, considering also the experience of other universities. It can be considered an approach of harmonizing all feedback streams to improve curricula in three pillars: 1) students' feedback at the end of each course; 2) input of stakeholders on what needed skills students are missing; 3) results of teachers' conducted research in the specific area of the course. (**Chapter I Standard I.1**)
- A short/mid-term strategy on how to increase students' numbers. The current one contains no specific actions to tackle this problem. (**Chapter I Standard I.1**)
- More students' involvement, especially from second and third cycle of studies, in research by using international projects or fieldwork. (**Chapter I Standard I.11**)
- UGJ should institutionalize the development of student's internships, by establishing a mechanism in order to facilitate the identification of potential internships for students.

- Following the previous institutional accreditation's recommendations monitor and break down the data on employed students to identify profiles requested by the market to improve the study programmes accordingly. (**Chapter I Standard I.10**)
- The senior and especially young researchers and students should be supported and involved more in the research activities by the senior staff as well as establish a standard of at least one paper to be published annually. (**Chapter I Standard II.6 and Chapter I Standard II.7**)
- Specific budget allocation and respective incentives to additional professional development of academic staff will be most welcome. (**Chapter I Standard II.6**)
- The institution should find alternative ways to increase the number of students and to reflect these into Strategy 2021-2025. (**Chapter III Standard I.5**)
- The key performance indicators must be included in the SER. Starting from the newly enrolled students, the total number of students, number of drop-outs, number of graduations, key budget information, list of publications, number of publications per professor, the list of funded projects national and international. (**Chapter I Standard II.1**)
- Staff should reflect from the student questionnaires and improve their performance, based on student requirements from the questionnaires. (**Chapter I Standard II.3**)
- UGJ should increase the applications for research projects from national calls and increase the number of international research projects. (**Chapter II Standard I.1**)
- The Interdisciplinary Center for Scientific Research and Development is in the initial stage of consolidation, but work should be intensified to start the activity and new staff should be trained on the use of appropriate equipment. (**Chapter II Standard II.6**)
- The UGJ in near future should organize workshops for the staff on the awareness raising about plagiarism. (**Chapter I Standard II.8**)
- Consultation processes between teachers and students should be monitored to provide numbers of students seeking for assistance weekly or monthly, and the time each professor spend with students in consultation and its eventual outcome on the students' performance. (**Chapter I Standard III.1**)
- Alumni regulation should be prepared, in order to strengthen the cooperation with Alumni through official meetings organized by the sector of Career Counselling Alumni, Sports and Cultural Activities. (**Chapter I Standard III.3**)

Affirmation of action being taken

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

- The review team identified that the institution is working to set up a strategy, which better addresses the current needs such as the role of UGJ as a key factor for the local development and the actions to be undertaken for improving students' recruitment. (**Chapter III Standard I.5**)
- The use of information technology in various activities is increased in the last year (**Chapter III, Standard VII.1**)

- New archaeological laboratory will increase the participation of students in studies and research and can help university to provide services to other institutions **(Chapter III, Standard VII.2)**
- University Strategy will be improved to better mirror the current needs of the UGJ especially the low number of students. **(Chapter I, Standard I.10) M1.**
- The steps that University takes to allocate about 3.5 million AL for small research projects that can be submitted by the staff of the departments, however a regulation on these projects should be drafted and all researchers should be informed about this possibility. **(Chapter II Standard I.1)**
- The review team has noted that the number of teaching trainings is not large despite the needs of teachers to learn new methods in teaching; even that UGJ has held several trainings through various projects. Furthermore, UGJ must find the mechanism (establishing the Centre for Excellence) that through the annual staff evaluation and application for academic grades these trainings to be mandatory in the future. **(Chapter I Standard II.4)**
- The UGJ is trying to strengthen scientific cooperation between Interdisciplinary Centre for Scientific Research and Development and Departments. **(Chapter I Standard II.6).**
- Steps are undertaken to digitalize library and to enrich library stock through the University budget and donations in order to effectively support students' learning and research. **(Chapter I Standard III.5)**

Summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area

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

Summary Judgement

The reviewers recommend to the Accreditation Board that at the University of Gjirokastra "Eqerem Çabej", the State Quality Standards are **substantially met**.

Detailed Report

Evaluation Area 1: The Organisation and its Management

- 1.1 University of Gjirokastra “Eqerem Cabej” conducts the proper academic and scientific /research work pursuing the respective legal framework. These activities are based on the national legal acts in force, on the university statute, and on complementarily normative procedures and acts approved by the UGJ governing bodies and authorities. It is a public higher institution established in 12/11/1991. **[SER p7]** The UGJ Statute remains the paramount document, which sanctions the regulatory framework of norms and rules to ensure the appropriate implementation of activities, in compliance with UGJ mission, vision and objectives. The statute is drafted in accordance to the Law No. 80\2015 “On the Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania”, Article 38. In compliance with the Law No. 80\2015, the UGJ revised Statute is approved based on the Verdict of the Senate no. 33, date 20.12.2016. **[AE1.2]** In tandem with the UGJ Regulation **[AE1.5]** approved by the Senate with its decision number 7 (19/05/2011) and amended by the Senate Decision number 26 (08/09/2020), the Statute regulates the University’s teaching, research and administrative activities, in compliance with the proper mission and objectives, while regulating the activity of all the governing structures. **[BM2, SER p13] (Chapter III Standard I.1)**
- 1.2 The collegial governing bodies and authorities guarantee the organization and management of the UGJ conducting their activity by pursuing the legal framework in force. The highest decision-making bodies are the Academic Senate and the Board of Administration, which ensure the administration of the academic and financial activity of the university. **[AE1.1, AE1.4, AE1.12, AE1.13, AE1.22]** The Academic Senate is the highest collegial decision-making body of UGJ, which decides on the paramount strategic planning of the institution in relation to areas of teaching, scientific research and quality assurance. It gives its approval on administrative and financial matters. This body functions according to the UGJ Statute, which sanctions all its competencies **[AE1.1]**. The Senate meets periodically, usually on monthly, basis and issues the proper decisions. The Board of Administration, is the highest collegial decision-making body concerning administrative, financial, and assets management of the UGJ **[AE1.1]** The Board of Administration functions based on its Regulation, meets periodically and issues respective decisions **[AE1.1, AE1.22]. (Chapter III Standard I.2)**
- 1.3 The collegial bodies of UGJ meet periodically, in compliance with provisions and specific norms regulating their activity and even more if needed **[BM1]**. The Senate, as the highest academic collegial body of the University, carries out its activity in regular meetings **[AE1.12, BM2] [SER p15]**. The Academic Senate implements its functions in cooperation with other UGJ collegial bodies such as the Board of Administration, Rectorate, Ethics Council and Standing Committees **[SER p13]**. They act together as the governing authorities at the UGJ, in accordance with the legal framework and University's approved statute and regulation to draft and implement medium and long-

term strategic planning on teaching and research development, budget, etc [AE1.1 AE1.12, BM2]. The Board of Administration is in charge of institution's financial administration, in setting up the criteria for employing financial and human resources. It cooperates with the Academic Senate on drafting and approving the annual budget and the medium-term budget based on the proposals made by the main units and basic units, on the strategic plan on institutional development and on the medium-term budget program [AE1.1, AE1.12, AE1.22, BM2]. Rectorate drafts the Strategic Plan of the UGJ based on the needs/proposals of the Academic Units, which is subsequently approved by the Senate and it is in charge of the reallocation of financial and human resources between different Academic Units [SER p14]. The Ethics Council, instead, focuses on issues related to the ethical activity of UGJ [AE1.23, AE1.24]. Dean's office is the liaison institution between the Rectorate and Basic Units: it approves the priorities identified by the basic units related to study programmes, admission criteria and development priorities [AE1.1 SER p15]. Decisions taken by the collegial bodies (Academic Senate, Board of Administration, Rectorate, Dean's Office) are protocolled and are passed on to the respective structures for implementation, in line with the decision's scope [BM3]. Due to insufficient number of full professors, UGJ has not yet established the Council of Professors. Students contribute in the constructive debate thanks to participation in the Senate and Standing Committee on Students' Relation [AE1.1 SER p15].

As the basic unit, the Department meetings focus on issues related to teaching tasks, study programme, monitoring of scientific research activities undertaken by members of department are monitored and aspects of relationship with students are addressed in discussion with the academic staff, thanks to students' representatives' presence in the Senate and Department meetings. The department meetings are presided by the head of the department [AE1.6, AE1.7, AE1.8, AE1.9, BM3, BM8]. (*Chapter III Standard I.3*)

- 1.4 University of Gjirokastra operates in accordance with the legal framework in the field of higher education, upon which has drawn upon to draft its internal functioning acts to ensure external and internal autonomy of the institution [BM8]. The Statute and Regulations of UGJ, which define the organizational and functional regulatory framework of the institution as well as the periodic institutional evaluations, guarantee the internal autonomy [AE1.1]. One of the mechanisms established to ensure and guarantee internal supervision and assessment is the Internal Insurance Unit of Quality Standards, which is a permanent committee within UGJ. [AE1.1, Article 16].

The financial autonomy is ensured through incomes generated by the university activity, state financial support and participation in EU (and not only) funded projects [AE1.15, AE1.15.1, AE1.34].

The academic autonomy consists off the freedom to design and develop study programmes and define the areas of research activity, while promotion is based on evaluation of the scientific and teaching activity [AE1.21, AE1.38].

Organizational autonomy relates to university capacity to self-governing, to elect governing bodies and structures and regulate of exercising their activities based on internal legal framework constituted in compliance with laws in force [AE1.27].

Still UGJ is missing the financial autonomy at the Department level, as stated on the higher education Law. [BM8] (*Chapter III Standard I.4*)

- 1.5 In compliance with the Law No.80/2015 "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania" and in response to its

obligations, the UGJ has its own institutional development strategy for 2020-2025 **[SER p17]**. The Development Strategy determines the key scenarios of institutional development require further development, such as: teaching and learning, research, social dignity, internationalization and mobility, staff recruiting and infrastructure. In general, the scenarios, mechanisms and concrete actions for achieving such strategic objectives, in line with the vision and development platform of UGJ and its funding resources, are provided in the strategy document, but a specific focus on students recruitment, which remains a key issue is not clearly provided. **[AE1.33] (Chapter III Standard I.5)**

- 1.6 In compliance with Article 32 of Law No.80/2015, UGJ produces for each academic year the annual report, which is submitted to the MoEYS and published in the official website of the university. The annual report informs the MoEYS on the academic activity, financial situation, forecast on academic staff engagement, offers an overall quality assessment of students and study programmes, and school tuitions for the upcoming years **[AE1.41]**. The annual report is based on input submitted periodically by the academic units as well as the external/internal evaluation to assess the effectiveness of teaching and research at the UGJ in line with the agreed objectives and set standards. The Senate, Rectorate and Administrative Board discuss and approve this document with involvement of all participating stakeholders **[SER p17]**. This report is presented by the Rectorate during the Academic Senate meeting and became an object of discussion among academic and administrative staff and students **[BM2, BM9]**. The report findings are used by the Rectorate to take measures on addressing evidenced challenges at the institutional or specific aspects and also identify the responsible structures for their fulfilment **[BM11]**. **(Chapter III Standard I.6)**

Drawing upon its mission to offer the opportunity of higher education and is increasingly developing the capacities of lifelong learning by integrating research, teaching and international cooperation, the UGJ adopts an organization, which as mentioned in section 1.4 enables academic freedom, financial, organizational and staff selection autonomy, pursuing the legislation in force. UGJ is organized in main units (faculties) and basic units (departments) and support units. **[AE1.1]** The organization of UGJ complies with the legal framework prescribed in the Law No. 80/2015 and to enhance institution's mission and objectives. The UGJ consists of three main units i.e. the Faculty of Education and Sciences (6 basic units), Faculty of Natural Sciences (3 basic units), Faculty of Economics (3 basic units) **[SER p 8-10]**.

UGJ has also its own website, which offers an overview on the available study programs, academic research, information on academic staff, reports of rectorate meetings, verdicts of the Academic Senate, verdicts of the Board of Administration, projects, mobility opportunities, etc⁴, **(Chapter III Standard II.1)**

- 1.7 In terms of decision-making, the collegial bodies of UGJ are organized at institutional and main unit level. The Collegial bodies are: Academic Senate, Board of Administration, Academic Staff Assembly, Committees, Ethics Council, Rectorate and Dean's Office **[AE1.1 AE1.54]**. These bodies operate in compliance with Law No.80/2015 "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions" and are bodies in

⁴ <https://uogj.edu.al/>

charge of taking decisions or giving recommendations for the activity of UGJ, main units (faculties) and basic units (departments), according to the statute and regulations provisions. **[AE1.1, SER p19] (Chapter III Standard II.3)**

- 1.8 UGJ has established the Carrier Consulting and Alumni office to monitor the employability rate of its graduates and to maintain contacts with them to understand the matching degree between the academic curricula and the labour market needs. They have started to create a database in several departments in order to assess how the curricula addresses the labour market needs and how this could be integrated in the curricula improvements, but there is still work to do for completing this database **[BM9]**. During the meeting with second year students and admin staff, it was referred that Students Career office offers them instructions for internship and employment opportunities based on collected data through alumni network. **[BM5, BM8]** UGJ pays attention to regional economic development challenges thanks to interaction with regional/national institutional stakeholders and by attending conferences addressing regional development issues **[AE1.35, SER p20]**. Teachers' feedback and insights of stakeholders helps UGJ to identify priorities on developing new or improving study programs based on the region's needs. **[AE1.55, BM1, BM10] (Chapter III Standard III.1)**
- 1.9 UGJ states the priorities of cooperation policy in its development strategy and works to improve collaboration with other academic and public institutions at the regional, national and international level **[E1.33 E1.62]**. In its activity, UGJ seeks to harmonize cooperation with regional and international partners in order to promote participation in and organization of international conferences as well as international projects to offer to students and academic staff research and mobility opportunities. **[AE1.34, AE1.35, AE1.36] (Chapter III Standard III.2)**
- 1.10UGJ cooperates with various local/regional public and private institutions to improve students opportunities for conducting internships such as: Municipality of Gjirokastra, Gjirokastra District Council, Regional Health-Care Directorate, Regional education directorate, second level banks, NGOs, etc.), **[AE1.34,]**. Such institutional efforts to build up a good collaboration with public and private institutions were evidenced in meetings with students, alumni and partners. **[AE1.34, AE1.62, BM5, BM10] (Chapter III Standard III.3)**
- 1.11UGJ promotes and enhance students and staff mobility activities in the framework of collaboration within various national and international projects **[AE1.5 Article 92, C Additional Document 7]**. UGJ works to further improve welcoming procedures for external students and academic staff, while participating in various EU (and not only projects) for facilitating mobility of its students and academic staff in other universities **[AE1.36, AE1.36, AE1.37, AE1.38, AE1.39, AE1.53, AE1.64, AE1.65]**. During field meetings with staff and students and additionally made available documentation, there were provided examples of international projects, mobility and exchange of experiences with different European universities within the ERASMUS programs. **[BM4, BM5, BM10, C Additional Document 7, C Additional Document 8] (Chapter III Standard III.3)**

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- UGJ has established collaboration with local public and private institutions for students support during the practical training, which is key for their future employment. It has also managed to establish international collaborations in some specific areas such as Greek Language and Literature and Albanology (**Chapter III Standard III.3**)

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weakness:

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendation:

- The institution should find alternative ways to increase the number of students and to reflect these into Strategy 2021-2025. (**Chapter III Standard I.5**)

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirmed the following actions in progress:

- The review team identify that the institution is working to set up a strategy, which better addresses the current needs such as the role of UGJ as a key factor for the local development and the actions to be undertaken for improving students' recruitment. (**Chapter III Standard I.5**)

Judgement

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

Evaluation Area 2: Resourcing

2.1 University of Gjirokastra is a higher education institution which operates in accordance with Albanian higher education legislation, law and bylaws in force. The organisational structure is in line with Law 80/2015 in higher education but due to the impossibility of recruiting academic staff with scientific titles and degrees, the institution does not meet the criteria in three basic units **[AE 2.24]**. The organisational chart **[AE 2.2]** is made public on the website. **[www.uogj.edu.al]**. Within the approved general structure academic and administrative staff roles are presented in detail. **[AE 1.14, 1.14.1]**.

The review team identified that the recruitment to academic units, is supported by needs analysis specific to the faculty, department, study programme and the curricula and whether the role is full or part-time. Vacancies are made public through the university website in accordance with employment regulation. **[AE2.1]**. The recruitment processes for teaching, scientific and administrative staff follow the same process set out in the Statute and Regulations which take account of relevant law. **[AE2.9]**. A commission is formed to scrutinize applications from candidates, the evaluation is undertaken on individual merit and the employment contract is signed by the Rector **[AE2.15]**. Priority is placed on recruiting academic staff qualified in well-known international universities. In line with the specific nature of the institution and its geographical position, the review team identified as a serious problem the recruitment of high qualified academic staff. **[BM1, BM2], (Chapter III, Standard II.2)**. In this context, the review team therefore recommends that the University should consider establishing a strategy of academic staff recruitment and developing incentive mechanisms for the employment of qualified staff at the university **(Chapter III, Standard IV.1)**

2.2 UGJ is committed to the implementation of integration policies of academic and administrative staff which are set out in the Strategic Plan **[E1.33, E1.43, E1.44, E1.45, E1.46, E1.47] [A1 SER p25]; [E1.12]; [BM 6,7&11]**. Staff supported the view in the Self-evaluation report that the academic staff is engaged in a variety of activities, such as workshops, field events and social organizations in addition to teaching. **[A1 SER p25; E2.9; [BM 6,7&11]**. The university supports the integration of the academic and administrative staff in social life and encourages them to be part of several different activities such as entertainment activities, organized in collaboration with other institutions of higher education or partners in the district of Gjirokastra and beyond. **[E.1.39], [BM 6,7&11] (Chapter III, Standard IV.2)**. All employees of the University have health insurance since they pay the 'Obligatory contribution for Health Insurance'; such contribution is paid in accordance with required legislation. **(Chapter III, Standard II.2)**.

2.3 Staff development strategic goals are set out in the strategic documents and regulations of UGJ. UGJ pursues a policy of continuous training of staff in accordance with these goals. In last two years, see **[SER p25], [B2,3&7]**. Support is provided for academic staff to enable them to participate in training activities at other institutions and internationally. **[SER p26], [AE1.39]**. This academic year, the University established and developed the system for online teaching. The staff had specific training regarding online teaching. Manuals and guidelines are distributed and some trainings were held and covered the area of online teaching techniques to lecturers in improving their approach to teaching **[BM7, BM8]. [SER p26]. (Chapter III, Standard IV.3)**.

The University has some cooperation agreements with other institutions [AE 4.24, E 1.62, E 1.63], [BM1, BM9] and also supports staff mobility [E 1.37, E 1.38, E 1.39] but a minority of staff have so far participated in these programs outside mobility programs. The review team identify that the performance evaluation mechanisms of the activity of academic staff, are insufficient. (*Chapter III Standard IV.3*) However, the team recommends the institution to focus on developing an internal quality assurance system where the performance's evaluation should be part of it. The University encourages academic staff to further their qualifications, attend national and international conferences [BM3, BM7] and publish in journals [BM7], [AE 2.17]. They also provide financial support for conferences [BM2, BM8] and for publication.

2.4 Before the Covid 19 pandemic, UGJ has organized a wide range of activities to encourage social dialogue between staff, students and the general community. [SER p26], [BM7, BM4, BM5]. Examples include social activities, the weekly awareness campaign and open days for prospective students. Academic staff have been involved in a variety of workshop conferences and students have been engaged with the local institutions in activities such as book promotions, awareness of violence against women, gratitude ceremonies for important figures, sport activities etc. [AE 3.42]. [AE 5.22]. [AE 2.26]. UGJ students also have become part of the national initiative to support with human resources and financial assistance [AE 2.54]. Last year these activities are minimal, mostly held online. [SER p26], [BM7, BM4, BM5]. (*Chapter III, Standard IV.4*)

2.5 UGJ exercises financial autonomy in accordance with the rules and standards of budgetary programming and public financial management. [SER p26], [BM1, BM2]. The Administration Board, approves the budget which is drafted by the Administrator and staff confirmed that budgetary matters are discussed at all relevant boards and committees at departments, faculties and Academic Senate [AE 1.15, AE 1.15.1], [AE 2.33, AE 2.34, AE 2.35, AE 2.36]. The review team noted that the 2021 financial budget has been approved by the Administration Board [AE 2.17]. As financial management and budgetary control is centralized, academic units do not hold full financial autonomy. However, transparency is assured through financial matters being discussed at Academic Senate, which includes staff and student representatives. The budget design process and financial administrative management system is well structured, efficient and known to staff. [SER p26], [BM8]. In accordance with statutory requirements and other legal acts, the institution has been subject to periodic external or internal audit. [AE 2.38,], [AE 3.16], [AE 2.27], [AE 2.36]. Financial information is available to the public through the UGJ web site. [www.uogj.edu.al;]. The team identified as a threat to the financial health of the institution the impossibility of generating other secondary income. UGJ should focus to find other financial resources in compensation of low income from student fee due to low students' number. (*Chapter III, Standard VI.1; Chapter III, Standard VI.2; Chapter III, Standard VI.3*)

2.6 UGJ has implemented a system for online learning based on Microsoft Teams package⁵. The web site of the institution is the main tool of communication and information. UGJ has a relevant structure for the development and dissemination of the

⁵ <https://uogj.edu.al/platforma-office-365-dhe-teams-per-mesimin-online/>

information at vertical and horizontal level. [www.uogj.edu.al]. The institutional website provides a holistic overview, strategic information and public announcements related to the academic needs of Main and Base Units. The review team found that the website does not provide students with information relating to their studies, social activities or alumni networks. In order to address in full, the recommendation made following the previous accreditation, UGJ should make the strongest efforts in order to provide students with the necessary information about the study program, employments and also inform the public. The information provided should be consistent, clear, current and accurate (English version of the page should not be done through translation by google translate). The University also has a good presence on Facebook and Instagram. Students state that teachers use a range of electronic means to make resources available to students, including personal emails and software packages such as Microsoft Teams. UGJ is committed to developing its digital infrastructure in support of student learning and the professional development of academic staff. To enable the coordination of information, UGJ has in place the online system ESSE3 for both students and academic staff provided by RASH. **[A1 SER p27], [AE 2.20]**. Consequently, the majority of institutional activities are available in an electronic form including protocol and archiving services, library systems. The team identify as an affirmation the use of technology from the institution. However, UGJ should focus in the future to centralize all these services in a centralized management system for the entire institution and its activities. **(Chapter III, Standard VII.1)**

Compared with the number of students, UGJ provides a range of laboratories supplied with basic equipment. **[AE 1.48], [C12]**. The review team identified as an affirmation the establishing archaeology laboratory, which can create which enables the performance of studies, student work and the provision of services to other institutions. **[BM7, BM8, C12]** **(Chapter III, Standard VII.2)**

- 2.7 UGJ has a record of its real estate, which extends to three State Buildings under the administration of MESY. **[A1 SER p30], [AE 2.21], [B8], [C12]**. UGJ closely monitors the use of resources according to the requirements for teaching and research. A master plan is in place for the security, rehabilitation of a new building. **[SER p31-33]**. UGJ has a suitable infrastructure equipped with the necessary facilities for guaranteeing a normal process of teaching. The facilities area is in proportion with the number of students. **[AE 2.24]**. Annual investment ensures that UGJ's infrastructure is maintained at the required standard. The review team commented that the quality of learning accommodation as well as the facilities and access for individuals with disabilities generally meet statutory requirements. **[C12]** In some areas, the access is not possible for people with disabilities, problem not addressed from previews accreditation. **[C12]**

There are agreements with other organisations for sports provision such as the local stadium and sports club. **[BM4; BM5, BM8]**. The theatre is used for activities. The hospital is used to provide a real work environment for nursing **[BM4; BM5]**. In general, the classrooms and laboratories meet demands **[C12]**. The library is digitalised. Partners of the University are very supportive and funding resulting from some projects has brought additions to University equipment. **(Chapter III, Standard VII.3; Chapter III, Standard VII.5; Chapter III, Standard V.1)**

- 2.8 UGJ has a strong academic and cultural heritage and it archives publications by academic staff, diploma theses produced by students, which are stored in the Library.

Effective coordinated management systems are in place to ensure the care and preservation of all documentation and information, including student data held by Teaching Secretaries. **[SER p30]** The review team found that storage and archiving facilities within libraries and electronically met sector expectations. **[C12] (Chapter III, Standard VII.4; Chapter III, Standard V.2)**

- 2.9 UGJ performs teaching, scientific research activities and services of common interest with external third parties. **[BM1; BM2, BM8]** Laboratories within academic units offer services to external institutions and directly to relevant labor market organizations with arrangements taking account of institutional regulations. **[AE 1.1, AE1.5]** Market research on student internships has informed engagement with external partners. **[AE 4.24]**. The University offers a Master's of Science in Archaeology and Doctoral Studies in Albanology both of which help to support and develop the storage, maintenance and development of its academic, cultural and scientific heritage. **[AE 1.14]**. A library contains also materials of much interest to the Greek minority population such as textbooks in Greek and modern Greek/Albanian dictionaries and is available to the wider community **[BM7]**. Staff and students are also able to access the archives from partners or Academy of Science, National Library etc. **[BM7]. (Chapter III, Standard VII.6)**

Findings

Good practice

The review team did not identify any feature of good practice:

Weaknesses

The review team identify two weaknesses in this Evaluation Area.

- Insufficient commitment by the institution in recruitment of high-qualified academic staff. **(Chapter III, Standard II.2)**
- The performance evaluation mechanisms of the activity of academic staff are insufficient. **(Chapter III Standard IV.3)**

Recommendations

The review team made the following recommendations:

- University should consider establishing a strategy of academic staff recruitment and developing incentive mechanisms for the employment of qualified staff at the university **(Chapter III, Standard IV.1)**
- The institution should focus in developing internal quality assurance system where the performance evaluation of academic staff activity, should be part of it. **(Chapter III Standard IV.3)**

Affirmation of action being taken

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

- The use of information technology in various activities is increased in the last year (**Chapter III, Standard VII.1**)
- New archaeology laboratory will increase the participation of students in studies and research and can help university to provide services to other institutions (**Chapter III, Standard VII.2**)

Judgement

The standards for Resourcing are substantially met.

Evaluation Area 3: The Curriculum

- 3.1 Current study programmes seek to harmonize the UGJ traditional culture and experience with the quickly evolving market needs. Therefore, the study programmes of the UGJ are established to comply with its mission and objective for preparing young specialists to address labour market needs for teachers, sociologists, economists but also scientists in natural sciences **[AE1.6, AE1.7, AE1.8, BM10]**. There is also the case of the Faculty of Economic, in which all three programmes in Finance, Public Administration and Tourism are exactly the same in the first two years, while there is only one different subject in the elective ones **[C Additional Document 5, BM6, BM10]**. In order to inform secondary school students about study opportunities, the UGJ organizes regular campaigns for "graduate secondary school students information days" on regular basis with the support of the Education Regional Directorate and coordinated by the Alumni Career Counselling Office **[AE2.11, BM9, C Additional Document 9]**. This campaign is organized by all GJ academic staff and covers the entire territory of the city area finalized with the University's open doors day **[AE5.27, BM9]**. As a public HEI, the UGJ publishes the study programs on its website <http://uogj.edu.al/arsimimi/>, while each faculty and department offer in the proper website information related to the study programme i.e., syllabus, curricula and programs documentation⁶. All published programs are accredited at the state level **[BM2, BM6]**. UGJ offers study programmes in all three study cycles: Bachelor programmes (18); Master (8); Professional Master (7); Master of Science (5); Doctoral Programme in Albanology; 2-year professional programmes (6) for a total of 40 study programs **[AE1.42, SER, p35]**. UGJ offers study programs of different duration including those of a professional character as well as the second cycle of Professional Master **[AE1.42]**. While Study programs are annually improved up to 20%, there are specific programmes, which have been thoroughly improved to reflect labour market needs such as the case of Education Studies, which was changed up to 80%, or the establishment of specific professional study programs such as the Professional Master in General Nursing (two years' study) **[BM6, BM8]**. To increase the quality of teaching and learning, the UGJ collegial bodies pursue the regulation of studies and is based on the activity of the University Internal Unit for Quality Insurance IUQI **[AE4.8, AE1.1, Article 16, C Additional Document 3, BM11]**. The UGJ sets out the rules and procedures for evaluating study programs that are ongoing through final exams and diploma paper **[AE1.1, Article 34]**. Faculties and departments of UGJ propose quotas - which are approved by the UGJ's Senate - regarding new student admissions based on study programs **[AE3.4, AE3.6]**. (*Chapter I Standard I.1*)
- 3.2 Beyond the principal mission of teaching future experts and researchers capable of addressing the current labour market needs, the academic units and staff of the UGJ focus on the responsibility of developing and making available study programs, which have the objective of ongoing life education **[AE1.1, BM6]**. Training modules, in terms of Life Long Learning (LLL), are available to face emerging market needs, such as for instance 16 training modules for teachers certified by the MoYES and Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University education **[AE1.1, BM8]**. Moreover, all students

⁶ <http://uogj.edu.al/fakultetet-dhe-departamentet/>

completing the Bachelor study programs have the opportunity to continue studies at Master levels (scientific or professional) - or even advanced studies and specializations - if completed successfully. Within UGJ, there is the functional centre LLL established in the framework of capacity building project “Developing Teacher Competences for a Comprehensive VET System in Albania” [<https://teavet.org/>] [BM6]. The LLL centre offers mainly the necessary infrastructure, methodology and study material for the implementation of certified training modules for teachers⁷. UGJ offers a variety of study programmes and of different duration of 1 to 2 years with a professional character as well as the second cycle of Professional Master [AE1.1, Article 30]. Although the UGJ has no mechanism to assess the experience gained and the impact of these training courses, the increasing number of participants can be considered as a positive indicator [SER, page 36]. (*Chapter I Standard I.2*)

3.3 Based on the strategy [AE1.33], the statute [AE1.1] UGJ focuses its academic offer on key pillars such as: a) quality of teaching and study to offer adequate professional training for building up the necessary competencies for the labour market; b) more value to education thanks to international cooperation and research; c) constant overview of the quality on both teaching and research through quality assurance mechanism and implementation of standards [AE1.33, SER, p36]. UGJ has defined its vision and objectives in the strategy 2020-2025, underlying inclusion and social responsibility as the main drivers [AE1.33]. UGJ will pay particular attention while implementing this strategy to the improvement of study programs and the further scientific development of the academic staff, in order to appropriately identify and adequately respond to the market needs [AE3.26]. The well-rooted collaboration of the UGJ with local public institutions and private companies offer opportunities for a successful internship and potential employment upon graduation, which was also underlined in the meeting with a group of teachers and representatives of external partners and alumni [BM8, BM10]. Specific competence and contacts with local actors have contributed to achieve high employability of the UGJ graduates especially in some specific profiles such as teaching and education (up to 95%) [BM10]. (*Chapter I Standard I.3*)

3.4 All study programmes at the UGJ are offered pursuing the national and international legal framework, in accordance with Bologna system i.e., study programs are integrated with the subject system of studies, while the subjects have their workload through credits (25h/ECTS) [AE3.7, AE3.8, AE3.9, AE3.10]. UGJ offers study programs in line with the general national policies, aiming to consolidate the Albanian tradition, while complying with the European qualifications and legal framework [SER, page 37]. While multi-disciplinarity remains a paramount objective when designing the study programmes, the introduction of foreign languages in all programmes and at all levels is considered as an enhancing factor for increasing the mobility of students and academic staff [AE3.27]. Although there is not currently a joint programme with another international HEI, there is commitment and efforts done to achieve such objective through participation in different international projects [AE3.28]. In a meeting with the academic staff [BM8], RT also confirmed that mobility happens when possible. The UGJ Statute recognizes the credits received by students attending studies in another HEI [AE1.1, Article 34]. (*Chapter I Standard I.4*)

⁷ <https://trajnime.arsimi.rash.al/Trajnimes/TrajnimeTeavet>

- 3.5 The teaching workload of the full-time lecturer in the UGJ is in average 1536 hours as per University Regulation **[AE1.5, Article 26]**. This teacher's workload includes teaching, research, institutional work, and a sample of a contract **[E3.32.1]**. Illustrating documents and reporting evidence provided by the UGJ **[AE3.29, AE3.30, BM8]** provides information of lecturer workload throughout the year by classifying it in teaching, laboratory, assistance in the teaching process (research, publications), support activities for the institution **[AE3.32, BM6]**. Workload of the lecturers is determined within the bylaws **[AE3.31]**. The additional workload of lecturers is financed by the University budget **[AE3.31]**. Heads of directorates and scientific centres are engaged teaching conform the legal framework **[BM8]**. (*Chapter I Standard I.5*)
- 3.6 Curricula of the study programs for all academic units is available on the University website <http://uogj.edu.al/arsimimi/> while the specific study programmes and their curricula are available in the website of the respective department in charge of delivering that study programme <http://uogj.edu.al/departamenti-i-historise/> **[BM4, BM5]**. The objectives of the study programs comply with the general objectives of the UGJ. Student admission criteria comply with laws and quotas issued at the national level, approved by the senate **[AE3.31, C Additional Document 4]** and are published on the UGJ website. Once you land in the course page, the website offers the course syllabi for each study programmes, which allows staff, students and prospective students, have a quick access in this information. This is a strength of UGJ (see <http://uogj.edu.al/arsimimi/>) **[BM4, BM5]**. (*Chapter I Standard I.6*)
- 3.7 The statute states that studies at UGJ are organized in three consecutive cycles referring to levels 6, 7, and 8 of the Albanian Qualifications frameworks. In the statute is explicated the transition between these three levels **[AE1.1, article 30]**. All first cycle i.e., 3-year Bachelor's degree programs are organized with 180 ECTS and provide students with the opportunity to continue their studies at the second level Master's level (Scientific or Professional), as in any HEI. **[AE3.26]**. Faculties of UGJ organize 6 study programs of the basic two-year level which give students competencies in professional (non-scientific) fields. **[AE1.42]**. UGJ academic units have set up study programmes in compliance the division into disciplines as core subjects, characteristic subjects, interdisciplinary subjects and supplementary subjects equipping students with basic knowledge of the respective professions and scientific principles **[SER, page 39]**. Students generally consider, that the current study programmes and the academic unit organization, equip them with general and specific competencies and adequate formation, while offering the opportunity to expand fields of relevant studies in greater extent and depth **[BM4, BM5]**. Meeting with students and admin staff, the RT noticed that UGJ Alumni Association is present and seeks to help the newly graduated students to have better contacts for employment opportunities thanks also to the UGJ external partners **[BM5, BM10]**. UGJ Regulation **[AE1.5 Article 65]** specifies the cases of students' transfers upon the pre-condition that it is conducted within the same study cycle and upon the decision of a three-member commission composed by the field-related teachers and established by the department (basic academic unit) to assess the equivalence of grades and credits **[AE3.41]**. Statute of UGJ **[AE1.1, Article 33]** regulates the transfer issues. (*Chapter I Standard I.7*)

- 3.8 Information thanks to regular campaigns with secondary school students about study offer and organization during "students' information days" is harmonized with the activities coordinated by the Alumni Career Counselling Office to ensure a soft landing of students in their first year of studies [AE2.11]. Moreover, the tradition at UGJ is that all the academic staff involved teaching with first year students offers a continuous support until students gain familiarity with procedures and academic [BM10]. In meetings with the RT, students confirm [BM4, BM5] that their orientation is further supported by the university website, where they find all the necessary information about the organogram of the UGJ and contacts of key offices to address their questions such as the career counselling office. The UGJ Regulation and Study Programme Regulation offer a clear overview of activities, which are of students' interest, while starting their courses but also during their academic studies [AE1.5, AE4.8]. The ESSE3, which makes available the course syllabi for each study programmes allows students to have clear information, while reducing procedural steps [BM8, BM9]. UGJ promotes students career development through scholarships for the best performing students [BM4, BM5, BM9]. Evidence from study programs [AE3.39] shows that the academic staff with contract and temporary contract staff ratio is 66.7/33.9% (and more in detail for each faculty: FEES 79/42; FNS 60/29; FE 33/17). These figures but also a detailed supervision of the provided evidence shows that such balance is well-preserved not only at the university level, but also at the faculty and study programmes. The 2020-2025 Development Strategy [AE1.33] seeks to increase the level of qualifications of the academic staff, while the scoring system favours people with the highest level of qualification. (*Chapter I Standard I.8*)
- 3.9 Study programmes of the second cycle are drafted by the departments' academic staff based on their research, collected expertise and through a process of feedback received from students' assessment [AE1.42, C Additional Document 2]. As per UGJ Regulation [AE1.5 Article 30], the workload is split among these activities: a) teaching; b) scientific research; c) institutional contribution; professional contribution. Evidence [AE3.32.1] shows that 25-30% of a teachers' time is devoted to research, participation in international conferences and collaboration in research projects, including the work on improving the curricula of the study programmes and participation in department academic tasks [BM8]. Full time academic staff if categorized with research orientation may have a reduction of teaching load up to 35% [AE1.5 Article 31, BM8]. Around 70-80% of the working time is dedicated to teaching activities broke down into personal preparation for lecturing, frontal teaching, consultations and thesis supervision [AE1.5 Article 26, AE3.32.1, BM8]. Thesis preparation i.e., template, expectations, requisites and the necessary steps i.e. academic support, procedures, thesis defence etc, are sanctioned in the respective manual [AE4.8]. Professional internships are developed as part of the curricula in cooperation with private and state-owned companies, and are concluded with a specific evaluation of this activity [AE3.45]. Career Counselling Office has the data completed on the employment of the graduates [C Additional Document 6]. Better integration of such data and employers' feedback helps to create a complete picture of the labour market needs and obtain feedback on the review of the study programs. When needed and possible the UGJ has invited local and foreign academic staff or people with particular expertise in a specific area [AE3.39, BM10]. (*Chapter I Standard I.9*)

- 3.10 The statute states that studies at UGJ are organized in three consecutive cycles referring to levels 6, 7, and 8 of the Albanian Qualifications framework, while transition between these three levels is explicated in the statute **[AE1.1, article 30]**. All first cycle i.e., 3-year Bachelor's degree programs are organized in courses with 180 ECTS and accredit to students the right to continue their studies at the second level Master's level (Scientific or Professional) **[AE3.26]**. Based on the UGJ strategy, international cooperation is a priority, as well as the mobility of teachers and students in various programs **[AE1.33]**. RT notes that UGJ study programs seek to facilitate and implement mobility **[BM4, BM5, BM9]** meaning that UGJ promotes cooperation at national and international level **[AE1.33, AE1. 64]**. At the end of study programs - first and second cycle - students are given diplomas and supplementary diplomas in Albanian and English **[AE3.41]**. RT during the meetings with the students of the second cycle of studies has also identified that the knowledge of foreign languages is at a satisfactory level, while UGJ statute defines the admission criteria for students in the second cycle of studies including the knowledge of the relevant foreign language for the study programme **[AE1.5 Article 63]**. UGJ practices the recognition of up to 75% equivalence in mobility cases in each study programme **[AE3.41, BM9]**. ***Chapter I Standard I.10***
- 3.11 Study programmes combine the theoretical component and hands-on implementation of that knowledge: depending on the study programme, the practical application tools vary from hands-on activities to laboratories **[SER, page 41]**. Internship is included in the study programs of the first and second cycle **[AE1.5 Article 69, BM5]**, while UGJ seeks to offer an adequate match-making between study programme and internship institution **[AE1.5 Article 101, BM10]**. UGJ keeps evidence of student's work during the internship and teachers assess students' performance **[AE3.45, BM10]**. In meeting with students, RT noticed that their inclusion in research projects is mainly focused on questionnaires and fieldwork, but not in completing papers or projects **[BM5]**. During the study course programme, the UGJ organizes and financially supports teaching internships, known as field internships, consisting of several days outside the university to conduct hands-on activities **[AE3.45]**. ***Chapter I Standard I.11***
- 3.12 In the UGJ, department and faculty staff seek to include characteristic disciplines (with professional focus) as much as 90-99 ECTS equivalent to 50-55% workload of the entire study programme, while characterizing and integrative projects count for another 17% **[SER, page 41]**. Focus on professional discipline of the study programme is in line with the UGJ mission and development strategy to address the labour market needs. Study programs at all levels offer to students general and special professional competencies in order to constitute a desirable professional profile in the labour market **[AE3.45, BM9]**. Moreover, one key criteria to establish new study programmes depends on how a study program is justified vis-à-vis the needs of the labour market, its graduated students will address **[AE1.5 Article 43]**. Professional practice is conducted at both levels of study and in all programs **[BM5]**. During the RT field visit at UGJ, the presence of learning infrastructure (such as Nursing Lab Pedagogical Practising-room etc.) lab spaces and their equipment evidenced students' work in terms of practical formation **[BM12]**. (***Chapter I Standard I.12***)

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- LLL education initiated from a successful project on teachers' training, a good starting point to establish a fully functional LLL centre (**Chapter I Standard I.2**)
- The website offers course syllabi for each study programme, allowing students and prospective students to access quickly such info. (**Chapter I Standard I.6**).
- UGJ organizes in cooperation with labour office financially supported trainings for students (**Chapter I Standard I.11**)
- Curricula in some departments such as teaching studies is improved up to 80%, thanks to students and stakeholders' feedback. New programmes, such as the Second cycle programme in nursery are also established in response to market needs. This is an experience, which needs to be expanded also in other departments, (please see the recommendation below). (**Chapter I Standard I.1**)

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weakness:

- Three bachelor study programmes of Faculty of Economics have the same curricula in the first two years and the specialization is concentrated only in the third year. Regardless shared concepts - such similarity reduces the specialization impact of the respective study programmes. (**Chapter I Standard I.1**)
- The current students' recruitment approach is not sufficient to balance the result of demographic changes in the area. The low number of students limits the financial revenue streams from students' fees and UGJ's research and internationalization capacity. (**Chapter I Standard I.1**)
- Students' inclusion in research projects is usually focused on questionnaires and field-work, but not in completing papers or projects (**Chapter I Standard I.11**)
- Limited data on employed students' profiles limits the quality of feedback on how to improve study programmes based on market needs (**Chapter I Standard I.10**)

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendation:

- Better distinguish study programmes curricula in the first two years of the BA in the Faculty of Economics, considering also the experience of other universities. It can be considered an approach of harmonizing all feedback streams to improve curricula in three pillars: 1) students' feedback at the end of each course; 2) input of stakeholders on what needed skills students are missing; 3) results of teachers' conducted research in the specific area of the course. (**Chapter I Standard I.1**)

- A short/mid-term strategy on how to increase students' numbers. The current one contains no specific actions to tackle this problem. (**Chapter I Standard I.1**)
- More students' involvement, especially from second and third cycle of studies, in research by using international projects or fieldwork. (**Chapter I Standard I.11**)
- Following the previous institutional accreditation's recommendations monitor and break down the data on employed students to identify profiles requested by the market to improve the study programmes accordingly. (**Chapter I Standard I.10**)

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirmed the following actions in progress:

- University Strategy will be improved to better mirror the current needs of the UGJ especially the low number of students. (**Chapter I, Standard I.10**)

Judgement

The standards for the Curriculum are substantially met.

Evaluation Area 4: Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research

4.1 The organization and documentation of the curriculum of study programs offered by UGJ in written form are clearly defined in the statute and the regulation [A.E1.1; A.E 1.5] and the regulation on the basic units [A.E1.6; A.E1.7; A.E1.8], which ensure the implementation in appropriate conditions of the study programs in accordance with national and international standards of higher education. Furthermore, information is provided about the institution, for each study program, responsible academic and other cooperative structures, general training framework of the study program, academic staff for the implementation of the program, curriculum, available infrastructure of the program, admission criteria, curriculum, syllabi of subjects, the regulation of the study program and the diploma supplement [A.E3.7; A.E3.8; A.E3.9; A.E3.10]. The announcement of the general schedule takes place at the beginning of each semester where the forms of teaching are clearly defined, the day, hour and room where it will take place as well as the respective lecturer [A.E4.1]. The schedule is published on the UGJ website [A.E4.2], and additionally displayed on the UGJ facilities. The UGJ for the student enrolment has created the electronic system ESSE3, where each student and academic staff of UGJ has his personal account and the complete manual on how they can access to use the system [A.E2.20; BM4; BM5]. The academic staff at UGJ are assigned to each field of specialty [A.E3.71]. UGJ has 25 laboratories [A.E1.48], which guarantee sufficient capacities for the realization of practical and professional training of students. However, students are interested in increasing the number of practical hours and upgrading existing laboratories. The pandemic situation has led to some laboratory practices being developed online [BM4]. In order to better prepare the students in the practical part, the practice should be applied more in BSc. studies, not only in MSc. studies [B.M5]. In addition, there is a lack of equipment for scientific research [C.11], that can be published in impact factor journals. Additionally, the UGJ has cooperation agreements with different institutions for teaching practices according to the specific field [A.E4.24; B.M10] and supervised by the relevant lecturer [A.E3.45]. Related to the doctoral program, UGJ has its own regulation, which clearly defines the rules and criteria for graduation [A.E1.19]. The basic and supporting literature for the study program is provided to students for each subject foreseen in the syllabus of the subject [A.E3.20], but also through UGJ library [A.E4.5]. The UGJ are currently in the process of digitizing the library. The library offers subscriptions to important magazines and also allows access to the online library [BM3]. In each department, the basic literature is approved in beginning of each academic year [A.E4.4]. UGJ has defined the standards and criteria that must be met by the literature that is used for students, which should be reviewed and approved in the department [A.E4.5]. The faculties prepare a request for new literature and it is possible to be purchased from UGJ funds, but also from various donations [A.E4.6; A.E4.7]. Additionally, UGJ students have access through the digital platform U.LIBRARY <https://ulibrary.rash.al> where they can also find supporting literature for the curriculum and more. The literature is offered in foreign languages by the library, and last year the literature was more provided online due to pandemic situation [BM5]. However, UGJ has to think seriously in the future to improve the ESSE3 system, so that academic staff can put in ESSE3 the different materials available to students, and be more useful, although

currently these materials are set up through Teams **[BM7]**. Nevertheless, ESSE3 is an official platform. *(Chapter I Standard II.1).*

4.2 The UGJ has prepared regulation on the rules and requirements for graduation **[A.E1.5]** and the regulations on the basic units **[A.E1.6; A.E1.7; A.E1.8]**. The rules and requirements for the graduation exam are approved by the responsible university structures and are made known to all through regulation. UGJ makes known (announces in visible places) the criteria and procedures of graduation, according to the relevant regulations. The criteria and procedures of graduation, according to the relevant regulations are displayed on the stand of each faculty and published online on the official website of the UGJ **[SER, p 44]**. For the exam and graduation dates students are informed publicly in the respective faculties as well as on the institution's website **[SER, P 44; BM4; BM5]**. It is very important that students have the opportunity to meet with their supervisors as needed to discuss about the diploma exam **[BM4]**. The anonymity of students is respected when correcting exams and all written exams are done by secretion, a procedure set out in the study regulations **[SER, p 44]**. Furthermore, the appeal of the exam results is reviewed by a commission set up in accordance with the study regulations, the faculty regulations and the respective study program, always respecting the appeal deadlines **[A.E4.8]**. From the student meeting, it is clear that not all students are aware that a Council of Ethics is in place, although there are cases where some students are taught by copying **[BM5]**. The Code of Ethics was prepared at the end of 2020, but it is encouraging that it will be applied to academic staff and students who break the Code of Ethics. The students have access to personal exam results, respecting the principle of confidentiality **[SER, p 44]** and they can verify the results of the exams, which are also communicated verbally by the commission within the deadline based on regulation **[A.E2.46]**. *(Chapter I Standard II.2)*

4.3 The academic staff of UGJ is evaluated by the structures of the institution that follow the quality implementation of the study programs, as well as by the leading structures such as the Dean's office, the department in evaluative analysis during the academic year, and by the deputy rector appointed to evaluate the performance of the lecturer **[SER, p 45]**. The UGJ for the evaluation of the teaching process use institutional questionnaires and the questionnaires for the teaching process, organized by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit IQAU **[A.E1.1; A.E1.3]**. Students have opportunities for the assessment of the institution and the quality of teaching **[A.E4.9]**. However, the questionnaire contains many questions and is not specific to teaching performance. Students have completed the questionnaires, but do not receive a feedback, and the results are not transparent **[BM5]**. The achievements of its staff the UGJ evaluates in the annual teaching and through research analysis at the department level **[A.E2.40]**. The academic staff completes its own evaluation sheet of its scientific activity, which is submitted and enriched at the end of each academic year **[SER, p 45]**, but is missing the evaluation sheet. In each academic year, all study programs are reviewed to be updated and improved so that the curriculum is as functional as possible and better adapted to the demands of the labour market **[SER, p 45]**, however public and private sector involvement is not sufficient, they are mostly in individual basis **[BM10]**. These discussions start from the department level, then the proposals for change are addressed to the Dean's office where there a discussion about the proposals made takes place and forwarded to the Academic Senate for further discussion and decision-making **[SER, p 45]**. However, is not clear how student's opinion on this issue is taken. *(Chapter I Standard II.3).*

4.4 At the UGJ the department is a basic structure, which promotes continuous improvement of teaching, while the policy of the university encourages the mobility of academic staff, in order to exchange experiences related to the improvement of teaching in the university [SER, p 45]. Also, the UGJ encourages and supports academic staff in the field of scientific research, and offers facilities so that staff can focus on scientific research, through the reduction of the teaching load, the sabbatical year, etc. [SER, p 45; BM8]. It is worrying that many academic staff have retired [BM3; BM9] and many have gone abroad and moved to the Universities in Albania. [BM7]. It is stated that academic staff is continuously trained to improve teaching, through participation in trainings inside and outside the country, within projects, in which UGJ is a partner [SER, p 46], but it is not documented, and there are no trainings organized by UGJ to improve the quality of teaching, these trainings are mainly based on different projects, for example with the University of Ghent, Belgium [BM6] and mainly for senior staff [BM3]. But it is important that the academic staff has conducted training for teaching and for the development of online exams, in order to develop learning successfully. Platform for online teaching is already in place [A.E3.46; BM8]. Additionally, UGJ has prepared a questionnaire related to online learning; from the results have emerged some shortcomings which will be published soon and will certainly affect the improvement of online learning [BM8]. UGJ implements capacity building projects, which focus on human capacity building, through training and qualifications, infrastructure capacity building, through the establishment of laboratories dedicated to this purpose and the exchange of study visits between partners. Information on the projects where UGJ is a partner, are found published on the website, along with the relevant links of each project⁸. The UGJ Senate has set the modalities and standards for the recruitment of academic staff, while the departments set criteria according to the specifics they have in relation to these recruitments [A.E 2.1; BM9]. A pronounced lack at UGJ is that they do not have enough sports fields in its premises, but through agreements with public and private institutions, it is somehow enabled providing these necessary spaces [A.E4.24]. *(Chapter I Standard II. 4).*

4.5 The 3 units at UGJ are grouped according to the respective teaching disciplines where the respective teaching-research groups operate, and various research studies in specific fields are conducted [SER, p 46]. Every year UGJ has reserved a certain budget for scientific research and received funding from the state, but it depends on the number of students, but last years there was a decrease in the budget they receive from the state [BM1]. However, the UGJ consistently has the priority to turn UGJ into a Research Centre [BM2]. Nevertheless, now this is very difficult to achieve this priority as the academic staff spends most of their working time teaching in a ratio of 75% teaching with 25% research and UGJ did not make classifications for teachers and researchers [BM8]. The research groups are focused mainly on research and publications, based on the long-term development strategy of the institution [A.E1.33]. However, the UGJ currently does not provide additional financial support for those who publish works inside and outside the country [BM3]. Furthermore, from meetings with academic staff only one research group from Department of Economy has been declared to win a research project [BM8], but in the past some research groups won three projects, however it is not clear what research projects are in question [BM8]. The basic unit is responsible for the

⁸ <http://uogi.edu.al/projekte-nderkombetare/>.

progress of scientific research work of research groups and each department has the responsibility to compile an annual report that evaluates the progress of scientific research work of research groups. All achievements related to the didactic-scientific publications and different projects are promoted through the UGJ website by the Head of the Basic Unit. It is much more important than UGJ core units are financially supported in a transparent manner and the institutional budget plan provides funding for research for each department **[A.E 1.1]**, but, in article 36, 37 and 38 it is not clear how this budget is allocated to departments and **[A.E1.5]** article 102, point 4 states that applied research-scientific activity is an integral part of UGJ budget for each academic year. However, it is encouraging that UGJ for this year has at its disposal 3.5 million AL for research projects **[BM2; BM6]**. Proposals are submitted by the basic units and then evaluated through the external evaluation team **[BM6; BM8]**. Additionally, the Regulation of the organization of the teaching, scientific research and administrative activity of University of Gjirokastra has been amended by the decision of the Academic Senate dt.08.09.2020. (*Chapter II Standard I. 1*).

4.6 UGJ welcomes and encourages research proposals and decides on their progress throughout the academic year, based on approved financial resources **[A.E2.15; A.E2.16]**. In fact, these documents show the structure of UGJ, the number of staff and the change of salary categories. UGJ is collaborating with other public and private research institutions especially in the field of teaching **[A.E1.62]**, but not much for typical research projects, mainly through individual staff connections in the region and beyond with joint projects **[BM3]**. The UGJ has cooperation with various public or private institutions inside and outside the country **[C.12; C.13]**, but not very satisfying to enable the provision of continuous improvement of the research. (*Chapter II Standard I.2*).

4.7 UGJ organizes and participates in scientific conferences organized by other institutions and this information is presented on the website⁹ of the UGJ and in the official social network¹⁰. From 2016-2021 in total 12 national and international conferences have been organized on various topics by the UGJ **[A.E4.18]**, The academic staff of UGJ also participated in international scientific conferences, published scientific articles in international scientific journals or other engagements of this type **[A.E4.22]**. This document presents the approval of the composition of the board of the scientific bulletin, University research, of UGJ. However, it is obvious that the academic staff is supported for their participation in conferences **[BM6]**, but not the students **[BM5]**. The of UGJ has signed numerous agreements with HEIS inside and outside the country to increase cooperation, the organization of joint events and various initiatives for scientific research, and which are currently being implemented **[C.13; C.14]**, (*Chapter II Standard I.3*).

4.8 Determination for the basic research fields starts from research groups of departments and proposals are based on the development strategy of the institution **[A.E1.1; A.E1.5]**. The fields of the research are proposed by the basic and main units such as: Teaching and learning methodology, Historical and linguistic development; Biodiversity and environment, Demographic developments, Tourism, etc. states that UGJ favours scientific debate in the primary areas of scientific research through the organization of academic

⁹ <http://uogj.edu.al/giithe-aktivitetet/>

¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/Universiteti-Eqrem-Cabej-Giirrokastër-Faqja-Zyrtare>.

days, open lectures, discussions of new lectures in departments, seminars, where academic staff engages in discussion of ideas and scientific achievements, but these activities are not documented as well as the lack of foreign lecturers to bring new research methods [BM4]. There are cases that in some departments foreign professors have lectured, such as the case in the field of history-geography [BM5]. (*Chapter II Standards I.4*).

4.9 UGJ has continuously set up and improved the infrastructure in support and function of scientific research activity, but has not been sufficient for scientific research and to generate income [BM9]. UGJ provides laboratories, library facilities, etc. for the implementation of certain priorities. To develop strategy of the institution, the UGJ recruits qualified academic staff in the field of scientific research, based on the regulation on the recruitment of the academic staff [A.E2.1; BM9]. In general, UGJ gives priority to applicants who hold academic degrees or titles, especially those who have received these degrees at reputable foreign universities. It's stated in the [SER, p 48], that the research priorities including strengthening cross-border cooperation in the field of research, increasing cooperation between the community of researchers and the business, etc., are in line with institutional goals, which derive from the development policies of the institution. However, more commitment is needed in terms of research. (*Chapter II Standard I.5*).

4.10 It is clear that one of the key points of UGJ development strategy is research [A.E1.43]. UGJ has collaborations with national private and public institutions on the basis of memoranda of cooperation and contracts, such as the Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Albanological Studies, other Universities of the Republic of Albania, etc, [C.12; C.13]. The organization of conferences has enabled the visits of foreign researchers as well; foreign researchers have participated as invited academic staff, in various study programs at our university [A.E1.38]. These visits are mainly for teaching, therefore the focus in the future should be more on scientific research. UGJ pursues a favourable policy for the mobility of academic staff and encourages academic staff to participate in research projects in institutions inside and outside the country [SER, p 49]. It is stated in the report that members of the academic staff of UGJ are lecturers or members of research groups at Universities abroad, but this is not documented. Furthermore, the UGJ has enabled the administrative permit payable to professors participating in short-term projects, creation of facilities for mobility, allocation of the sabbatical year, for professors conducting long-term scientific research [A.E1.37; A.E1.38]. UGJ, in order to promote the increase of quality and internationalization of studies, invites foreign academic staff to participate in teaching in the form of open lectures and part-time engagements. However, the number of foreign academic staff for the teaching is not satisfying, especially the involvement of external lecturers in recent years was affected by the pandemic as well as finances [BM3]. (*Chapter II Standards I.6*).

4.11 Based on the Law No. 80/2015 "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania", UGJ is obliged to make public the scientific research activity as well as the relevant results. The UGJ publishes international "Scientific Bulletin", mainly in volumes with summaries of references, papers held within a scientific activity (symposium, conference, congress, etc.), online publication

of results of research activity on the official website of the institution, etc., but, this is not enough, more publications should be published in foreign journals and with impact factors. However, the portion of the academic staff have published papers in collaboration with colleagues from foreign Universities in prestigious journals **[BM3]**. Moreover, it should be seriously considered that these professors who publish works in prestigious magazines should be stimulated, as at the moment that is not happening **[BM3]**. Also due to pandemics and smaller funds available in the last two years, fewer academic staff have been supported to pay the fee for the publications **[BM3]**. (*Chapter II Standards I.7*).

4.12 The performance of research work is evaluated by the Basic Units, the main UGJ Units as well as by the Academic Senate. Additionally, the basic units organize periodic and annual analyses for the realization of the scientific work tasks referring to the annual plans of each member. In cooperation with the basic and main units, the Vice Rector for Science and External Relations prepares the annual report of the university research activity and submits it to the Rectorate for approval. In the end of this evaluation, the Rectorate sends it to the Academic Senate. The report states **[SER, p 49]** that the process of evaluating the research-scientific activity of the basic units is carried out every four years by NACI, based on bibliometric criteria, impact of scientific research, infrastructure, human capacity and internationalization. The evaluation at the basic unit level is realized through an algorithmic scoring system, automatically from the electronic platform, the Albanian Scientific Research Information System - ASRIS. However, there is no clear mechanism for evaluating research performance to be done through departmental reports, but in fact, this was not clear even during the discussions. **[BM6; BM8]**. In addition, for plagiarism the UGJ uses an internal structure, google, search various documents however does not have a specific program **[BM9]**. Although UGJ has prepared anti-plagiarism criteria and standards **[A.E1.25]**, it is not clear when these criteria and standards were prepared and how functional they are. IT staff has participated a training organized by the Ministry of Education on plagiarism and are in the phase of checking doctoral theses **[BM9]**. All information on the results, products of all types of research activity in UGJ are shared through the online platform with open access and its updating. UGJ also periodically publishes and makes available to staff, students, the research and business community, its Scientific Bulletin "University Research", which continues to update bulletin articles with ISSN. Organizing scientific conferences, seminars, promotions in the regional media network, etc. (*Chapter II Standards I.8*).

Findings

Good practice

The review team did not identify any features of good practice in this Evaluation Area:

Weaknesses

The review team identify these weaknesses in this Evaluation Area:

- Lack of research projects and laboratories equipment for the research, which enable the publication of papers in journals with an impact factor. (*Chapter I Standard II.4*)
- The budget for the small research projects is used a little, mainly used for the common departmental activities (conference participation, co-financing of some projects). There is a lack of regulation for proper allocation of funds for the research.

The university should find better ways to allocate the fund for research. **(Chapter II Standard I.1)**

Recommendations

The review team make these recommendations in this Evaluation Area:

- The key performance indicators must be included in the SER. Starting from the newly enrolled students, the total number of students, number of drop-outs, number of graduations, key budget information, list of publications, number of publications per professor, the list of funded projects national and international. **(Chapter I Standard II.1)**
- Staff should reflect from the student questionnaires and improve their performance, based on student requirements from the questionnaires. **(Chapter I Standard II.3)**
- UGJ should increase the applications for research projects from national calls and increase the number of international research projects. **(Chapter II Standard I.1)**
- The Interdisciplinary Center for Scientific Research and Development is in the initial stage of consolidation, but work should be intensified to start the activity and new staff should be trained on the use of appropriate equipment. **(Chapter II Standard II.6)**
- The UGJ in near future should organize workshops for the staff on the awareness raising about plagiarism. **(Chapter I Standard II.8)**

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirmed the following actions in progress

- The steps that University takes to allocate about 3.5 million AL for small research projects that can be submitted by the staff of the departments, however a regulation on these projects should be drafted and all researchers should be informed about this possibility. **(Chapter II Standard I.1)**
- The review team has noted that the number of teaching trainings is not large despite the needs of teachers to learn new methods in teaching; even that UGJ has held several trainings through various projects. Furthermore, UGJ must find the mechanism (establishing the Centre for Excellence) that through the annual staff evaluation and application for academic grades these trainings to be mandatory in the future. **(Chapter I Standard II.4)**
- The UGJ is trying to strengthen scientific cooperation between Interdisciplinary Center for Scientific Research and Development and Departments. **(Chapter I Standard II.6)**

Judgement

The standards for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are substantially met.

Evaluation Area 5: Students and their Support

5.1 The UGJ pursues the correct policy for new students' entrance and applies criteria proposed by the departments and approved by the senate [A.E1.59]. Student registration is done by respecting the criteria and offering suitable programs and giving the opportunity for application to all students based on Statute [A.E1.1] and the Strategy of UGJ [A.E1.33]. Additionally, the UGJ gives a special importance to the exchange of students mainly based on Erasmus program [A.E1.37], and this is included in Internationalization Strategy [A.E1.21]. Each student who completed or continued his/her studies in another country was possible to convert their diploma based on the statute [A.E1.1]. The diversity of programs facilitating the transfer of studies and pursuing second and third cycle programs [A.E1.33]. UGJ together with Student service every year organizes open days with graduates to inform them about the programs as well as the facilities offered by the institution [A.E2.13]. The information days for graduates, groups of councils are set up and programs are presented in local offices by the academic staff including brochures in schools. In some other days the doors of UGJ are open to know about the infrastructure, and this lasts for two weeks [BM7]. Furthermore, potential students are informed also through career counselling office together with representative of the academic staff of the basic units [A.E2.12], and distribution of the informative brochure with respective study programs [A.E2.13]. Additionally, the career office has held with the student several workshops on the labour market and its requirements [BM9]. It is the tradition of UGJ to organize welcoming meetings with students who have just gained this status in order to orient them not only on the programs, but also on all the facilities that UGJ offers. Furthermore, the Regulation [A.E1.5] emphasizes the importance of academic counselling as a role and mission of professional and academic leadership. After the students enrolled, they have right to elect and be elected to representative bodies, to participate in workshops, trainings, projects, in open conversations with academic staff, in giving an opinion on any decision that affects their status as students and in other UGJ activities [SER, p 52]. However, this was not clearly explained by the student representative in the academic senate [BM2], seems that students are partly involved in some of these activities [BM5].

The UGJ is in regular contact with the Regional Education Directorate and Education to inform high school graduates, but also for the realization of professional practice for teaching programs [A.E4.24]. To facilitate students UGJ has set up special structures for the reception, information and admission of new students and these structures are located in the rectorate. For each respective study program, the teaching secretariat is responsible for enrolling students, and the latter are equipped with IDs as well as oriented on other facilities offered [A.E5.1]. The lecturers are obliged to respect a certain consultation schedule with students, for the information or assistance, not only in relation to the relevant course, but also to the program or other services provided by the institution [A.E4.1]. This was also confirmed [BM3], but there are still missing numbers of students seeking for the assistance weekly; on the duration of the consultation and its eventual outcome on the students' performance. The Internationalization Strategy [A.E1.21] has come as a result of the orientation of the UGJ towards a new approach, i.e. opening the institution to

facilitate the possibility of absorption and integration of foreign students through inter-institutional agreements, but the strategy was adopted in September 2020 and the impact of this strategy is difficult to be assessed at this time. Mainly, this is achieved through UGJ agreements within the Erasmus programs [A.E1.36], and student admission criteria, including approval of quotas for foreign students for admission [A.E3.40]. The academic staff at UGJ is obligated to be available to students for consultation in their office for a reasonable number of hours, each week [A.E5.3], These schedules are informed about the teaching secretary or that should be communicated them during the course. Regarding the student/lecturer ratio in recent years there are no significant differences, but there are differences between faculties [A.E5.2]. (*Chapter I Standard III.1*).

5.2 Admission of students is realized by two main structures located in the Rectorate and the basic units [SER, p 53]. An important role is also played by the Career and Alumni Counselling Office which advises students on enrolment, rights and obligations arising from the acquisition of student status, university regulations and statutes, elective courses, financial aspects and scientific and cultural activity within UGJ. Students are notified of the alumni office and ask for help as needed, but do not have regular meetings [BM5]. Additionally, the IT office, is responsible for creating, managing and administering the personal account of each student, from which the student is informed about the learning process. Main communication and information at UGJ is done through the official website www.uogj.edu.al, (information, documents, activities etc.) from staff, students, and by third parties, who are interested in being informed about UGJ. There is no lack of social media as a new means of communication in recent times; commonly used Facebook and Instagram addresses. Given the situation with the pandemic, communication has started to change, at the beginning of the pandemic there were difficulties, at first the Google classroom platform was used, and this year they started using Teams. This has greatly facilitated communication, especially online learning [BM2], whereas for parties who request official information, UGJ has written means of communication such as written documents [A.E2.39]. For internal communication, UGJ also uses virtual communication via email, announcements and communications in the "Notification Corner" mainly for students, as well as through the official website of UGJ www.uogj.edu.al. and the internal telephone network of UGJ [A.E2.28]. The communication of the staff at UGJ is regulated by the regulation [A.E1.5]. The communication and announcements of any kind addressed to the academic staff and the staff of the institution are realized through the official e-mail, and through the publication on the official website www.uogj.edu.al. [A.E2.28]. The personal file and personal data of each student are administered by the teaching secretary, based on the UGJ Regulation [A.E1.5]. The teaching secretary is responsible for the administration of data [E2.55] taking into account the obligation on personal data protection, also based on the Regulation on Personal Data Protection [A.E2.53] and electronic registers, including e-mail address of each student for the communication and phone number [A.E2.55]. (*Chapter I Standard III.2*).

5.3 UGJ aims to give priority to its students by the order for the establishment and functioning of the data system for the registration of students for the two study cycles [A.E5.17]. The Career and Alumni Advisory Office engages students in training and provides information on how to prepare for the job market, prepare their CVs, to get

prepared for job fairs and various employment opportunities, study programs and opportunities to move from one study program to another inside or outside UGJ [SER, p 54]. Additionally, the Career and Alumni Advisory Office supports and provides counselling to applications, for the continuation of the study cycle or other study cycles in Higher Education Institutions abroad [A.E5.24]. The study programs at UGJ are reorganized in accordance with the Law on Higher Education. The Career and Alumni Advisory Office prepares and distributes information brochures on study programs offered by UGJ [A.E2.11], and conducts various information activities with students, and provide beforehand with the necessary information materials [A.E2.12; A.E2.13]. However, Alumni regulation should be prepared, in order to strengthen the cooperation with Alumni through official meetings organized by the sector of Career and Alumni Advisory Office, Sports and Cultural Activities. UGJ envisages the possibility of changing the study program through the transfer procedure inside and outside the institution with the condition that the transfer is made in related study programs based on Statute and Regulation [A.E1.1; A.E1.5]. The transfer procedure is carried out through the *ad hoc* Commission set up in the main basic units, which control the exit study program and the one in which the student seeks to apply. The list of students who have requested the change of program is submitted to the Rectorate and should be approved by the Rector [A.E3.41]. The Office of Career and Alumni Advisory Office guides and advises students throughout all study cycles, as well as during the transition from the first cycle of study to the second and the third cycle [A.E5.24], and towards their entry into the labour market and follows them even after their graduation [A.E5.23]. **(Chapter I Standard III.3).**

- 5.4 The tuition fees at UGJ are applied in the accordance with the legislation in force, UGJ provides support for the reduction or complete abolition of the tuition fee [A.E5.25]. Also, there are students who come to study at UGJ due to the low fee [B.M5]. For the students with disabilities B ramps have been built to increase access [A.E5.4]. There are students who have colleagues with disabilities and in these cases, teaching is organized only in the first floor [B.M4], while in case of deaf students, or blind students, each lecturer offers the possibility of conducting knowledge assessment in a way that is appropriate for the student [A.E5.4]. UGJ also pursues admission quotas for students from different minorities such Roma and Balkan Egyptians [A.E5.5]. The categories of students who will be exempt from paying fees or whose tuition fees may be reduced, include different groups such as orphans, children of former political prisoners or persecuted, children of police officers or Armed Forces servicemen, who have lost their lives or been wounded due to duty. This is based on Legislation, namely in accordance with DCM, no. 40, dated 23.01.2019. The UGJ supports students who engage in sports or cultural activities of high levels, not only through the promotion of these activities, but also by creating the necessary facilities for these students. Students involved in these activities, at their request and with the approval of the Dean, may carry out the assessment of knowledge at a different time from the assessment of the rest of the class [A.E5.22], and for students taking exams in the context of mobility at other Universities grades are transferred [C.15]. For the time being UGJ does not organize part time studies, but continues to offer it to students who are in the process of closing these study programs [A.E5.7]. **(Chapter I Standard III.4).**

5.5 UGJ guarantees for its students basic textbooks and the necessary supplementary literature recommended and approved by each department and is available at the University Library **[A.E4.4]**. Additionally, students can access different literature through the online library <https://ulibrary.rash.al/>. Access to this library is enabled through the address of the University for all students who are active in UGJ. UGJ has a rich fund of books that they are currently digitizing. The library also offers subscriptions to important journals and allows access to the online library. This is accomplished by entering the official personal address of each student. In the total are three libraries, one central and two in two of the main units **[BM9]**, while some units do not have library at all. The coordination and needs of professors and students and the procedure of the registration of books, brochures and journals is based on the Regulation on the Academic Library of the UGJ **[A.E5.8]**. Also the Sector of Standards and Curricula maintains an extensive list of available literature from the Scientific Library. UGJ has a Central Library, in the building C of the University, and it is equipped with a good literature in comfortable facilities. In addition, there are two faculty libraries located near the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences. Each year, prior to budget approval, departments and Library submit their project proposals, which include the need for basic or additional literature **[A.E4.6]**. The library literature is also enriched through donations of UGJ friends **[A.E4.7]**. The fund for new titles for library enrichment for the period 2018-2020 has been 5.8 million AL **[BM9]**. The proposals of each Basic Unit for different literature are approved according to the relevant procedures of the Institution **[A.E4.5]**. The library is multidisciplinary and has titles from 10 different fields of study, starting from the general issues, science and knowledge, philosophy, psychology, social sciences and their subdivisions, economics and its subdivisions, law, mathematics and sciences of nature, applied sciences such as medicine and technology, linguistics and literature, history, geography, as well as materials dealing with art, culture and sports. Each student has a registration card, through which he/she can receive the literature. The registration card contains the basic information of the student, as well as the signature of the librarian and reader **[A.E5.9]**. However, there is a lack of e-book service for students, but in meantime the staff and students have the opportunity to access the online library and provide a variety of literature in foreign languages and students use English language literature provided by the academic staff and online library **[BM5]**. *(Chapter I Standard III.5).*

5.6 UGJ provides guidance and tutoring for students during their diploma thesis phase in all study cycles. The procedures for the distribution of diploma theses are provided by the UGJ, based on the regulation on the study programs **[C.16]**. For diploma theses, the academic staff offers to students titles for different topics and with collaborations students choose the appropriate topic **[BM5]**. The University shall make students' theses available to the public in order to discourage possible plagiarism – the UGJ does not have a specific program for plagiarism **[BM9]**. In addition, UGJ helps and guides the student on how to access literature, by the lecturers of the course or by the relevant department of the curriculum. UGJ offer consultations with professors to help students according to their needs, planned in the curriculum, in addition to the consultations provided in the disciplinary programs. The Interdisciplinary Centre for Scientific Research and Development was established two months ago by Academic Senate with the decision no. 05, dated 02.02.2021, **[A.E4.25]**, but it is difficult to assess the impact

of this Centre which is in its initial stage of consolidation as confirmed by the academic staff **[BM3]**. (*Chapter I Standard III.6*).

5.7 Students are part of the bodies within the institutional level and also bodies within the main unit level. In the Academic Senate of UGJ there are two student senators, who are elected by students. Additionally, students are participants of standing committees at the institutional level as well as committees of the main units **[A.E1.28]**. Student Councils function and students perform their activities independently in the main institutions and units. In addition, students are part of drafting important institutional reports, including Institutional Internal Evaluation Report **[SER, p 57]**, but students are partially involved in these activities **[BM4; BM5]**. Students, are included in the annual student survey organized by HEQAA and the survey conducted by the institution. Through the students' senators, they can express opinions and proposals on all issues of general interest, such as curricula and study programs, study regulations, etc. This is obvious and there are cases when students have addressed various issues **[BM4; BM5]**. Student opinions are obtained from various meetings with them and through the grievance box. UGJ has supported students for sports activities according to financial possibilities, e.g. participation in international sports tournaments **[A.E2.26]**. (*Chapter I Standard III.7*).

5.8 The Student Card, as a legal obligation and part of the Pact for the University, has been achieved. UGJ supports students in different activities, promotes the best students, conducts graduation ceremonies, as well as other activities aimed at expanding the field of information to students through projects or seminars **[A.E3.42]**. The UGJ established the association of sports and students, which has participated at PCU University Games in Antwerp Belgium **[A.E5.26]**, funded by the UGJ **[A.E2.26]**. Additionally, UGJ supports any initiative related to cultural and sports activities such as the realization of volleyball and football games with the participation in several national and international championships and organized a theatrical performance, nevertheless during the time of the pandemics these activities have been reduced **[BM5]**. UGJ cooperates with the health sector to carry out internships and various activities to raise public awareness of maintaining health. Membership in the National University Sports Association relevant decision. (*Chapter I Standard III.8*).

5.9 UGJ holds the data on the employment of its graduates **[A.E5.15]**, but only for UGJ employees, and not in other public and private sectors. However, after graduation the Career Counselling Office cooperates with every public and private institution by sending forms to their graduates. This way UGJ guarantees the preservation of contacts and possesses data on employment as well as whether they are in accordance with their studies **[BM9]**. The role of Career Counselling Office is to provide assistance to students through trainings organized such as how to apply for employment, drafting a curriculum, job interview, etc., and organizing a job fair, etc. **[A.E5.24]**. The Career Counselling Office in the last two years has organized for students several workshops on the labour market and its requirements **[BM9]**. The preparation for students for employment is realized not only as above, but also through contacts that are maintained with stakeholders **[A.E5.23]** as well as through the realization of professional practice under the guidance of professors. This gives an opportunity to students to be recognized by different employers, and also creates the opportunity for

contacts/networking. The new study program, Tourist Guide has had many feeds, and all of UGJ students have covered the entire southern region, and this was because of labour market research [BM2]. During professional internships, the student obtains practical skills that provide opportunities for the labour market. The Administrative Board has suggested increasing more internships at private and state institutions [BM2]. However, finding a job for newly graduated students needs an internship and then the job opportunity would be greater [BM5]. This is required also from private institutions [BM10]. UGJ maintains relations with Alumni students and tracks its alumni [A.E5.16] thus creating the possibility for contacts and invites them whenever UGJ organizes informative or formative meetings [A.E5.24]. However, UGJ does not have a proper policy for the employment of its own graduates, but it pursues and encourages the employment of its graduates. It is quite characteristic that at UGJ, all of academic and administrative staff are alumni in at least one UGJ study cycle [A.E5.15]. The employment of graduate students is based more on public than private institutions [BM10]. Although UGJ has cooperation with the private and public sector for the employment of graduate students, majority of participants with external partners and Alumni were from local, regional and European Universities. Of course, collaborations with local, regional and European Universities are highly valued, but cooperation with private and public parties should be further strengthened for the possibility of student employment. It is important that some banks have close cooperation with the university and have a training program for students before graduation to get acquainted with the labour market. However, the private sector has made some investments in the UGJ and are interested in continuing these relations as long as possible [BM10]. (Chapter I Standard III.9).

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- The provision of individual tutors for first-cycle students to facilitate their progress through their programme. (*Chapter I, Standard III.6*)

Weaknesses

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

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendation:

- Consultation processes between teachers and students should be monitored to provide numbers of students seeking for assistance weekly or monthly, and the time each professor spend with students in consultation and its eventual outcome on the students' performance. (*Chapter I Standard III.1*)
- Alumni regulation should be prepared, in order to strengthen the cooperation with Alumni through official meetings organized by the sector of Career Counselling Alumni, Sports and Cultural Activities. (*Chapter I Standard III.3*)

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirmed the following actions in progress

- The steps being taken to digitalize library and to enrich library stock through the University budget and donations in order to effectively support students' learning and research. (*Chapter I Standard III.5*)

Judgement

The standards for Students and their Support are fully met.

Evidence List

List A: List of evidences

List of evidences provided as part of self-evaluation documents, annex ...of SER. These evidences on EER are referred using the abbreviation **AE1...**, **AE2...**, etc:

A1 Raporti i GVB ne gjuhen angleze.pdf

AE1.5 Rregullore e perditësuar e UGJ.pdf

AE1.6 Rregullore e FESHSH.pdf

AE1.7 Rregullore e FSHN.pdf

AE1.8 Rregullore e FE.pdf

AE1.9 Rregullore e Departamentit te Edukimit dhe Metodologjise se Mesimdhenies.pdf

AE1.10 Rregullore e Departamentit te Matematikes Informatikes dhe Fizikes.pdf

AE1.11 Rregullore e Departamentit te Administrimit Publik.pdf

AE1.14.1 Vendimi i SA per miratimin e struktures organizative te UGJ.pdf

AE1.15 Vendimi i SA per miratimin e Buxhetit 2019, 2020.pdf

AE1.20 Lista e konferencave, numri i artikujve buletini.pdf

AE1.22 Rregullore e Bordit te Administrimit.pdf

AE1.23 Vendim per ngritjen e Keshillit te Etikes.pdf

AE1.26 Shembuj vendimesh te Dekanateve.pdf

AE1.27 Rregullore e zgjedhjeve 2020.pdf

AE1.28 Vendime te KIZ 2020.pdf

AE1.30 Vendim SA dhe urdher Rektorati per ngritjen e NJSBC dhe GVB.pdf

AE1.31 Rregullore e NJSBC.pdf

AE1.32 Vendimet per dhenien e titujve per Honoris Causa.pdf

AE1.33 Strategjia e Zhvillimit te UGJ.pdf

AE1.33.1 Vendimi i SA per miratimin e Strategjise se Zhvillimit te UGJ.pdf

AE1.40 Raporti vjetor 2018-2019.pdf

AE1.40.1 Vendim i miratimit te Raportit vjetor SA dhe BA 2018.pdf

AE1.41 Raporti vjetor 2019-2020.pdf

AE1.41.1 Vendim i miratimit te raportit vjetor 2019.pdf

AE1.42 Programet akademike sipas emertimit dhe fakultetit.pdf

AE1.47 Strategji e zhvillimit te departamenteve te UGJ-se.pdf

AE1.54 Vendim i SA per ngritjen e komisioneve te perhershme.pdf

AE1.55 Relacion i panairit te punes 2019.pdf

AE2.13 Relacion mbi ecurine dhe realizimin e diteve te informimit te maturanëve.pdf

AE2.14 formular i vleresimit te punes staf akademik staf administrativ.pdf

AE2.18 Rregullore e njehësuar e punes me dokumentet ne UGJ.pdf

AE2.24 Raporti i grupit te punes mbi kapacitetet pritese ne UGJ 2019-2020.pdf

AE2.26 Kerkese per mbështetje financiare per aktivitetet sportive te shoqates sportive studentore te ugj.pdf

AE2.27 Raporti vjetor financiar 2018 2019 2020.pdf

AE2.31 Lista e aktiviteve kulturore, sociale dhe edukative me pjesëmarrjen e studenteve.pdf

AE2.38 Raportet e MASR Auditi 2018.pdf

AE2.39 Rregullore per organizimin dhe funksionimin e Drejtorise se Sherbimeve Ndhimes Akademike Administrative.pdf

AE2.45 Rregullore e Sekretarise mesimore.pdf
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 AE1.50 Lista e pedagogeve e FESHSH + gradat.pdf
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 AE1.52 Lista e pedagogeve te FE + gradat.pdf
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 AE2.50 Vendim i SA per Riorganizimin e Revistes Shkencore Kerkime Universitare.pdf
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 AE5.28 Procedure per zhvillimin e Sondazhit Kombetar te Studenteve.pdf

List B: Meetings held during the visit

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

Review team meet with the Institutional Coordinator.

BM1: Review team meet with the Rector.

BM2: Review team with members of the Academic Senate (excluding the Rector) and Administration Board

BM3: Review Team meet with senior staff

BM4: Review team meet with a sample of first-cycle students.

BM5: Review team meet with a sample of second-cycle students.

BM6: Review team meet with the Self-evaluation team.

BM7: Review team meet with a sample of teaching staff.

BM8: Review team meet with a sample of administrative and support staff.

BM9: Review team meet with partners and alumni

Review team meet with the Institutional Coordinator.

BM10: Review team meet with Rector.

List C: List of evidences provided during the visit

List of evidences provided during site visit. These evidences on EER are referred using the abbreviation **C1...**, **C2..**, etc:

C1. The agenda of a department meeting.

C2. Internal Security Document / Unit to ensure Quality Standards

C3. Are there any documents to demonstrate how feedback is collected from all stakeholders and alumni to improve curricula?

C4. Decision 16 dated 23/10/2018 (E3.18) determines a minimum number of students for each subject of 5. Otherwise act in accordance with the instruction 33 dated 23/10/2018. Can we have such instructions?

C5. Schedule of lecture hours for the three Bachelor courses at the Faculty of Economics.

C6. A document (if available) regarding the employment of students in the last three years and the division into the private and public sector.

C7. A list of international projects (research, mobility or capacity building) in which UGJ lectures have participated in the period 2016-2019 and the number of beneficiary lectures. (List of mobilities for research purposes (lecturer and student) from the last accreditation)

C8. A list of mobility projects for the period 2016-2019, and how many students from UGJ have completed their movement abroad and how many from other universities have completed their period at UGJ.

C9. A PowerPoint brochure and presentation used for information days. And a poster for the open days of university (obviously before 2020).

C10. Minutes of the meeting of the department or any other academic body where issues raised by students are discussed and where appropriate steps are proposed to address them.

C11. List of equipment of biology and nursing laboratories

C12. Site visit

C13. Additional information

C.14 Additional information