Institutional Review of Higher Education Institutions in Albania

Report of Epoka University
May 2017

REVIEW TEAM:

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About this review

The overall aim of Institutional Review is to assess the extent to which each HEI meets the Albanian State Quality Standards which came into force in 2011. Institutional Review is a peer-review process with each review team composed of a mix of UK reviewers appointed by QAA and Albanian reviewers appointed by APAAL. The review team is led by a QAA reviewer.

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

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

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

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

As part of the report-writing process, QAA has provided expert support to the review team by ensuring that the team supports the findings made in the report with evidence, and also by proofreading and summarising the full report for the summary below.

The context of this review

Epoka University is a private institution initially founded in 2008 as a 'School of Higher Learning', and owned by 'TurgutOzal Education SH.A'., and situated just outside Tirana in the vicinity of the airport. In 2012 the institution was permitted to change its status to that of a university by the Ministry of Education and Sport. The University is currently organised into two Faculties: the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering whose provision includes Architecture, Civil Engineering and Computer Engineering and the Centre of Research for Architecture and Design; and the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciencesoffering programmes inBanking and Finance, Economics, Business Administration, Political Sciences and International Relations. The Centre of Research and Design in Architecture and the Centre for European Studies operate under the Rector's Office. To comply with the new Law on Higher Education, and to maintain its university status, a new Faculty of Law and Social Sciences will be launched for the academic year 2017-18.

Between 2012 and 2016 the University gained accreditation for all its master's programmes and in 2015-16 accreditation was granted for the doctorate programmes. However, some undergraduate programmes are still awaiting final confirmation of accreditation from the Accreditation Board of the Ministry of Education and Sport, as part of the framework of periodic re-accreditation.

The Mission of Epoka University is to offer 'innovative and influential teaching and research … through the production, dissemination and development of knowledge at an international level'. The University currently offers 10 bachelor's degrees, 17 master's level degrees including one integrated programme, and six degrees at doctorate level. The University has 1,709 students of whom 70 per cent are studying on undergraduate programmes.

Epoka has a wide range of university partnerships worldwide, including with universities in the United States, the UK, Italy, Romania, Poland and Bulgaria. Epoka University is a member of the International Association of Universities (IAU) and an associate member of the European Universities Association (EUA), and is a signatory to the Magna Charta Universitatum. The University engages in a number of international projects including Erasmus and the Horizon 2020 project.

Summary report

Epoka University is a private higher education institution located just outside Tirana, offering undergraduate and postgraduate master's and doctorate programmes delivered in English. The use of English as a teaching medium differentiates the University from other institutions offering similar provision. The University at the time of the review visit had two faculties with a third being introduced. Provision is delivered on a custom-built campus with modern buildings housing teaching rooms, laboratories, studios, a library and social and recreational areas.The campus also has a residential block whichcan accommodate just over 100 students along with canteen facilities and sports areas. All buildings are modern and well-maintained. The mission of the University is the production, dissemination and development of knowledge which will prepare its students to accomplish their professional goals and to pursue their interests to the benefit of the national and international community. In 2016-17 the University enrolled 1,709 students on first, second and third-cycle programmes.

A self-evaluation report was developed by a team at the University which included senior staff, academic and support staff and a student representative. Drafts were circulated to a wider audience for comment before being finalised and approved by the Academic Senate.

The visit took place on 29 and 30 May 2017. The review team was made up of two senior higher education reviewers from the UK andone experienced reviewer froman Albanian University. The review team was supported by the Review Manager and note-taker provided by the Albanian Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (ASCAL). The review team wasprovided with a self-evaluation report and the portfolio of supporting evidence eight weeks in advance of the review visit, and supplemented by additional documentation requested by the team. In all, 56 documents were considered. Through reading of the documentation provided, the team wasable to familiarise itselfwith the structure, policies, management procedures and nature of teaching and research activity undertaken by the University. Evidence considered by the review team included the Statute of the University, Academic Regulations, annual reports, Admissions Policy, list of external agreements and memoranda, list of research projects, examples of programme information and evidence of deliberative meetings.

A series of meetings took place during the visit, which allowed the team to gain a clearer understanding of responsibilities, procedures and the views of staff and students. The team wasable to meet with the Rector, senior managers, students, lecturers and administrative and support staff, as well as external partners and employers. Notes were taken at all meetings as a source of reference and evidence for the review team only. The review team wasalso given a tour of the campus, and viewed the library, teaching areas, laboratories, and offices, and provided with a demonstration of the University's online and electronic information systems. Having reviewed all evidence available, the team reached the conclusions set out below.

The responsibilities for the organisation and management of the University are clearly set out in the University Statute and Regulations. The review team identified good practices in the University structures to support the development of internship opportunities through the development of collaborative and partnership arrangements with employers, and the Strategic Plan Development Board which provides effective oversight, approval, implementation and monitoring of the Strategic Plan. The review team did not identify any weaknesses or recommendations. The review team affirmed the inclusion of student representation on the membership of the Ethics Board in line with revised statute requirements, and the appointment of Heads to each Research Centre by Sept 2017, in order to ensure that institutional research can be coordinated and managed effectively throughout the University. ***Chapter III Standards I.1- I.6, Standard II.1, Standard II.3, and Standards III.1- 4*** for the Organisation and its Management are fully met.

Epoka University has clear systems in place to manage its responsibility for resources, infrastructure and the needs of staff and students. Staff recruitment is managed by the Human Resources Office, and the integration of new staff is supported by an ongoing programme of social activities and open forums which enable staff to meet and exchange ideas. This represents good practice. The University operates well-defined systems for managing its data and student information. However, the role of Faculties in the review, development and management of budgets is unclear and identified as a weakness. The team recommends that the University consider developing a budgeting model that includes clear involvement of staff at all levels in the organisation. The team concluded that **Chapter III Standards IV.1-4, Standard II.2, Standards V1.1-3, Standards VII.1-6, Standards V.1-2** are substantially met.

The University offers study programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral level in line with its development strategy and faculty structures. The provision is adequately structured and aligned to the Bologna requirements and the Qualification Framework in Albania. The University has developed interdisciplinary awards with the aim to promote its activity in the broader international academic context. The delivery of programmes in English, the system of internships, organised by the University to provide a wide range of work experience opportunities, and the effective system of student advisers who effectively support and monitor student progress and achievement represent good practice. The University primarily recruits full-time academic staff who undertake most of the teaching and research workload. However, the review team noted that there is no clear and consistent system on which remission from teaching hours is calculated, which is a weakness. The team recommends that the University explore means to make clear the basis on which teaching remission is made. The team found the requirements of **Chapter I StandardsI.1-12** to be substantially met.

The responsibilities for the management of Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are set out in the University Statute, Regulations and Research Strategy. The review team did not identify any aspects of good practice in the evaluation of this Area. Weakness was identified with staff ownership of the University's research strategy and the focus on research priorities, which have inhibited the development and integration of consistent research at departmental and research centre level; limited evaluation of research at research centre level due to the lack of designated senior management posts; and no independent mechanism for checking the marking of papers, or the standardisation of grading of students' work. The review team recommends that the University develops an integrated and focused research strategy that articulates the University's research priorities clearly throughout the institution and which is owned by staff, and develops and implements an independent mechanism for checking on exam paper questions and the marking of exams to ensure appropriate coverage of the curriculum and the quality and fairness of marking. The review team affirmed the University plans to achieve a critical mass of researchers in order to focus on a smaller number of research areas.**Chapter I StandardsII.1-4**, **Standards I.1-8** were found to be substantially met.

The University provides effective support and guidance to its student body, along with a range of extracurricular activities. As a campus university, resources include a well-stocked library, sports and leisure areas and activities. The provision of space and facilities for the sport activities and for the students' club meetings is considered an example of good practice. The information advice and guidance provided by the Careers Office and the Dean of Students Office, the annual Jobs Fair and the University's system of scholarships, which attracts high achieving students,also represent good practice and serve to build student employability. No weaknesses or recommendations were identified. The review team affirms the changes to the admissions policy and procedure to improve access for disabled students and the improved student representation on Boards through the new Statute. **Chapter I Standards III.1-9** were found to be fully met.

Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the Strategic Planning Board provides effective oversight of the approval, implementation and monitoring of the strategic plan (paragraph 1.13; *Chapter III Standard I.5*)
- the University structures to support the development of internship opportunities through the development of collaborative and partnership arrangements with employers (paragraph 1.18; *Chapter III Standard III.2* and *Chapter III Standard III.3*)
- an ongoing programme of social activities across the University provides opportunities for staff to exchange ideas and knowledge of ongoing research, and generally get to know each other (paragraph 2.2; *Chapter III Standard IV.2* and *Chapter III Standard IV.4*)
- the delivery of programs through the medium of English promotes student employability in Albania and internationally (paragraph 3.2; *Chapter I Standard I.10*)
- the individual support provided by student advisors at course level in monitoring and supporting student progression and achievement (paragraph 3.4; *Chapter I Standard I.8*)
- the system of internships organised by the University makes available a wide range of work experience opportunities which supports the development of student employability (paragraph 3.14; *Chapter I Standard I.12*)
- the information, advice and guidance provided to students through the Careers Office and Dean of Students is clear and proactive in responding to student needs (paragraph 5.8; *Chapter I Standard III.1* and *Chapter I Standard III.3*)
- the system of scholarships provided to students with high GPA scores, especially for candidates living in the Vora Municipality (University location) (paragraph 5.10; *Chapter I Standard III.4*)
- the provision of space and facilities for sport activities and for students' club meetings, and the fact that students are also invited to guest lectures and open forums (paragraph 5.13; *Chapter I Standard III.8*)
- the organisation of the Jobs Fair which draws on the University's wide network of contacts (paragraph 5.14; *Chapter I Standard III.9*).

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- The review team noted that the basis on which remission from teaching hours is made is not clear in all cases. The University notes that the Heads of Department hold responsibility for ensuring a balanced distribution of administrative duties among staff members, thus leading to potential inconsistencies (paragraph 3.10; *Chapter I Standard I.5*)
- lack of mechanisms for checking the grading of papers, cross-moderation and sampling of work (paragraph 4.2; *Chapter I Standard II.2*)
- the lack of staff understanding of the University'sdevelopment and integration plans for research, to support broader strategic approaches (paragraph 4.8; *Chapter II Standard I.4* and *Chapter II Standard I.5*).

Recommendations

The review team identifiedthe following recommendations:

- that the University makes clear the basis on which teaching remission is calculated and awarded to promote clarity across the University(Priority)(paragraph 3.10; *Chapter I Standard I.5*)
- develop and implement an independent mechanism for checking exam paper questions and the marking of exams to ensure appropriate coverage of the curriculum and the quality and fairness of marking (High priority)(paragraph 4.2; *Chapter I Standard II.2*)
- that the University develops a clear focused and integrated research strategy which articulates and promotes its research priorities for all staff (High priority) (paragraph 4.8; *Chapter II Standard I.4* and *Chapter II Standard I.5*).

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following actions already in progress:

- the recruitment of new heads of research centres for the start of the 2017-18 academic year (paragraph 1.4; *Chapter III Standard I.1*)
- the revised Ethics Board membership which will include student representation in line with revised statute requirements (paragraph 1.9; *Chapter III Standard I.1*and *Chapter III Standard I.2*)
- the University hasdeveloped plans to achieve a critical mass of researchers in order to focus on a smaller number of research areas (paragraph 4.6; *Chapter II Standard I.3*)
- the University has updated its admissions policy and procedures to include the admission of students with disabilities (paragraph 5.9; *Chapter I, Standard III.4*)
- Improvement to the representation of students on decision-taking committees (paragraph 5.12; *Chapter I Standard III.7*).

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 **fullymet**.
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 Council that at Epoka University the State Quality Standards are **substantially met**.

Detailed report

Evaluation Area 1: The Organisation and its Management

1.1   The University operates in accordance with the principles of its Statute, first approved in 2007 when it was established, and later re-adapted to the provisions of the new Law on Higher Education in Albania. Through its mission and objectives, the University is committed to teaching, research and professional development. From the academic year 2017-18 teaching will be provided in three faculties, as opposed to the current two faculties. **[13 p.9; 2 Note 14]** With the planned creation of a third faculty of Law and Social Sciences, the institution will meet the legislative requirements to be a university. The University offers study programmes in all three cycles: bachelor's, master's and PhD. **[13 p.8; 3 Note 13; 2 - Note 14; M1; M3]** [*Chapter III Standard I.1*]

1.2   The University's academic provision is delivered through the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering and the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences. **[1; 3.1]** The University also has two research centres, the Centre for European Studies and the Centre for Research and Design in Architecture, although at the time of the review both research centres were without a Head of Department. **[M3; M1]** The University also has a Centre for Continuous Education which offers education and training courses, careers and professional development advice. **[6.5]** Programmes are offered in the first, second and third cycles comprising 10undergraduate programmes, 17postgraduate programmes and six doctoral programmes. All provision is offered as full-time study. Most programmes are offered through the medium of English which makes them popular with students seeking to work abroad or in international organisations. **[1; M2; M3; 3.6]** [*Chapter III Standard I.2*]

1.3   The University's rules and regulations are based upon Albanian legislation and its Statute. The regulations regulate the processes and output of all the units and services at the University. **[3 Note 11; 3.3]** The Statute is approved by both the Academic Senate and the Administration Board of the University (currently called the Higher Board) and is in compliance with article 33 of the Law on Higher Education.**[80/2015 Law of HE; 4 Note 12; M2]** [*Chapter III Standard I.1*]

1.4   As noted in paragraph 1.2 the University has two research centres, the Centrefor European Studies and the Centrefor Research and Design in Architecture. **[1; 3.2]** As the current research centres do not have Heads in place it was not clear to the review team how institutional research was being coordinated and managed for the benefit of the University and its staff. The review team **affirms**that the recruitment of new heads of research centres for the start of the 2017-18 academic year. **[M2; 38; 6.31]** [*Chapter III Standard I.1*]

1.5   The University has established appropriate management bodies that function according to the provisions of the Statute and respective sets of regulations. **[4]** The decision-making processes involve the Higher Board, Academic Senate and the University Administrative Board (recently restructured as the Academic Senate, the Administration Board and the Rectorate). **[3.2; 3.6; M2]** These collegial bodies employtop-down and bottom-up management of the administrative, financial and student affairs, according to the respective duties and tasks asstated in the Statute. They meet regularly and the Rectorate monitors the implementation of their proposals. **[4; 3.1; 3; M3; M5]** The University has also established a Board of Ethics, **[14; 14.1]** a Council of Professors and a Student's Council**. [20.1; 20.3; 37]** Students are represented on the Board of Ethics. **[M3; M4; M9]** [*Chapter III Standard I.2*]

1.6   The University's management system undergoes an annual review by both internal and external audit,**[6.9 Note 16]** and reports demonstrate increasing efficiency with respect to the delivery of academic services to students. **[M9; 6.5; 7.2]** The University operates a

clear distribution of roles and functions, with vertical structures of decision-making for administration, financial and student affairs. The management of academic affairs and research is based upon decision-making systems and policies detailed in the Statute and regulations. **[3 Note 17; 11; 3 Note 18; M3; M5]** [*Chapter III Standard I.2*]

1.7   The University has a clear management structure. University management authorities include the Rector, the Secretary General and the Deans of each Faculty. **[1; 3.2]** Under the new statute the Secretary General becomes the University Administrator, all other posts remain the same. **[3.1; M3]** The University Administrative Board formulates the criteria for the allocation of resources including financial, materials and human resources, and submits them for approval to the Higher Board, which approves the budget and investment plan. **[10.4; 10.3;27]** Prior to each academic year the Rector requests all departments to provide a draft budget which, after evaluation by the Rector's Office, is submitted for approval to the Higher Board. **[6 Note 19; 27]** [*Chapter III Standard I.2*]

1.8   Duties and responsibilities for the administration are clearly articulated. The Administrative Board is responsible for the granting of financial support to academic staff in respect to international conference participation and to staff who publish in international peer reviewed journals. **[3 Note 20; 45; 21]** The Administration Board is chaired by the Rector, and membership includes the Vice Rectors, Deans of Faculties, Secretary General, Dean of Students, Vice-Dean of Students and the Head of institutional and legal matters and the President of the Student Council. Membership is for a period of two years. **[3; 3.1 Statute; M3; 4; 4.3]** The Administration Board is responsible for drafting long-term development plans, the formulation of criteria for resource management, and their submission for approval to the Higher Board. **[3 Note 21 ;M3; 18]** Due to the University's financial policies and administration which meet EU requirements, it has been able to participate in several EU programmes, including COST, Erasmus+ and one national project - Horizon 2020. **[5 Note 42]** [*Chapter III Standard I.4; Chapter III Standard I.2*]

1.9   The Academic Senate is the highest collegial decision-making body in respect to academic matters and is chaired by the Rector. **[3.1; 4; M3]** The Academic Senate is responsible for developing policies and making decisions in all matters related to teaching and research. **[3 Note 22; 4.3; 6.3; 3.1 Statute]** The Ethics Board is responsible for ethical matters concerning academic and administrative staff including students, and makes proposals to the Rector. The revised statute requires student representation, and from 2017-18 the revised membership of the board will include the Vice President of the Student Council. Members serve for a period of two years. **[3 Note 23; 14; M3; M1]** The review team **affirms** the revised Ethics Board membership which will include student representation in line with revised statute requirements. **[M3]** At faculty level, the Faculty Board chaired by the Dean determines all activities related to teaching and research, based upon the proposals from each department. The Faculty Administrative Board is responsible for managing the resources of the Faculty based upon proposals from departments. **[3 Note 25; 3.1; 4.11]** [*Chapter III Standard I.2*]

1.10   The newly approved statute will implement a range of changes including the introduction of the Decanate, which will combine the powers of the Faculty Board and the Faculty Administrative Board. **[3 Note 27]** In addition, the Assembly of Academic staff of each faculty will elect three members to the Senate and will appoint the members of permanent commissions at faculty level. **[3 Note 28; M3; M2]** Under the new statute the Dean will be appointed by the Rector and approved by the Academic Senate. Key appointments will be for fouryears from the start of the 2017-18 academic year. **[3 Note 30; M2;M3]** [*Chapter III Standard I.2*]

1.11   The Head of Department is the managing authority of the department, responsible for teaching and research activities at all levels. Currently the Head of Department is

selected by the Dean from the full-time academic staff members, approved by the Rector and appointed by the Higher Board. **[3 Note 31; M3; 3.1]** Under the new statute the Head of Department and the Head of Research Centrewill be proposed by the Dean from the full-time academic members, and will be appointed by the Rector after approval by the Academic Senate. **[3 Note 32; 3.7]** The Council of Professors operates at faculty level and maintains oversight of the organisation and management of PhD study programmes offered by the University. **[3 Note 33; 4.9] [*Chapter III Standard I.2*]**

1.12   The University's main boards which include the Administrative Board, Academic Senate, Ethics Board and Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Board (AEQI), effectively ensure legal compliance with the rules and regulations of the University. **[3 Note 39]** The University ensures that all staff are involved in the decision-making processes of the University. **[M9; 11]** Meetings take place regularly, for example the Higher Board meets 11 times per year, and the Academic Senate around 15 times. Decisions of Boards are made available to staff. **[6.4 Note 35; 3.1; 4.1]** The Rectorate monitors the implementation process against deadlines. **[6 Note 38; M3; M4]** To support the work of the University, externality is used to improve its organisation and management, for example, the AEQI Board includes two external consultants and consultancy from the parent company. **[3Note 40/41] [ESG 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance;*Chapter III Standard I.3*]**

1.13   The University has appropriate mechanisms in place to formulate and review its strategic plan. The University produced its first development strategy in 2012 for the period 2013-17, to underpin the mission and purpose of the University. **[7.1Note 43]** The plan, which was widely discussed and approved by the Academic Senate and the Administration Board, sets appropriate objectives and strategies and identifies key responsibilities against objectives**. [4; M3; 7.2]** The Strategic Planning Board monitors the implementation of the strategy, and progress is regularly evaluated by the AEQI Board, based upon incorporated indicators which have largely been met. **[7 Notes 45, 46,and 47; 7.2]** The Strategic Plan 2018-22 is currently being drafted. **[7 Note 48; M3]**The Strategic Planning Board provides effective oversight of the approval, implementation and monitoring of the strategic plan and represents **good practice**. **[M2] [ESG 1.8 Public Information]** [*Chapter III Standard I.5*]

1.14   The University publishes and submits its Annual Report to the Ministry of Education and Sports according to the Law on Higher Education. **[7 Note 49]** The report is disseminated throughout the University and to interested parties through the website and in brochure format. **[6 Note 50and51; M5]** The report ensures transparency for stakeholders and supports the University with internal and external assessment. The report is discussed at the Academic Senate and the AEQI Board and provides ongoing oversight of progress against outcomes set out in the Strategic Plan. **[3 Note 52; M3]** The University's website in Albanian and English has published a range of information since 2009 and has consistently been the highest or second-highest ranked in Albania, demonstrating the relevance of information provided to students and other stakeholders. **[M6; 13 Note 60 and 61] [ESG 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance; ESG 1.8 Public Information;*Chapter III Standard I.6*]**

1.15   The University has established appropriate structures to accomplish its mission and purpose. The organisation and management structures are detailed in the Statute of the University and act in compliance with the Albanian legal framework. **[3.1; 3.2]** The Academic Senate operates with full autonomy and its staff enjoy full academic freedom. **[3 Note 53, 54 and 55]** Each University Faculty has three basic units, out of which two are departments. Each department has sevenacademic members of staff, three of whom have at least a PhD or higher academic title. **[3 Note 58 and 59; 3.1; 6.31] [*Chapter III Standard II.1*]**

1.16   All University Boards provide forums for relevant discussions, and staff have opportunities to contribute to the decision-making processes in accordance with the Statute and deliberative reporting structures. **[4 Note 62]** Each department enables its academic

staff to be involved in decision-making processes. The introduction of the new Statute will enable all full-time staff to be members of the General Assembly of Academic Staff of each Faculty. **[3 Notes 62, 63, and 64; 11; M3]** [*Chapter III Standard II.3*]

1.17   All University processes are evidenced-based and follow the best education and administration practices of the universities with whom it partners. The University Strategic Plan is predicated on the development of the Albanian economy and the role of vocational education in the fields of architecture, civil engineering and information technology for the expansion of small and medium enterprises. The University conducts market research to accomplish its mission. **[7 Note 65, 66, 67, and 68; M2; M3; M7]** The career planning and alumni office track student employment, and the data is published in the University's Annual Report, indicating that 75 per cent of graduates in 2014-15 found a job within the first year after graduation. **[51; M9]** The Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences reported high satisfaction rates among graduates in relation to employability prospects. **[13 p.20 Note 72]** The University complies with the legal framework of the Republic of Albania in respect to competition in the education market. This commitment has been incorporated into the new Statute of the University. **[13 p.20 Note 73 and 74; M4; M7]** [*Chapter III Standard III.1*]

1.18   The University has developed a cooperation strategy on collaboration and partnership at a regional, national and international level, which is included in both the Statute and Strategic Plan 2013-17. **[7 Note 75 and 76; 9]** The University's key priorities reflected in its partnerships include: strengthening the relations with the community; enhancing relations with its alumni; developing cooperation with industry; and further developing relations with universities in Albania and abroad. **[9; 9.5; 9.1]** The University has formal agreements with 30 partners representing a broad range of sectors in the Albanian economy. **[9.3; 9.5; M7]** The University is an associate member of the European Universities Association and a member of the International Association of Universities**. [**http://iro.epoka.edu.al/home-european-university-association-1141-1636.html;http://iro.epoka.edu.al/home-international-association-of-universities-1141-1142.html**]** Agreements with peer higher education institutions have been based on mutual recognition of curriculum and to facilitate mobility within the EU's exchange programs, for example Erasmus+. **[9 Note 85; M3; M5]** The University collaborates with about 50 institutions and enterprises to provide an extensive range of internships and related facilities to support curriculum areas at faculty level. **[9 Note 86/87; 9.4]** The structures to support the development of internship opportunities through the extensive development of collaborative and partnership arrangements with employers is considered by the review team to be an aspect of **good practice**. **[M2; M3; M4; M7]** [*Chapter III Standard III.2; Chapter III Standard III.3*]

1.19   The University encourages the mobility of staff and students (both in and outbound) at national and international level, including through financial support. **[13 p.23]** Underpinned by a strategic priority, the University organises international conferences. During 2015-16 University staff participated in 31 international conferences and 17 national and international events, the majority funded by the University. **[7 Note 88-90; 6.5]** A detailed orientation programme is organised by the Human Resources Office for all newly employed staff including foreign employees.**[6.15; M5]** [*Chapter III Standard III.4*]

1.20   The responsibilities for the organisation and management of the University are clearly set out in the University Statute and Regulations. The review team identified good practices in the University structures to support the development of internship opportunities through the development of collaborative and partnership arrangements with employers, and the Strategic Plan Development Board which provides effective oversight, approval, implementation and monitoring of the Strategic Plan. The review team did not identify any weaknesses or recommendations. The review team affirmed the inclusion of student representation on the membership of the Ethics Board in line with revised statute

requirements, and the appointment of Heads of each Research Centre by Sept 2017, in order to ensure that institutional research can be coordinated and managed effectively throughout the University.

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the Strategic Planning Board provides effective oversight of the approval, implementation and monitoring of the strategic plan (paragraph 1.13; *Chapter III Standard I.5*)
- the University structures to support the development of internship opportunities through the development of collaborative and partnership arrangements with employers (paragraph 1.18; *Chapter III Standard III.2* and *Chapter III Standard III.3*).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

Recommendations

The review team did not identify any recommendations.

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following actions already in progress:

- the recruitment of new heads of research centres for the start of the 2017-18 academic year (paragraph 1.4; *Chapter III Standard I.1*)
- the revised Ethics Board membership which will include student representation in line with revised statute requirements (paragraph 1.9; *Chapter III Standard I.2*).

Judgement

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

Evaluation Area 2: Resourcing

2.1   The recruitment of staff is governed by clear guidelines set out in the Regulatory Framework of the University, and managed in compliance with the Law on Higher Education and the Labour Code. **[3 Chapter 2; 3 Statute]** Clear job descriptions are drafted by Human Resources based on information provided by departments, and agreed with the Department Heads and the Faculty Dean. Salary levels are reviewed and approved by the Administrator in line with salary guidelines, and passed to the Rector for final approval. **[3.8; 24; 6.11; 16]** Job vacancies are advertised on the Epoka website, as is information about the University structure and management. **[6.10; 6.11]** Interested parties complete an online application form available through the website or may request additional information from the Human Resources Department**. [6.1; M3; 24]** A scoring system is set out in the regulations in compliance with the Law on Higher Education and the Labour Code 2961/1995, and points are awarded for academic publications and for time spent researching abroad. **[3 Chapter 2 Article 10]** Final decisions are made after interviews with recommendations for appointments submitted to the Rector for approval. **[3.8; 24]** Qualified individuals interested in working for the University are invited to complete a 'Cold Calling' application form which is then reviewed by the appropriate department and Faculty. **[website] [*Chapter III Standard IV.1;* ESG 1.5 Teaching Staff]**

2.2   The majority of staff at the University, around 60 per cent, hold qualifications gained through study at institutions outside of Albania, though the University does not have a policy of positive discrimination for those applicants with qualifications gained abroad. **[1; M3; 6.11]** Faculties and departments have arrangements for the mentoring and orientation of new staff, and all new employees are provided with a Staff Guide. **[6.44; M5]** New employees also have access to brochures and other information which provide information on departments and Research Centres along with the facilities of the University. Staff are also encouraged to take part in open forums which enable staff to discuss current developments and peer review research. **[6.15; 22; 6.5]** New staff are made familiar with programme promotional materials to help them gain an understanding of the overall University provision. **[22; M5; 9; 6.44]** To further help new staff to settle in to the University, they are also invited to social events including welcome lunches and informal gatherings to help them get to know managers and colleagues and to promote broader integration. **[6.15; 6.44]** Staff are also made aware of the training development plan and research strategy which are developed as part of the broader Faculty and University Strategic Plans. **[7.3; 7.1; M3]**An ongoing programme of social activities across the University provides opportunities for staff to exchange ideas and knowledge of ongoing research, and generally get to know eachother. This review team considers that this is **good practice**. Health insurance is provided for all staff whether employed in full or part-time roles.**[7.3; 6.44; 7.11] [*Chapter III Standard IV.2; ChapterIII Standard IV.4*]**

2.3   Clear policies and procedures are in place for the periodic assessment and evaluation of academic staff performance. Activities include observation of learning and teaching and annual assessment which aim to help staff evaluate and improve their performance and supports professional development. Student feedback through surveys is also used to identify good practices and key areas for individual as well as broader staff development. **[3; 6.27; 6.28; 6.29; M5]** Annual assessments and performance profiles are also considered when staff apply for more senior posts. **[6 1.3; 6.30; 6.33]** As appropriate, staff are encouraged by the University to participate in international projects, and activities including graduate programmes at partner institutions, particularly those in Europe, as part of the University's strategic plan to increase the number of staff with PhDs from institutions outside Albania. **[7.1; 6.32] [*Chapter III Standard IV.3;* ESG 1.8 Public Information]**

2.4   Staff are provided with opportunities to work with international staff engaged by the University to help review and support work on third-cycle programmes and to take part in

review committees. **[6 4]** Open forums are organised to encourage staff dialogue across departments, along with a programme of guest speakers and book launches.**[6.5; 9.7; M5]** Staff are also supported to apply for posts at the University of Tirana and the Polytechnic University of Tirana which may support their efforts to gain titles of Professor and Associate Professor. **[6.6; 7.1] [*Chapter III Standard IV.3*]**

2.5   Clear and comprehensive regulations are in place which define key responsibilities for identified roles. These range from the Rector, Administrator, Deans and Heads of Department to teaching and support staff, including job descriptions. **[3 Section 2 Statute; 16; M3]** There is a clear disciplinary code which is included in the Staff Guide and also set out within the Statute and Regulations, with explanations of what constitutes misconduct and possible penalties. **[6.44; 3.1]** Annual staff evaluation provides individual staff with more informal feedback on their performance, whileperformance assessment is used in relation to recommendations for promotion or continuation of employment. **[39; 6.14] [*Chapter III Standard II.2*]**

2.6   Procedures for the management of financial resources are set out in the Statute. **[3.1; 4.3; 3]** The Secretary General and the Finance Office are responsible for monitoring expenditure and for ensuring appropriate policies and procedures are complied with. **[3.1; 27; 10.14]** Accounts are audited as prescribed by Albanian Tax Legislation, and an audit report is produced by independent financial auditors. **[6.2; M3]** A summary of financial activities, including fee income and expenditure, is included in the Annual Report which is made available to both staff and students in the interests of transparency. **[6.5; M5; 3.8] [*Chapter III Standard VI.3*]**

2.7   The budget is drafted by the Rectorate based on information provided, and discussions with, departments and faculties and reflects the agreed strategic plans for the individual departments. The Faculty Administrative Board is Chaired by the Dean and is the highest collegial decision-making body within the Faculties.**[3.3; 7.2 - 7.10; 6.16; M3; M5]** The draft budget is forwarded to the Secretary General and the Finance Office for review before being passed to the Higher Board of the University who have the authority to approve expenditure. **[3; 7.1; 10]** Financial resources are allocated following the decisions of the Higher Board which represents the Parent Company as the University is in private ownership, and devolved funding is notified at department level with oversight by the Secretary General and the Finance Office. The Higher Board is also responsible for ensuring full compliance with legal requirements. **[4; 3.8; 27][*Chapter III Standard V.1*]**

2.8   Information management systems and the online information systems have been recently upgraded into an integrated system known as the Epoka Interactive System (EIS). **[6.5; 10.1; 57]** The system supports the recording of student data, provides staff and students with access to student services and learning materials. **[6.5; M5; M4; M9]** The system also supports the financial management and human resource functions, and enables the smoother access to and exchange of information across the University, including the facilitation of the production of reports at department and institutional level. **[10.1; 104; 38]** Students are registered onto programmes and modules and can access information and materials linked to their programme through the creation of their own account. Students canalso use their EIS accounts to access information and materials as well as communicate with lecturers and other staff. **[10.1; 57; M4; M5; M9]** Staff are able to use the system to support their teaching and administration management, as well as their research, through access to stored research materials and online links to other institutions' libraries. **[M5; 5.7; 5.11]** Blended learning is also supported through the linked e-learning platform. **[10.1; 6.18]** The integrated system generates reports to support management in the review and evaluation of provision, and can also produce reports to inform key meetings. **[6.5; 6.18] [*Chapter III Standard VII.1; Chapter III Standard VII.2;* ESG 1.7 Information Management]**

2.9   Students have access to a range of computer facilities through the two computer laboratories and classroom internet access. Printing and photocopying facilities are also available along with scanners and video-projectors. **[10.7; 10.15; Site visit; M4]**WhileEpoka does not provide any distance learning programmes it is able to support blended learning provision through its interactive platform. **[10 ICT - 1.3.1]** [*Chapter III Standard VII.2*]

2.10   The modern campus provides spacious facilities for teaching and learning as well as staff offices.The infrastructure is administered by the TurgutOzal Education Company, who have records relating to the real estate and the buildings which are maintained in good order. **[10.2; 7]** The current buildings provide 14,352 square metres of space to accommodate teaching, research, administrative and social activities as well as a cafeteria. **[10.8; site visit]** The classrooms have good lighting and large double-glazed windows. All areas meet requirements of the Ministry of Education and Sport for heating, lighting, water storage, acoustics, height and space requirements. **[23]** Further development plans for the campus have been drawnup to meet the future planned capacity of 3,500 students. **[M2; M3; 7]** The planning and decision-making related to buildings and facilities lies with the Education Company and the Higher Board of the University**. [4. 4.1 - 4.12; M3]** Facilities are made available to students for Student Council meetings and activities, and sports facilities in the form of volleyball pitches and football fields are provided along with ample parking for staff and students. The University also offers residential accommodation in a separate block for around 100 students. **[3.1; 3.3; 4.2; site visit]** [*Chapter III Standard VII.3;Chapter IIIStandard VII.5; Chapter III Standard V.1*]

2.11   Regulations are in place to ensure records and archives of information are kept.Record-keeping and archiving is managed by Faculty Coordinators and the Registrar's Office. Documents are kept in hardcopy and digital copies are also kept for the archive.**[8; 2]** The Rector's Office is responsible for maintaining records of key meetings and decisions including those of the Academic Senate and the AdministrativeBoard, in addition to students' documents including all student data, achievement and degree awards. **[4; 4.3; M1; M3]** Faculty Coordinators maintain records of decisions and meetings as well as correspondence with other bodies. **[3.1; 3.5; M9]** At the end of each year documents are archived in accordance with legal requirements.Data is processed and analysed by the Data Collection and Analysis Units and made available at institutional level to Boards and meetings as required. **[4; 4.12]** Data is managed and protected as required by law, and the University has a Data Collection and Analysis Unit which reports to the Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Board. **[26; 3.8; 4.5; 10.1; 6.18]** [*Chapter III Standard V.2*]

2.12   Cultural heritage systems are in place for the maintenance of academic, cultural and scientific information. Documents are kept in laboratories, the library and the public digital repository, which is unique to the University. **[3]** Copies of all syllabus information is recorded along with records of developments and scientific and research publications. **[4.17; 3.1; 3; 6.46]** [*Chapter III Standard VII.5; Chapter IIIStandard V.2*]

2.13   Epoka University has clear systems in place to manage its responsibility for resources, infrastructure and the needs of staff and students. Staff recruitment is managed by the Human Resources Office, and the integration of new staff is supported by an ongoing programme of social activities and open forums thatenable staff to meet and exchange ideas and which represents good practice. The University operates well-defined systems for managing its data and student information; however, the role of faculties in the review, development and management of budgets is unclear and identified as a weakness. The team recommends that the University consider developing a budgeting model that includes clear involvement of staff at all levels in the organisation.

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- an ongoing programme of social activities across the University provides opportunities for staff to exchange ideas and knowledge of ongoing research, and generally get to know each other (paragraph 2.2; *Chapter III Standard IV.2 and Standard III IV.4*).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

Recommendations

The review teamdid not identify any recommendations.

Affirmation of action being taken

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

Judgement

The Standards for Resourcing are fullymet.

Evaluation Area 3: The Curriculum

3.1   Epoka University has defined business and engineering as the priority fields of its academic offer, which reflect the institutional development objectives. **[7]** Currently, the University offers 10bachelor study programmes, seven professional master's, nine master's of science, one integrated diploma and six third-cycle programmes. Subject areas include computer engineering, civil engineering, architecture, economics, banking and finance, business administration, law, political science and international relations, and other social sciences. **[3.8 Statute (2016) Art.8]** The significant majority of programmes are delivered in English. **[1]** [*Chapter I Standard I.1*]

3.2   The study programmes comply with the frame of the Bologna Process and Albanian higher education legislation and comply with the European Credit Transfer System to facilitate student mobility. **[3.8 The Statute (2016), The Basic Regulation; 6.5]** General admission criteria, such as previous education level, Grade Point Average and English language proficiency level are defined in the Statute, and set out in the admissions regulations. Students' entry requirements include evidence of English language proficiency and fluency, and students are required to take English language entry tests. **[3.8 Statute (2016) Art.83-84-91-95; 3.8 Regulation 'On Undergraduate Studies and Examinations'; Annex 4; 6.24; 6.25;**http://admissions.epoka.edu.al /home-admission-criteria-1923-1924.html**; M7]** Additional criteria are set according to individual programme requirements for prior learning, and level of study. The delivery of programmes through the medium of English promotes student employability in Albania and internationally and is **good practice**.[*Chapter I Standard I.10; Chapter I Standard I.6; Chapter I Standard I.1*]

3.3   The University has clear procedures for the recruitment and admission of students. Information about study programmes is provided to prospective students and other stakeholders via the University website. Promotional campaigns are organised with pre-university education institutions, including public and private schools, and the University also promotes its programmes through attendance at national higher education fairs, and through the distribution of leaflets and brochures. **[M4; M7; Nr.59-62 Sample of leaflets and brochures; 6.5; 6.36]** External communications with the media are managed by the Media and Public Relations Office in accordance with agreed procedures. **[6.42; M9]** Groups of high school students are invited to visit the University where they have a chance to view facilities and to receive more detailed course information from staff. Prospective students are invited to take a computer-based English language test as part of their visit to ensure they meet the level of language proficiency required. **[6.34; M7]** [*Chapter I Standard I.1*]

3.4   The content of the study programmes is also available via the University website, in-campus noticeboards and screens, leaflets and brochures made available as part of the Orientation Day. **[36; M4; M7]** Students can also access course information through the Epoka Education Information System. **[6.19]** [*Chapter I Standard I.6*] Students receive key information about the University, its services and facilities through the Student Guide, and through contact with academic tutors and the Registrar's Office. **[37; 33; M5]** Students have access to guidance and additional support through the remedial courses offered and through personal academic tutors. Student advisers are also available to discuss issues and support students to resolve problems and to enable progression. **[33; 12; M4]**The individual support provided by student advisers at course level in monitoring and supporting student progression and achievement, represents **good practice**. The value of the support offered to students is evidenced in the qualification completion rates of undergraduate students which is above the national average. **[1 Table 23, Table 30; 6.5]** [*Chapter I Standard I.8*]

3.5   The quality of the assessment system is evaluated by the external evaluators, and reports indicate this is working appropriately. **[8.1; 38]** Assessment criteria are set out in the institutional regulations withthe grading system based on the institutional evaluation system

and published to students in the course materials. **[3.8; 6.46; M4]** The University applies the Albanian grading system, and uses the ECTS evaluation system and the American system. **[3.8 Chapter VII]** Grading criteria and examination methods are published in advance in the syllabus documents. At the end of the semester, students' transcripts record their grade point average and indicate whether the student has met all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria needed to support progression and graduation. Final thesis research papers are a requirement for the master's programmes, and have clear assessment and grading requirements to meet. Final thesis submissions are peer-reviewed. **[4 Decision of the Academic Senate 2.1.7; 80-84 Peer review of the final thesis]** However, the internal moderation of the grading of assessment is not always transparent as discussed in paragraph 4.2 below. **[site visit; 52; 54]** The success of the system is reflected in the University's rating against other institutions, which is important for the its reputation and ability to attract students. **[6.46; 6.23Annex 1 Statistics, Table 25/30]** The exam appeal procedures are defined in the regulation 'On Undergraduate studies and regulations'**[3.8]**. **[*Chapter I Standard I.1*]**

3.6   Epoka does not offer any part-time studies;however, the management and delivery of second and third-cycle study programmes is adapted to meet the needs of the employed students. **[M4]** Lifelong learning studies are offered upon external request by the Continuing Education Centre (CEC), a unit that offers training modules on education and technology to teachers. **[16-23]** The CEC has the capacity to increase its contribution to the institutional Staff Development Policy by offering a range of training programmes to staff and to alumni. **[M7][*Chapter I Standard I.2;Chapter I Standard I.4*]**

3.7   Study programmes are reviewed continuously and curricula updates are undertaken by the department and programme teams to support progression and employability. **[6.25; 6.22; Nr 92-100; M1]** Recommendations for amendments and updates to programmes have to comply with the requirements of the accreditation processes, and changes made must be supported by a rationale linked to curriculum improvement. **[M3]** The learning outcomes of a number of programmes at the University are aligned with the institutional strategies for promoting employability as well as the international links and cooperation agreements. **[7.1-7.10; M3; M5; M4]** The Diploma Supplement provides additional learning objectives along with earned competences which are linked directly to improved employability opportunities. Awarded diplomas and supplements are approved by the Ministry of Education and Sport and registered in its database. **[6.20] [*Chapter I Standard I.2; Chapter I Standard I.6;Chapter I Standard I.3; Chapter I Standard I.10*]**

3.8   Epoka continuously monitors its study programmes to ensure they remain coherent and reflective of local and national development needs. **[M2; 7.2]** Study programmes involve materials related to job market skills and professional knowledge demands. **[6.45]** Both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offer students internships or work-placement opportunities which promotes their employability profile. **[9.4; M4; 12]** All first and second-cycle programme are defined in ECTS credits which supports transparency for employers as well as student transfers and progression. **[6.23; 6.46]** Theories, principles and soft skills included in degrees have led to high rates of employment among graduates, including 89 per cent among Business graduates and 87 per cent for Civil Engineering. **[6.46; 51]** Data on student employment is collected by the Career Planning and Alumni Office and included in the Annual Report. **[19; M9] [*Chapter I Standard I.4; Chapter I Standard I.11*]**

3.9   The University is engaged in the development of new joint provision to broaden opportunities for its students. Epoka offers a joint degree with the University of the Applied Sciences in Mainz and the EADA Business School. This is a clear indicator of the work the University is undertaking to develop broader interdisciplinary provision to enhance its profile and the opportunities of its students. The University has also developed interdisciplinary

study programmes and promote its activity in a larger, international academic context. **[M2; 31; M3; 41.2; 4.16]** [*Chapter I Standard I.4*]

3.10   The Epoka legal framework clearly sets out the rules on the teaching load of its academic staff. The workload includes teaching, research, student support and administrative duties. **[3.8; M5]** Academic staff who are engaged in administrative duties have fewer teaching hours, but there is no clear guidance on how remission is calculated. The distribution of the teaching load of study programmes is primarily covered by the 65 full-time academic staff, and a lower number of part-time lecturers. **[1Table 46; 3.3]** The review team noted that the basis on which remission from teaching hours is made is not clear in all cases. The University notes that the Heads of Department hold responsibility for ensuring a balanced distribution of administrative duties among staff members, thus leading to potential inconsistencies, which the team considers constitutes a **weakness**. The team **recommends**as a priority thatthe University explores means to make clear the basis on which teaching remission is calculated and awarded to promote clarity for designated duties and research across the University.**[*Chapter I Standard I.5*]**

3.11   First-cycle study programmes are designed to comply with Level 6 of the Qualification Framework; they focus on disciplines which provide professional skills, critical understanding of theories and advanced skills that enhance problem-solving skills which support student employability. **[38; 38.1, ECE; 51]** Mobility is supported through the framework of partnership agreements approved by the Administrative Board of the Faculty. **[3.8]** The system of grade point average (GPA) assessment facilitates mobility procedures and participation in Erasmus+ programmes.**[6.23; M4]** [*Chapter I Standard I.7; Chapter I Standard I.10*]

3.12   The University seeks to ensure that its programmes are fit for purpose and reflect current practices and applications. Second and third-cycle programmes contain advanced theoretical and applied knowledge, and students are supported to develop their research skills and practice-based understanding within their subject area. **[3.8; 3.8; 97-100]** The teaching structure and learning activities are designed to contribute to students' individual achievements and academic research. The University also supports staff and students' development through encouraging participation in seminars, exhibitions, competitions, conferences, studio site trips, and other external opportunities. **[3.5; 21; M4; M5]** Research groups at unit level provide assistance to postgraduate students and check whether the content-based research is related to EU matters or initiatives, or covers areas of social enterprise. **[M5]** [*Chapter I Standard I.9*]

3.13   Each cycle builds on the knowledge of the previous level and the knowledge transmission from cycle to cycle is progressive.**[3.8]** Research ethics and research coherence with the institutional strategic development are taken into consideration. **[7.3]** Recruitment of qualified staff; particularly those who have gained qualifications abroad and who have academic titles is part of the University's policy for expanding its research base and curriculum development. **[M2; 1 Table 3.6, Table 33, Table 43; 5.3; 5.7]** [*Chapter I Standard I.7;Chapter I Standard I.8; Chapter I Standard I.9*]

3.14   Vocational training is an effectively embedded component of study programmes as appropriate, including practical skills being built through entrepreneurship, case-studies, professional practices and internships. **[3.8; M4]** The system of internships is formalised through agreements with employers and makes available a wide range of work experience opportunities which supports student employability. These include industry placements, internships in banks and private businesses and in commercial practices, which students are expected to undertake each summer, and are a requirement for course completion and graduation. **[6.5; 6.26; 37; M4]** Students receive support and guidance in finding suitable placements, and the University also uses alumni to broaden its network of placements.

Placements are checked to ensure that they meet student needs and practice-related requirements. **[15; 9.4; M7; M4]** The system of internships, which makes available a wide range of work experience opportunities, supports the development of student employability and constitutes **good practice**. **[M7; M4; M6; 14 Ref. Paragraph 5.22]**[*Chapter I Standard I.4; Chapter I Standard I.12*]

3.15   The variety of teaching and assessment methods supports student engagement with their studies, with delivery methods focusing on student-centred learning including group work, seminars, projects and practical activities. **[26]** Experts from a range of professions are invited as guest lecturers, curricula reviewers and part-time staff. **[1Table 30; 38.1; M3; 9.7]** All undergraduate and postgraduate programmes require students to submit a research paper or project and to undertake final examinations as part of their summative assessment, and input is sought from professionals in the relevant sector as appropriate. **[4.9; 4.19; M4; M5]** [*Chapter I Standard I.8; Chapter I Standard I.9*]

3.16   Students at Epoka are encouraged to participate in the social life of the University. They have access to a range of activities including sport events, open forums and student clubs.**[9.7; 10.11; 12]** A good range of social activities are organised to help students settle in to the University and to promote and support collaborations and interchanges between students and with staff. The open forums and lectures provide students and staff with opportunities to broaden their understanding of a range of subjects and to stimulate cooperation and cross-subject working. **[9.7; M4, M6 Ref. Paragraph 5.17/5.18]** [*Chapter I Standard I.11*]

3.17   The University offers study programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral level in line with its development strategy and faculty structures. Provision is adequately structured and aligned to the Bologna requirements and the Qualification Framework in Albania. The University has developed interdisciplinary awards with the aim to promote its activity in the broader international academic context. The delivery of programmes in English, the system of internships, organised by the University to provide a wide range of work experience opportunities, and the effective system of student advisers who effectively support and monitor student progress and achievement represent good practice. The University primarily recruits full-time academic staff who undertake most of the teaching and research workload. However, the review team noted that there is no clear and consistent system on which remission from teaching hours is calculated, which is a weakness. The team recommends that the University explores means to make clear the basis on which teaching remission is made.

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the delivery of programmes through the medium of English promotes student employability in Albania and internationally (paragraph 3.2; ***Chapter I Standard I.10***)
- the individual support provided by student advisers at course level in monitoring and supporting student progression and achievement(paragraph 3.4; ***Chapter I Standard I.8***)
- the system of internships organised by the University makes available a wide range of work experience opportunities which supports the development of student employability (paragraph 3.14; ***Chapter I Standard I.12***).

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weakness:

- the basis on which remission from teaching hours is made is not clear in all cases. The University notes that the Heads of Department hold responsibility for ensuring a balanced distribution of administrative duties among staff members, thus leading to potential inconsistencies (paragraph 3.10; ***Chapter I Standard I.5***).

Recommendations

The review team identifiedthe following recommendation:

- that the University makes clear the basis on which teaching remission is calculated and awarded to promote clarity across the University (Priority) (paragraph 3.10; ***Chapter I Standard I.5***).

Affirmation of action being taken

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

Judgement

The Standards for the Curriculum are substantially met.

Evaluation Area 4: Teaching, Learning Assessment and Research

4.1 The University operates with a full set of rules and procedures embodied in the 'Regulation on Undergraduate Studies and Examinations', the Regulation 'On Second Cycle Study Programs' and for PhD Study Programmes. **[3 Note 234; 4.19]** All regulations are published on the University website and communicated to all staff via official channels. **[3.2]** Faculty Boards supervise internships and monitors thesis submission, student projects, seminar work, practical work and research. **[3.3; M3; M5]** The University library provides supporting literature for all study programmes, the library has a total of 10,000 printed books including a range of online resources. **[10.10; 12; M2; M4] [ESG 1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification;*Chapter I Standard II.1*]**

4.2 Graduation criteria and procedures are published on the University website under the regulations for first, second and third-cycle programmes. **[13 p.51 Note 240/241/241]** The University uses a range of examination methods including quizzes, oral and written exams. **[3.3; M3]** A complaints procedure is in place to safeguard the objectivity of assessment. **[3.1; 3.3]** Each student at enrolment is provided with an online confidential account which registers all study programmes and informs students on the outcomes from each assessment. **[M5; 6.19]** Through review of several examination papers and in discussion with the University, it became evident that there is a lack of mechanisms for the checking of the grading ofpapers, cross-moderation and sampling of work by the Head of Department or Exam Commission, which the review team considersto be a **weakness**. **[52; 54]** The review team **recommends**as a high priority that the University develop and implement an independent mechanism for checking exam paper questions and the marking of exams to ensure appropriate coverage of the curriculum and the quality and fairness of marking.**[13 p.52 Note 244; 54] [ESG 1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification;*Chapter I Standard II.2*]**

4.3 Each faculty uses feedback from both peers and students to ensure that the delivery of teaching and learning is of the highest quality. In this regard, the University conducts student evaluations each semester and publishes the results of the student evaluations via its Annual Report. **[6.5; 6.29; 6.28; 40]** The Annual Report also includes the outcomes from entrance examinations, competitions and achievements. **[6.5]** Staff and student evaluations are used to inform and improve the coherence of study programmes. **[3.3; 6.5; 6.24; 40]** Programme objectives and the curricula are also reconsidered based upon student employment statistics reported at departmental level. The successful employability of students is a key determining factor in the development of master's programmes. **[38; M3; M4; 19] [ESG 1.3 Student Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment;*Chapter I Standard II.3*]**

4.4 The Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Board (AEQI) monitors the implementation of programme regulations and the overall teaching quality at University level. Faculty and departments utilise evaluation commissions which conduct peer reviews and assess student evaluations. **[3.3; 38; M3]** Faculties have not yet included the assessment of teaching effectiveness in the process for staff evaluation, although the new Staff Guide booklet confirms that it should be a primary factor in evaluation. **[38; 19]** The University believes the quality of teaching is a priority;however, the University confirmed that the new staff guide will not be implemented until 2017-18. **[13 p.53 Note 252; M3]** Students demonstrate high satisfaction levels with teaching quality in their annual evaluations. **[12; M3; M4]** The University supports staff in gaining further qualifications, as well as providing funding for research publications and conference and workshop attendance. **[13 p.54 Note 253/254/255/256/257; 5.1; 5.5; 5.8] [ESG 1.9 Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes;*Chapter I Standard II.4*]**

4.5　　The department is the basic teaching and research unit in the University. There are eightdepartments and one research centre as a base unit focused on teaching and research in the fields of political science, economics, law, business, design and engineering. The departments operate with research groups which function in each unit of research, with a reported 56 areas of research, 26 of which are related to the Department of Business and Administration. **[5.1; 41.4; 6.32; 6.5]** The Publication, Promotion and Scientific Activities Commissions converts the research achievements in points and grants money to staff to undertake research. **[5.5; 44]** Research is evaluated at department level and is also assessed by the Research and Project Office and AEQI board. **[M3; 4.5]** The University has signed cooperation agreements with 40 universities in 20 countries and the average number of publications of its academic staff since 2011 has been 84 publications in each year. **[5.3; 9.1]** The participation of the staff in international scientific events is financially covered by the University; the average rate is 10-15 events per year. **[5.8]**Since 2011, 11 books and 423 research papers and journal articles have been published by its full-time staff. **[5.3; 6.5]** [*Chapter II Standard I.1*]

4.6　　Scientific research is conducted at departmental level, as stated in the Statute and Law on Higher Education,**[3.1]** and organised within specific research disciplines. **[13 p.56 Note 263]** The University does, however, note that to achieve a critical mass of researchers it needs to focus on a smaller number of research areas. **[6.5; M2; 5.1]** The review team **affirms** that the University has developed plans to achieve a critical mass of researchers in order to focus on a smaller number of research areas. **[M2]** Financial support for research is submitted to the Academic Senate and is subject to approval by the Administration Board. Financial responsibility lies with the Faculty and the Administrative Board.**[56; 10.14; 27]** The financial support by the University has led to an increase in research outcomes including conferences, publications and staff mobility. The average number of publications per year since 2011 has been 84 (1.36 outputs per FTE), and the University has committed an average of between 10-12 per cent of its budget to supporting research. **[5.1; 5.3]** Although the University has actively sought bilateral agreements with foreign universities and a number of applications for research funds have been made, between 2012 and 2015 the number of authors for publication has fallen from 2.2 to 1.3. **[13 p.58 Note 270; 6.5]** [*Chapter II Standard I.2*]

4.7　　To increase visibility of research findings the University has organised ceremonial meetings where faculty members are able to publicise their research;however, the University reports that these events are a little adhoc or informal, and would wish to formalise future events. **[13 p.60 Note 281; 5.1; 6.5]** To encourage debate among faculty members, the University organises open lectures with renowned researchers, open forums with Albanian figures, ceremonial meetings and book publications. **[9.7; 13 p.61 Note 285/286; 6.5; M5; M4]** [*Chapter II Standard I.3*]

4.8　　The University's research priorities are linked to the applied sciences, engineering, design, business, law and social sciences. Research priorities are set out in broad terms within the Strategic Plan and the Research Strategy along with some measurable indicators. **[41.1; 41.2; 41.3; 41.4]** Objectives include increasing cooperation with national research organisations and the number of applications to national research projects. Through a review of documents and via discussions with academic staff, it became evident that the University research priorities are widespread, but lacked clarity and were not well understood and owned by staff met by the review team. **[41.1; 41.4; M3; M5]** The review team concluded that the lack of staff understanding of the University'sdevelopment and integration plans for research in order to support broader strategic approachesis a**weakness**. The review team **recommends**as a high prioritythatthe University develops a clear, focused, and integrated research strategy which articulates and promotes its research priorities for all staff. Additionally, as notedin paragraph 1.4, there is no strategy or facility for the evaluation of research outputs due to the lack of designated Heads of Research

Centres, which has inhibited the University's research focus. **[3.2; 13 p.62 -Note 293/294; M3]** [*Chapter II Standard I.4; Chapter II Standard I.5*]

4.9 The University has been active in engaging with the development of national research policies and national higher education policy at both institutional and individual level. The University regularly provides feedback to the Ministry of Education and Sports and drafts processes for the development of sectorial strategies. **[M7;5.1; 6.5]** The research strategy has incorporated some of the priorities set out in the National Strategy in Science, Technology and Innovation 2009-15. **[6.13]** The University regularly invites foreign academic staff to be guest lecturers or to undertake research with a view to promoting the internationalisation of study programmes. **[5.1; 5.5; 45; M5]** PhD candidates choose their topics of research by taking into consideration the research areas of each department, and their research is then integrated into the research groups which allows PhD students to publish together with their supervisors. **[M5; 5.3; M2; M5]** The University encourages young researchers to get involved in research projects and to publish papers in partnership with staff. **[M4; M5; 6.5]** [*Chapter II Standard I.6; Chapter IIStandard I.8*]

4.10 The University has developed a research regulatory framework for publication activities.**[41.4]** Research outcomes are stored on the department websites and uploaded to the University's digital repository. **[57 VLE Demonstration; M5]** The University has also developed a policy on intellectual property and is in the process of developing an Ethics Code supporting academic and administrative staff and including students. **[14; 3.3]** [*Chapter II Standard I.7*]

4.11 Monitoring of research takes place at departmental and faculty level and by the Research and Project Office, which ensures the coordination and effective use of resources. Research outputs are evaluated by the AEQI Board. **[41.2; 41.3]** The University strictly complies with the provisions of the regulation 'On ethics in research and publishing activities'. All papers, articles and dissertations prepared by students are subject to plagiarism testing using Turnitin - a plagiarism-detection software.**[3.3; M4; M5]** The University publishes on its website the full text of all PhD dissertations that have been defended by PhD candidates in front of the jury established by the Council of Professors. **[Website; M3; M5]** [*Chapter II Standard I.8*]

4.12 The responsibilities for the management of Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are set out in the University Statute, Regulations and Research Strategy. The review team did not identify any aspects of good practice in the evaluation of this Area. Weakness was identified with staff ownership of the University's research strategy and the focus on research priorities which have inhibited the development and integration of consistent research at departmental and research centre level; limited evaluation of research at research centre level due to the lack of designated senior management posts; and no independent mechanism for checking the marking of papers, or the standardisation of grading of students' work. The review team recommends that the University develops an integrated and focused research strategy that articulates the University's research priorities clearly throughout the institution and that is owned by staff, and develops and implements an independent mechanism for checking on exam paper questions and the marking of exams to ensure appropriate coverage of the curriculum and the quality and fairness of marking. The review team affirmed the University plans to achieve a critical mass of researchers in order to focus on a smaller number of research areas.

Findings

Good practice

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

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- lack of mechanisms for checking the grading of papers, cross-moderation and sampling of work (paragraph 4.2; *Chapter I Standard II.2*)
- the lack of staff understanding of the University'sdevelopment and integration plans for research,to support broader strategic approaches (paragraph 4.8; *Chapter II Standard I.4* and *Chapter II Standard I.5*).

Recommendations

The review team identifiedthe following recommendations:

- develop and implement an independent mechanism for checking exam paper questions and the marking of exams to ensure appropriate coverage of the curriculum and the quality and fairness of marking (High priority)(paragraph 4.2; *Chapter I Standard II.2*)
- the University develops a clear, focused, and integrated research strategy which articulates and promotes its research priorities for all staff (High priority)(paragraph 4.8; *Chapter II Standard I.4* and*Chapter II Standard I.5*).

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following action already in progress:

- the University has developed plans to achieve a critical mass of researchers in order to focus on a smaller number of research areas (paragraph 4.6; *Chapter II Standard I.2*).

Judgement

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

Evaluation Area 5: Students and their Support

5.1   The University has clear mechanisms and procedures for the admission of students. Epoka aligns its admission policy with the mid-term Institutional Development Strategy (2017-22). The strategy sets out the management of services for alumni and their subsequent employment. **[7.1 p. 7-84; M4; 6.43]** The admissions procedures are underpinned by the regulatory framework of the University.**[3.1; 8; 2.3; 6.35]** Assistance and guided services are offered by the Career Planning and Alumni Office and the Alumni Association and supported by marketing with allocated funding. **[6.36; 3.8; 3.1 Article.8; M7]** Printed leaflets and brochures are delivered to candidates during the promotional campaign and after their enrolment.**[59-62] [*Chapter I Standard III.I; Chapter I Standard III.3*]**

5.2   Epoka designs a Career Planning Programme to attract prospective students from the pre-university education institutions and sends the information to Regional Educational Directorates in Albania, Kosovoand Macedonia. **[3.36; M7]** Open days and education fairs are organised annually on the University campus, and the University is represented at national higher education fairs. **[3.5; M7]** The Universitywebsite displays information about enrolment procedures and study programme curricula and learning objectives. **[Website, M7]**

5.3   Support for new students is effectively managed. The Student Guide and the Orientation Day support the integration of freshmen students to the University. **[37; 50]** Foreign students are supported in finding accommodation and receive advice to ensure that the necessary documentation for enrolment is completed. **[M7; 37; 6.5; 12]** Walk-in visiting hours, information sessions, and contact emails of the administrative staff are also made available to support students. Academic advisers and student help-groups/clubs offer assistance to newly enrolled students. **[M4; M5] [*Chapter I Standard III.1; Chapter I Standard III.2*]**

5.4   The Admission Office guides and monitors the whole integration process and documentation, and can be contacted year-round. **[6.43]** The Registrar's Office is responsible for keeping student records and individual files in line with the data protection bylaws. **[3.8 Article 27; M7; 3.5]** The file includes a Study Contract,**[6.37]** details of the English language proficiency exam, diploma of State Matura, transcripts, ID, as well as personal data, pre-graduation documentation, university transcripts and diploma supplements. The office also stores for one year all submitted assessment reports, which are later sent to the institutional archive. **[3.3; 3.5; M7] [*Chapter I Standard III.1; Chapter I Standard III.2*]**

5.5   The University ensures that students receive appropriate academic teaching and support. The University has staff to student ratio of one academic staff member for every 17 students which is well within statutory requirements. **[5.2;3.1.2 table 38]** The average ratio of research and teaching assistants to students was reported to be one to every 34 in 2015-16. **[1 table 39][*Chapter I Standard III.1*]**

5.6   The University organises its internal and external communications to support students and to engage with other stakeholders. The Media and PROfficemanages the external communications with the media to provide coverage of academic and research activity.**[6.1 p.193-3; 6.42]** Internal communication in terms of top-down information dissemination and announcements is managed in a written form and made available electronically to staff and students, as appropriate, through their university email addresses. **[M4; M5; M7; 37]** The University stores records of the official University email addresses and phone numbers of the academic staff and students. **[6.41; M3; M7]** Students are provided with a Student Guide which contains key information and contact details,

withadvice and guidance also available through the office of the Dean of Students. **[37; 3.9; M7]** [*Chapter I Standard III.2*]

5.7   Introductory classes and elective courses make up first year study programmes and support students to settle into their studies. Tutors and academic advisers monitor student progress and provide academic support and advice. **[6.46; 6.38; M4; M5; M7; 3.8]** Counselling and guidance on the selection of study programmes, in line with the candidate skills is also provided. Student advisers assist students to organise their educational plan according to their skills and interests. **[M5; 3.4; 6.37; 6.40]**

5.8   Study transfer guidelines and credit transfer procedures are clearly defined in University procedures and regulations. **[3.9 Directive 'On Transfer between departments'; 3.8; M4]** The Dean of Students Office offers advice and guidance on careers and employment, supports and advises on finding accommodation, changing courses, as well offering advice on financial matters. Students can also seek advice on gaining help with health-related issues where this may not be available through the campus doctor's office. Students confirmed that the advice and guidance they receive is clear and accessible, and that they can discuss any pastoral matters and additional support needs and gain the help required. **[3.5; 3.1; 3.3; M3; M7; M4]** All of the services offered to students are monitored and intermediated by the Dean of the Students. **[3.4; 3.1; M7]** This office also manages Mentorship Programmes to coordinate the department tutorship for students who have difficulties in meeting the course requirements. **[6.10; M4; M7]**The information, advice and guidance provided to students through the Careers Office and Dean of Students is clear and proactive in responding to student needs and the review team considers this is**good practice**. **[16]** [*Chapter I Standard III.1; Chapter I Standard III.3*]

5.9   Epoka does not have a formal policy on support of students with disabilities. One of the main buildings is accessible via a ramp and has a lift for reaching upper floors. **[site visit; 38]** The student cafeteria and social areas housed in the second main building are located on the ground floors and also accessible to people with physical disabilities. However, the library, situated on the second floor, cannot be accessed.**[M7; site visit]**Epoka plans to amend its admission policy to include students with disabilities in the next academic year. The team **affirms** that the University has updated its admissions policy and procedures to include the admission of students with disabilities. **[4.18; M7]**[*Chapter I Standard III.4*]

5.10   Scholarships are offered to students from minority groups including Roma and Balkan Egyptians, the children of police officers killed in the line of duty and orphans from low-income families. The University also offers scholarships to students with high grade point averages (GPA) from high schools and to students who excel at sport.**[4.4; 4.18]** The system of scholarships provided to students with high GPA scores, especially for candidates living in the Vora Municipality (University location), is an example of **good practice** through which a private University is able to attract high achieving students and continue to build its provision. **[*Chapter I Standard III.4*]**

5.11   The library of Epoka has a stock of 10,000 printed books, which are also digitally catalogued. The catalogue can be accessed onthe University website. [http://lib.epoka.edu.al/] Books are multidisciplinary, related to the subject areas and fiction literature is also offered. The library stores graduate and PhD research papers of the students. The library also provides access to 16 online research sources along with internet access. **[3.9; 49]** The library fund is enriched by budget allocations for book purchases, in line with department requests. **[4.15]** Library opening times are 8:30 - 17:30 on weekdays and 09:00 -13:00 on Saturdays, **[site visit]** and details are posted on the website. Students use their Student ID Card to access library sources. **[6.39; M4]** The library resources are

available through a self-service system, and librarians provide assistance for students to access relevant literature. **[3.9; site visit; M4]** [*Chapter I Standard III.5; Chapter I III.6*]

5.12   The University includes student representatives in itsdecision-making bodies. The Student Council represents student concerns through Faculty Boards. The Faculty Boards meets once per semester whichallows for issues raised by students to be addressed by the University. **[3.9; 3.1; M4; 4]** Meetings of the Administrative Board are attended by the President and the Vice-President of the Student Council. **[M7]** Under the provisions of the new Statute, the President and Vice-President of the Student Council will be members of the Academic Senate, the student voice having been previously represented by the Dean/Vice-Dean of Students. **[3.1; M3]** Students will have representation on the Council of Ethics through their Vice-President, and are also represented on the AEQI Board, as well as having been actively involved in the self-evaluation process. **[14.1; 6.4; M3]** The changes articulated in the new Statute **affirm** the improvement of the representation of students on decision-taking committees. **[3.1; 6.29]** [*Chapter I Standard III.7*]

5.13   Epoka pursues a supportive policy in relation to students' extracurricular activities. Support is provided for the activity of 18 students' clubs, which represent the interests of students in different areas (academic awareness, social concerns, entrepreneurship, art, culture, sport, IT, etc.). **[3.9;**http://clubs.epoka.edu.al/clubs-2**]** Students are engaged in the institutional football league tournament, and other sporting events. The provision of space and facilities for sport activities and for students' club meetings, and the fact that students are also invited to guest lectures and open forums,represents**good practice**. **[site visit; 10.11; M4; M7]** Health care services for students and staff are provided on campus, through a full-time employed medical practitioner, who offers day-long service. **[site visit]** [*Chapter I Standard III.8*]

5.14   The University has effective systems for promoting student employability. The Career Planning and Alumni Office record the employment destinations of the students. **[7.12; 6.5]** The data is gathered through contact with alumni following graduation including by email and through social media, and recorded on the alumni database. **[M6; 7.11]** Employment rates of graduates are above the national average, with 75 per cent of the graduates in the academic year 2015-16 employed in the first year after graduation.**[6.5 p.31; 51]** The Career Planning and Alumni Office organises career seminars and training for students in their final year, **[6.36]** before they participate in the annual Jobs Fair hosted on campus. The annual Jobs Fair has been running for six years and attracts large numbers of employers which enables students to access real job market vacancies. The organisation of the Jobs Fair which draws on the University's wide network of contacts represents **good practice** in supporting student employability.**[***Chapter I Standard III.9***]**

5.15   Internships are formalised as part of the curriculum and attendance is obligatory, with students required to engage in internships over the summer break, and to attend summer courses as appropriate. The internships and summer courses form part of the University's strategy to prepare students for employment, which includes the development of 'soft skills'. **[M4; 9.4; 6.36]** Cooperation with the Simulation Hub in Tirana has increased the staff expertise and serves to enhance knowledge of the job market and the skills and qualification requirements. **[M2; M4; M7]** Academic staff review the internship outcomes of the students, which include the employers' report, and use them to inform individual achievement profiles. **[M5; M6; 3: Chapter 2- Internships during undergraduate studies, 15]** [*Chapter I Standard II.9*]

5.16   The University provides effective support and guidance to its student body, along with a range of extracurricular activities. As a campus university,resources include a well-stocked library, sports and leisure areas and activities. The provision of space and facilities for sports activities and for students' club meetings is considered an example of good

practice as discussed at paragraph 5.13.The information advice and guidance provided by the Careers Office and the Dean of Students Office, the annual Jobs Fair and the University's system of scholarships which attracts high achieving students also represent good practice and serve to build student employability. The review team affirms the changes to the admissions policy and procedure to improve access for disabled students and the improved student representation on Boards through the new Statute.

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the information, advice and guidance provided to students through the Careers Office and Dean of Students is clear and proactive in responding to student needs (paragraph 5.8; *Chapter I Standard III.1* and *Chapter I Standard III.3*)
- the system of scholarships provided to students with high GPA scores, especially for candidates living in the Vora Municipality (University location) (paragraph 5.10; *Chapter I Standard III.4*)
- the provision of space and facilities for sport activities and for students' club meetings, and the fact that students are also invited to guest lectures and open forums (paragraph 5.13;*Chapter I Standard III.8*)
- the organisation of the Jobs Fair which draws on the University's wide network of contacts (paragraph 5.14; *Chapter I Standard III.9*).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

Recommendations

The review team did not identify any recommendations.

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following actions already in progress:

- the University has updated its admissions policy and procedures to include the admission of students with disabilities (paragraph 5.9; *Chapter I Standard III.4*)
- improvement to the representation of students on decision-taking committees (paragraph 5.12; *Chapter I Standard III.7*).

Judgement

The Standards for Students and their Support are fully met.

Evidence list

Ordinal Number in AMS	Documents
Annex 1	1. Statistics
Annex 2	2. Decisions of the Council of Ministers and Ordinances
Annex 3	3. Regulatory Framework of Epoka 3.1. Organization & Management 3.2 Organization Chart 3.3. List of rules and regulations 3.4 Student's representation 3.5. Student Affairs 3.6 Current organization Scheme of Epoka University 3.7 Organization Scheme of Epoka University as of 2017-2018 academic year 3.8 Internal Legal Framework of Epoka University 3.9 Number of amendments of the Regulations, Directives and other internal legal acts of EpokaUniv'ty
Annex 4	4 Decision Making Processes 4.1 Meetings of the Decisions Making Bodies of Epoka University for 2016 4. 2 1 Decision-making body: Higher Board of Epoka University for 2016 4.3 Decision-making body: Senate of Epoka University for 2016 4 .4 Decision-making body: Administrative Board of Epoka University for 2016 4.5 Decision-making body: Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement (AEQI) Board for 2016 4.6 Decision-making body: The Council of Professors of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences '16 4.7 Decision-making body: The Board of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences for 2016 4.9 Decision-making body: Council of Professors of the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering for 2016 4.10 Decision-making body: Administrative Board of the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering for 2016 4.11 Decision-making body: Board of the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering for 2016 4.12 Functional Process Map 4.13 Graduation of Students 4.14 Admission Quotas 4.15 Book Purchase 4.16Opening of the new study programs 4.17 Publications 4.18 Offering of Scholarships for specific categories 4.19 Final Comprehensive Exam 4.20 Approval of the Statute of Epoka University
Annex 5	5. List of Research Activities and Conferences 5.11. Research Activities at Epoka 5.2 General data 5.3 List of publications 5.4 Conferences 5.5 Research and Development Projects 5.6 Application for projects in International Programs

	5.7 List of Publications 5.8 List of conferences supported financially by Epoka
Annex 6	6. Samples of Documentation illustrating University Procedures and Committees 6.1 Organization and Management 6.2 Audit report - 2015 6.3 Meeting Agenda - Academic Senate 6.4 Meeting Agenda – AEQI Board 6.5 Annual report 6.6 Cooperation and partnership 6.7 Project rationale in relation to the needs of Albania and the region 6.8 Cooperation agreement 6.9 PGM – ISO Certificate 6.10 Job Vacancy Position – Announcement 6.11 Job vacancy recruitment decision. 6.12 Resources 6.13 Faculty Involvement in the development of national research and higher education policies. 6.14 Promotion and award of academic titles 6.15 Staff integration activities 6.16 Financial resources 6.17 Department Needs 6.18 Information System 6.19 Student Guide ICT. 6.20 Diploma and Supplement 6.21 Course Appointment for FEAS & FAE 6.22 Approval of Curricula Change in BINF 6.23 Student Transcript 6.24 Senate Decisions Concerning Entrance Criteria 6.25 English language requirements 6.26 Study programs & Objectives 6.27 Evaluation of Teaching and Research 6.28 Peer Evaluation of Teaching 6.29 Student evaluation of Teaching 6.30 Academic evaluation 6.31 Academic Staff for 2017-2018 academic year 6.32 Research and training activities 6.33 Training activities 6.34 Student Affairs 6.35 Student Admission 6.36 Career Planning Program 6.37 Student's data 6.38 Student's services 6.39 Student's ID 6.40 Remedial courses 6.41 Office Procedures 6.42 Media and Public Relations Office Procedures 6.43 Admission Office Procedures 6.44 Staff Guide 6.45 Market Research Survey for opening PICD in law 6.46 Course Syllabus sample
Annex 7	7 Strategic Plans and Evaluation 7.1 Epoka's Strategic Plan 2013-17 . 7.2 Interim Evaluation Report of the Epoka University Strategic Plan 2013-2017

	7.3 Strategic Plans of the departments 7.4 Department of Banking and Finance Strategic Plan 2017-2022 7.5 Department of Business Administration Strategic Plan 2017-2022 7.6 Department of Economics Strategic Plan 2017-2022 7.7 Department of Political Science and International Relations Strategic Plan 2017-22 7.8 Department of Architecture Strategic Plan 2017-2022 7.9 Department of Computer Engineering Strategic Plan 2017-2022 7.10 Department of Civil Engineering Strategic Plan 2017-2022. 7.11 List of employment strategies and policies 7.12 List of labour market studies and surveys
Annex 8	8 National Legal Framework
Annex 9	9 List of Partners 9.1 Higher education partners 9.2 Partnerships according to country and cooperation program 9.3 List of industry and business partners 9.4 List of companies where student have completed their internships 9.5 List of business partners 9.6 List of governmental institution partners 9.7 Open Forums at Epoka University 9.8 List of service providers at Epoka University
Annex 10	10 Resources 10.1 Epoka Interactive System 10.2 General services for students and faculty 10.3 Students resources 10.4 Teaching & Learning resources 10.5 Student Affairs 10.6 Faculty Resource Management (finance, hardware, documents). 10.7 Facilities and inventories 10.8 Teaching facilities and laboratories 10.9 Cafeteria 10.10 Library 10.11 Recreation environments 10.12 Parking 10.13 Evaluation based on the legal criteria 10.14 Financial: Budgeting Process at Epoka University 10.15 Table 1: Teaching facilities and laboratories 10.16 Table 2: Classes used during the 2016-2017 academic year 10.17 Table 3: Auditoriums used during the 2016-2017 academic year 10.18 Table 4: Laboratories used during the 2016-2017 academic year 10.19 Table 5: Number of teaching facilities and PCs 10.20 Table 7: Satisfaction with the service - Cafeteria 10.21 Table 8: Use of library in the academic year 2015-16
Annex 11	11 Staff Survey Results
Annex 12	12 Student Survey Results
Annex 13	13 Epoka Self-evaluation Report
Nr. 2-3	14 Ethics Code. 14.1 Ethics Code Guidelines 14.2 Decisions on travel and study proposals
Nr. 14	15. List of internships offered by the University in the last 2 years.
Nr. 15	16. Job Description for the role of the Dean of Students.
Nr. 16-23	17. Information on the role of the Continuous Education Centre.

Nr. 4-13 Nr. 24-42	18. Minutes of Administrative Board meetings. 18.1- Meeting dated 31.05.2016; 18.2 - Meeting dated 17.01.2017; 18.3 - Meeting dated 28.03.2017. 18.4 – Decisions of the Administrative Board
Nr. 43	19. decision making processes including annual monitoring and evaluation reporting and: *Annual Report of the Department of Civil Engineering as a sample.*
Nr. 44-51	20. List of members of the Council of Professors, including external members and a copy of the remit of the Council. 20.1 - Members of the Council of Professors; 20.2 - Minutes of the Council of Professors; 20.3 - Decisions of the Council of Professors; 20.4 - Distribution of the Decisions of the Council of Professors.
Nr. 52-58 and Nr.125	21. Financial support offered by the University for the Academic Participation in international research activities.
Nr. 59-62	22. Sample of leaflets and brochures on the University and its provision available to prospective students for first, second and third cycle programmes of study. English & Albanian
Nr. 63	23. Compliance with accommodation requirements certified by external expert.
Nr. 64	24. Recruitment procedure of the full-time and part-time academic staff.
Nr. 65	25. Evidence of the "Hygienic Permission" which covers aspects of meeting the Standard for noise control, heating, fire-alarms, fire-exits, etc. (Albanian)
Nr. 66	26. Information on the professional IT programmes offered at the computer laboratories, and a short commentary on how these contribute to programme learning outcomes.
Nr. 67-68	27. Procedures for compiling and approving budgets for 2017 including approval from the Trust. Clarification of how budgets are implemented and who is responsible for monitoring the spending and value for money. 27.1 - Budgeting Process at Epoka University has been already submitted as attachment in Annex 10: chapter 3 of the Self-Evaluation Report. 27.2 - Department Needs for 2017-2018 have been already submitted as attachment in Annex 6: chapter 2.2.1 of the Self-Evaluation Report.
Nr. 69	28. IT information systems access to courses and course information for staff and students. List of programmes that can be accessed.
Nr. 70	29. Regulation of a Bachelor, Masters and Doctorate study programmes (within one subject area or Faculty, including the requirements for progression from one cycle to the next and links between the curricula.
Nr. 71	30. Qualification requirements for the staff teaching on the first, second and third cycle programmes, including part-time staff for those programmes given as examples in question 16.
Nr. 72	31 Number of students enrolled on the joint study programme with the University of Mainz.
Nr. 73-76	32. List of the annual workload, including teaching hours, for full-time academic staff.
Nr. 77-79	33. Job Descriptions and workload information for the student personal advisors.
Nr. 80-84	34. Peer review of the final comprehensive exam.
Nr. 85	35. Student feedback including feedback on pre-course information.
Nr. 86-90	36. Student Induction Programme
Nr. 91	37. Copy of the Student Guide

	37.1 - Student Guide has also been cited in the Self-Evaluation Report: Reference No. 326 See for instance Student Guide 2016-2017. http://epoka.edu.al/mat/Student_Guide_2016- 2017.pdf
Nr. 92-100	38. Programme Reviews/annual monitoring and review reports – one each for a first cycle and a second cycle programme. (Albanian with brief outcomes in English) 38.1 - Internal Evaluation Reports and External Evaluation Reports of the Bachelor in BINF, Bachelor in ECE, MSc in ECO and MSc in ECE study programs.
Nr. 101-102	39 Evaluation of teaching staff
Nr. 103	40. Utilisation of student satisfaction with teaching surveys to further enhance the quality of learning and teaching.
Nr. 104-107	41. University Strategy Document 41.1 University Research Strategy 41.2 Epoka Strategic Plan 41.3 Interim Evaluation of Epoka Strategic Plan 41.4 Regulation of Scientific Research
Nr. 108-111	42. Example of a follow-up procedure initiated by the AEQI Board which has led to the improvement of the study programmes and to the quality of teaching. 42.1 Decisions 42.2 Teacher Training Agenda 42.3 Teacher Training Report
Nr. 112	43. Example of a course register.
Nr. 113-118	44 Procedure for the evaluation and associated monetary reward to academic staff linked to research achievement example
Nr. 119	45. Statistical data on research staff mobility for the 2016.
Nr. 120-121	46. Faculty board supervision of second cycle graduation thesis example.
Nr. 122	47. Copy of the 2017-18 Roma and Balkan Egyptian scholarship policy and any associated quotas for programmes. 47.1 - Copy of the decision on the offering of the Scholarships to the Roma and Balkan Egyptian has been already submitted as attachment in Annex 4: chapter 2.1.6 of the Self-Evaluation Report.
Nr. 123	48. Actual number of scholarships awarded for the last two years in each of the special categories, and includes students with excellent high school scores.
Nr. 124	49. Report on University evaluate the Library and range of resources.
Nr. 126-130	50. Example of an Orientation Day programme 50.1 - Link; 50.2 - Photos; 50.3 - attendance lists; 50.4- ppt presentation which has been delivered.
Nr 131	51. Data on national employment statistics and how the University graduates compare
Nr	52 Exam Papers - assessed
	53 Grading Appeal Examples
	54 Course files
	55 Draft appraisal form
	56 Updated budget data-sheet to include 2016 projections

No	Meetings
M1	Meeting with the Facilitator and Self-evaluation development team

M2	Meeting with the Rector
M3	Meeting with Senior Staff
M4	Meeting with Students
M5	Meeting with Teaching Staff
M6	Meeting with Employers an Alumni
M7	Meeting with Support Staff