



**AGJENCIA E SIGURIMIT TË CILËSISË NË ARSIMIN E
LARTË**

**Report of the Institutional Accreditation
of Western Balkans University**

April, 2024

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About this review

The overall aim of Institutional Review is to assess the extent to which each HEI meets the Albanian Quality Code Standards which came into force in 2021. The Institutional Review is a peer review process with each review team composed of a mix of international reviewers and Albanian reviewers appointed by ASCAL.

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

The Albanian Quality Code Standards have been grouped under five headings, the Evaluation Areas: Management, Autonomy, and Quality Assurance; Resources and Partnership; Study Programs, Teaching, and Evaluation; Scientific/Artistic Activity and Innovation; Students and Their Support. This report identifies features of good practice, recommendations, affirmations of actions in progress and weaknesses for each Evaluation Area, together with a judgement as to how well the HEI meets the standards. The judgements that the reviewers may assign are: standards are fully met; standards are substantially met; standards are partly met; or standards are not met.

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

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



The context of this review

Western Balkans University (WBU) is a recently established higher education institution, established by the Council of Ministers' Decision No. 679, dated 10.11.2021, "On the opening of the non-public Higher Education Institution Western Balkans University". The Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Assurance in Higher Education (AQAHE/ASCAL) received an application from the university requesting accreditation.

The institution applied for accreditation in accordance with timeline and accreditation procedure requested by ASCAL. This accreditation process is for first time and is obligatory for accreditation of study programs and diploma issuing.

Western Balkans University in a new institution in Albanian higher education system. Actually, WBU offers programs of first-cycle, second-cycle and operates as a private university with academic and scientific departments. The International Hygeia Hospital and the American Hospitals Group collaborated to establish the university as a private legal organization recognized by Albanian civil and commercial law, registered in the National Business Center.

Actually, the university is composed of three faculties [Ev. No.2.19], 20 programs and 11 administrative units:

- Faculty of Dental Medicine; Department of Dentistry, Department of Basic Sciences, Research Center for Quality and Safety of Oral Healthcare.
- Faculty of Technical Medical Sciences; Department of Nursing and Physiotherapy, Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences and Imaging, Medical Department, Surgery Department, Research Center for the Study of Rare Diseases.
- Faculty of Economics, Technology and Innovation, Department of Technology and Business, Department of Economic Sciences and Finance, Research Center for Medical Sciences, Technology and Innovation.

WBU offers 20 study programs, including 3 Master of Science degrees, 2 integrated second-level programs, and 15 Bachelor programs. All the programs are reorganized by law 80/2015 and DCM No. 41, amended. Western Balkans University's study programs are all designed to be compatible with the American higher education system and to be adjusted to ECTS credits, by the Bologna Process. The entire teaching process is conducted in English and Albanian.

The mission of the university is to transmit, develop, and generate knowledge through teaching, research, innovation, and other services for students and stakeholders. The goals of Western Balkans University are to provide a qualitative education, offer cutting-edge facilities for teaching and learning, foster student motivation in the provision of healthcare, and raise regional and international health standards. Based on the Institution's Statute and strategy, WBU graduates will be ready to take on leadership roles in the workplace, fostering innovation, creativity, and professional development while also building competitive advantages. As an international institution, WBU's students come from Albania, the Balkans, and other countries. To get a strong international profile, WBU offers dual study programs in medical and computer sciences.



Summary report

The Higher Education Institution, Western Balkans University (WBU) is an Albanian non-public institution of higher education licenced with the Council of Ministers' Decision No. 679, dated 10.11.2021. This is the first Institutional Review of WBU to assess the extent to which the Albanian Quality Code Standards have been met. This external evaluation report reviews the period 2022-2024 in which the institutions have the full operation.

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

The site visit took place over two days on 5 and 6 March 2024. The review team was made up of one senior academic reviewer from Kosovo and one senior academic reviewer from Albania. The review team consisted of Mr. Niko Hyka (Lead Reviewer) and Mr. Lul Raka (Reviewer). The review team was supported by the Review Manager provided by the Albanian Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (ASCAL). The review team received the Self-evaluation Report and the portfolio of supporting evidence weeks in advance of the review visit. The wide range of supporting information provided by WBU enabled the team to familiarize with the structure, policies, procedures, and nature of teaching and research activity undertaken. Evidences included the Statute and Regulations, internal reports, admission and orientation procedures, a list of external agreements and memoranda, examples of program information, and evidence of deliberative meetings.

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

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

The review team judges that:

The Standards for the Higher Education Institution - Management, Autonomy, and Quality Assurance are **fully met**; In reaching this judgment, the review team noted two feature of good practice regarding framework with regulations, policies and procedures to support the implementation of the institution's statute. Periodic assessments of academic achievement, student evaluations, staff evaluations, and administrative assistant evaluations are carried out by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQUA) to support the increasing the quality of the study programs. WBU provided strong evidence documents to demonstrate its commitment to creating a culture of quality and continuous improvement of teaching and processes in



support of teaching and quality assurance through, among others, the Internal Quality Assurance Unit and accompanying policy and procedures related to internal quality assurance. The review team has affirmed one action being taken in this Evaluation Area. The internal quality assurance policies, procedures, and activities performed last two years, are efficient and effective to support the institution's ambitions in the field of quality assurance and quality culture at the institutional level

The Standards for Resources and Partnerships are **fully met**. In reaching this judgment, the review team noted three features of good practice and two affirmation. During the site visit it was clear that the institution has made investments in the improvement of the educational and laboratory infrastructure and consistently modernized its current facilities and equipment with the good support of the founders. Also, WBU provides working, teaching, and lab premises comfortable for the academic staff and students, as well as students and persons with disabilities. The institution's strategy of establishing an integrated archive of the institution and implementation of SMART-WBU is very useful for the institution. Registration of foreign students as well as academic staff from other countries, is highly valued by the review team as it is in line with the strategy and objectives of the institution to be an institution with an international profile. The review team affirms that the university is working to enhance the research infrastructure by pursuing information technology and biobank-related research initiatives. If we take into consideration the short time of the institution, we believe that these initiatives will strengthen academic staff members' infrastructure for doing scientific research. The review team identify that cooperation agreements with local, national, and international institutions, as well as with other universities around the country, reflect these aims and ambition.

The Standards for Study Programs, Teaching, and Evaluation are **fully met**. In reaching this judgment, the review team noted two features of good practice and identified one affirmation already being implemented. Throughout the review process, we consider the offering of programs in the English language, which enables not only access to a wide international literature, but supports the institution to be competitive into international market of foreign students, increasing its international profile and supporting of joint programs and mobility, a good practice. The development and application in practice of the knowledge and skills acquired by students, through the EPIC program. Beneficiaries are all WBU students studying in one of the study programs. The combination of theoretical and practical skills and the connection of students with the labour market, and their preparation for employment is a good practice. The review team identified the following action being taken during the visit. We were informed that the programs are in the first phase of their accreditation and for this reason fundamental changes are not allowed until the accreditation of the programs is completed. We encourage the institution to continuously monitor and update these programs as they are part of the fields that currently have the fastest development in technology, innovation and implementation. In the context of continuous improvement in the institution, the academic and administrative staff is subjected to training for the further improvement of teaching and other important processes through an international project for quality assurance. It demonstrates the commitment of the institution to consolidate the internal quality assurance system based on international practices.



The Standards for Scientific/artistic activity and innovation are **fully met**. In reaching this judgment, the review team noted five features of good practice, identified one affirmation already being implemented and made one recommendation. The review team concluded that the financial concerns are not an issue, as the primary sources of income and investment are from the founding companies, ensuring long-term financial stability. Leadership views the construction of a new campus with 40,000 square meters, as a significant investment. The university has built relationships with other research organizations and takes part in joint projects, involving both local and international researchers, through the signing of cooperation or participation agreements or participation in joint activity events. The department successfully integrated teaching, scientific research, and extracurricular activities into its planning. This is further supported by establishing dedicated working groups for research, ensuring adherence to legal and contractual obligations. The Scientific Research Regulation at WBU ensures the quality of research carried out by its staff and students and the responsibilities and rights of everyone involved. As a result, the review team was able to recommend strengthening the laboratory equipment within the biology field and the ICT lab equipment is necessary to support the academic staff needs in the field of biology and ICT. The affirmation is related to positive steps to enhance research capabilities and should continue to increase the involvement of both staff and students in research activity.

The Standards for Students and their Support are **fully met**. In reaching this judgment the review team noted two features of good practice and identified one affirmation already being implemented. The percentage of students dropping out, compared to other private institutions in this field, is relatively high—approximately 25% of the students have failed to advance to the next year and have requested to transfer elsewhere. WBU offers various scholarships, including excellence and institutional scholarships through partnerships, and special scholarships for certain regions' graduates. The affirmation is related to the Office of Graduates (Alumni Office), to track graduates in the labor market, as well as create a wide network of communication and developing activities with them. We encourage the university to preserve the relevant data in the following since the institution does not have graduate students and we are unable to assess the follow-up of graduate students. As a result, the review team was able to confirm that the State Standards included under Evaluation Area 5 have been addressed fully.

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



Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- The institution has a strong framework with regulations, policies and procedures to support the implementation of the institution's statute. **(Annex No. 1, Standard I.1).**
- Periodic assessments of academic achievement, student evaluations, staff evaluations, and administrative assistant evaluations are carried out by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQUA) to support the increasing the quality of the study programs **(Annex No. 1, Standard I.8)**
- The institution has made investments in the improvement of the educational and laboratory infrastructure and consistently modernized its current facilities and equipment with the good support of the founders. Also, WBU provides working, teaching, and lab premises comfortable for the academic staff and students, as well as students and persons with disabilities. **(Annex No. 1, Standard II.7), (Annex No. 1, Standard II.9)**
- The institution's strategy of establishing an integrated archive of the institution and implementation of SMART-WBU. **(Annex No. 1, Standard II.14)**
- Registration of foreign students as well as academic staff from other countries, is highly valued by review team as it is in line with the strategy and objectives of the institution to be an institution with an international profile. **(Annex No. 1, Standard II.21)**
- Offering of programs in the English language, which enables not only access to a wide international literature, but supports the institution to be competitive into international market of foreign students, increasing its international profile and supporting of joint programs and mobility. **(Annex No. 1, Standard III.7)**
- The development and application in practice of the knowledge and skills acquired by students, through the EPIC program. Beneficiaries are all WBU students studying in one of the study programs. **(Annex No. 1, Standard III.14).** The combination of theoretical and practical skills and the connection of students with the labour market, and their preparation for employment is a good practice. **(Annex No. 1, Standard III.16). (Annex No. 1, Standard III.20)**
- Financial concerns are not an issue, as the primary sources of income and investment are from the founding companies, ensuring long-term financial stability. **(Annex No. 1, Standard IV.1)**
- The university has built relationships with other research organizations and takes part in joint projects, involving both local and international researchers, through the signing of cooperation or participation agreements or participation in joint activity events. **(Annex No. 1, Standard IV.3)**
- The department successfully integrated teaching, scientific research, and extracurricular activities into its planning. This is further supported by establishing dedicated working groups for research, ensuring adherence to legal and contractual obligations. **(Annex No. 1, Standard IV.7).**



- The Scientific Research Regulation at WBU ensures the quality of research carried out by its staff and students and the responsibilities and rights of everyone involved (**Annex No. 1, Standard IV.10**).
- The review group notes that WBU effectively fulfills the criteria for engaging foreign staff and diaspora members in its teaching and research activities. (**Annex No. 1, Standard IV.13**).
- The percentage of students dropping out, compared to other private institutions in this field, is relatively high—approximately 25% of the students have failed to advance to the next year and have requested to transfer elsewhere. (**Annex No. 1, Standard V.1**).
- WBU offers various scholarships, including excellence and institutional scholarships through partnerships, and special scholarships for certain regions' graduates. (**Annex No. 1, Standard V.2**).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendations:

- Strengthen the laboratory equipment within the biology field and the ICT lab equipment is necessary to support the academic staff needs in the field of biology and ICT. (**Annex No. 1, Standard IV.11**).

Affirmation of action being taken

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

- The internal quality assurance policies, procedures, and activities performed last years, are efficient and effective in order to support the institution's ambitions in the field of quality assurance and quality culture at institutional level (**Annex No. 1, Standard I.11**)
- The review team affirms that the university is working to enhance the research infrastructure by pursuing information technology and biobank-related research initiatives. If we take into consideration the short time of the institution, we believe that these initiatives will strengthen academic staff members' infrastructure for doing scientific research. (**Annex No. 1, Standard II.8**)
- The review team identify that cooperation agreements with local, national, and international institutions, as well as with other universities around the country, reflect these aims and ambition. (**Annex No. 1, Standard II.19**)
- In the context of continuous improvement in the institution, the academic and administrative staff is subjected to training for the further improvement of teaching and other important processes through an international project for quality assurance. It demonstrates the commitment of the institution to consolidate the internal quality assurance system based on international practices. (**Annex No. 1, Standard III.12**)

- The institution has taken positive steps to enhance research capabilities and should continue to increase the involvement of both staff and students in research activity. **(Annex No. 1, Standard IV.9).**
- The institution has established the Office of Graduates (Alumni Office), to track graduates in the labour market as well as create a wide network of communication and developing activities with them. We encourage the university to preserve the relevant data in the following since the institution does not have graduate students and we are unable to assess the follow-up of graduate students. **(Annex No. 1, Standard V.8).**

 

Summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area

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

Summary Judgement

The reviewers recommend to the Accreditation Board that at the Western Balkans University the Quality Code Standards are fully met.



Detailed report

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

- 1.1 The Council of Ministers' Decision No. 679, dated 10.11.2021, "On the opening of the non-public Higher Education Institution Western Balkans University," created WBU as a non-public higher education institution. Both the current bylaws and Law No. 80/2015 for Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Republic of Albania are adhered to in its structure and functioning. The WBU's essential principles, goals, and objectives are outlined in the statute that was adopted by ministry. **[Ev. 1.1]** The Statute defines the mission, objectives, status and organisational management of the university. It also covers selection procedures, decision-making bodies, authority levels, quality assurance of study programmes, student enrolment and graduation, rights and responsibilities of staff and students, research activity and financial matters. Widespread understanding of the relevant parts of the Statute was confirmed during meetings with staff from across the WBU. The review team identify that the Academic Senate and the Board of Administration have adopted the Western Balkans University's organizational chart, which shows the relationships and dependencies among its constituent divisions. Also, internal regulations and acts are continuously improved and adjusted in response to suggestions and requests from the Student Council and/or the units, **[BM2]**, **[Ev. 1.2]**. The review team evaluates very positively the drafting of many regulations and procedures in function of the good implementation of the institution's statute. **(Annex No. 1, Standard I.1)**
- 1.2 The institution demonstrates management efficiency, as evidenced by the structured budget process and financial management. According to the WBU Statute, the University's governing bodies are separated into three categories: administrative, academic, and other. The Academic Senate is the highest body within the university. There are fifteen members of the Academic Senate. **[Ev. 1.1]**, **[Ev. 1.2]**. The Rector, two vice-rectors, the deans of the faculties, and the dean of students make up the function's members. The academic staff assemblies of the main units hold general elections to choose the remaining members. The Student Council's president and vice president take part in the Academic Senate. The regular performance evaluation of academic and administrative staff, as part of the institution's assessment plan, further exemplifies efficient management practices. **[Ev. 1.3]** The Faculty is administered by the Dean's Office as the collegial executive body of the main unit. The dean's office consists of the dean, deputy dean, administrator of the main unit, and head of the department/scientific research centre. Other collegial bodies in WBU are The Ethics Council; the Dean of Students; and the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. Due to the feature it presents as a HEI, the International Advisory Board is organized and functions at WBU. The review team judges that the university has a good structural organization, which enables it to be efficient in management. However, due to the short time of operation, we cannot yet judge how efficient this organization is in the context of the long-term performance and sustainability of the institution. **[BM2]**. **(Annex No. 1, Standard I.2)**



- 1.3 The university's 2023–2030 plan was developed in compliance with the WBU Statute and the Law on Higher Education, which specify the institution's goals and purposes as a higher education institution [Ev. 1.10], [Ev. 1.11]. Based on the meeting with WBU's President, the plan is to establish WBU as a premier hub for teaching and research in the area and beyond. In order to accomplish the institution's mission, aims, and obligations, the strategy has established the institution's goals, objectives, and actions for the upcoming years. The planning process is dynamic, incorporating input from both internal and external stakeholders. This strategic approach is evident in the discussions during the meetings at the institution, emphasizing the commitment to long-term strategic objectives. [Ev. 1.10; BM2; BM4]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.3*)
- 1.4 The university has autonomy on organizational structure, academic staff management, and finances. In order to carry out its mission, financial autonomy is ensured by the right to generate lawful revenue from teaching, scientific research, services, and other sources; to receive funding from the government and other organizations; to establish internal guidelines for the financing and use of income; to set study fees; and to manage its assets, to determine criteria for the admission of students in study programs in accordance with the law and other legal and by-law acts in force, to conclude agreements with legal entities, public and private, domestic or foreign, for teaching, research-scientific, qualification activities, etc. [Ev. 1.12] The right to self-govern, ensures organizational autonomy and academic freedom. [BM2; BM4; BM7]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.4*)
- 1.5 Through its collegial organizations, which have different functions and responsibilities, such as the Senate and Rectorate, the institution promotes productive discourse. Frequent gatherings of these groups help in the formulation and implementation of policies by exhibiting a setting that encourages candid discussion and decision-making (verified through on-site interviews). The different bodies convene on a regular basis in accordance with their bylaws, and agenda items are distributed beforehand. Meetings with staff [BM3] made it clear to the review team that they felt heard and involved in choices made by the university, both on subjects of personal importance to them and the institution. Periodically, the following convene: The Academic Senate, the Board of Administration, the Rectorate, the Dean's Office, the Departments, the Centers, and the designated Commissions. The members of these structures are provided with discussion materials before each meeting, allowing them the chance to review the materials and consider the options before making any choices. [Ev. 1.13]. [BM4]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.5*)
- 1.6 Transparency is a key focus of the institution, with the institution making public the activities and reports of its collegial bodies. In compliance with Article 32 of Law No.80/2015, WBU produces for each academic year the annual report, which is submitted to the MES and published in the official website of the university. The annual report informs the MES on the academic activity, financial situation, forecast on academic staff engagement, offers an overall quality assessment of students and study programmes, and school tuitions for the upcoming years [Ev. 1.15]. The annual report is based on input submitted periodically by the academic units as well as the external/internal evaluation to assess the effectiveness of teaching and research at the



WBU in line with the agreed objectives and set standards. The Senate, Rectorate and Administrative Board discuss and approve this document with the involvement of all participating stakeholders [SER, p10]. [Ev. 1.18]. This report is presented by the Rectorate during the Academic Senate meeting and became an object of discussion among academic and administrative staff and students [BM2, BM9]. The report findings are used by the Rectorate to take measures on addressing evidenced challenges at the institutional or specific aspects and also identify the responsible structures for their fulfilment. [BM4]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.6*)

- 1.7 The university employs systematic data collection and feedback for internal quality assurance. Regular evaluations assess the quality of educational programs and organizational units, ensuring the continuous development and improvement of study programs. This commitment to quality assurance was reflected in the discussions during the meeting with Teaching Staff, where quality assurance challenges and strategies are addressed. In addition, since the institution is at the first stage of its functionality, for some activities regarding graduates, alumni is not yet possible to provide information. The annual report is drafted by the institution and represent the information from academic and financial activities for the year [Ev. 1.17]. Because it includes a thorough analysis, it aids in both internal and external assessments of the institution. The academic activity reports of the main units and minor WBU constituent units served as the basis for the final product. Also, the institution's website offers data on income and budgetary expenses, along with details about the decision-making processes of academic, administrative, and collegial bodies. [BM4]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.7*)
- 1.8 WBU has internal quality assurance policies, processes, and procedures that comply with its internal acts as well as the applicable laws and sub-laws. The Permanent Commission for Guaranteeing Institutional Quality Standards and Study Programs was established and is run by WBU. [Ev. 1.21]. The Commission is in charge of creating internal quality assurance policies and processes. The institution monitors the quality of study programs periodically for continuous improvement. The review team finds that the periodic assessments of academic achievement, student evaluations, staff evaluations, and administrative assistant evaluations are carried out by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQUA) with the function of increasing the quality of the study programs. This unit gathers data through various questionnaires, including the students' assessments of the subjects, which are also looked at in the annual analysis of the basic units. IQUA is composed of 5 people; a representation from each faculty, a student, and an external expert. Academic program administration and coordination, including curriculum development, implementation, assessment, and outreach, are provided by the academic program coordinator. To plan, organize, coordinate, evaluate, and participate in an academic program, this position offers specialized academic expertise. The Internal Quality Assurance Unit has proposed a package of evaluation instruments, to periodically evaluate the results of the quality of education, research, human resources, finance, infrastructure, public relations, international relations, social and cultural activities, and works within quality development and improvement activities at WBU. [Ev. 1.23]. This package consists of formats assessment, categorized according to the need and importance of assessment, institutionalizing quality culture at WBU [BM7]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.8*)



1.9 The Internal Quality Assurance Unit at WBU has proposed a package of evaluation instruments, to periodically evaluate the results of the quality of education, research, human resources, finance, infrastructure, public relations, international relations, social and cultural activities, works within quality development and improvement activities at WBU. Various assessment tools and methodologies are used to evaluate its study programs' effectiveness, aligning with the discussions in the "Evaluation Team Meeting," which highlighted the need for enhanced research publications [Ev. 1.19]. The IQAU conducts periodic internal evaluations of the study programs. This structure administers the topic evaluation questionnaire twice a year, just before to the start of exam season. [Ev. 1.28]. The information from the questionnaire is analysed, and the results and suggestions that apply are included in the report. The reports are included in the self-assessment report for the study program or institutional accreditation, as well as the annual analysis of the units or the institution [Ev. 1.29]. [BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.9*)

1.10 In order to ensure and continuously improve the quality of the study programs, the WBU's internal acts anticipate and uphold internal quality policies and processes and involve both internal and external actors. The IQAU includes members from the student body as well as outside specialists who actively participate in its annual activities [Ev. 1.31]. The reports produced by the IQAU are made public through the official website. [www.wbu.edu.al]. The work plan and departmental discussions include the report findings. The institution's internal acts and the corresponding rules specify the roles and responsibilities of the Permanent Committee for Guaranteeing Institutional Quality Standards and Study Programs, IQAU, and other entities. Involving academic units, staff, and students in the study programs' IQA process, the institution ensures an inclusive approach [Ev. 1.27]. The engagement of the fundamental and primary unit responsible for the study programs, the academic, administrative, and staff members, as well as the students in the particular study programs, is ensured in the evaluation and assurance of the quality of the study programs. [Ev. 1.32]. When creating and carrying out study plans, the fundamental unit adheres to quality requirements. In this case, it also involves outside specialists in the creation of curricula, reviews of relevant material, or suggestions for fresh study plans. To represent the views of the students, the student representative is asked to attend the meetings that the unit organizes. The IQAU's make up includes representatives from each primary unit, student representatives, and external expert [Ev. 1.33], (*Annex No. 1, Standard I.10*)

1.11 The organization, strategy, policy, and practices of quality assurance are open and available to the public. The institution's website features a section solely dedicated to the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. [Ev. 1.31]. The purpose is to provide information regarding WBU's internal quality assurance procedures, the unit's structure, and its yearly work plan. The IQAU's yearly reports are periodically posted in this column for the benefit of students, employees, and other interested parties, in compliance with the transparency concept. [Ev. 1.38] The appropriate recommendations are included with the evaluation reports, and other institutional structures create a plan of action for their fulfilment based on necessity and need. WBU regularly plans events for students, academic staff, academic assistants, and administrative personnel to educate and

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink are visible at the bottom of the page. The signature on the left is more stylized and cursive, while the one on the right is more legible and appears to be a name.

increase their understanding of the need of maintaining and enhance the long-term quality of study programs. Review team affirms that the institution has made good steps on quality culture at institutional level. The internal quality assurance policies, procedures, and activities performed last years, are efficient and effective in order to support the institution's ambitions in the field of quality assurance. (**Annex No. 1, Standard I.11**)

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- The institution has a strong framework with regulations, policies and procedures to support the implementation of the institution's statute. (**Annex No. 1, Standard I.1**).
- Periodic assessments of academic achievement, student evaluations, staff evaluations, and administrative assistant evaluations are carried out by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQUA) to support the increasing the quality of the study programs (**Annex No. 1, Standard I.8**)

Weaknesses

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

Recommendations

The review team did not make any recommendations in this Evaluation Area.

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team has affirmed one action being taken in this Evaluation Area.

- The internal quality assurance policies, procedures, and activities performed last two years, are efficient and effective in order to support the institution's ambitions in the field of quality assurance and quality culture at institutional level (**Annex No. 1, Standard I.11**)

Judgment

The standards for Higher Education Institution - Management, Autonomy, and Quality Assurance are: fully met.



Evaluation Area 2: Resources and Partnership

2.1 As a non-public higher education institution, Western Balkan University operates in compliance with the laws, regulations, and bylaws governing higher education in Albania. The organizational structure complies with Higher Education Law 80/2015. The primary regulatory papers of the institution, including the statute, the regulation, and other actions derived from them, reflect the institutional structure, organization, and organization chart. Employees may be engaged on a full-time or part-time basis, under a contract with a set end date or an arbitrary one. The requirements for hiring full-time academic staff are set by the base unit, based on the needs of the latter, and approved by the rectorate, in accordance with WBU Statute and Regulation. The institution's website and other communication channels both post the job opening notice. The announcement includes details on the job description, responsibilities, and duties in addition to information on the application, deadlines, and required papers. WBU hires outside expertise on a contract basis in addition to part-time academic and administrative staff. [Ev. 2.64]. The vacancy announcement is posted on the institution's website and other communication channels, much like the procedure mentioned above. The announcement includes details on the job description, responsibilities, and duties in addition to information on the application, deadlines, and required papers [Ev. 1.13]. Depending on their areas of competence, service contracts are used to hire outside experts. The open employment policy aligns with the institution's broader objectives of fostering an inclusive and dynamic educational environment [Ev. 2.4]. The review team identified that the institution demonstrates a commitment to an open and transparent recruitment process. The policies and procedures followed by the institution ensure that hiring practices are equitable and inclusive, aiming to attract a diverse range of talented and qualified individuals to contribute to the institution's academic and administrative roles. [Ev. 2.1], [BM2; BM5]. *(Annex No. 1, Standard II.1)*

2.2 A collaborative environment is emphasized in the institution's policy on the integration of academic, assistant, research, and administrative staff. This policy aims to promote teamwork and cross-functional collaboration by integrating all employees into the institutional culture, regardless of their roles. Maintaining a positive and productive environment that supports academic success requires this kind of approach [Ev. 2], [BM2; BM5]. WBU has created and implemented specified procedures for staff progression and continued qualification by existing laws and regulations. The Staff Guide document is available for academic staff members to use as a reference for their work within the organization [Ev. 2.4]. Additionally, several events are hosted every academic year to support the integration of administrative, academic, and assistant staff members. To support academic personnel, the university organizes training for many processes and duties. These include teaching and learning development methodologies, SMART-WBU, technology us, important scientific promotional initiatives, etc. Employees of WBU participate in pertinent ad hoc structures as well as collegial decision-making bodies [Ev. 2.2]. Also, WBU supports the integration of the academic and administrative staff in social life and encourages them to be part of several different activities such as entertainment activities, organized in collaboration with other institutions of higher education or partners [Ev. 2.5]. The university can provide WBU staff members and their



families with financial and social assistance equal to 30–70% of the services they receive at this hospital because it collaborates with the American Hospital. All information the academic and administrative staff need is available through SMARTWBU platform [Ev. 1.13]. The review team identified that the recruitment to academic units, is supported by needs analysis specific to the faculty, department, study programme and the curricula regardless whether the role is full or part-time. Through cooperation agreements with foreign universities under the Erasmus+ program, WBU promotes academic staff mobility [BM5, BM6, BM9] and also supports staff mobility in order to assist academic personnel at WBU, foreign lecturers have also involved in training process. [SER, p15]. (Annex No. 1, Standard II.2)

2.3 The university emphasizes the ongoing evaluation and skill development of its employees. The institution ensures that staff members are prepared to address the changing needs of higher education by actively identifying and developing their abilities. WBU assesses staff performance using a comprehensive suite of tools that allow it to track, in various ways, the performance of academic staff members across all categories and at all levels of the institutional hierarchy. [Ev. 2.8]. The staff evaluation questionnaire for students and the performance self-assessment process, which is a component of the quality instrument package, is used for the evaluation. Every member of the academic staff completes the performance self-evaluation form, which has pertinent indicators, at the end of the academic year. The gathered information is included in the department, faculty, and institutional unit's annual analysis. The review team identified that the institution has a policy for evaluating its administrative and academic staff performance. The academic staff performance usually is performed at the end of the subject/module. A program quality questionnaire created by the internal quality assurance unit is distributed to the students of the course. Every year, a survey is conducted to find out what kind of training the WBU employees require [Ev. 1.27]. The findings enable the preparation of a training schedule and the fulfilment of it, involving specialists in the pertinent domains. It is feasible to promote conversation as a secure space for discussion and idea exchange among professionals, experts in various fields, researchers, and staff members with one another through regular meetings and open discussion forums. [BM4; BM5]. To address the identified needs emerging from the quality teaching performance assessment, the institution has set staff development goals in various documents and regulations and has pursued a policy of continuous staff training in line with these goals. WBU provides its employees with the chance to advance their education both domestically and internationally. The university provides support to its staff in their proposals to secure national or international funding for their projects. In case of need, the university offers administrative and academic support infrastructure to assist with the application process by providing relevant information, guidelines, and materials [Ev. 2.10]. To enhance the staff's performance, the university welcomes local or foreign professors and specialists for training and qualifications as part of its international profile. Moreover, the university assists academic staff with publications and encourages their involvement in scientific research activities. [B6; B5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard II.3)

2.4 Students and faculty members are invited to engage in social and cultural events at WBU in addition to scientific ones. The goal of these events is to foster a friendly atmosphere on campus and to get students interacting with one each-other [Ev. 2.15].

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The administration of students' interactions with the university is overseen by the Dean of Students. In collaboration with the governing organizations, he carries out his tasks and organizes the students' socio-cultural events. Several social events that involved students and staff were planned for the last academic year [Ev. 2.16]. This approach involves engaging in initiatives that go beyond the academic realm, fostering social responsibility, and encouraging staff and students to participate in activities that have a broader societal impact. Such a policy underscores the institution's commitment to social awareness and responsibility [Ev.2.14; 2.15; 2.16]. The institution is dedicated to implementing integration policies for academic and administrative staff to encourage involvement in national and international development activities, according to the evaluation team's overall assessment of the institution's pursuit of a social development policy. A variety of events involving stakeholders are also planned [Ev. 2.19]. Through its several activities, the institution is dedicated to taking on a more significant role in the socio-economic to meet the demands of the national and international labor market. [2.14; 2.10; 2.17]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.4*)

- 2.5 For academic and administrative staff, the institution honours and carries out its employees' contractual work requirements and obligations, as well as financial and social security obligations and other duties resulting from current laws and bylaws. After the Board of Administration approves the employment, the Rector concludes the indefinite-term employment contract for academic staff and academic assistants working for the institution. The contract is renewed based on performance evaluations and quality assessments in the areas of scientific research, teaching, and the support and advancement of the institution. WBU is a new HEI, but based on its mission and objectives, the institution commits to guarantee the long-term sustainability of its academic staff. This approach ensures stability and continuity in the academic staff, which is crucial for maintaining the quality of education and research. [BM5; BM7]. The basis for recruitment, employment arrangements, and employment reports is the Labour Code, the requirements for academic engagement, curriculum, and/or function at the academy, and the specific provisions in the specific staff employment contract, including descriptions of work. WBU makes sure that academic staff categories are fairly distributed in terms of age and experience, allowing for continuity, experience sharing, and the advancement of foundational units. [Ev. 2.14; 2.10; 2.17; 2.15]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.5*)
- 2.6 The university has a structured process for evaluating and supporting its staff to meet their academic and administrative responsibilities while also promoting their academic success and growth. WBU through IQAU has established personnel management policies that are relevant to both academic and non-academic staff, starting with identifying the human resource needs and assessing the performance of current staff. The approach involves performance evaluations and providing the necessary resources and training to help the staff effectively fulfil their duties. [Ev. 2.22]. The staff receives additional training during the academic year to clarify the contents and process. The evaluation is based on self-assessment where the head department assesses the academic staff's work using performance evaluation and related metrics. Student questionnaires are used to track and assess how well academic staff members are fulfilling their duties in relation to teaching processes. For administrative staff evaluation,



WBU organizes an annual questionnaire [Ev. 2.21]. The collected information is analysed to provide a report and overall assessment. The annual evaluation also is performed for each unit and for overall institutional evaluation. Review team identified that the institutions appraises and supports its own staff in meeting their annual academic and administrative obligations in accordance with individual contracts, the role, activities and workload. Creating specialized policies and procedures aids staff in managing their responsibilities throughout the year. [Ev. 1.35]. Additionally, there are clear and transparent terms and methods for taking disciplinary and administrative measures against violators, as well as provisions of individual contracts, performance assessments and compensation based on expected contributions, and reviews of contractual conditions [BM4; BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.6*)

2.7 The institution's management of its real estate focuses on their continuous maintenance, development, and improvement. This process involves strategic investment in infrastructure to support the institution's needs, ensuring that facilities are up-to-date and conducive to learning and research activities. As to the terms of the 10-year leasing contract, this infrastructure is owned by institution. WBU is set up like a typical university campus, complete with three buildings, with parking, and a courtyard. As is mentioned by the Rector, the Plan for the new University Campus is already designed. The buildings have emergency stairs, internal stairs, an elevator, and lighting and ventilation [Ev. 2.21]. Ten lecture halls, ten seminar halls, one conference hall, seventeen laboratory spaces, three Internet halls (the number three denotes computer laboratories), one hall for promotional activities, one library, three study rooms, one multipurpose hall, one environment for photocopying and bookstore, one environment for students, forty offices, two meeting rooms, halls, and common areas, and fifty-seven hydro sanitary units are all contained within the structures of the buildings [Ev. 2.20]. We found that the institution has made investments in the improvement of the educational and laboratory infrastructure and consistently modernized its current facilities and equipment with the good support of the founders. The review team identified that the legal quality criteria are met in terms of the quality of learning environments compared with actual student numbers. [BM4; BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.7*)

2.8 The university has made available the infrastructure and environment needed to support all academic activities linked to teaching and research. This involves making certain that the spaces have the tools and technology required to support the institution's activities, learning, research, and social activities. In general, all teaching and learning spaces are well equipped with smart boards, wi-fi, natural light, air conditioning, etc. Protocols for quality control, communication of possible problems, and cooperative resolution were in place. The academic staff has the necessary infrastructure to support their research activities, according to the evaluation team's assessment of the scientific infrastructure. The review team affirms that the university is working to enhance the research infrastructure by pursuing information technology and biobank-related research initiatives. If we take into consideration the short time of the institution, we believe that these initiatives will strengthen academic staff members' infrastructure for doing scientific research. [BM3; BM4; BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.8*)



2.9 The institution prioritizes the quality of its premises for academic staff and students. This includes the provision of accessible and well-equipped working, teaching, and laboratory spaces. As mentioned, the institution has a good quality and spacious campus outside city. Classrooms for lectures and seminars are furnished with new chairs and tables that are adequate for educational purposes. These spaces have smart boards which are utilized for instructional purposes [Ev. 2.20, Tour]. These spaces have air conditioning and ventilation systems in addition to natural lighting, create enough opportunities for quality teaching, the creation of an environment supportive of debates and constructive exchange of ideas between students and lecturers and among students themselves. The lab spaces are furnished with all the equipment required for teaching. Laboratory installations are new, especially the labs for medicine programs. [Ev. 2.27]. A trained staff has access to the laboratory facilities, and students are given the appropriate lab attire. Staff members and students have access to designated lockers for keeping clothes and other belongings [Ev. 2.22]. The review team identified that the institution provides working, teaching, and lab premises comfortable for the academic staff and students, as well as students and persons with disabilities. [BM3; BM4; BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.9*)

2.10 As previously stated, WBU currently has operational laboratories that are available for use in the teaching process following the study programs. The laboratory spaces are furnished with all the equipment required for teaching, [Ev. 2.29], [Ev. 2.20]. Laboratory waste management is done in compliance with the environmental criteria. [Ev. 2.27.] The institution offers guidelines and expert information for research labs. These spaces are furnished with tools and technology to facilitate practical education and research [Ev. 2.28]. To better serve dentistry program students in the second semester of the 2023–2024 academic year, the institution is expanding its laboratory infrastructure in this area. The review team during the site visit found that the facility's laboratory infrastructure was adequate. [BM3; BM4; Tour]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.10*)

2.11 During the site visit, the review team, identified that the institution ensures the availability of appropriate facilities for rest, sports, parking, transport, and entertainment for students and staff. The institution engages in periodic monitoring of its infrastructure to ensure upgrades and improvements are made as needed. [Ev. 2.33, 2.34, 2.35, 2.36]. A bar and canteen have been established as a unique space for students and staff, on building B's top floor [Ev. 2.32]. The premises have a designated first aid centre with a responsible individual on the ground floor. Also, there are appropriate conferences or exhibitions in support of creative and promotional endeavours. The large halls have all the audio-visual equipment required to ensure that events like conferences, ceremonies, trainings, and presentations go off without a hitch. There is also a library with more than 20,000 copies and with a big space for reading research and another area dedicated to activities such as book launches or watching movies and documentaries [Ev. 2.40, 2.41]. During meetings with students, the review team was informed that they were very happy with the recreation facilities and that they were instrumental in facilitating their studies, alleviating their stress, and enabling a sense of community and belonging. [BM3; BM4; BM5, Tour]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.11; Standard II.12*)



2.12 Documentation of academic activities in both hard and soft copy is maintained by the institution and is stipulated clearly in its main regulatory documents. This ensures that all academic processes, decisions, and outcomes are recorded and accessible, thus providing transparency and accountability. [Ev. 2.33, 2.34, 2.35, 2.36]. More specifically, the documentation related to human resources, related contracts, and respective procedures are filed in the Office of Human Resources. In addition, at the start of the academic year, the staff is assigned their annual workload and other expected outputs, which is done in writing and constitute an integral part of their overall assessment. Overall, the review team noted that at WBU there are effective coordinated management systems in place to ensure the care and preservation of all documentation and information, including student data held by secretariats. In addition, the review team found that electronic storage and archiving facilities within libraries met all expectations [BM3; BM4; BM5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard II.13). The Office of Protocol and Correspondence keeps the records by the current legislative provisions. The office is in charge of the archiving, storage, and effective use of the university's documents, following its Regulations and by-laws in force. Documents created by the institution's governing bodies and units are gathered, managed, stored, recorded, and used by the office. The institution has production unit-level document digitization available via the SMART WBU platform [Ev. 2.42, 2.46]. Administrative offices like the teaching secretariat and Human Resources are responsible for gathering and analysing the data. As per the current bylaws, WBU maintains a database about student registration, matriculation numbers, and other associated information. General details regarding the program, form, curriculum, and required study credits are available at WBU. The dean's office and the basic units are in charge of managing and storing documents. They are fully uploaded to SMART WBU and published online [Ev. 2.65]. The basic register of students with their personal information, the basic register for the evaluations received while completing the study program in written and electronic form, and the register for the diploma or diplomas obtained along with the diploma supplement are all kept by the teaching secretariat. [www.wbu.edu.al]. (Annex No. 1, Standard II.13)

2.13 The review team find that WBU has implemented information and management systems at an institutional level [Ev. 2.65]. These systems are designed to automate processes, enhance communication, and facilitate the management of academic and administrative functions. From the analysis of the document submitted by the institution, the review team find that WBU publishes on its website and SMART WBU platform many documents which include details on funding opportunities and the application process for study program registration, the Statute of WBU, catalogue, faculty handbook, student handbook, academic regulation, strategic plan, and assessment plan [Ev. 2.42, Ev. 2.46]. As per the current bylaws, WBU maintains a database pertaining to student registration, matriculation number, and other associated information. General details regarding the program, form, curriculum, and required study credits are available at WBU [Ev. 2.44]. The dean's office and the basic units are in charge of managing and storing documents. They are fully uploaded to SMART WBU and published online. The academic staff uses Google Classroom and other communications ways in addition to SMART WBU for communication and uploading student learning resources. [Ev. 2.48] WBU has provided an electronic address to anyone who might like more information. We



endorse the institution's strategy of establishing an integrated archive of the institution that is available via SMART-WBU. [BM.6, BM7, Tour]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.14*)

2.14 WBU is responsible for coordinating information technology-related initiatives. A comprehensive use of technology is made possible through SMART WBU with regard to the computerization of processes and procedures as well as documentation related to institutional activities. WBU has provided internet access, labs, and other technical resources to its staff and students. Smartboards are installed in the classrooms to aid in teaching and learning. Additionally, the library's grounds are computerized, giving staff and students access to the digital database and the library, among other resources. The establishment of the VR (Virtual Reality) lab is another example of the institution's creativity and added value. It benefits not only technology students but also medical professionals who do specialized. It was highlighted in the discussion with administrators and faculty members that WBU is currently developing cutting-edge information technology laboratories. As was highlighted in the meetings, we recognize the institution's hostile initiatives to use technology not only for teaching but also for offering services to others. [A2; A11; A50]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.15*)

2.15 The review team finds that WBU's budgeting process is distinguished by clear, open protocols. This strategy guarantees financial accountability and facilitates the efficient distribution of resources in accordance with the institution's aims and objectives. Being a non-public university, WBU is primarily funded by the proceeds from its operations as well as numerous grants, contributions, and gifts from both Albanian and foreign legal entities. [Ev. 2.40, Ev. 2.41]. The established budgets, internal policies, and relevant laws are followed in the administration of these funds. The self-evaluation report states that the following sources account for the majority of WBU's revenue streams: tuition fees; money from services rendered to outside parties; research projects; gifts, inheritances, and public and private donations. WBU's budget is prepared on an annual basis by the administrator based on proposals from the units of WBU and submitted for approval to the Board of Administration and Academic Senate. This procedure is published on the policy manual of WBU and staff members and academics seemed to be well-acquainted with it [www.wbu.edu.al]. WBU has committed staff members in charge of finances who monitor expenditures and file the necessary internal and external documents. [Ev. 2.47]. Additionally, the staff plans internal meetings with different stakeholders to talk about and help make decisions on financial matters including income, expenses, and so forth. The WBU policy manual contains information on this approach, and faculty and staff members appeared to be familiar with it. [Ev.2.28, 2.66, 2.67, 2.44, 2.67, Tour]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.16*).

2.16 The review team concludes that WBU accurately performs its policy of financial and budgetary control. This policy requires the implementation of controls to protect the institution's financial stability, as well as the routine monitoring of financial activity and standards compliance. WBU and is yearly subject to an outside audit. The supervisory board and tax office get the audit report. Crucially, WBU invites staff, students, and other interested parties to a number of meetings where the audit report is presented to key stakeholders in the interest of transparency [Ev. 1.15]. This process is detailed in the WBU policy handbook, and faculty and staff appeared to be familiar with it. WBU reviews



the budget on a regular basis and reallocates funds as needed, analysing indicators of how the financial policy is being implemented through monitoring. The allocation and administration of financial resources are tracked and computed in compliance with Albanian laws, bylaws, and accounting standards. [Ev. 2.47]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.17*).

- 2.17 Within the specified timeframes and in compliance with current laws and bylaws, WBU prepares its financial reports, which comprise comprehensive revenue and expense statements and are included in the institution's annual report on its operations. Once finished, the financial statements are also available on the website of the National Center of Business. Annual financial reports are archived at the appropriate directorate. [Ev. 1.15]. The report lists all of the financial commitments, employee pay, operational costs, etc. A comprehensive summary of foreign funding obtained and service contracts pertaining to institutional performance are included in the report. The review team concluded that it had a large budget supported by the funding of the founders. This can be seen from the activities carried out in the institution, the investments made in the infrastructure and the current investments identified during the visit. [Ev. 2.47]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.18*).
- 2.18 During meetings and supporting documents, review team identify that the institution has long-standing and fruitful partnerships with different institutions and organisations [Ev. 2.50]. WBU adopts an open strategy for cooperation and partnership at various levels, including regional, national, and international. This approach fosters collaboration and networking, enhancing the institution's ability for academic and research exchange. Since the HEI is part of the founding hospital network, making it open for different levels of cooperation. The University wants to establish itself as a national and international hub for excellence in higher education, with a focus on research and innovation, health care, and academics. The institution has outlined the goals of its collaboration policy in detail in its institutional growth strategy in order to carry out its mission [Ev. 2.52]. Partnerships have made it possible to implement both national and international projects and to plan significant events [Ev. 2.51]. The review team identify that cooperation agreements with local, national, and international institutions, as well as with other universities around the country, reflect these aims and ambition. [BM4, BM5; BM6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.19*)
- 2.19 The institution works closely with other organizations to support its administrative, academic, and scientific research activities [Ev. 2.53, Ev. 2.50]. These partnerships improve the quality of the educational experience, present real-world possibilities, and strengthen the institution's capacity to provide a thorough curriculum. As we mentioned on Standard II.19, collaborations with Cambridge University Medical Education Group, with businesses, labs, research centres, and industry to provide students with hands-on training and a link to the workforce etc, are sever evidences that support this conclusion [Ev. 2.55, BM5, BM6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.20*)
- 2.20 The institution adheres to measures that facilitate the international mobility of academic staff and students. Students and academic staff participate in mobility initiatives in international projects like Erasmus+ and COST, research activities etc [Ev. 2.56]. The



collaboration agreements with partners helped the mobility of the academic staff. In the meanwhile, foreign students are welcome to apply to WBU at the start of each academic year by following the standard registration process [Ev. 2.57]. Applications for admission to the University's study programs are open to international students [Ev.1.26]. We found a comparatively high percentage of international students in relation to the whole student body, despite the institution having only been in operation for two years. Registration of foreign students as well as academic staff from other countries, is highly valued by review team as it is in line with the strategy and objectives of the institution to be an institution with an international profile. [Ev. 2.59, 2.61]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.21*)

2.21 The review team noted that the institution is new and during the licensing phase or the study programs, they conducted several studies of the labour market oriented in the three main fields, medicine, technology and artificial intelligence and business and management. Additionally, WBU periodically monitors and assesses the dynamics of the labour market and its needs in order to assist in providing skilled human resources in a timely manner. Market research are performed to align its mission and purpose with the needs and trends of the educational and professional landscape in which it operates. This research informs and shapes strategic decisions, ensuring that the institution's study degree programs are relevant and responsive to the market demands. WBU adheres to the rules of free and fair competition in the market, focusing its marketing efforts on the features and priorities of its modern foreign language study programs, their suitability for the demands of the labour market, and their prepared and qualified staff. The need for specialists in a variety of sectors was examined in the labour market studies conducted by WBU and included in the proposals for the launch of new study programs. In this regard, fresh cooperation agreements have been inked or extended in order to consistently assess the partnership's contributions. [Ev. 2.57, 2.58]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.22*)

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- The institution has made investments in the improvement of the educational and laboratory infrastructure and consistently modernized its current facilities and equipment with the good support of the founders. Also, WBU provides working, teaching, and lab premises comfortable for the academic staff and students, as well as students and persons with disabilities (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.7*), (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.9*)
- The institution's strategy of establishing an integrated archive of the institution and implementation of SMART-WBU. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.14*)
- Registration of foreign students as well as academic staff from other countries, is highly valued by review team as it is in line with the strategy and objectives of the institution to be an institution with an international profile. (*Annex No. 1, Standard II.21*)



Weaknesses

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

Recommendations

The review team did not find any recommendation:

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team identified the following actions being taken in this Evaluation Area.

- The review team affirms that the university is working to enhance the research infrastructure by pursuing information technology and biobank-related research initiatives. If we take into consideration the short time of the institution, we believe that these initiatives will strengthen academic staff members' infrastructure for doing scientific research. **(Annex No. 1, Standard II.8)**
- The review team identify that cooperation agreements with local, national, and international institutions, as well as with other universities around the country, reflect these aims and ambition. **(Annex No. 1, Standard II.19)**

Judgement

The standards for Resources and Partnership are: **fully met**

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Evaluation Area 3: Study programs, Teaching, and Evaluation

- 3.1 WBU offers 20 study programs, including 3 Master of Science degrees, 2 integrated second-level programs, and 15 Bachelor programs. The study plans comply with the institution's mission and vision as well as the laws governing higher education. The courses are mostly provided in English, requiring full-time enrolment [Ev. 3.27]. They are arranged into modules and assessed using credits in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System. [Ev. 3.25]. The goal of WBU is to achieve excellence in scientific research and professional education for the good of individuals and society. It also aims to promote innovation in all fields, progress, well-being, and sustainable development in the Western Balkans. The study programs offered by the academic institution align with the elements of its development strategy. The medical sciences study programs are aligned with the lines of both regional and national development [Ev. 1.26]. They draw from documents that seek to define and accomplish the goals of the study programs, such as the National Health Strategy, 2021–2030, and the National Strategy for Scientific Research, Technology, and Innovation, 2023–2030. During the information days, graduates receive the list of study programs in the form of an academic offer, which is posted on the official website. [Ev. 1.26]. As circumstances dictate, the study plans may need to be modified to better meet the demands of the job market and ensure that the curricula are as useful as possible. [BM4, BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.1*)
- 3.2 The review team notes that the study programs are in line with both national and international objectives. The institution's strategy of using English as the main language of instruction facilitates the international reach of the programs as English is generally accepted as the global language of communication [Ev. 3.27]. When identifying the launch of new programs, WBU reviews and analyses strategic documents pertaining to technology, health, and education in an effort to meet international standards for quality, academic honesty, and openness. It also supports the nation's social and economic advancement.
- In accordance with the Strategic Plan, WBU aims to offer several academic programs and joint ventures with esteemed Albanian and international universities. As is mentioned during meetings, WBU is preparing to launch two dual study programs in medical science and computer science. This approach enables students to earn multiple diplomas from participating institutions, which broadens their academic and career prospects both nationally and internationally. [Ev. 3.2]. [BM2, BM3; BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.2*)
- 3.3 The review team identified that WBU has clearly defined objectives, illustrated by the overarching institutional objectives and the study programs provided by the faculties. [BM5]. These objectives align with their mission of empowering students to shape their lives with dignity and independence. Moreover, the institution has established processes to ensure the relevance and quality of their programs. The goals of the study programs are clearly stated from the moment it is applied to ministry of education for the opening of these programs. Also, WBU has outlined the admission requirements in detail, considering the particulars of each study program [Ev. 3.2]. The program's learning objectives are in line with the goals of the unit that is providing it. The bylaws now in



effect state that this data is included as a particular component of the curricula [Ev. 3.3]. Review team identified that the study programs have clearly defined objectives and their learning outcomes are consistent with the qualification profile they offer. Moreover, they are updated since they were drafted in the last two years. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.3*)

3.4 The review team notes that WBU, adheres to a specific process when introducing new programs. Departments are tasked with creating these programs, which must then gain approval from both the Academic Senate and the Administration Board [BM3]. This ensures an extensive review process, with the curriculum committee having the main responsibility for the development, review, and improvement suggestions for these programs [Ev. 3.3, BM5]. Moreover, any new programs or significant changes, including openings, reorganizations, or closures, require approval from the relevant authority, as guided by the law and internal regulations of the institution. The Academic Senate and the Dean's Office play crucial roles in proposing new study programs. The Senate proposes these new programs, including changes and closures, to the Administration Board based on the annual draft budget of the HEI. Bachelor's degree programs aim to provide students with both academic and practical expertise in their subjects through coursework, hands-on training, and scientific research. Students graduate with general and essential knowledge in the relevant subjects. [Ev. 3.5]. Through coursework, practice, and scientific research, the second cycle programs aim to provide students with theoretical and practical expertise in their areas of specialization. Third cycle studies are made possible by the information these programs give and the skills students acquire via them, which lay the groundwork for a future in academic research. Graduates of integrated second cycle study programs are equipped with advanced theoretical understanding and research skills in a particular field of study. As we mentioned WBU considers the needs of the labour market, studies, and available host capacities while creating admission standards and approving student quotas [Ev. 3.2, BM4; BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.4*)

3.5 The university is capable of providing study programs based on their institutional capacity. This is evident by the fact that they have sufficient academic staff to cover both academic and administrative responsibilities. [Ev. 2.48]. These are the first or second year of active WBU programs. This indicates that only professional master's programs for are full operating. In this manner, WBU hires new employees every year in accordance with the demands of the programs for the upcoming years. Albanian and foreign professionals with prior academic expertise have been employed to fill the demand for academic staff with scientific titles and degrees. The student-to-academic staff ratio is set by the current bylaws and considers the institution's capacity. The study programs are set up to give academic staff members an efficient approach to balance their administrative duties, research and scientific activities, and teaching responsibilities and also it is important to note that their full-time staff is responsible for covering at least 70% of the subjects [Ev. 3.5]. In order to meet the criteria for the teaching load of full-time and part-time academic staff participating in the study programs at WBU, it is preferable that each unit recruits academic staff engaged in research-scientific activities that are directly related to the profile of the study program. [Ev. 3.6] In terms of the allocation of the academic staff's workload regarding of teaching, research, administration, and other responsibilities, we found clear guidelines. This makes it



possible for every employee to be dedicated to carrying out their responsibilities, which in turn makes it easier to evaluate performance at the individual, base, and main unit levels. **[BM2, BM3, BM4; BM5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.5)**

3.6 The review team notes that WBU University complies with the Bologna Agreement, which is evidenced by its organization into study cycles. This is reflected in their use of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) for course description. This system categorizes their studies into a Bachelor program which requires a minimum of 180 ECTS, and a Master program which needs a minimum of 120 ECTS **[Ev. 3.7]**. Notably, the institution has adopted a quarter system to cater to their multinational faculty's scheduling needs. At the end of the second cycle, integrated programs are completed with 300–360 credits and typically last 5–6 academic years such are medicine and dentistry. During the meeting with the managers, we heard about the institution's plans to launch doctoral programs, which will satisfy the university's requirement to provide all three study cycles. **[BM3; BM4; BM5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.6)**

3.7 The review team notes that WBU exhibits a strong commitment to providing comprehensive guidance and knowledge to students through their study programs. From the onset of enrolment, students are provided with academic advisors and mentors who are readily available to offer guidance throughout the coursework, internships, and thesis preparation **[Ev. 3.28]**. This approach is applied across study cycles, ensuring that students receive consistent support during their academic journey. WBU's programs, whether Bachelor or Master level, are designed with a strong emphasis on practical applications to prepare students for their prospective careers **[Ev. 3.7]**. For instance, the Bachelor programs intertwines theoretical foundation with emphasis on practice, ensuring students acquire relevant academic and practical skills essential for a career in business. Additionally, the inclusion of modules such as "Introduction to the Research Methods" and "Preparation for the bachelor thesis" in the curriculum underpins WBU's commitment to fostering a research culture among students. This is evidenced by enabling students to apply scientific approaches in their project works, in preparation for writing their dissertations. Moreover, the Master of Science program offers courses, preparing students to handle complex organizational situations. **[Ev. 3.5]**. Key subjects like Research Methodology and Critical Thinking are integrated into the curriculum, enhancing the students' ability to undertake scientific work. The graduates of the second cycle's integrated study programs possess both the theoretical know-how and the investigative abilities necessary for scientific investigation in a particular topic. The integrated second-cycle study programs are available in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, etc. Programs of the same departments show how the academic and professional fields continue from cycle to cycle. **[Ev. 3]**. During the academic year, the academic adviser provides guidance and support to the student regarding academic matters, including orientation regarding the possibilities of transferring credits or study programs. Overall, the review team notes that the range study programs demonstrate their commitment to providing students with quality guidance and theoretical as well as practical knowledge. The review team identify that one of the strongest points of the institution is the offering of programs in the English language, which enables not only access to a wide international literature, but supports the institution to be competitive into international



market of foreign students, increasing its international profile and supporting of joint programs and mobility. **[BM3; BM4; BM5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.7)**

- 3.8 As a means of promoting lifelong learning, the institution provides programs in continuing education. These courses provide quick specialties, additions, knowledge refreshers, and deepening. Programs for continuing education may also be among them **[Ev. 3.28]**. Study programs for continuing education assist people in improving their credentials and professional abilities **[Ev. 3.7]**. There are some of the events such training program, medical treatment for people with impairments, trainings for professionals in the fields of nursing and physiotherapy as well as for students studying in technical medical sciences. The training's main goals are to provide as much variety in the knowledge as possible and to raise awareness of the difficulties that people with disabilities encounter and the professional contributions that each can make in the fields relevant to addressing these difficulties. **[BM3; BM4; BM5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.8)**
- 3.9 The review team found that the study programs rely on the research and professional profile of the unit and are delivered in cooperation with stakeholders of the filed. Representatives from other areas teach in the second cycle study programs, not only to foster cooperation but also to introduce students to best practices. As part of American Hospital Group, the university collaborates with domestic and international partners in the field of study programs. **[Ev. 2.19]**. The creation of Labour Market and Career Planning Boards adjacent to each WBU department has been allowed as a means of advancing this collaboration **[Ev. 1.19]**. The programs at WBU are backed by research efforts of the academic staff all of whom are conducting or have conducted scientific research. This draws a clear connection between the study programs and the profile of the institution. Additionally, the institution has a robust system for performance evaluation and planning, which includes self-evaluation, student feedback, academic, and professional integrity evaluation. On the other hand, the completion and submission of the self-evaluation form is done at the end of each academic year in order to regularly assess the academic staff for updating and their scientific qualification in relation to the program. This form provides an overview of the staff's teaching, scientific research, and administrative activities throughout the entire academic year. Representatives from other areas teach in the second cycle study programs, not only to foster cooperation but also to introduce students to best practices **[Ev. 2.50, BM5; BM6]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.9)**
- 3.10 The review team noted that WBU regularly reviews and monitors its study programs through a well-structured and monitoring system. The review process includes the evaluation of the study programs to ensure up-to-date curriculum, getting feedback from different stakeholders, including students, partner's freshmen, business representatives and faculty. Their methodologies of evaluation are systematic and include performance evaluations, surveys, and feedback meetings. Periodic monitoring of assessment by students or staff also involves external experts from other higher education institutions or students. In particular, an outside expert and a student representation make up the members of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit **[Ev. 1.19]**. The teaching load, ethics, and the process for promoting and evaluating the effectiveness or advancement of the study program's components are all covered by various policies and guidelines. One of



the topics discussed during the annual analysis at the basic unit level for the programs offered is the execution of study programs. **[BM4; BM5; BM6]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.10)**

3.11 The market study, at the study program opening serves as guidance and proof of the program's necessity, also helps to direct graduates' future employment **[Ev. 3.24]**. Several of additional quality instruments, including the distribution of surveys with students to improve their study programs, have also been planned by IQAU within the framework of ongoing quality improvement and recurring program monitoring. **[Ev. 1.19]**. The review team notes that the institution places a great emphasis on the continuous improvement of the study programs. The institution conducts regular market research every three years to analyse job market needs and adjust their programs accordingly **[BM6]**. Also, they collect and utilize feedback from partners during professional practice. This information is then discussed in multiple forums of the departments for the purpose of program improvement. The institution analyses the student achievements during academic year indicating their commitment towards improving the quality of their study programs when they have difficulties in terms of content understanding **[Ev. 3.7]**. During the visit we were informed that the programs are in the first phase of their accreditation and for this reason fundamental changes are not allowed until the accreditation of the programs is completed. We encourage the institution to continuously monitor and update these programs as they are part of the fields that currently have the fastest development in technology, innovation and implementation. **[BM2; BM5]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.11)**

3.12 The institution, clearly pursues a policy to improve teaching quality. It implements a systematic application of quality assurance measures aiming to establish an ongoing culture of excellence in higher education. The periodic evaluation of all faculty members twice a year and the involvement of students and other administration members in this process highlights their commitment to foster educational quality. Faculty members are evaluated on a broad range of categories such as quality and quantity of instruction, adherence to policies, professionalism, and student retention to name a few. The feedback provided by the students for Guest Lecturers also contributes to improving teaching methods and overall student satisfaction **[Ev. 2.19]**. The institutional structure itself, with its governing bodies like the Academic Senate, Rectorate, and Faculty Council, supports the academic procedures including those related to faculty evaluation. The Internal Quality Assurance Unit, which periodically assesses academic performance in terms of teaching quality and study program evaluation, collaborates with the Commission to coordinate their efforts. **[Ev. 3.6]**. The evaluation team concluded that in the context of continuous improvement in the institution, the academic and administrative staff is subjected to training for the further improvement of teaching and other important processes through an international project for quality assurance. This is considered a good affirmation, as it demonstrates the commitment of the institution to consolidate the internal cycle insurance system based on international practices **[BM5; BM6; BM7]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.12)**

3.13 The review team notes that the study programs at WBU are implemented according to the structures approved at the institutional and national level. Specifically, the study



programs conform to the Bologna Reform in Higher Education norms that Albania has ratified, indicating alignment with national and international standards. Importantly, teaching methods intertwine both theoretical learning and practical training, in compliance with the requirements of a dual study program as mandated by the Bologna requirements. Overall, WBU offers comprehensive student support, including guiding and advising students throughout their studies through academic advisors and providing access to educational resources, such as high-speed internet, libraries, and digital resources. [Ev. 3.6]. WBU ensures a functioning interrelation among its administrative departments, academic staff, and stakeholders to maintain the desired standard in the delivery of its programs [Ev. 1.22]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.13*)

3.14 The review team noted that the study programs fully satisfies this requirement in terms of practical application of knowledge and skills acquired by students in theoretical courses. The bachelor programs operate combining academic and practical applications directly tied to the theoretical learning undertaken in class, with internship experiences woven into the syllabus. [Ev. 3.13]. This hands-on learning is well-structured, with specific outcomes outlined in the Module Description Catalogue and agreements on learning outcomes with partnering institutions or companies. Additionally, the institution aims at moving further away from traditional theoretical-oriented education emphasizing a more practical. In the case of the master programs, a mandatory internship is included in the curriculum helping students to apply their theoretical knowledge [Ev. 2.50]. Moreover, the student's ability to commence their thesis - a significant practical application of their learning - is contingent upon successful completion of all courses or modules and attainment of all credit points. The review team identify as a good practice the development and application in practice of the knowledge and skills acquired by students, through the EPIC program. Beneficiaries are all WBU students studying in one of the study programs. Students with high academic achievements, up to the application period, are selected to follow a paid internship through the EPIC program. Students are involved in scientific research projects, diploma topics and dissertations, under the guidance of academic staff. [Ev. 3.8, 3.15, BM6; BM3]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.14*)

3.15 The review team noted that WBU has developed programs with a strong emphasis on student active participation and competency acquisition [Ev. 3.17]. Their programs integrate student-centred teaching methods, utilizing small class sizes, advanced technology, student engagement in various learning environments, as well as accessibility to faculty. They also ensure that students are challenged to grow their entrepreneurial, innovative, and creative thinking skills. The teaching staff comprised of full time, part time and visiting professors from international universities, further supports this endeavour. The institution has now a good staff-student ratio, allowing for individualized attention and active participation. [Ev. 2.19]. The review team also noted that WBU employs guest lecturers, who are involved in teaching, lending further expertise to the classes and enhancing student competencies. Assessment of the programs is conducted through an Assessment Plan and Program Review, which reviews enrolment, retention rate, and learning outcomes among others. Lectures are regularly evaluated through standardized online surveys by students, assessing the didactic competencies of the lecturers, student effort in preparation and wrap-up of



content, and general framework of the lecture, providing feedback for continuous enhancement of the programs **[BM3, BM6]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.15)**

3.16 WBU offers study programs that are designed to meet the needs of the labour market and support national economic and social development. The institution provides study programs that align with the national plan for employment and skills, with the goal of equipping students for the workforce, based on the actual demands of the labor market. From the meeting with the students, especially those of the master's programs, it was evident that they feel professionally capable of serving in different institutions and businesses and health care institutions. **[Ev. 3.17]**. Professional practice is incorporated into the curricula of WBU's programs in accordance with the Bologna Charter's stipulations, assisting students in integrating their theoretical and practical knowledge. Moreover, the university's cooperation with national institutions promotes a comprehensive and global perspective on three main field of study programs that are offering. **[Ev. 3.19]**. We identified as a good practice the provision of seasonal employment opportunities for students, especially for students of technical medical sciences programs who have been employed during the summer in the founding group's hospitals since the first year. **[Ev. 3.15]**. This helps students to better orient themselves towards the needs of employment and the professional requirements they have. The review team notes that the combination of theoretical and practical skills, the connection of students with the labour market, and their preparation for employment is a good practice. **[BM5; BM3]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.16)**

3.17 WBU uses the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System which is a key component of the Bologna Agreement to promote mobility **[Ev. 3.7, Ev. 3.21]**. The university provides study programs that align with the national plan for employment and skills, with the goal of equipping students for the workforce, based on the actual demands of the labor market. Professional practice is incorporated into the curricula of WBU's programs. This workload consists of both the students' individual assignments and the work done in the auditorium. As previously stated, all study programs are available in English, with some also being offered in Albanian. **[Ev. 3.27]** Due to this, candidates must demonstrate their English language proficiency among other requirements for admission. The requirements for the registration of international students are made public. The law aims to delineate the guidelines and protocols that WBU adheres to in order to recognize credits and facilitate study transfers, both from other higher education institutions and within the university itself. Applications for study transfers from other higher education institutions as well as from within the institution are considered, provided the requirements set forth by the Ministry in charge of higher education are met. Students and staff are allowed to go on study tours to partner institutions and in order to help students and faculty from foreign universities integrate into WBU's academic programs and make the most of international projects and programs in the field of education, the office of international relations was established. **[Ev. 1.27]**. It also aims to provide students and faculty members with opportunities to engage in research and study abroad. **[BM3, BM5, BM7]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.17)**



3.18 The review team noted that WBU provides students who have met all requirements of their respective study programs with relevant diplomas. The HEI has explicit regulations published on its website and SMART-WBU platform to guide students through their exams and assessment processes [Ev. 2.65]. The right to take the diploma defense exam belongs to the student who fulfills all of their academic duties. If not, he will be entitled to pay them back the next semester and will graduate once all of his academic debts have been satisfied. The appropriate diploma, an official document, is given to the student who has completed all program requirements. The diploma is prepared in legible handwriting using technical ink, and both the faculty dean and the university rector have signed it. Name, surname, rank, and scientific title are listed for each of them. The WBU seal attests to the authenticity of their signatures. Further, upon successful completion of the study program, students are granted their respective diplomas, prepared in Albanian and English in accordance with Law of Higher Education and the by-laws of the Ministry of Education and Sport [Ev. 3.12, BM7]. **(Annex No. 1, Standard III.18)**

3.19 As we mentioned the institution has made investments in state-of-the-art laboratory equipment in accordance with the requirements of various study programs. During site visit at campus, we were informed that there are around 27 laboratories for the students to support their study programs, with specific ratio of equipment, already in operation. A committed staff has access to the laboratory facilities, and students are given the appropriate lab attire. [Ev. 3.17]. For this reason, staff members and students can utilize lockers to store clothes and other belongings. WBU complies with the requirements outlined in respect to the quantity of students and lab spaces, in accordance with the hosting capacities' order of approval for each academic year. Other infrastructure facilities are related teaching infrastructure such are whiteboards, projectors, smart board for meetings, internet connection across all buildings within its compound etc. **(Annex No. 1, Standard III.19)**

3.20 In order to support the study programs, the university provides infrastructure, services, and laboratory equipment. The university also hosts extracurricular seminars with people who live abroad, using a variety of video conferencing programs. The institution makes sure that the appropriate personnel is trained in the management of each service and piece of technology it purchases. The training for using the Smart-WBU, the smartboards, the Anatomage Table, and other brief instruction in using the tools and services on site, are a few examples that WBU provides. WBU has hired a specialized business company to develop a digital platform known as "SMART-WBU," which automates a significant portion of the manual operations and procedures that are otherwise completed by all branches of the organization. Using this platform, lecturers can also monitor and educate their pupils. While it is evident from the information presented above that WBU provides appropriate ICT infrastructure and assistance particularly for academic staff and students We consider the current laboratory infrastructure as quite suitable for covering the needs of the study programs up to this stage. Also, as we have emphasized, the access that students have to the infrastructure of the companies that are part of the founders' network, is available to students for its use in various programs, especially that of hospitals for programs in the field of medicine. **[Tour]. (Annex No. 1, Standard III.20)**



3.21 The review team noted that WBU has a comprehensive library with more than 20,000 physical books, with plans for further expansion, reflecting an emphasis on quantity and quality. All computers linked to the WBU network have the ability to access electronic resources for users, either directly or through mail authentication. Once authenticated at the Central Registration Point, access from outside the WBU computer network. Users are required to adhere to copyright laws when using electronic materials for instructional, scientific, or personal purposes. WBU has made resources, texts, and publications accessible and usable through memberships in online libraries like JSTOR or Research4Life etc. Furthermore, student services, including library services, are evaluated annually via Student Service Surveys. Overall, the review team note that WBU is committed to offering high-quality academic programs supported by a modern library and access to online literature [BM2, BM3, BM4, BM5]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.21*)

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- Offering of programs in the English language, which enables not only access to a wide international literature, but supports the institution to be competitive into international market of foreign students, increasing its international profile and supporting of joint programs and mobility. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.7*)
- The development and application in practice of the knowledge and skills acquired by students, through the EPIC program. Beneficiaries are all WBU students studying in one of the study programs. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.14*). The combination of theoretical and practical skills and the connection of students with the labour market, and their preparation for employment is a good practice. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.16*). (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.20*)

Weaknesses

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

Recommendations

The review team did not identify any recommendation:

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team identified the following action being taken in this Evaluation Area.

- In the context of continuous improvement in the institution, the academic and administrative staff is subjected to training for the further improvement of teaching and other important processes through an international project for quality assurance. It demonstrates the commitment of the institution to consolidate the internal quality assurance system based on international practices. (*Annex No. 1, Standard III.12*)



Judgement

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

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Evaluation Area 4: Scientific/Artistic Activity and Innovation

4.1 WBU has defined in its mission the commitment to become an internationally distinguished university in the field of scientific research and innovation. WBU has established three research centres as foundational units, all corresponding with the strategic focus areas of research activities and organized within the faculties. These centres undertake scientific research and development. One such centre is the Research Center for the Study of Rare Diseases, which provides expertise in researching, diagnosing, and treating rare diseases. Another centre is the Research Center for Medical Sciences, Technology, and Innovation, dedicated to research, education, and innovation in medicine and science. The institution has a strategic plan for 2023-2030, with the goal of transforming into a center of excellence in higher education and scientific research in the country [Ev. 1.11, BM2]. The strategic plan lacks an Executive Summary, a timeline for completing outlined activities (although partially available in Ev. 4.11), and a financial plan detailing the necessary resources for execution. It also lacks the methods for tracking progress toward strategic objectives (such as key performance indicators). The plan doesn't address potential risks to successful implementation or propose any strategies for their mitigation. By filling these gaps, the strategic plan would offer a comprehensive implementation roadmap, progress tracking methods, financial oversight, and adaptive strategies for potential challenges, ensuring flexibility and adaptability [SER, p.17]. According to the evidence of detailing the activities of research centres for the academic year 2022-2023, three articles were published in international journals. [Ev. 4.1] The SWOT analysis as presented in this document highlighted weaknesses in the laboratory equipment within the biology field and the ICT lab equipment. Scientific publishing poses a challenge, partially because the institution is relatively new and requires time from conducting research to publishing in indexed journals. At a meeting with the academic staff, it was noted that 50% of the staff members present had not published their scientific works in impact factor journals over the past three years [BM9]. Considering the institution is at early stage, the research component can be progressively expanded and further developed over time. Leadership views the construction of a new campus with 40,000 square meters, as a significant investment. The review team confirms that the institution clearly outlines its main research areas. The institution's financial stability over the long term is assured by income and investments from its founding companies, which is regarded as a significant strength of the institution. (**Annex No. 1, Standard IV.1**)

4.2 Review team affirms that WBU meets the priorities of the scientific research. The scientific research work topics, directions, deadlines or volume of research work are determined by the WBU key units, staying in line with procedures defined in the scientific research regulation. WBU has established support system for research and knowledge transfer, innovation and application of new technologies. This was achieved through continuous staff training, the organization of seminars, workshops, open lectures, and the involvement of students in scientific research activities. The topics, directions, deadlines, and the scope of scientific research work are set by the foundational and principal entities of WBU, in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the scientific research regulation [Ev. 4.2]. The emphasis of these activities is aligned with the country's developmental needs, the significance of research in student education,



scientific collaboration initiatives, faculty development, the institution's strategic goals, and available financial resources. Scientific research at WBU is guided by its strategic research priorities, which include a blend of Development Strategy, Research Centers, Faculties, Cross-disciplinary Collaboration, and its modern infrastructure [SER, p45]. WBU has successfully established and equipped 27 laboratories for both educational and research purposes, utilizing all the necessary tools [Ev. 2.30]. Review team during the site visit to the dentistry department, saw dozens of advanced dental training mannequins designed to teach students the practical skills in a real setting and other teaching facilities of the last generation [Tour]. To enhance the quality of education and research, the base units have formed scientific research teams composed of staff members with relevant expertise and experience in research. During the meeting with staff, review team concluded that staff have academic freedom within their respective departments and are ensured to utilize the infrastructure and financial resources provided [BM6]. The evaluation of their scientific work is performed during the annual performance review. The allocation of financial support to research groups is carried out in a transparent way. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.2*).

4.3 WBU has established a supportive environment for its academic staff for research, studies, and project initiatives. When applying for funding, academic staff are based on their proposals, supported by the institution through infrastructure access and administrative guidance for information, procedures, and application materials. WBU provides modern facilities and supports innovative projects with funding, promotes the creation of research centres, and fosters collaboration across diverse disciplines. Staff is dedicated to converting research into real-world applications, adheres to ethical standards in research, and engages students in research [BM2, BM5]. Academic staff at WBU can work on research and development projects for third parties. The university, often brings in experts from both within the country and abroad for training to improve staff skills. WBU supports its academic staff and assistants when they take part in scientific events. Additionally, the university has built relationships with other research organizations and takes part in joint projects, involving both local and international researchers, through the signing of cooperation or participation agreements or participation in joint activity events. Institution provided a list of some promising partnership (Graz University in the framework of Biobank project; University of Pescara, Italy; the area of Nano science, etc.) [Ev. 4.5, SER, p43; BM2]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.3*)

4.4 At the end of academic year, all departments submit reports on their activities, including research, which are then included in the annual institutional report. According to the WBU Regulations, academic staff have the right to participate in scientific activities at national and international level, and to commit to their professional development and advancement. Faculty members who have earned a Master of Science degree are required to complete their academic promotion within five years from their hiring date [SER, p44]. Staff was engaged in national and international projects and conferences 74 times in total. Additionally, there were five books edited, 32 articles either published as proceedings or presented in international scientific journals, and four articles were affiliated with WBU. [Ev. 4.24] The review team recognizes that WBU successfully adheres to the research standards, effectively appraising performance across the institution. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.4*).



4.5 The Office of Scientific Research was founded to strengthen the institution's research efforts. This office is responsible for preparation and managing the policies governing research development at WBU, monitoring research program implementation. The 'Instruction on the Promotion of Publications and Scientific Research' guides the enhancement of publications and the research activities of full-time academic staff, especially when publications represent the Western Balkans University. WBU recently launched the scientific publication, the European Journal of Medical Sciences and Health Innovations, with the objective of promoting the research achievements of its staff. The review team finds that the institution ensures the protection of research results, intellectual property, using them to support its financial and economic development. [SER, p45; Ev. 4.23]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.5*).

4.6 The review team confirms that the institution directs its research efforts at the departmental level. Within the existing legal framework, the department serves as the primary entity for managing both teaching and scientific research activities, comprising various research groups. The Dental Medicine Faculty includes Dentistry, Basic Sciences, and a Scientific Research Center for Oral Health Care Quality and Safety. The Technical and Medical Sciences Faculty comprises Laboratory Medical Sciences and Imaging, Nursing and Physiotherapy, Medicine, Surgery, and a Center for Rare Diseases Study. The Economics, Technology, and Innovation Faculty contains Economic and Financial Sciences, Technology and Business, and a Research Center for Medical Sciences, Technology, and Innovation. These departments are closely linked to corresponding research areas and are responsible for research funding. Research activities are conducted following the institutional strategy, research domains involved and the existing infrastructure. Another entity that supports scientific work is the Department Council, led by the department head. This council regularly meets to discuss topics and oversee their implementation [Ev.4.10, 4.11, SER, p48]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.6*).

4.7 WBU annually plans its scientific research activities through its main units, detailing objectives, activities, assigned responsible personnel, and timelines for execution. WBU has established criteria for determining the teaching workload for its full-time and part-time academic staff across all educational programs [Ev.4.11]. For faculty staff, the baseline teaching requirement is 8 hours weekly. To meet its research goals, the department collaborates, recruits, and involves prestigious researchers and experts at national and international levels. Review team observed that the departments have successfully integrated teaching, scientific research, and extracurricular activities into its planning. This is further supported by establishing dedicated working groups for research, ensuring adherence to legal and contractual obligations. To fulfil the objectives in the field of research, the department sets up working groups for the project design or studies. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.7*).

4.8 Sustainability is key to continuous scientific research [Ev.4.2, SER, p50], achieved by deepening research's role in education, strengthening connections with partners, and enhancing staff mobility and recruitment efforts. WBU invited many guests for teaching and research, including open lectures, workshops, and seminars. During the 2022-2023



academic year, WBU was active in national research projects, especially in health sciences. The institution provided a detailed list of these activities [Ev.4.19; 4.20]. WBU has incorporated programs for third-cycle studies and long-term specialization into its research planning, in line with its strategic objectives and adhering to legal requirements at the point of application. Some of these programs, like the master's program in Hospital Management, are currently undergoing the accreditation process. The institution ensures the research integrity of staff and students through the Scientific Research Regulation [Ev.4.2; BM5]. This regulation outlines the organization of research activities, roles and responsibilities, and the conduct of research, including journal publications, conference participation, and individual projects at WBU. Additionally, this regulation emphasizes the importance of promoting ethical policies in research practices. WBU also ensures process for evaluation and funding of publication in indexed journals. Considering WBU is just in its second year and acknowledging that the full process from ethical approval to journal publication can be lengthy, the review team concluded that WBU is actively enhancing its research activities and securing the involvement of staff and students across the second and third cycles. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.8*).

- 4.9 The review team confirms that the institution publicly shares scientific research outcomes by maintaining records to organize, track, promote, and transfer the results of its scientific work. These findings are shared with the public through publications, conferences, and other scientific events. The transfer of research outcomes is linked to collaborations with local businesses via diverse informational research initiatives. Upon the conclusion of each academic year, faculty members submit records of their activities and any publications or editions produced within the department. These materials are then incorporated into the WBU library's archives. Additionally, information regarding the academic staff's involvement with scientific networking sites like Research Gate, Google Scholar, and Academia.edu is maintained by the departments [SER, p51]. Intellectual property rights are protected by the relevant legislation. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.9*).
- 4.10 WBU is committed to working towards ethical practices in its scientific research. The university aims to build a culture of integrity, transparency, and accountability to protect the reputation and impact of its academic work. Developing policies on research quality and setting up systems to check the quality of its publications and research are key parts of its strategy shown in the presented robust documentation. With support from the Erasmus+ "QA_SURE" project, WBU plans to introduce online tools to prevent plagiarism and enhance research integrity. The review team verifies that the Scientific Research Regulation at WBU ensures the quality of research carried out by its staff and students. This regulation covers the basic principles of research organization, and the responsibilities and rights of everyone involved [SER, p52]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.10*).
- 4.11 The review team, through the site visit and review of documentation, observed that WBU outlines the participation requirements for academic staff in research activities. Each academic year, the Board of Administration at the WBU establishes the overall budget for fostering publications and scientific efforts of its staff. Additionally, it defines the highest possible individual financial incentive for contributions to publications and scientific activities. Academic staff members are required to adhere to the scientific



teaching standard by the terms of the employment contract and the applicable legal and sub-legal framework. Strengthening the laboratory equipment within the biology field and the ICT lab equipment is necessary to support the academic staff's needs in the field of biology and ICT. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.11*).

- 4.12 Review team proclaims that WBU has strategically positioned scientific research at the front of its priorities, placing a strong emphasis on the internationalization of research efforts and related activities. This approach aims to cultivate partnerships and enhance the institution's presence on the international level. Institution has established partnerships and agreements with universities and colleges in OECD, EU, or G20 nations to conduct scientific research. Significant among these efforts is a partnership with the University of Graz, which is recognized for having one of the top biobanks in Europe and for its involvement in Plant Molecular Pharming Research Pharming [SER, p50, Ev.4.30, 4.31]. However, implementing a biobank initiative involves a governmental part with strict regulations, ethical issues, and privacy laws. Compliance with these requirements could be a challenge, requiring biobanks to balance scientific objectives with legal and ethical obligations. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.12*).
- 4.13 Involving foreign staff and members of the diaspora in teaching and research activities is an important area for WBU, emphasizing the importance of integrating educational and scientific contributions from individuals in these categories [SER, p51, Ev.4.18]. These professionals participate in a range of scientific and teaching activities, including open lectures, workshops, and seminars. Such involvement could increase the institution's reputation and impact. The review group notes that WBU effectively fulfills the criteria for engaging foreign staff and diaspora members in its teaching and research activities. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.13*).
- 4.14 The review team has carefully assessed and found that WBU proficiently adheres to the established criteria for the inclusion of foreign staff and members of the diaspora in its educational and research initiatives. By actively integrating these international professionals into research or teaching opportunities, including but not limited to, delivering open lectures, conducting workshops, and leading seminars, WBU underscores the invaluable educational and scientific contributions these individuals bring to the institution. This strategic engagement enriches the academic and research landscape at WBU, and also significantly increases the institution's global standing and impact. [SER, pg.51; Ev.4.15, Ev.4.25]. The review team acknowledges that these mobility efforts are evident both externally and within the campus, as demonstrated by the significant number of international students present during the evaluation visit [Tour]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.14*).
- 4.15 Review team confirms WBU's commitment to enhance its scientific impact. Establishing partnerships, such as with the American Hospital or Hygeia, strengthened the expertise of its academic staff, thus enriching its educational offerings. WBU's approach to sustaining research excellence is linked with its long-term research objectives with its fundamental mission, investing in state-of-the-art laboratories, hiring renowned researchers, and fostering collaboration across different departments (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.15*).



4.16 WBU maintains a database of publications and participation of academic staff in scientific research activities. It also promotes the outcomes of these research efforts, aiming to contribute to the country's social, economic, and scientific progress. Within this context, the university has proposed the development of two scientific research events: The International Conference on New Trends and Innovations in Medicine and Healthcare, and the International Conference on Higher Education and Sustainable Development. The institution aims to establish a Techno Park (Techno City), a collaborative campus for technology companies and organizations to foster innovation and research [SER, p52, Ev.4.25, Ev.4.28]. WBU launched the Point of Care Research Group to advance its medical and health-related research, aiming to later include food security and water monitoring. The review team finds that the institution has developed a strong framework to guarantee that its scientific research directly aids the country's social and economic growth. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.16*).

4.17 WBU's contract with academic staff includes provisions for intellectual property protection. The institution supports scientific research projects by establishing the Office of Scientific Research. This office is tasked with overseeing the institution's research efforts, including the process of applying for and managing research projects. It also develops the strategic framework necessary for the efficient progression of research activities undertaken by teams during the project drafting phase. To engage students in economic and business growth, various activities are organized, including informative sessions on Start Up application and support. These sessions highlight the Challenge Fund as a significant opportunity for visionary students eager to effect change in the country [SER, p53]. The review team confirms that the institution guarantees the ownership of the achievements and results in the area of scientific research and uses them to its own economic and financial benefit. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.17*).

Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- The institution's financial stability over the long term is assured by income and investments from its founding companies, which is regarded as a significant strength of the institution. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.1*)
- The university has built relationships with other research organizations and takes part in joint projects, involving both local and international researchers, through the signing of cooperation or participation agreements or participation in joint activity events. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.3*)
- The departments have successfully integrated teaching, scientific research, and extracurricular activities into its planning. This is further supported by establishing dedicated working groups for research, ensuring adherence to legal and contractual obligations. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.7*).



- The Scientific Research Regulation at WBU ensures the quality of research carried out by its staff and students and the responsibilities and rights of everyone involved (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.10*).
- The review group notes that WBU effectively fulfills the criteria for engaging foreign staff and diaspora members in its teaching and research activities. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.13*).

Weaknesses

The evaluation group didn't identify any weaknesses regarding this Assessment Area.

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendations:

- Strengthen the laboratory equipment within the biology field and the ICT lab equipment is necessary to support the academic staff needs in the field of biology and ICT. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.11*).

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the actions being taken in this Evaluation Area.

- The institution has taken positive steps to enhance research capabilities and should continue to increase the involvement of both staff and students in research activity. (*Annex No. 1, Standard IV.9*).

Judgement

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



Evaluation Area 5: Students and Their Support

- 5.1 WBU's student admissions follow legal and institutional guidelines, emphasizing academic success. First-cycle and integrated program admissions are open to candidates who've completed secondary education and meet the annually defined grade point average. Additional criteria for these programs are announced yearly. Second-cycle admissions criteria are set by the offering unit, including English language proficiency for the Master of Science program, with approval from the Academic Senate and public announcement by the main unit. The Academic Senate also approved the establishment of Labour Market and Career Planning Boards for each department. WBU's campus has space norms ranging from 3.8-8.0 m²/student. Study programs are credit-based, with one credit equating to 25 working hours, encompassing both classroom and individual student work [SER, pg.55]. The percentage of students dropping out, compared to other private institutions in this field, is relatively high—approximately 25% of the students have failed to advance to the next year and have requested to transfer elsewhere [BM2]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.1*).
- 5.2 WBU has established departments for reception, information, and enrolment of new students, including the Office of Communication, Public Relations, and Student Admission, which works with the Dean of Students to efficiently promote study programs and provide career counselling through electronic and printed resources, including a student guide. The EPIC program provides practical professional experience for students. International students receive information on academic programs, registration, and Albanian culture, with organized tours and visits. Scholarships are available to all undergraduates, with criteria and allocation outlined in the Scholarship Regulation, based on academic performance [SER, p56, Ev.5.10]. Students experiencing difficulties in their coursework are assisted by advisors, who provide extra lessons. If a student is not satisfied with the exam score, they have the opportunity to retake that exam. Additionally, the institution arranges a summer school for interested students as preparation for the exams of the autumn semester [BM3]. Review team confirms that WBU offers various scholarships, including excellence and institutional scholarships through partnerships, and special scholarships for certain regions' graduates. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.2*).
- 5.3 WBU has launched Smart-WBU, a platform offering detailed information on study programs, progress, and resources. The official website and updates keep students informed about academic opportunities. All members are assigned internal email addresses for communication. WBU publishes a student guide and hosts an orientation week annually to familiarize new students with campus life. The review team verifies the effectiveness of the student information system, which offers ongoing academic assistance. Academic advisors from both core and major units contribute to guiding student advancement. [SER, p56]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.3*).
- 5.4 Review team affirms that WBU emphasizes a student-centred approach in teaching, research, and social impact, incorporating student representatives into the Academic Senate and engaging them in essential institutional committees and the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. Students are involved in drafting key documents like the Internal



Institutional Evaluation Report and are active in the Student Council and clubs. In the meeting with students, they proved that their opinions and feedback are taken into consideration [BM3, BM4]. The independently operated Student Council, with its own Statute, plays a critical role in voicing student interests, proposing solutions, and ensuring representation across the university's governance. It advocates for all students with diverse beliefs, gender, race, and orientation. At the beginning of each academic year, university students receive the necessary information about student clubs at the university. Hygeia and the American Hospital offer orientation guides for students, emphasizing infection prevention and control (IPC), and workplace safety. The American Hospital conducts training sessions and paid internships for students, aiming to prepare them for future employment within these institutions [BM2, BM6]. There are many extracurricular activities at this institution. Examples include the Student Club, game changers, open lectures, volunteering, the Debate Club, trips around Albania, sports (such as volleyball), the Dance Club, etc. [BM3, BM4]. The students highlighted that what makes this institution unique is the EPIC program and the opportunity to work and get paid at the American Hospital during the summer [BM4, BM6]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.4*).

5.5 WBU offers guidance and support for students through the Dean of Students and dedicated offices, ensuring smooth integration with the institution and the labour market. The office provides orientation, helps students navigate university policies, and maximizes campus resources, while also assisting foreign students from arrival through graduation and beyond. Information on Albania's culture and organized activities introduces international students to the country. Academic Advisors offer departmental orientation and counselling, while the Career Planning Office connects students with job opportunities or internships, facilitating their transition into the workforce and promoting their absorption as quality, engaged professionals. Student complaints are addressed correctly and follow the university's policies. Students fill out a form that is forwarded to the appropriate department. Subsequently, a committee is established, excluding the professor of the course that is the subject of the complaint [BM3, BM7]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.5*).

5.6 WBU follows an inclusive policy for all students, irrespective of race, colour, nationality, or religious beliefs. Students coming from minorities are ensured to have the same opportunities as all other colleagues. To support this, the institution has allocated specific quotas in its study programs for students from these groups. The building is accessible to individuals with disabilities [SER, p59]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.6*).

5.7 The WBU institutional library offers a wide range of quality textbooks and additional literature, both in electronic and physical formats, to students and staff. While still cataloging its physical collection, which exceeds 20,000 items, 6,300 are already system-registered. Additionally, the library grants access to 36 online resources through its website at <https://library.wbu.edu.al/>. The library's collection encompasses around 12,080 resources in humanities, 8,800 in medical science (with 2,800 journals), 1,550 in economics and business (150 magazines), 1,050 in technology (100 magazines), 1,140 in language and literature, and 950 in engineering [SER, p60, Ev.5.7]. The library regularly updates its collection to include both required and suggested readings for study



programs through purchases, donations, or online subscriptions. Access to library facilities and services is provided to students based on schedules that are both approved and made public. Students can borrow physical books, access online resources at no cost, or book study rooms for specific periods. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.7*).

5.8 The institution facilitates the practical application of knowledge and skills acquired by students through the EPIC program, which is open to all WBU students enrolled in any study program. Selection for the EPIC program is based on high academic achievements up to the application period. Furthermore, the Career Guidance and Planning Office prepares institutional agreements to connect students and graduates with the labour market. EEG consider an affirmation that the institution has established the Office of Graduates (Alumni Office), with the aim of tracking graduates in the labour market as well as creating a wide network of communication and developing activities with them. We encourage the university to preserve the relevant data in the following since the institution does not have graduate students and we are unable to assess the follow-up of graduate students. [SER, p64]. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.8*).

5.9 WBU maintains active engagement with its alumni through the Graduate Office (Alumni Office) within the Dean of Students, organizing seminars, workshops, congresses, and events to promote relationships, continuous learning, and mutual advice for sustainable growth. However, as a new institution, they are still in the preparatory phase for connections with their future alumni. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.9*).

Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- The percentage of students dropping out, compared to other private institutions in this field, is relatively high—approximately 25% of the students have failed to advance to the next year and have requested to transfer elsewhere. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.1*).
- WBU offers various scholarships, including excellence and institutional scholarships through partnerships, and special scholarships for certain regions' graduates. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.2*).

Weaknesses

The evaluation team didn't identify any weaknesses regarding this Assessment Area.

Recommendations

The evaluation team didn't identify any recommendations:

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the actions being taken in this Evaluation Area.



- The institution has established the Office of Graduates (Alumni Office), with the aim of tracking graduates in the labour market as well as creating a wide network of communication and developing activities with them. We encourage the university to preserve the relevant data in the following since the institution does not have graduate students and we are unable to assess the follow-up of graduate students. (*Annex No. 1, Standard V.8*).

Judgement

The standards for Students and their Support are: fully met.



Evidence. List

List A: List of Evidences

List of evidences provided as part of self-evaluation documents, annex ...of SER. These evidences on EER are referred using the abbreviation Ev. 1.1..., Ev. 2.40., etc. For meetings we use BM1, BM 2 etc.

Evidence No	Supportive Evidence
Evidence 1.1	Statute of WBU
Evidence 1.2	Basic Regulation of WBU
Evidence 1.3	Organizational Chart of WBU
Evidence 1.4	The Practice of Amending Acts
Evidence 1.5	Membership of the Academic Senate
Evidence 1.6	Membership of the Board of Administration
Evidence 1.7	Membership of the International Advisory Board
Evidence 1.8	The practice of organizing a meeting of the collegial body
Evidence 1.9	Practice of meetings with Invited Participants
Evidence 1.10	Order for establishment of the Working Group for the Strategic Plan
Evidence 1.11	Strategic Plan 2023-2030
Evidence 1.12	Decision for the Approval of Admission Quotas
Evidence 1.13	Practice of Employment at WBU
Evidence 1.14	Student Participation in Collegial Bodies
Evidence 1.15	Institutional Annual Report for the Academic Year 2022-2023
Evidence 1.16	Decision of Academic Senate for drafting Institutional Internal Self Evaluation Report
Evidence 1.17	Decision on the Establishment of the Permanent Commission for Ensuring Institutional Quality Standards and Study Programs
Evidence 1.18	Annual Budget of WBU
Evidence 1.19	Quality Instruments Package
Evidence 1.20	Decision for the Establishment of IQAU
Evidence 1.21	Regulation of Organization and Functioning of IQAU
Evidence 1.22	Regulation for the operation and organisation of the Permanent Commission for Guaranteeing Institutional Quality Standards and Study Programs
Evidence 1.23	List of training activities implemented according to IQAU recommendations
Evidence 1.24	Internal Quality Assurance Unit Activity Plan
Evidence 1.25	Practice for the organization of the Base Unit Meetings
Evidence 1.26	Application File for a Study Program
Evidence 1.27	Student Evaluation Report for the Academic Staff
Evidence 1.28	Case of student's engagement in activities to quality increase
Evidence 1.29	Inclusion of external experts in the development of new programs
Evidence 1.30	Practice meeting with the participation of the representative student (Senator) of the study program in the Basic Unit
Evidence 1.31	Practice of Meetings with IQAU Participants
Evidence 1.32	The assistance of IT office in creating the Website page for IQAU
Evidence 1.33	Example of the Annual Report of the Main Unit
Evidence 1.34	Proposal for Opening of New Programs
Evidence 1.35	Evaluation Report of the Institution by the Staff for Academic Year 2022-2023



- Evidence 1.36 Case of Action Plan based on Evaluation Reports Drafted by IQAU
- Evidence 1.37 Case of an Organized Activity for Information and Awareness on Quality Assurance
- Evidence 1.38 Staff Self-Assessment Form
- Evidence 1.39 Calendar of Meetings of Collegial Bodies
- Evidence 2.1 Regulation on employment, promotion, and staff performance evaluation
- Evidence 2.2 Employment contract of academic staff
- Evidence 2.3 External Expert Engagement on the Internal Quality Assurance Unit Staff Guide
- Evidence 2.4 Completed Staff Training List during the 2022-2023 Academic Year and the New Annual Planning
- Evidence 2.6 Academic Staff Graduated Abroad
- Evidence 2.7 Meetings Arranged with High School Seniors at WBU
- Evidence 2.8 Western Balkans University Promotion at MoES Organized Fair
- Evidence 2.9 Innovation Summit Event
- Evidence 2.10 Practice of Financial Support for Participation in Conferences
- Evidence 2.11 Spring Fest Planning
- Evidence 2.12 Cooperation Agreement Between WBU and the American Hospital LLC and the International Hospital LLC
- Evidence 2.13 Hygienic-Sanitary Act
- Evidence 2.14 Project Application Model (AKKSHI& QU-SURE)
- Evidence 2.15 List of Professors and Experts Engaged in Training at WBU During the 2022-2023 Academic Year
- Evidence 2.16 Activities List Organized by the Student Dean for the 2022-2023 Academic Year
- Evidence 2.17 Scholarship Regulation
- Evidence 2.18 Fire Protection Act
- Evidence 2.19 Staff structure Table 1 of the Annex
- Evidence 2.20 Report on the WBU Infrastructure
- Evidence 2.21 Notice on the IQAU Conducted Training for the Self-Evaluation Form Completion
- Evidence 2.22 Annual Report Model of the Basic Units
- Evidence 2.23 WBU Cadastral Map Fragment
- Evidence 2.24 Plan of the University Campus
- Evidence 2.25 Building rental contract and certificate of ownership
- Evidence 2.26 Construction contract
- Evidence 2.27 Model Inventory of the Academic Staff Office
- Evidence 2.28 Smart Board Classes Distribution Plan
- Evidence 2.29 Laboratory Manuals
- Evidence 2.30 Laboratory Inventory
- Evidence 2.31 Agreement for the Laboratory Waste Disposal
- Evidence 2.32 Floor plan for the cafeteria
- Evidence 2.33 Rental Contract for Parking Facilities
- Evidence 2.34 Transport Contract
- Evidence 2.35 Agreement for Sports Facilities
- Evidence 2.36 Floor plan for the first aid room
- Evidence 2.37 Photographs and Painting Exhibition Event Planning
- Evidence 2.38 Data on the Conference Hall Infrastructure
- Evidence 2.39 Regulation on Administrative Organization
- Evidence 2.40 Book Donation to WBU Act
- Evidence 2.41 PC Donations to WBU Act
- Evidence 2.42 SMART WBU Contract
- Evidence 2.43 Internet Service Contract
- Evidence 2.44 Laboratory List

Evidence 2.45	JSTOR Subscription Document
Evidence 2.46	SMART WBU Use Online Trainings
Evidence 2.47	WBU 2023 Budget
Evidence 2.48	Instruction for the teaching load at the University of the Western Balkans
Evidence 2.49	The Procurement Office and Administrative Services Regulation
Evidence 2.50	WBU Collaborations Agreements List
Evidence 2.51	Applied Projects List
Evidence 2.52	Staff Participation Practice in Conferences Held Inside and Outside the Country
Evidence 2.53	List of Institutions offered on the EPIC Program
Evidence 2.54	Cooperation Agreement with the Cambridge University Medical Education Group (CUMEG), UK
Evidence 2.55	EPIC Agreements List
Evidence 2.56	Academic Staff Mobility
Evidence 2.57	ICM (International Credit Mobility) Agreements List
Evidence 2.58	Participating Personnel List in COST and COST Mobility
Evidence 2.59	Foreign Students Manual
Evidence 2.60	Student Support Policies
Evidence 2.61	List of Participating Personnel in Working Groups, Drafting of Strategic Plans Outside the Institution
Evidence 2.62	WBU Academic Offers
Evidence 2.63	Academic Staff List of Basic Units
Evidence 2.64	Link to Publish Job Vacancies
Evidence 2.65	SMART-WBU Information Management System Guide
Evidence 2.66	Technology Assets List
Evidence 2.67	Access to Research4Life Agreement
Evidence 2.68	Security Contract
Evidence 3.1	List of Foreign Students Studying at WBU
Evidence 3.2	Decision of the Academic Senate on the Admission Criteria for the Academic Years 2022-2023/2023-2024
Evidence 3.3	Proposal for Curriculum Change
Evidence 3.4	Agreement with Golden Links
Evidence 3.5	Basic Unit Teaching Workload Model
Evidence 3.6	Staff Evaluation Form in the Recruitment Process
Evidence 3.7	Regulation of First Cycle Study Programs and Second Cycle Study Programs
Evidence 3.8	EPIC Practice Manuals
Evidence 3.9	Summer Semester Regulation
Evidence 3.10	Code of Ethics for Academic and Administrative Staff" at WBU
Evidence 3.11	QA-SURE Quality Assurance Project
Evidence 3.12	Study Program Model
Evidence 3.13	Model of development of professional practice
Evidence 3.14	Diploma Thesis Manual
Evidence 3.15	List of Beneficiary Students of the 2022-2023 EPIC Program with Paid Internship
Evidence 3.16	Student Involvement in Research Projects
Evidence 3.17	Scientific Research Training for Students
Evidence 3.18	Extracurricular Annual Student Training Activities Calendar for the Academic Years 2022-2023/2023-2024
Evidence 3.19	Curriculum and teaching training package
Evidence 3.20	Decision of the Board of Administration for the Approval of Study Quotas for the Academic Years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024
Evidence 3.21	Diploma Model
Evidence 3.22	Model Request to Be Equipped with a Laboratory

- Evidence 3.23 Training Development Practice for ANATOMAGE
- Evidence 3.24 Sample Market Study of the Study Program Opening
- Evidence 3.25 Example Cooperation Agreement with a Higher Education Institution
- Evidence 3.26 Full Training List Report for 2022-2023
- Evidence 3.27 Double-degree programs list
- Evidence 3.28 Regulation on Academic Organization
- Evidence 3.29 Training for Dentists in the Orthodontics Field
- Evidence 3.30 Decision of the Academic Senate on the Approval and Promotion of the Labor Market and Career Planning Boards
- Evidence 3.31 Decision of the Board of Administration to Cover Expenses for the Delegation of Students and Staff to MEDIAN Reha-Zentrum Bernkastel-Kues
- Evidence 3.32 Training plan for academic and administrative staff for the academic year 2023-2024
- Evidence 4.1 Research Centres Activity for the Academic Year 2022-2023
- Evidence 4.2 Regulation on Scientific Research
- Evidence 4.3 New Study Programs List for the Academic Year 2023-2024
- Evidence 4.4 Academic Staff List
- Evidence 4.5 List of Scientific Research Activities Organized by WBU or in partnerships for the Academic Year 2022-2023/2023-2024
- Evidence 4.6 Scientific Research Activity of the Basic Unit during the Academic Year 2022-2023
- Evidence 4.7 Training Conducted by TCE
- Evidence 4.8 List of Projects Funded by the Institution
- Evidence 4.9 Model of Financial Support of Personnel Participating in Scientific Research Activities
- Evidence 4.10 Organization of Research Groups Within Basic Units
- Evidence 4.11 Annual Planning of Scientific Research Activities of the Base and Main Units
- Evidence 4.12 Program Opening in Collaboration with NANOALB
- Evidence 4.13 Cooperation Agreement with Cambridge Clinical Laboratories
- Evidence 4.14 Defining Objectives of Scientific Research
- Evidence 4.15 Model of Institutional Support for Personnel on Academic Reasons
- Evidence 4.16 List of Work Groups for Writing Projects
- Evidence 4.17 Agreement with the NEXTCLICK Center
- Evidence 4.18 Engagement of Staff in Teaching (visiting prof.)
- Evidence 4.19 List of Personalities Invited on Workshops, Trainings and Open Lectures
- Evidence 4.20 Medical Conference Participation Report
- Evidence 4.21 Report on Participation in the NANOALB Conference
- Evidence 4.22 Report on Conference Participation Organized by the American Hospital
- Evidence 4.23 Resolution to Establish the Periodical Scientific Journal
- Evidence 4.24 Annual Publications List 2022-2023
- Evidence 4.25 List of Students as Part of Mobilities Projects
- Evidence 4.26 List of Hygeia and American Hospital Staff Engaged in Teaching
- Evidence 4.27 Decision on the Development of the International Conference on New Trends and Innovations in Medicine and Healthcare
- Evidence 4.28 Decision on the Development of the International Conference of Higher Education and Sustainable Development
- Evidence 4.29 Regulation of the Scientific Research Center for Medical Sciences, Technology, and Innovation
- Evidence 4.30 Project idea to Establish BIOBANK
- Evidence 4.31 Project idea for the Establishment of the Cell Culture Research Laboratory
- Evidence 4.32 Project idea for the Establishment of Technicity
- Evidence 4.33 Study Visit of WBU Students to Saxon University in the Netherlands




- Evidence 4.34 WBU -Down Syndrome Albania Training Report
- Evidence 4.35 Plan for Scientific Activities 2023-2024
- Evidence 4.36 Proposal for the Establishment of the Point of Care Research Group
- Evidence 4.37 Guidelines for Promoting Publications and Scientific Research
- Evidence 4.38 Decision of the Rectorate for Participation in Scientific Research Projects
- Evidence 4.39 Information on the Challenge Fund Briefing Session
- Evidence 5.1 Approval of the admission criteria in the first and second cycle study programs
- Evidence 5.2 Report on the activity of the office of communication, public relations and student admission for the academic year 2022-2023
- Evidence 5.3 Student's Guide
- Evidence 5.4 The agreement with the "New Perspective" for scholarships
- Evidence 5.5 Involvement of students in the Academic Senate
- Evidence 5.6 The establishment, functioning and composition of the Student Council
- Evidence 5.7 List of books (Library Fund)
- Evidence 5.8 The practice of the request for the enrichment of the fund
- Evidence 5.9 Regulation of the Library
- Evidence 5.10 Regulation of Scholarship
- Evidence 5.11 Information days inside the institution for students/organization of information activities
- Evidence 5.12 Organization and Operation of Student Clubs
- Evidence 5.13 Practice of Student Council Election 2022
- Evidence 5.14 Report on activities of Students Clubs for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024
- Evidence 5.15 List of Partner Academic Institutions

List B: Meetings held during the visit

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

BM1: Review team meet with the Institutional Coordinator.

BM2: Review Team meet with the Rector.

BM3: Review team meet with a sample of first cycle students.

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

BM5: Review team meet with Rectorate and senior university managers.

BM6: Review team meet with Administrative Board and Academic Senate

BM7: Review team meet with the Self-evaluation team.

BM8: Review team meet with the Institutional Coordinator.

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

BM10: Review team meet with a sample of support/administrative staff.

BM11: Review team meet with external partners and alumni.

BM12: Review team tour of facilities

BM13: Review Team meet with the Rector to summarize the major lines of enquiry and related matters pursued during the review.


