



QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## PERIODIC EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Integrated Master of Science in “Architecture”

offered by

Higher Education Institution - EPOKA University

### External Evaluation Group:

1. Prof.As.Dr. Gjergji Islami

2. Prof.As.Dr. Teuta Jashari Kajtazi

July/2024

### STUDY PROGRAM DATA SUMMARY TABLE

For the Study Program: "Integrated Master of Science in Architecture", offered by the Higher Education Institution "EPOKA University"

Nr.		
1	Applicant HEI:	Epoka University
2	Basic unit that offers:	Department of Architecture
3	Name of the study program:	Integrated Master of Science in Architecture
4	Licensing order / DCM:	OMES Nr. 517, dated 17.10.2011
5	Reorganization order / DCM:	OMES Nr. 517, dated 17.10.2011
6	Diploma registration form:	OMES Nr. 217, dated 24.10.2022
7	Order / ABD of the first accreditation:	OAB Nr. 54, dated 28.09.2018
8	Study cycle:	Second Cycle
9	Duration of the study program:	5 years /10 semesters
10	Total Credits (ECTS):	300 ECTS
11	Form of study:	Full time
12	Language (Albanian / other):	English
13	The program is offered in cooperation with other institutions:	-
14	Joint degree (insert name):	-
15	Dual degree (insert name):	-
16	The national qualifications framework level:	7
17	EAS / CAS academic staff for the study program:	17 EAS/10 CAS 2022-2023 a.y. 16 EAS/5 CAS 2021-2022 a.y. 19 EAS/3 CAS 2020-2021 a.y. 19 EAS/3 CAS 2019-2020 a.y. 19 EAS/10 CAS 2018-2019 a.y.
18	Number of students:	58 students 2022-2023 a.y. 62 students 2021-2022 a.y. 60 students 2020-2021 a.y. 49 students 2019-2020 a.y. 50 students 2018-2019 a.y.
19	Comments / others:	-



## SUMMARY OF PROGRAM DATA IN THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION PROCESS

Epoka University began its activity during the 2007-2008 Academic Year with the initial status of "Higher Education School," which was changed in 2012 to "University.

The University is composed of three Faculties:

- Faculty of Architecture and Engineering
- Faculty of Economics and Administrative Science
- Faculty of Law and Social Sciences

The Faculty of Architecture and Engineering is composed of three departments:

- Department of Architecture
- Department of Civil Engineering
- Department of Computer Engineering

In 2017, the university received institutional accreditation from the Albanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, valid from 20/10/2017 until 19/10/2021.

The architecture programs at Epoka University were first offered in 2008, when a 4-year bachelor's degree (240 ECTS) was approved and then opened. In 2011, to become compatible with the Bologna process, the program was reorganized into a 300 ECTS program with 5 years of integrated studies (PICD), concluding with a Master of Science degree.

Documents regarding the Master of Science (Integrated Second Cycle) study program in "Architecture":

- First Licensing Document: DCM no. 281, dated 12.03.2008, as a Bachelor Program in "Architecture" with a duration of 4 years (Licenses for opening an academic activity, following the given license, according to UMAS No. 596, dated 23.12.2008)
- Accreditation document of the Bachelor program in "Architecture" (4 years): is the Order of the Minister of Education and Science no. 260, dated 07.06.2011, based on the Decision of the Accreditation Council no. 176, dated 30.05.2011.
- Reorganization document from the BSc (4-year) program at the Integrated Msc: Order of the Ministry of Education and Science, no. 517, dated 17.10.2011, based on the Decision of the Accreditation Council no. 250, dated 16.09.2011.
- The 5-year integrated study program is entering for the second time in the accreditation process. The integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture was accredited on 28.09.2018 with validity until 30.09.2023, based on decision Nr. 54.

For years, the university and the Department of Architecture have shown progress by increasing the number of students and academic staff, establishing a campus with a qualitative infrastructure, and consolidating the academic reputation.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION PROCESS.

### Summary description

The External Evaluation of the Integrated Master of Science Study Program in Architecture started with a review of the documents submitted by the university and then with the site visit conducted in September 2023, following the previously prepared Agenda containing discussions with all relevant parties involved. During the meeting, the EEG addressed critical issues, confirmed the documentation, visited the premises, and confirmed the infrastructure required for the teaching and learning process, including the Program self-evaluation.

Upon completion of the visit, the EEG requested additional documents mainly related to the revised Curricula (based on previous evaluation recommendations), the number of graduated students, the number of active students, the process associated with the transfer of students, and the acceptance of ECTS credits. The same information requested by EEG was shortly provided by the Institution, allowing the evaluation process to continue preparing the report evaluating the Integrated Master of Science in Architecture program.

The EEG accessed all provided data, documents, visits to the institution, and information necessary to prepare the external evaluation report.

The External Evaluation Group sent the draft external report to the institution on 18.06.2024. The institution sent its comments about the draft external evaluation report dated 25.06.2024 in ASCAL's AMS system. The External Evaluation Group (EEG) has received the comments of the University on the Draft External Evaluation Report and after carefully reviewing all comments, the EEG has concluded that:

- All comments provided by the University agree with the report's findings and show the institutional commitment to further address the issues.
- The Draft External Evaluation Report will have NO changes.




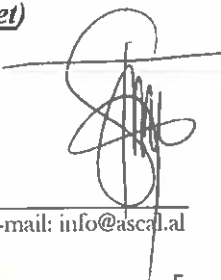
## RECOMMENDATIONS FULFILLMENT DEGREE FROM THE LAST ACCREDITATION

### I. Recommendations of the Accreditation Board based on Decision No.54, date 28.09.2018, are:

1. To improve the curriculum of the study program by adapting the credits of didactic activities for every subject based on the European Credit Transfer System and integrating more professional activities into it.
2. To recruit new academic staff with degrees and titles, reduce the teaching load of the current academic staff in this study program, and become more involved in scientific research activities.
3. To expand the variety of collaborative institutions for the professional preparation of students.

### II. Completion of recommendations by the Institution

1. The curriculum is improved and adapted according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) per course, divided into theory, practice, and laboratory work (see Annex 2.1). The integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture with 300 ECTS credits (5 years-10 semesters). It is important to mention that the Master thesis is allocated 15 ECTS in the 10<sup>th</sup> semester, along with summer practices and non-technical electives. (*Recommendation – fully met*)
2. Data presented and discussions at the Institution confirm several academic staff members employed since the first accreditation of the study program, as well as the advancement of existing academic staff. Even though the distribution of the teaching load is evident, there is still a requirement to look into more relaxed allocation amongst existing and possible employment of new teaching staff members. (*Recommendation – substantially met*)
3. Since the first accreditation, the Institution has expanded its list of collaborations/cooperations with Educational and Professional Institutions (see Annex 10.6—foreign partnership agreements; Annex 22.1—non-educational partnerships). The HEI and the Department of Architecture assist students in relation to summer practices and professional institutions with whom the collaboration/cooperation is ongoing. (*Recommendation – fully met*)



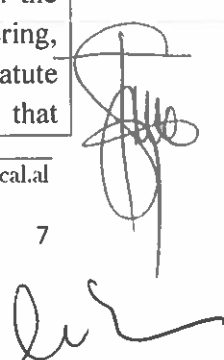
## Evaluation of the Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture

### I. STUDY PROGRAM PROVISION

<b>Standard I.1.</b>	
<b>The higher education institution delivers study programs in accordance with its mission and goal, aiming at preserving national interests and values, as well as in line with the development strategy, statute and its other regulatory acts.</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The higher education institution provides study programs that do not infringe on national interests and aim to preserve and consolidate national academic and cultural values.	<p>The integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture complies with the academic and cultural values of the Republic of Albania, following the national policies set out in the “National Strategy for Higher Education” of the Ministry of Education and Sports. The study program provides the students with academic skills and necessary ethics that can help them contribute to the research environment in Albania.</p> <p>The education of qualified professionals, both in theoretical and professional formation, is an essential contribution to society and matches the mission of higher education institutions in general and Epoka University in particular. (see Annex 2.1, which shows the content of the Curriculum of the study program)</p>
<b>Criterion 2.</b> The study program is designed and delivered in accordance with the goals and mission of the institution and field of activity.	<p>The Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture has been designed and implemented following EPOKA University’s mission and goal, outlined and specified in the Department’s strategic plan for 2017-2022 (see Annex with specific theme 3, related to the Program in reaccreditation).</p> <p>The Program also fits into the HEI Framework Strategy 2018-2022, under Goals and Objectives (see Annex 5.1, point 4), and is drafted per the national policies set out in the National Strategy of Higher Education.</p>
<b>Criterion 3.</b> The study program is designed and delivered pursuant to and in accordance with the strategy for development, Institution Statute and Regulation, and in line with the academic fields and directions of the Institution.	<p>The Program in reaccreditation aligns and is implemented following HEI’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022 (see Annex 5.1), the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 of the Department of Architecture (see Annex 5.4), as well as with the goals of the Republic of Albania and the national strategies for economic development and integration. The same also follows national and international standards and practices, such as the Bologna Charter and the Albanian Qualifications Framework.</p>

<b>Criterion 4.</b> The study program is designed and developed in line with national development strategies, national interest and global development trends, based on the relevant national and international documentation.	As stated in Criteria above, the Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture consists of courses that address, among other things, the need for scientific research and professional skills in the field of architecture and contribute to Albania's construction market, which requires educated and highly skilled graduates, leading to effective institutions in the country.			
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The program is well-structured and follows the institution's mission and development strategy. It contributes to providing highly qualified professionals to meet labor market demand and the overall national economic development.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				X

<b>Standard I.2.</b> The study program complies with the academic field of the main and basic unit responsible for the study program at the institution.	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution demonstrates it possesses the proper experience, capacities and resources in the specific academic area to deliver a study program in that particular area.	Over the years, the HEI has offered programs in architecture at various levels, including a Ph.D., while the Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture is offered for 10 years. This confirms that the institution possesses capacities and resources in architecture and can offer study programs in this field.  The opinion offered can be supported by accessing the information about the academic staff, CV-s, and tabular presentations (see Annex 2.5) and meeting most of them during the EEG visit at the Institution.  In addition, the classes are offered on a modern campus, in a library, and facilities with high-quality lecture materials, including smart boards, computers with internet access, and computer labs for empirical study and research at the master level.
<b>Criterion 2.</b> The general and specific field of the study program must be in line with the academic and research field of the main unit, responsible for study	The Organizational Scheme of HEI (see Annex 9) identifies that it comprises three faculties, one of them being the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering, which has three Departments: the Department of Architecture, the Department of Civil Engineering, and the Department of Computer Engineering. The HEI's statute specifies that the faculty is the central academic unit that



<p>program, according to the study program classification/codification, in line with national and European directives and instructions.</p>	<p>coordinates teaching, research, and cultural development in the relevant teaching-research fields. (see Annex 1.1, article 11). Offered documentation shows that the HEI has implemented its codification of study programs and courses following the specific field of study since its establishment. It should be mentioned that the Ministry of Education and Sports has started a program codification process at the state level, which is still ongoing.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> The general and specific field of the study program must be in line with the academic and research field of the basic unit responsible for the study program. In case of interdisciplinary programs, at least one of the cooperative units must ensure such compatibility.</p>	<p>As mentioned above, The Organizational Scheme of HEI (see Annex 9) identifies that it comprises three faculties, one of them being the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering, which has three Departments: the Department of Architecture, the Department of Civil Engineering, and the Department of Computer Engineering. In this case, the Department of Architecture is responsible for the Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture. This means that the general field of study is distributed in specific fields throughout the curriculum, containing required research fields in architectural studies and compatible with other programs at the same level of study elsewhere.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> In cases when the institution offers a “Master of Professional Studies” program in a specific field, not included in the institution’s profile, its quality is guaranteed by partner institutions.</p>	<p><b>It does not apply to the program in reaccreditation.</b></p>
<p><b>Criterion 5.</b> The higher education institution, in coordination with employers, offers further professional training to graduated students.</p>	<p>As stated in the SER and documentation provided (see Annex 8.2 and Annex 22.1), it can be confirmed that the HEI offers specific and required training activities for Teaching staff and possibilities for graduated students via signed agreements with external professional parties.</p> <p>Various general information training courses are offered for teaching staff and students at the beginning of every academic year. Specific training possibilities related to research, scientific publishing, and quality assurance in higher education are also available. In addition, training in design and project management can be beneficial for teaching staff members. A tabular presentation of all training shows the schedule of specific training activities offered at least once or twice a year.</p>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p><i>The documentation provided, the content of the curriculum, and the visit to the institution, which included fruitful discussions with the</i></p>



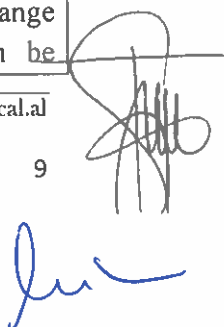



	<i>parties involved, confirm that the Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture complies with the academic field of the responsible unit.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	<b>Not met</b>	<b>Partially met</b>	<b>Substantially met</b>	<b>Fully met</b>
				<b>X</b>

**Standard I.3.**

**The Higher education institution ensures cooperation relationships with institutions, companies, third parties, local and/or foreign business actors in order to deliver the study program, in the framework of professional training, scientific research and mobility.**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution responsible for program development, supervision and progress ensures successful cooperation relationships within the institution through task division among staff and units, allocation of respective responsibilities and ongoing review of their work.	The HEI's statute specifies that each unit has tasks and objectives that fulfill the institution's mission. Departments organize teaching and research activities, while faculties coordinate the activities of the basic units they represent. Administrative units support infrastructure maintenance, IT support, admission, international relations, quality assurance, and projects. The institution guarantees cooperation and good relations by harmonizing duties between its staff and attaining their respective responsibilities. (see Annex 1.1, article 23)
<b>Criterion 2.</b> In order to meet the objectives of the teaching and student training process, the institution establishes cooperation relations with counterpart institutions in and/or outside the country, native and/or foreign business actors.	The HEI has well-developed cooperation relations with other educational Institutions/ Partner Universities, as well as Non-educational Institutions, as stated in the link below: ( <a href="https://epoka.edu.al/membership/cat-partnerships-2322.html">https://epoka.edu.al/membership/cat-partnerships-2322.html</a> ) In addition, the institution annually organizes a Career fair for students, as shown in the link below: ( <a href="https://cpao.epoka.edu.al/home-9th-career-fair-2022-1593-3213.html">https://cpao.epoka.edu.al/home-9th-career-fair-2022-1593-3213.html</a> )
<b>Criterion 3.</b> To deliver the study program, the institution enters into specific agreements with institutions, research institutes, companies in the relevant field to conduct professional, clinical and work practices or	As mentioned in the Criterion above, the institution has many agreements that allow the exchange of academic staff and students, including other professional activities within the scope of studies (practices, internships, etc). Many of these activities involving academic staff and students are shown in the documents attached. (see Annex 10.1) As an example, the HEI has an active agreement with Bergamo University related to ERASMUS+ exchange possibilities for Students and Staff members, which can be

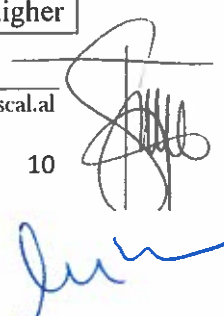


internships etc., and cooperates with employers to perform and supervise the practice, conduct scientific research and enable academic staff and student mobility.	considered very beneficial for the Program in particular cases (See Annex 22.2).			
<b>Criterion 4.</b> The unit responsible for the study program drafts periodic analytical reports in terms of benefits from cooperation agreements in the framework of study program delivery.	Within the list of submitted documentation, it can be noted that the Department of Architecture/ Institution produces a narrative or summary of activities performed within cooperation agreements with various partner institutions, both educational and non-educational. (see Annex 10.1, Annex 10.2, and Annex 10.5)			
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>EEG notices that the HEI has many cooperation agreements with educational Partner Institutions and Non-educational partners. As a result, the summaries show many activities involving academic staff and students, including mobility, practices and internships, and other professional activities.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				X

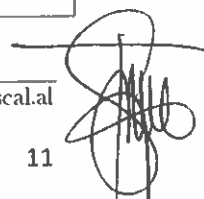
<b>Field I Standards' Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				X

## II. ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF SECOND CYCLE PROGRAMS

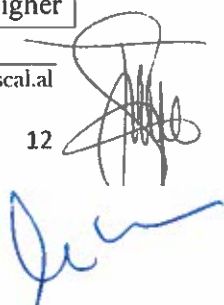
<b>Standard II.1.</b>	
<b>The study program is organized in accordance with national legal provisions and bylaws in force and internal regulatory acts</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The elements comprising the study program structure, training activities, assessed in credits, are clearly defined in accordance with	All Courses within the integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture have the assigned number of ECTS credits that correspond to 25 hours of learning activities, following the Decision of the Council of Ministers, No. 41, dated 24.01.2018, which addresses the elements of study programs offered by higher



<p>the national legislation in force and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).</p>	<p>education institutions (see Annex 2.1, the program that specifies credits and hours in a tabular form for each of the courses taught).</p>
<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> The study program aims to develop special skills in a wide range of professions and specialties, provide advanced knowledge in a field of study or employment, including critical understanding of academic theories and principles in the field, building advanced knowledge, skills, and competences in an academic or professional field, necessary to solve complex and unforeseeable problems in a specialized study or professional area.</p>	<p>The program's content and courses cover various fields of architecture studies. All courses can be grouped into Architectural Design, Building Technology and Construction, History of Art and Architecture, Urban and Landscape Design, Restoration and Conservation, and other specifics that help develop students' skills and competencies, preparing them to solve problems professionally. (see Annex 2.1, the variety of courses offered during the five years of studies)</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> The study program has defined load in credits in terms of professional practice delivery and fulfillment of completion requirements.</p>	<p>In the fifth year of studies, more specifically in the 10-th semester, there are 5+4 ECTS credits allocated to two Compulsory courses such as summer practices, one at the Construction site and the other at the Architectural Studio (See Annex 2.1, which specifies the number of hours per each of these courses)</p>
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> The first-cycle program Bachelor in Primary Education is supplemented by second-cycle programs "Master" in Teaching, which prepare primary education teachers. Master's in Teaching programs that train lower and upper secondary education teachers are organized as second-cycle "Master" study programs</p>	<p><b>It does not apply to the program in reaccreditation.</b></p>




according to relevant training fields.	
<b>Criterion 5.</b> “Master” programs in the field of teaching are organized into 120 credits and 25 percent of credits must go toward general psycho-pedagogical training. “Master” programs that prepare teachers in the same teaching field should have at least 80 percent of the curriculum similar.	<b>It does not apply to the program in reaccreditation.</b>
<b>Criterion 6.</b> The form of study organization, student admission, and funding in higher education institutions of special status are carried out in accordance with the law on higher education and relevant specifications provided for in the legal framework of the ministry responsible for education.	<b>It does not apply to the program in reaccreditation.</b>
<b>Criterion 7.</b> Second cycle Master’s study programs that are offered in the same study field and under the same name should have a similar content level of at least 70 percent.	The integrated Master of Science in Architecture, with its content, is a unique Program offered. The evidence shows that no other HEI Institution offers the same or similar program. Previous experience evaluating study programs in architecture shows one more integrated program with two specializations (mainly in the 4th and 5th years of studies) offered at another HEI. It does not reach 70% of similarities in the content!
<b>Criterion 8.</b> The study program is accompanied by the relevant code, according	Even though the national codification of study programs, as defined by the provisions of Article 86, point 2, of Law No. 80/2015, on Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher



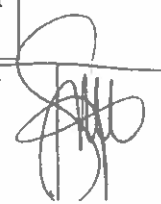
to field of study and classifications published by the ministry responsible for education. Then, program subject codification is performed.	Education Institutions of the Republic of Albania, has not been approved yet, the HEI has implemented their study program codification system. (see Annex 1.1 and Annex 1.2)			
<b>Criterion 9.</b> Study programs may also be shared programs between two or more domestic and foreign higher education institutions, pursuant to the legislation in force.	The integrated Master of Science program in Architecture offered by Epoka University is structured in such a way that it offers a variety of courses or subjects, which all in one are in line with both domestic and foreign programs of the same level in Architecture, as well as are following the legislation in force for the second level architecture programs. This all can be seen in the number of annexes/documents, including the tabular curricula/program (Annex 2.1) The integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture is offered at Epoka University only, and no cooperation with other Institutions exists in this regard.			
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>Within this standard, EEG concludes that the Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture is organized according to the actual law on higher education, internal regulation (Basic regulation), and the Statute. The program is offered only by EPOKA University and also respects the Decision of the Council of Ministers, No. 41, dated 24.01.2018, which addresses the elements of study programs offered by higher education institutions, shown in ECTS.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				<b>X</b>

<b>Standard II.2.</b> The main/basic unit responsible for the study program meets the legal requirements and quality standards prescribed for these units	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
Criterion 1. The main/basic unit responsible for the study program meets the obligations set forth in the legislation in force as regards academic organization and	The Department of Architecture is part of the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering. The Architecture and Engineering Faculty meets all the criteria in Article 23 of Law no. 80/2015 on higher education and scientific research in the Republic of Albania's higher education institutions, which consists of three basic units. (see Annex 1.1. - Statute of Epoka University, and

<p>structure, academic staff, evaluation and accreditation.</p>	<p>Annex 1.2. - Basic Regulation). For further reference, see Annex 9 (organizational chart/scheme of the HEI) and the links below:  <a href="https://fae.epoka.edu.al/cat-general-2390.html">https://fae.epoka.edu.al/cat-general-2390.html</a>  <a href="https://fae.epoka.edu.al/home-architecture-424-1117.html">https://fae.epoka.edu.al/home-architecture-424-1117.html</a></p> <p>In addition, the following is the information about the Full-time/ Effective Academic Staff (EAS) and Part-time/ Academic Staff with Contracts (ASC) during the range of 5 academic years in the Department of Architecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2018-2019: 14-EAS (1 Prof. Dr, 9 Dr, 4 Msc) and 6-ASC (6 Msc);</li> <li>- 2019-2020: 14-EAS (1 Prof. Dr, 9 Dr, 4 Msc) and 11-ASC (1 Dr, 10 Msc);</li> <li>- 2020-2021: 12-EAS (1 Prof. Dr, 7 Dr, 4 Msc) and 3-ASC (3 Msc);</li> <li>- 2021-2022: 13-EAS (1 Prof. Dr, 8 Dr, 4 Msc) and 4-ASC (4 Msc)</li> <li>- 2022-2023: 13-EAS (1 Prof. Dr, 9 Dr, 3 Msc) and 8-ASC (1 Dr, 7 Msc)</li> </ul> <p>(See Annex 39)</p>
<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> The main/basic unit responsible for the study program meets the obligations set forth in the legislation in force by engaging academic/administrative support staff for teaching, laboratory, clinical, etc. practice delivery.</p>	<p>HEI considers it important to support and assist academics and academic staff members in presenting scholarly work at different academic venues nationally and internationally. This detail was also discussed and confirmed during the EEG visit to the Institution and meetings with academic staff members. Several internal documents/regulations allow academic staff to perform the above activities. At the same time, the HEI Institution considers consistency in the research engagement of academic staff essential. The following annexes support the above: Annex 8.1 (HEI policy) and, because of possibilities, Annex 8.3.</p> <p>The HEI has a well-organized administrative structure and offices to support the above academic staff activities (See Annex 9, organizational scheme). On the other hand, the HEI considers it essential to address the need to engage Teaching Assistants in supporting the activities stated above and in the laboratory work and practice delivery (See Annex 40.15, the decision of the Administrative Board).</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> The main/basic unit responsible for the program appoints for any study program a study program coordinator, who is</p>	<p>In his/her capacity as managing authority of the Department, the Head of the Department of Architecture is also the academic coordinator of the Integrated second cycle study program MSC in "Architecture."(see link: <a href="https://epoka.edu.al/fae-academic-staff.html">https://epoka.edu.al/fae-academic-staff.html</a> )</p>

responsible for the study program and professional practices progress and development in line with its objectives.	During the EEG visit, it was confirmed that the head of the unit responsible was appointed as the study program coordinator. At the same time, during the academic year, students of each year have advisors on the registration of courses, including professional practices and their progress. (see Annex 11.2)			
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The Department of Architecture, as part of the Faculty of Architecture, meets the legal criteria for its formation, function, and responsibilities, leading to quality and meeting required standards.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				X

<b>Standard II.3.</b>	
<b>The study program is detailed, informative, structured and organized in accordance with the provisions and objectives of the second cycle study program.</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The main/basic unit responsible for the second cycle study program possesses the necessary information on study program organization, structure and content.	As confirmed during the site assessment and the information available on the website of the HEI, more precisely under the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering, it can be noted that the Department of Architecture possesses all necessary information about the Program under reaccreditation, including its organization, content, and formation. In addition, the above is visible in the following links: <a href="https://fae.epoka.edu.al/cat-general-2390.html">https://fae.epoka.edu.al/cat-general-2390.html</a> <a href="https://arch.epoka.edu.al/home-architecture-5-year-integrated-1893-1985.html">https://arch.epoka.edu.al/home-architecture-5-year-integrated-1893-1985.html</a>
<b>Criterion 2.</b> The study program contains the teaching plan, including the information necessary to determine semester subjects, teaching load of subjects/modules, and hours inside/outside the auditorium.	Information was presented in both forms, during the visit, and as annexes, clearly showing the tabular form of the teaching plan with all necessary information included. The revised teaching plan for the last five years was also submitted as required by the EEG after the site visit. (see Annex 2.1 and Annex 5). In addition, this information for each subject is available in the Annexes of all Syllabuses for all academic years since the program's first accreditation (see Annexes 2.2) <a href="https://eis.epoka.edu.al/curricula/76/program">https://eis.epoka.edu.al/curricula/76/program</a>
<b>Criterion 3.</b> The study program provides students with all the necessary information related to the general and specific criteria	EEG during the site visit (discussion with students and alumni), as well as accessible information on the website, confirm that the HEI and the study program itself provide all necessary information about the admission procedures for new students, including transfer possibilities and requirements to be enrolled in the program.




<p>on admission, transfer, and study equivalence.</p>	<p><a href="https://admissions.epoka.edu.al/home-admission-criteria-1923-1924.html">https://admissions.epoka.edu.al/home-admission-criteria-1923-1924.html</a>  <a href="https://admissions.epoka.edu.al/home-enrollment-procedure-1923-1925.html">https://admissions.epoka.edu.al/home-enrollment-procedure-1923-1925.html</a>  <a href="https://admissions.epoka.edu.al/home-enrollment-documents-1923-1938.html">https://admissions.epoka.edu.al/home-enrollment-documents-1923-1938.html</a></p> <p>In addition to the above, documents provided as annexes during the application are available (Annex 30 – student guide, Annex 17.2 – student transfer, Annex 17.4 – admission policies). It should also be added that during the site visit and discussions with students, their requirements and needs can always be addressed at the admissions office on-site.</p>			
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> The study program contains the necessary information on subject programs (syllabuses) for each subject, about practices, seminars, or laboratory classes, and all the components of each program in and outside the auditorium following the approved formats.</p>	<p>As presented to EEG, the study program contains all the required information. This includes information about all subjects via syllabus (approved by the Institution), tabular forms of the teaching plan, and Curriculum. The syllabus has detailed information regarding seminars, laboratory classes, practices, and other details. The information above is accessible in the Annexes (Annex 39—tabular presentations 9 and 10, Annex 2.2—Syllabuses).</p>			
<p><b>Criterion 5.</b> Study program content has been continuously improved and updated. At the beginning of the academic year, the eventual changes are approved, and the entire file in Albanian and English is archived.</p>	<p>After the site assessment, HEI, Department of Architecture, provided an annex showing the curricula update during the last five years since the program was accredited (see Annex 5). EEG was informed about the procedures the HEI follows to address possible or required changes in the curricula update. The same can be accessed in the following annexes: Annex 2.3 and Annex 2.4.</p>			
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p><i>HEI has a framework that allows the study program to be prepared professionally, guaranteeing a detailed and well-structured study program that aligns with the objectives of the respective study cycle.</i></p>			
<p><b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b></p>	<p>Not met</p>	<p>Partially met</p>	<p>Substantially met</p>	<p>Fully met <b>X</b></p>

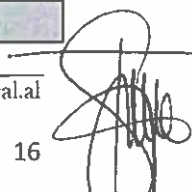

**Standard II.4.**

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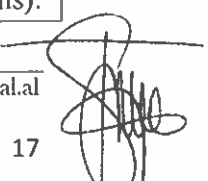

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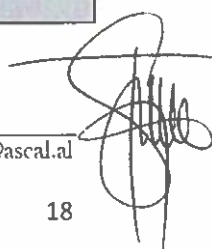

**The structure and organization of the study program complies with training objectives, the qualification level based on the National and European Qualifications Framework, learning outcomes and competences pursuant to labor market requirements.**

Criteria	Expert evaluation
<p><b>Criterion 1.</b> Naming, activities content, subject and practice distribution enable advancing knowledge and skills and/or student employment.</p>	<p>Course distribution throughout the program allows students to gain the required skills and knowledge that lead to successful employment upon completing their studies. Course content, division, training, and professional practice in the last semester back up the previous explanation. As a result of the program's structure, Annex 39 (Table 23) shows the employment of students after the first accreditation of the study program.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> Subjects/modules, their distribution over years and terms, and their evaluation in credits and classes enable the achievement of the study program's comprehensive objectives and expected learning and scientific research outcomes.</p>	<p>The Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture has a detailed structure of the study program. Every syllabus enables the achievement of course objectives and the objectives of the study program in general, including the scientific research outcomes. As stated in the Statute of the HEI (Annex 1.1, article 79-3), the study program is organized according to the European standards in modules and evaluated in ECTS credits, 60 ECTS per year.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> The study program design, subjects, and theory vs. practice ratio align with the study program profile and are similar to related international programs. The "Master of Professional Studies" program should provide advanced professional skills, competencies, and training.</p>	<p>As stated in the criterion above, the Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture has a detailed study program structure distributed over five years of study, containing various subjects in line with other second-cycle programs offered in international HEI institutions and taught in English. In addition, during the EEG visit at the Institution, a double degree international program with the Federico II University in Naples (Italy) was taken as an example of this compliance. However, more information and concrete examples of this should be examined in the future.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> Division according to training activities and the ratio between theory and practice enable the achievement of comprehensive objectives, transfer of knowledge,</p>	<p>The second cycle program is structured to give students an exchange of possibilities during their studies. The program's content aligns with other architecture programs elsewhere in Europe. Therefore, equalizing ECTS credits is very much possible and easy. Upon completion, the program content, structure, and proper distribution of theory and practice make the employment process much more manageable. (See Annex 39, table 23, showing the alumni employment at various institutions and professional firms).</p>

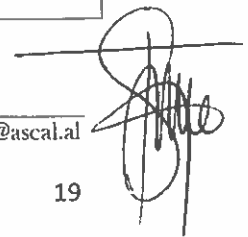
mobility, and employment upon study completion.									
<b>Criterion 5.</b> Syllabuses (subject/module programs) are updated on an ongoing basis to ensure acquisition of competences in accordance with labor market requirements, including the primary and support literature of recent years.	Documentation, including the discussions held during the EEG visit at the institution, confirms the continuous intention to improve and update the course content. The institution had an academic workshop about course design and syllabus development, and the syllabi of courses are updated regularly every academic year at the same time, updating the required and recommended literature. (see Annex 84; Annex 39, table 14).								
<b>Criterion 6.</b> The content of the study program guarantees the acquisition of intended knowledge, skills, and competencies.	The Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture corresponds to Level 7 of the Albanian Qualifications Framework. The study program offers advanced knowledge in Architecture studies, including a critical understanding of the theories, principles, and terminology. In addition, the study program develops skills, abilities, and advanced competencies in further areas related to restoration, planning, landscape design, and recovery and conservation of the environment. Regarding skills and competencies, all courses' teaching and learning methodology stimulates problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork. (see Annex 2.1 – study program)								
<b>Criterion 7.</b> Study program content enables furthering studies and/or student employment in line with labor market expectations and demands.	The study program in the reaccreditation process has content with various relevant professional subjects/courses is in line with labor market requirements. This allows graduates to pursue further, either third-cycle studies or employment. (see Annexes: 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3).								
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>Based on its structure, course distribution, and content, EEG identifies the second-cycle study program as compliant with the National and European Qualifications Framework. Students are capable to either study in third cycle study program or get a job in their study field.</i>								
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Not met</th> <th>Partially met</th> <th>Substantially met</th> <th>Fully met</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>X</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met				<b>X</b>
Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met						
			<b>X</b>						

**Standard II.5.**

**The higher education institution encourages students and partners, and other networks and organizations to participate in the design and ongoing improvement and successful delivery of the study program in accordance with their objectives.**

Criteria	Expert evaluation
<p><b>Criterion 1.</b> To improve and adapt the study program to labor market demands to the greatest extent possible, responsible units consult and consider the proposals of partner institutions, graduates, and other actors from the labor market during program study design and delivery.</p>	<p>During the discussions with the institution's representatives concerning the input of all parties essential for the improvement of the study program, EEG was presented with information on the function and the responsibilities of the Career planning office in this regard. Consultations with students, graduates, and partners are a significant part of the changes leading to improving and adapting the program to the labor market. About this, several Annexes are available (see Annex 4.1, Annex 4.2, and Annex 4.3)</p>
<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> The institution encourages and involves students and their structures in discussions, maintains contacts, and regularly consults with graduates to enhance the study program and reflect on when it benefits study program improvement.</p>	<p>HEI has established the Student Council, composed of student representatives elected democratically to forward petitions from students to the University Administration and contribute to educational activities at the University. The Student Council's fundamental objective is to ensure students' academic development and social and personal growth. The student can ask for any support, complaint, or advocacy concisely and efficiently through a form submitted as an Annex. (see Annex 15.4)</p> <p>In addition, the HEI constantly performs surveys involving graduate students to enable them to use the statistics for program purposes (See Annex 4.1 as the graduates' survey report). In this regard, the HEI produced "The Graduate Outcomes in the Labor Market—Ten Years of Achievement " as evidence (See Annex 4.4).</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> In cooperation with professional networks, associations, orders (especially in medicine), and public and non-public institutions, the responsible unit improves, updates, and adjusts the study program in compliance with proposals and the latest developments in different fields.</p>	<p>HEI has a policy on continuous improvement of the study program. Annex 11.2, point no. 4.3 specifies the program review process, identifying all required points and parties involved. Following the chronology of the process and involvement guarantees compliance with the latest developments in architecture education.</p> <p>In addition, the content of the Program under reaccreditation, as well as the improvement of the same, complies with Law No. 10171, Dated 22.10.2009, "On Regulated Professions in The Republic of Albania," and all other legislative documentation, that allows for graduates to perform their profession!</p>




<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The HEI has presented documents that clearly show procedures and the involvement of students, graduates, and other partners in improving study programs to achieve the objectives of the program itself and the HEI.</i>		
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met
			<b>X</b>

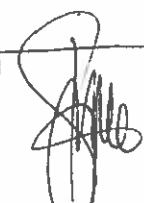
**Standard II.6.**

**The study program guarantees guidance in the relevant field of study and scientific research.**



Criteria	Expert evaluation
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The study program defines main study and research priorities and objectives in line with significant institution objectives.	The Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture has its research priorities oriented toward Architectural Design, Building Systems Technology, Urbanism and Landscape, History, and Theory of Architecture, as well as other components to meet the program's objectives and the higher education institutions. Regulations and legal frameworks make this possible. (see Annex 2.1, Annex 3, Annex 5.3, and Annex 11.1, relevant to the explanation above)
<b>Criterion 2.</b> The main/basic unit encourages coordinates, and administers teaching, research, or artistic activities by adhering to the academic staff's academic freedom and specific study field.	The Department of Architecture, as a basic unit, coordinates regular teaching and learning processes, including encouraging the academic staff to engage in various research and artistic activities. The HEI Statute supports these activities, more precisely, Articles 4 and 5 on Autonomy and Academic Freedom.
<b>Criterion 3.</b> The study program enables, encourages and motivates students to engage in studies, projects or research activities.	Meeting academic staff and students allowed EEG to observe both parties' engagement in the teaching/learning process and various projects and activities. For more information on projects and research activities, HEI has submitted Annex 21.1, which specifies relevant conferences and workshops. In addition, Annex 39, Table 22, specifies the number of students involved in scientific activities and their teachers.  Getting into more detail, students are encouraged to participate in various workshops (both curricular and extracurricular) as well as at the biannual Conference organized by HEI, ICAUD, partially supported by Cost Action!
<b>Criterion 4.</b> To carry out study, research, and scientific activities, the basic	EEG identified possibilities for financial support from the HEI in this process by meeting with responsible staff members for the primary and basic unit and academic staff. The directive on

unit relies financially on the institution and manages revenues from different activities.	<p>promoting scientific publications (see Annex 21.3) intends to encourage academic staff to participate in various research activities/publications.</p> <p>As stated above and in the annex, a request should be submitted to get support from the HEI for promoting scientific publications and activities. The responsible unit presents the application/s to the rectorate's office for further implementation based on yearly allocated funds related to the above.</p>			
<b>Conclusion</b>	<p><i>The HEI has established mechanisms that support scientific research in the relevant field of study. Documents that form the legal frameworks are presented within the above standard evaluation. Regulations or legal frameworks that should be mentioned are Regulation on the Second Cycle Study Programs, Department Faculty Policies regarding learning, teaching and quality assurance, etc.</i></p>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				X

<b>Standard II.7.</b>	
<b>The study program guarantees advanced knowledge, internationalization and scientific research.</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The unit responsible supports new subject groups and scientific research projects and ensures cooperation with other research structures to meet study program objectives for scientific research.	<p>The HEI has established the Research and Projects Office, with whom the EEG met at the location. This office supports the campus community's research, creative activity, and outreach initiatives. In addition, the office supports the academic staff members who initiate project applications or research groups within the institution. All these activities are of great importance to meet scientific research objectives, keeping in mind that they also benefit the promotion of academic staff members. (see Annex 21.3)</p> <p><a href="https://projects.epoka.edu.al/home.html">https://projects.epoka.edu.al/home.html</a></p>
<b>Criterion 2.</b> The unit is responsible for meeting the demands for analysis, studies, and projects of a scientific research nature and engages the academic staff and students to meet such objectives.	<p>The Department of Architecture, a responsible unit for the second cycle study program in reaccreditation, takes the responsibility to offer possibilities and engage students and academic staff in various scientific research activities, such as various national and international projects and conferences. (see Annex 21.1, Annex 21.6, and Annex 21.7)</p> <p>Teaching staff members and students are encouraged to participate in various workshops (both curricular and extracurricular) as well</p>




	<p>as at the biannual conference organized by HEI and ICAUD, which is partially supported by Cost Action! In addition, the Summer workshop “A New Rural Paradigm.” workshop/competition “Designing Together 2022” and the International Conference “Challenges in the Western Balkans – infrastructure and development in the Region” are important activities to be mentioned in this regard.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> The responsible unit organizes conferences or activities in the field of the study program, which aid staff and students in meeting objectives.</p>	<p>The HEI, specifically the central unit responsible for the program, organizes a biannual Conference ICAUD (International Conference on Architecture and Urban Design).  <a href="https://conf.epoka.edu.al/by-conference/icaud">https://conf.epoka.edu.al/by-conference/icaud</a>  In addition, the Annex 40.1 contains a list of all activities organized during the period 2021-2022 .  The above-mentioned Conference relates to the topic of architecture in the broader sense, involving Teaching staff and Student participation(<a href="https://icaud.epoka.edu.al/2021/article-draft-detailed-technical-programme-2868-2872.html">https://icaud.epoka.edu.al/2021/article-draft-detailed-technical-programme-2868-2872.html</a>). However, HEI organizes other conferences with topics related to other programs, and this can be accessed in the following link: <a href="https://conf.epoka.edu.al/">https://conf.epoka.edu.al/</a></p>
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> The study program trains competitive professionals for the national and international labor market.</p>	<p>The Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture is structured in a way that makes it possible to train professionals who can find themselves professionally both in the national and international labor markets. As we mentioned above, the curricula are diverse and completed for architecture students. All this comes because the study program is in line with National and European standards and according to the legal frameworks. Annex 39-table 23 shows the result of the employment of graduates.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 5.</b> The responsible unit takes into account and implements the recommendations issued by professional orders, associations, and networks with regard to the competencies required to obtain professional licenses in accordance with legal acts relevant to the field.</p>	<p>During the site visit, EEG discussed the requirements of the criterion, confirming that the responsible unit informs students and graduates about the required process for obtaining the professional license. The profession of an Architect is regulated according to the law (<a href="https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/LIGJ_NR_10_171_PRR.pdf">https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/LIGJ_NR_10_171_PRR.pdf</a>). Therefore, the structure of the study program can be considered well in line with these requirements.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 6.</b> The study program for regulated professions complies with</p>	<p>The profession of an Architect is regulated according to the law: <a href="https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/LIGJ_NR_10_171_PRR.pdf">https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/LIGJ_NR_10_171_PRR.pdf</a></p>

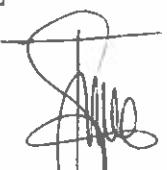



national legal acts and international recommendations issued in European Union directives and regulations (e.g. Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EU).	Therefore, the structure of the study program can be considered well in line with these requirements. In addition, the study program considers recommendations issued by the EU and their legal frameworks: <a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2005/36/oj">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2005/36/oj</a>			
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The structure and content of the integrated second cycle program in architecture align with the requirements of the architect's profession, considering the national law on regulated professions and EU regulations. All these integrated components guarantee the internationalization of the program for scientific research as well as the possibility of graduates fitting into national and international labor markets.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				X

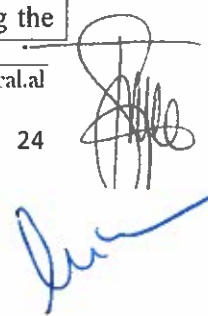
<b>Field II Standards' Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				X

### III. TEACHING, LEARNING, EVALUATION AND COMPETENCES

<b>Standard III.1.</b> The higher education institution guarantees the learning process and professional and scientific training through best student-centered methods and practices that ensure outcome achievement.	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> Forms of teaching, learning and knowledge transmission are lectures, seminars, lab classes, course assignments/essays, professional and clinical practices, open lectures and any other form approved by the institution.	The tabular presentation of the program and the syllabus of all courses show the proper distribution of all learning components, including lectures, seminars, lab work, and various course assignments (based on the nature of the course). These components are all approved by the HEI and are in line with the regulations for this purpose. (see Annex 2.1, Annexes 2.2, Annex 2.3, and Annex 3)




<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> The academic staff respects and responds to the variety and needs of students by offering alternative teaching and learning forms, means, methods, and opportunities.</p>	<p>The discussion with the teaching/academic staff was very productive because they were flexible about implementing various teaching methodologies according to the nature of each course. In addition, meeting with students confirmed this as well. It should be noted that all these components lead to reaching objectives for each course and positive results for students. EEG was informed about various extracurricular activities that have been organized for students.</p> <p>Activities offered by the Institution related to this criterion include various teaching methodologies based upon the specifics of each course syllabi (See annex 2.2), as well as the following opportunities for students: Architecture from Teaching to Learning to Practice, Learning from Vernacular, Designing the context, Theming Public Spaces, etc. (See Annex 10.5)</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> The institution supports the academic staff in improving didactic competences and in compliance with expected learning outcomes.</p>	<p>HEI organized several training activities for academic staff to support didactic competencies. These activities/trainings include Research training for academic staff, a workshop on course design and syllabus development, training on digital education, an open forum on bringing creativity into 21st-century classrooms, and several others that can be accessed in Annex 8.2.</p> <p><a href="https://aeqi.epoka.edu.al/cat-training-activities-1411.html">https://aeqi.epoka.edu.al/cat-training-activities-1411.html</a></p>
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> The academic staff involved in program teaching is competent in regards to explaining knowledge and concepts, utilizes various interactive teaching methods and holds student-centered discussions, promotes students' creative and critical thinking, as well as their autonomy and responsibility. At the same time, it guides, supports and helps build relationships of mutual respect between them.</p>	<p>Academic staff engaged in the Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture are well prepared, equipped, and competent to share their knowledge with students. They are responsible for courses according to their specialized fields. The syllabi prepared by responsible academic staff contain all required information on the methodology used and expected results towards promoting students' creative and critical thinking.</p> <p>HEI presented a staff recruitment form that it uses during this process. The form contains academic and scientific activity, among other components. (see Annex 7.2)</p> <p>In addition, CVs of academic staff are also available (see Annex 2.5), showing their competencies.</p> <p>EEG gained the required information to address and confirm the above during the visit to the institution.</p> <p><a href="https://epoka.edu.al/arch-academic-staff.html">https://epoka.edu.al/arch-academic-staff.html</a></p>
<p><b>Criterion 5.</b> The unit responsible for study program delivery assesses and improves teaching forms and methods periodically, by including</p>	<p>The HEI via the Department of Architecture, a basic unit responsible for the second cycle program, uses the Course Instructor Survey Form about this criterion (see Annex 12.4). During the visit, the EEG was informed that this form is filled in by students twice during the</p>





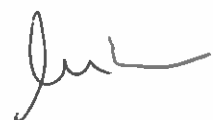
students in the process and reflecting their opinions and suggestions.	academic year, each semester. Upon completion and collection of all results, the Department produces the report and presents it to the faculty level, which completes the review of all results. (see Annex 12.3)			
<b>Criterion 6.</b> The institution organizes structures/units at the institutional level promoting the continuous improvement of teaching, coordinating and cooperating with the main/basic units in the framework of the teaching quality improvement. The responsible structures and units support the experimentation and development of new innovative teaching methods, deliver continuous academic staff training for teaching skill improvement and implementation of new methods.	As stated in Criterion 3 of this standard, HEI organized several training activities for academic staff to support didactic competencies and promote the continuous improvement of teaching methodologies. These activities/trainings include Research training for academic staff, a workshop on course design and syllabus development, training on digital education, an open forum on bringing creativity into 21st-century classrooms, and several others that can be accessed in Annex 8.2. <a href="https://aeqi.epoka.edu.al/cat-training-activities-1411.html">https://aeqi.epoka.edu.al/cat-training-activities-1411.html</a> In addition, the HEI has the Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance, responsible for developing policies and standards for quality assurance, conducting periodic results evaluations, etc. <a href="https://aeqi.epoka.edu.al/cat-permanent-commission-on-quality-assurance-1408.html">https://aeqi.epoka.edu.al/cat-permanent-commission-on-quality-assurance-1408.html</a> <a href="https://aeqi.epoka.edu.al/home-annual-report-of-the-pcqa-1479-3053.html">https://aeqi.epoka.edu.al/home-annual-report-of-the-pcqa-1479-3053.html</a>			
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The Institution ensures that the entire teaching process leads to planned outcome achievements by following the regulations and other internal guidelines. The relationship it creates between students and academic staff is intended to produce the best possible results and required learning outcomes.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				<b>X</b>

<b>Standard III.2.</b>	
<b>The institution drafts regulations and special procedures on testing and assessing professional competences and skills and guarantees their implementation.</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> Knowledge and professional skill testing and assessment criteria and manner are set forth under the Study	The regulation on the second cycle programs (see Annex 3) specifies testing and assessment criteria (see Articles 27-31), such as the right to take an exam, exam proceedings, the announcement

program regulation/Institution regulation/special regulation, and are made public and known to students.	of exam results, re-taking the course, and assessment documentation. In addition, HEI produces the Student Handbook, which contains all the information required in this regard. (see Annex 30) In support of the above, a Basic regulation also has all the necessary information related to this criterion. (see Annex 1.2)								
<b>Criterion 2.</b> Students are informed about knowledge and professional and scientific skills testing methodology as foreseen in subject/module syllabuses by the subject/module head, at the beginning of the academic year.	Academic staff members responsible for any of the courses present the Syllabus at the beginning of the semester. EEG can confirm this because of the meeting they held. Information about the course content is also available on the website of the respective program and as Annex 2.2. <a href="https://eis.epoka.edu.al/curricula/76/program">https://eis.epoka.edu.al/curricula/76/program</a>								
<b>Criterion 3.</b> Knowledge and professional and scientific skill testing and evaluation are done in different forms and ways, by enabling each student to demonstrate his/her knowledge and competences acquired.	When looking at the course Syllabus, there are several ways to assess, test, and evaluate students. Depending on the specifics of each course, the same can be done with the following components: homework, midterm exams, presentations, projects, quizzes, laboratory work, final exams, and attendance. (see Annex 2.2) <a href="https://eis.epoka.edu.al/curricula/syllabus/12627/1/32">https://eis.epoka.edu.al/curricula/syllabus/12627/1/32</a>								
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The submitted documentation, discussions at the location, and material presented on the website of the respective department responsible for the study program clearly show the procedures to follow to accomplish assessment and evaluation of students.</i>								
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Not met</th> <th>Partially met</th> <th>Substantially met</th> <th>Fully met</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>X</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met				<b>X</b>
Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met						
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<b>Standard III.3.</b>	
<b>The institution guarantees a fair and transparent evaluation based on each student's merits, including the appeal process.</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> Knowledge and professional skill testing and evaluation are done throughout the academic year and are reflected in the final	As stated in Criterion 3 of Standard III.2, when looking at the course Syllabus, there are several ways to assess, test, and evaluate students. Depending on the specifics of each course, the same can be done with the following components: homework,

evaluation, foreseen in subject/module syllabuses by the subject/module head.	midterm exams, presentations, projects, quizzes, laboratory work, final exams, and attendance. (see Annex 2.2) <a href="https://eis.epoka.edu.al/curricula/syllabus/12627/1/32">https://eis.epoka.edu.al/curricula/syllabus/12627/1/32</a>
<b>Criterion 2.</b> The institution has in place electronic testing and evaluation systems, preventing different forms of abuse and increasing transparency.	The HEI has an electronic system, EIS (Epoka Interactive System), manages students' evaluation and testing. <a href="https://eis.epoka.edu.al/login">https://eis.epoka.edu.al/login</a> This system allows students and academic staff access. The institution produces guidelines for both parties' access and use. (see Annex 36.1 – for lecturers and Annex 36.2 – for students)
<b>Criterion 3.</b> The final subject evaluation is performed pursuant to the syllabus and legal basis in force.	The Course Syllabus specifies the material students must absorb to accomplish the final exam requirements (see Annex 2.2). At the same time, this process is according to the HEI Guideline on Examination (see Annex 13.1). Students also agreed to this and were knowledgeable about it.
<b>Criterion 4.</b> Knowledge and professional skill evaluation is accompanied with comments/feedback (if necessary) and advice on the learning process to help the student improve in the future.	In relation to this criterion and after completing the regular form of the exam within every course, HEI has established mechanisms that control the progress of this process. Several documents and Bodies ensure this, and are as follows: Annex 13.7 – Exam assessment form Annex 13.8 – Examination period assessment form, as well as the functioning of the exam Board <a href="https://aeqi.epoka.edu.al/cat-exam-board-2607.html">https://aeqi.epoka.edu.al/cat-exam-board-2607.html</a> <a href="#">Directive “On the Functioning of the Exam Board”.pdf (epoka.edu.al)</a> The Regulation on Second Cycle Study Programs specifies detailed procedures to support this criterion: Exam results are announced within the timeframe in the academic calendar. Within five days after the announcement of the results, the students may request an exam appeal in the registrar's office for the exam answers to be reviewed by the Teacher, who reports to the dean's office regarding the reassessment of the exam sheet through the responsible Department for the studies. Within 15 days, the student gets feedback being informed about the results.
<b>Criterion 5.</b> The responsible units and academic staff prevent/do not tolerate plagiarism and cheating during exams and assignments.	The HEI has established mechanisms that allow the Department of Architecture and Academic staff to prevent plagiarism and cheating during the exam. In this case, the Guideline on Examination (see Annex 13.1) specifies the appointment of Invigilators and their responsibilities to supervise students during the exam.

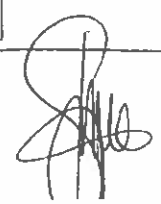
	In addition, Article 5 of the Regulation on Student Discipline (see Annex 13.2) specifies student disciplinary offenses, including plagiarism.
<b>Criterion 6.</b> The results of knowledge and professional skill examinations are merit-based and announced on time in accordance with the provisions of the applicable regulations.	<p>The Regulation on Second Cycle Study Programs (see Annex 3) Article 29 addresses the announcement of exam results. In addition, all results are published in EIS (Epoka Interactive System)</p> <p><a href="https://eis.epoka.edu.al/login">https://eis.epoka.edu.al/login</a></p> <p>It is essential to mention that the anonymity of the entire examination process is respected, bearing in mind that the only component to be seen by the Teacher/Evaluator is a student ID. This guarantees that the examinations are, above all, merit-based. As mentioned in the criterion above, the same explanation applies to the timeframe of the announcement of results, as exam results are announced within the timeframe in the academic calendar. Within five days after the announcement of the results, the students may request an exam appeal in the registrar's office for the exam answers to be reviewed by the Teacher, who reports to the dean's office regarding the reassessment of the exam sheet through the responsible Department for the studies. Within 15 days, the student gets feedback being informed about the results.</p>
<b>Criterion 7.</b> The institution guarantees student rights to be informed on the evaluation and request an evaluation review in line with the rules included in the statute, regulations and evaluation procedures.	<p>The Regulation on the second cycle study programs requires students to be informed about the exam result within five days of the exam date and given the possibility of reviewing it. See Annex 3, more precisely Article 29, which covers this criterion.</p> <p>In addition, the information about the result within the abovementioned time frame is published in EIS (EPOKA Interactive System).</p> <p><a href="https://eis.epoka.edu.al/login">https://eis.epoka.edu.al/login</a></p>
<b>Criterion 8.</b> Any request and complaint is reviewed by the evaluation commission and then by the ad hoc commission. The procedure adopted must be transparent for parties involved, documented and archived.	<p>The HEI has established mechanisms that guarantee the review of any request and complaint related to the exam result. These documents/regulations are:</p> <p>Regulation on second cycle study programs (Annex 3, Article 29)</p> <p>Functioning of the Exam Board: (Annex. 13.5)</p> <p>The Exam Board has a chairperson and is comprised of at least one representative from each Faculty, who is appointed by the respective Dean. The main responsibilities and decisions of the Exam Board are to establish guidelines and instructions related to all types of exams, monitor the implementation of all exam processes in compliance with the academic calendar, monitor the quality assurance of all exams, evaluate objections</p>



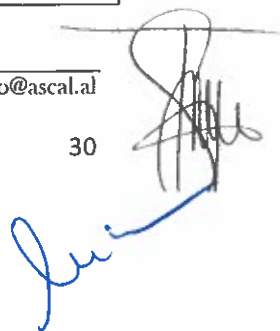

	related to the exam results, review the grade statistics, and prepare the annual report of the above activities.			
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The HEI has established mechanisms that guarantee fair and transparent evaluation of students upon completion of all Course engagements, including the appeal process in case the exam result needs to be reviewed.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				<b>X</b>

**Standard III.4.**  
**The study program guarantees the enhancement of students' creativity and practical skills, and aims at developing students' advanced professional and scientific competences.**

Criteria	Expert evaluation
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The study program must ensure advancement of students' knowledge and development of their professional and specific scientific skills.	The Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture offers a variety of courses (as already presented). In addition to the courses, the Faculty and the Department of Architecture organize extracurricular activities for students to advance their knowledge beyond the curricular activities. These activities are accessible on the website of the Institution: <a href="https://arch.epoka.edu.al/home-annual-design-competition-134-136.html">https://arch.epoka.edu.al/home-annual-design-competition-134-136.html</a> <a href="https://arch.epoka.edu.al/home-conferences-134-135.html">https://arch.epoka.edu.al/home-conferences-134-135.html</a> <a href="https://arch.epoka.edu.al/home-workshops-142-321.html">https://arch.epoka.edu.al/home-workshops-142-321.html</a> <a href="https://arch.epoka.edu.al/home-2021-2023-153-314.html">https://arch.epoka.edu.al/home-2021-2023-153-314.html</a> <a href="https://arch.epoka.edu.al/cat-activity-calendar-1762.html">https://arch.epoka.edu.al/cat-activity-calendar-1762.html</a>
<b>Criterion 2.</b> The study program guarantees the development of specific skills in the field of information technology, including as well human, social, communication, and interaction (including foreign language) resources.	The Integrated Master of Science Program in Architecture offers a variety of courses that guarantee the development of specific skills for students. This information is easily accessible on the website at the following link: <a href="https://eis.epoka.edu.al/curricula/76/program">https://eis.epoka.edu.al/curricula/76/program</a> and can be specified as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of Reading and Writing Skills in English</li> <li>- Digital Visualisation &amp; Presentation</li> <li>- Digital Graphics</li> <li>- GIS Applications for planners</li> <li>- Computational design, theory, and application</li> </ul> (see Annex 2.1)
<b>Criterion 3.</b> Student's competences and skills,	In relation to this criterion and according to the syllabus presented, each academic staff member responsible for the course conducts



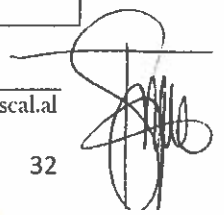

<p>introduced in the study program and syllabi of each subject, are analyzed and reviewed at the end of the subject. The academic staff highlights prominent matters and guides students on their implementation and completion requirements.</p>	<p>interim and final student reviews/tests during each semester, discussing with them the knowledge received, the methodology used, and other aspects relevant to the course. All these steps are taken to guarantee successful completion of course requirements. More detailed information about this explanation can be found in Annex 2.2 and within Syllabi, as well as on the website: <a href="https://eis.epoka.edu.al/curricula/76/program">https://eis.epoka.edu.al/curricula/76/program</a></p>
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> Teaching is competence-based to provide students with the opportunity further to develop their competencies in laboratories and professional practices. The academic staff supports group discussions and works on the interpretation and resolution of specific problems/issues; fosters an appropriate climate for developing innovative ideas, advanced research, and scientific studies and supports them; combines teaching forms with cooperative institutions to enable and increase student mobility.</p>	<p>During the site visit at the Institution, EEG was presented with information about the methodology academic staff use when communicating with students, addressing group discussions, problem-solving competencies, developing innovative ideas, and all this to enable and increase student mobility to various institutions. (see Annex 10.1)</p> <p>Classes are organized in the classrooms and laboratories, as presented in Annex 28.1, based on the study plan and courses. These infrastructure possibilities are oriented toward students' learning, communication, and research capabilities.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 5.</b> The academic staff, both active and under contract, delivers open lectures and seminars on new scientific and technological developments within and outside the scope of the study program structure.</p>	<p>Except for the course content presented at the location and in documented form, academic staff engaged in the teaching process are qualified to implement and align with developments outside the study structure and in various scientific and research activities. The main unit for the study program produces annual reports on this subject. As an example, see Annex 26.</p> <p>A few examples of open lectures are Spatial Syntax and Algorithms: Research Tools in Urban Planning and Architecture (Zaha Hadid Architects, Christos Passas), Architecture from Teaching to Learning to Practice, Learning from Vernacular (Beniamino Polimeni, University of Hertfordshire), Designing the Context, Theming Public Spaces (Piotr Lorens, Gdansk University of Technology) etc. (See Annex 10.5)</p>



<b>Criterion 6.</b> The institution promotes the development of innovative ideas and advanced research studies by students, providing them with financial support.	During the site visit, EEG was presented with the form academic staff use to engage students in scientific and research projects and publications. The same can also be confirmed with the documents presented. (see Annex 21.8) As stated above and in Annex 21.3, a request should be submitted to get support from the HEI for promoting scientific publications and activities that involve students and Teaching staff. The responsible unit presents the application/s to the rectorate's office for further implementation based on yearly allocated funds related to the above.			
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The HEI and the central unit organize extracurricular activities, such as workshops, projects, and conferences, and always aim to engage students in these activities. This leads to developing students' professional, scientific, and research capabilities.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	<b>Not met</b>	<b>Partially met</b>	<b>Substantially met</b>	<b>Fully met</b>
				<b>X</b>

<b>Standard III.5.</b> <b>The institution pursues a clear procedure with regard to completion requirement fulfillment by students in the study program and provides students with the necessary documentation.</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution drafts a specific procedure on completion requirements prior to their realization and publishes it.	The regulation on the second cycle study programs, among other things, includes specific articles that address the process of study completion requirements. See Annex 3—Articles 33, 35, 36, and 41, which specify thesis procedures, such as preparation, proceedings, assessment, and graduation. In addition, see Annex 40.4, 40.7, and 40.8.
<b>Criterion 2.</b> The responsible structures and academic staff assist students by providing the necessary information, instructions and materials in the framework of completion requirements.	The thesis is being mentored by respective academic staff, who assist the student with consultations related to the topic and share literature possibilities from which the student and thesis benefit.
<b>Criterion 3.</b> The ad hoc commission for the final exam administration is based on the testing of knowledge acquired throughout the academic years,	Based on the structure of the study program and the site visit, the EEG can confirm that the final diploma thesis is used to measure the knowledge acquired during the second cycle of studies. Students contact their supervisor weekly during thesis preparation to confirm their engagement. Ultimately, the students must

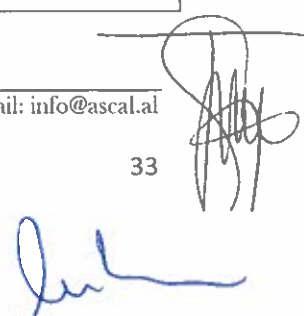
including all subjects/modules based on their relevance and specific weight.	present their work to the jury, which acts as a commission that decides on the scientific level of the diploma thesis. (see Annex3, Article 42 and Article 48)
<b>Criterion 4.</b> The academic staff/diploma mentor guides and assists students in selecting their diploma thesis topics. The mentor assists the student in producing and processing the relevant results, as well as in drafting the final thesis according to approved instructions. They ensure quality of results and either approve or disapprove whether or not the thesis is complete and should be presented to the panel.	A selected academic staff member mentors the entire thesis process. Based on the program and the 10th semester, the thesis is considered a course that must be registered. As mentioned, weekly consultations are held to ensure the quality of the thesis work and the exact time of submission for the final presentation and assessment by the selected Jury. Based on Annex 40.7, which concerns the thesis examination submission, the supervisor has to give permission for the thesis to be submitted for evaluation/assessment.
<b>Criterion 5.</b> The institution assists students in carrying out measurements, analyses, and tests in or outside institution premises, according to the specific topics and scope of study.	The HEI has a well-completed infrastructure, as presented during the site assessment. To confirm this, the institution, amongst others, submitted several annexes that support this criterion. (see Annex 28.1 – teaching facilities, Annexes 34.1.-34.2-34.3 – related to the library and books available, and Annex 34.5). The above infrastructure is fully available for students during their studies and for students doing research related to their final thesis work.
<b>Criterion 6.</b> At the end of the general final exam or diploma defense, the student is evaluated with a mark.	After the presentation and jury evaluation/assessment, the student receives a final grade. The appointed jury (3 members) determines the final grade, which can be confirmed with Annex 40.8, which contains all required information related to this criterion.
<b>Criterion 7.</b> Upon study completion, the student is provided with a diploma and its supplement as approved by the ministry responsible for education. Upon concluding their studies, a full official copy of the study program is made available to the student.	The HEI has established the final procedures presented in the Regulation on the second cycle study programs (see Annex 3). Article 48 of this regulation explains the procedure in detail. The diploma is also accompanied by a diploma supplement containing the nature and the cycle of the studies (see Annex 14.1 – diploma example and Annex 14.2 – diploma supplement example)






<b>Criterion 8.</b> Pursuant to the legislation in force, the institution retains a copy of the students' documentation and issues attestations to the student, on a case-by-case basis, if required.	All student documents are archived during their studies according to respective year directive requirements. A copy is also archived after the student's graduation and remains on their student file, like during the study period. The EEG visited the registrar's office to confirm this criterion.			
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The HEI has established very clear procedures regarding the entire process of the final thesis work, from the very beginning, when the selected academic staff member is appointed as a supervisor, through the supervision process, submission of the thesis work, presentation, evaluation/assessment by appointed jury members, and finally, the issuing of diploma and diploma supplement according to the legal state requirements.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	<b>Not met</b>	<b>Partially met</b>	<b>Substantially met</b>	<b>Fully met</b>
				<b>X</b>

<b>Standard III.6.</b> In the case of the "Master of Professional Studies" study program, the institution follows a clear knowledge implementation procedure through laboratory, professional and clinical practices and internships.	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> In the context of teaching and skill acquirement, the responsible units guarantee premises in and outside the institution, which are appropriate for carrying out the laboratory and professional practices.	<b>It does not apply to the program in reaccreditation.</b>
<b>Criterion 2.</b> Through cooperation and partnership, the institution ensures the performance of clinical practices and internships in contemporary forms and technology, with the aim of acquiring professional	<b>It does not apply to the program in reaccreditation.</b>

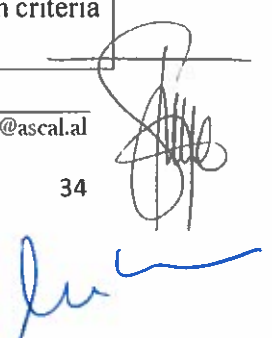


knowledge and competences in the best way possible.				
<b>Criterion 3.</b> Professional and clinical practices and internships carried out during studies are converted into credits and are documented in special documents, supplemented with the trainer's opinion and respective evaluation.	<b>It does not apply to the program in reaccreditation.</b>			
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>It does not apply to the program in reaccreditation.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	<b>Not met</b>	<b>Partially met</b>	<b>Substantially met</b>	<b>Fully met</b>
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

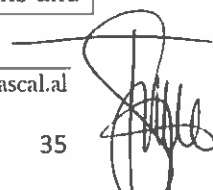
<b>Field III Standards' Fulfillment Degree</b>	<b>Not met</b>	<b>Partially met</b>	<b>Substantially met</b>	<b>Fully met</b>
				<b>X</b>

#### IV. HUMAN, FINANCIAL, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND LOGISTICS RESOURCES FOR STUDY PROGRAM DELIVERY

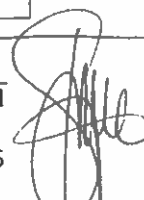
<b>Standard IV.1.</b>	
<b>The academic and academic support staff covering the study program meet the quantitative standards and have the proper and adequate academic qualifications, in line with the field of the program to guarantee teaching standards in the study program.</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The full-time and part-time academic staff and support academic staff engaged in delivering the study program meet the legal requirements in force on the appropriate academic qualification for managing the program, and managing and covering the program subjects/modules. There are	Referring to the data provided, the Department of Architecture has 8/17 full time members that have a PhD, where 3 of them hold academic titles. The legal requirements for the composition of a department are met. Still, there are academic staff with MSc. level qualification teaching in the program. Until the staff is qualified according to legal requirements, special attention can be provided to the 4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> year of the program (Master level) to be covered by staff with third cycle of studies qualification. According to the data provided the staff of the program that does not meet the qualification criteria



<p>research areas in compliance with the study program and its modules nature and characteristics.</p>	<p>is: K. Merxhani, M. Logli, N. Baçi, T. Kodra, A. Hasa, J. Beqiri, N. Hajdini. (Annex 39, Table 1 and Table 4) Regarding the qualification of the academic staff, referring to Annex 39, Table 6, it results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the Academic Year 2018-2019 there are 19 EAS (1 Prof., 13 Dr., 5 Msc) and 10 ASC (3 Prof. Asoc., 7 Msc.).</li> <li>• In the Academic Year 2019-2020 there are 19 EAS (1 Prof., 13 Dr, 5 Msc) and 13 ASC (3 Prof As, 1 Dr., 9 Msc).</li> <li>• In the Academic Year 2020-2021 there are 19 EAS (1 Prof., 10 Dr., 8 Msc.) and 3 ASC (3 Msc.).</li> <li>• In the Academic Year 2021-2022 there are 16 EAS (1 Prof., 10 Dr., 5 Msc) and 5 ASC (1 Dr., 4 Msc.).</li> <li>• In the Academic Year 2022-2023 there are 17 EAS (1 Prof., 9 Dr., 7 Msc.) and 10 ASC (1 Dr., 9 Msc.).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> The full-time academic staff should cover the academic load of the study program in compliance with the legal framework in force.</p>	<p>There is an overload of the academic staff which is still at the same levels of the previous accreditation, and which has not been addressed yet. The teaching goes up to 608 hours in a year (A. Cara) which is considered to be very high. At the same time, there is academic staff that covers up to 8 courses in a year (E. Zeka) which is also considered as overload. (Annex 39, Table 4)</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> The institution should guarantee and demonstrate the sustainability of the academic staff involved in the study program during the accreditation period, including employment contracts and coverage with social and health insurance.</p>	<p>From the verification of the data in the Human Resources office and from the data provided in Annex 39, Table 1, results that the staff is permanent, with no major changes over the years. At the same time, the random check of the documentation resulted that the files of the academic staff are complete with the relevant legal documents, including the contract and insurance. (Annex 38)</p>
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> The institution follows recruitment and evaluation procedures based on the announced general and specific criteria that ensure the selection of staff with the appropriate level of</p>	<p>The recruitment criteria and procedure are described in detail in the Regulation on Staff Recruitment (Annex 7.1). The process starts in the department and then involves the faculty, the HR office and at the end the Rectorate. The selection is carried by a department-based evaluation group which is responsible for the assessment of the documentation and for interviewing the candidates in order to understand their communication skills and</p>




<p>qualification, and in accordance with the nature, structure, modules and the study program content.</p>	<p>specific knowledge relevant to the position. The detailed criteria of evaluation are presented in Article 11.5 of the regulation.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 5.</b> The institution ensures and guarantees the engagement of appropriate and adequate academic support staff to carry out lab classes and maintain labs and other teaching premises, according to the specific nature of the study program being delivered.</p>	<p>Referring to Annex 39, Table 1, the Department of Architecture has no academic support staff. The university involves student in assistantship positions, but still this practice does not provide qualified academic support staff that are full time dedicated in the position.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 6.</b> Every academic year, the institution collects, stores and updates data on the staff engaged in the study program. These data include the academic staff involved in the program and the person responsible for organizing the study program, academic staff engagement in each academic semester and year, as well as the workload of the support and administrative staff.</p>	<p>The Human Resources office is responsible for keeping the data related to the academic staff, support, and administrative staff. The data are collected and stored through standard forms presented in Annex 7.2 and 7.3. The workload is regulated through the Directive on the Teaching Load (Annex 40.2). The data are kept in hard copy and are also stored in the electronic system <a href="https://eis.epoka.edu.al/login">https://eis.epoka.edu.al/login</a> The EEG found complete data through random checks of the documentation in the HR office.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 7.</b> The institution, by entering into cooperation agreements with other higher education institutions, business representatives and companies, makes available adequate, appropriate, and qualified staff to instruct, mentor and supervise students during their internship, diploma thesis development and other specific activities, depending on the nature of the study program.</p>	<p>The university results in having a rich list of agreements with other institutions which enable collaboration and support for the program (Annex 39, Table 5). These partners are particularly helpful during internships (see supplementary document 2) or in experience exchange in the case of academic institutions. Starting from the last accreditation (2018) there is only one student identified as outgoing in mobility programs (Annex 10.1). The internships on the other hand seem well organized and are usually conducted in collaboration with architectural offices or construction companies.</p>

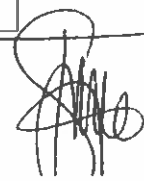



<p><b>Criterion 8.</b> The supervisory staff at the reception premises, who is engaged with developing internships pursuant to agreements, should help students in meeting obligations/drafting the final internship report, and participating in their internship evaluation process.</p>	<p>The internship is regulated through a guideline document (Annex 19.6) which is also defining responsibilities of the parties involved. Referring to Article 3.4. the responsibilities of the Professional Practice Site Supervisor are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- present the student to the company;</li> <li>- to define the responsibilities of the student;</li> <li>- provide learning opportunities for the student;</li> <li>- supervise the work of the student;</li> <li>- evaluate the work of the student;</li> <li>- sign the related documents.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p><i>The academic staff engaged in the program results to have in some cases qualification that do not fulfill the legal requirements. On the other hand, the teaching load results to be high, and no full-time support academic staff is employed in the Department. Students find help during their internship period.</i></p>			
<p><b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b></p>	<p>Not met</p>	<p>Partially met</p>	<p>Substantially met</p>	<p>Fully met</p>
			X	

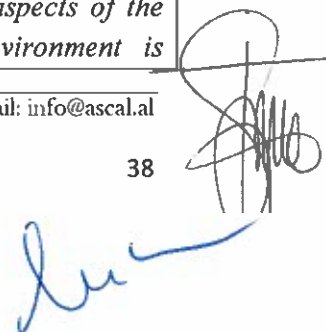
**Standard IV.2.**

**The Higher Education Institution makes available the learning premises and the appropriate infrastructure for the delivery of the study program teaching process and practical training, according to the nature and field of the study program.**

Criteria	Expert evaluation
<p><b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution provides adequate and appropriate teaching facilities, depending on the number of students and study groups, in accordance with the specific nature of the study program and respective modules.</p>	<p>The university offers enough classes, studios, offices, and exhibition spaces which are of a very good quality and well equipped for the activities they cover. EEG could visit all the educational environment in Epoka University which results to be abundant, qualitative, and well equipped with instruments helping the didactic and research processes.</p> <p>A detailed list of spaces and description of buildings is provided in Annex 39, Table 16, Annexes 28.1, 29.1, 29.2.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> Learning premises such as classrooms, labs, studios and the like are equipped with electronic and information technology devices that guarantee the realization of the theoretical</p>	<p>Electronic equipment such as computers, projectors, smartboards etc. are available and fully functional and accessible both to staff and students. Laboratories cover the basics needs of the program. During the site visit the EEG could see that the spaces used for didactic purposes were equipped with the appropriate instruments and devices such as computers, projectors, specific software etc.</p>





and practical teaching process through the use of contemporary teaching and learning methodology and technology.	Some classes had smart boards, which are useful for more interactive graphic communication in design courses. Detailed data on the available equipment are provided in Annex 37.
<b>Criterion 3.</b> Laboratories, studios, ateliers or other premises, according to the specific nature of the study program, contain the necessary equipment and tools to meet module requirements, theoretical and practical training, and the overall study program objectives.	The design studios are spacious, well-lit and equipped with drawing tables, both suitable for drawing and computer work. The configuration is quite suitable for group or individual work, offering flexibility of use. The EEG could also visit computer labs and the library, which offered very good working conditions. Other laboratories could be created to further improve the infrastructure related to the formation in architecture such as drawing lab, model making lab, 3d printers, survey lab, environmental physics lab etc. Some of this infrastructure could have a dual impact both in the curricula and research.
<b>Criterion 4.</b> The institution provides at least one information technology lab, equipped with professional software appropriate to the nature of the study program provided.	The campus has four computer labs dedicated to all the programs offered by the university. An engineering lab and an architecture lab are also available. Computers are equipped with the basic software in use by architects and engineers. Is to be mentioned that almost all students have their own laptops and do not face problems related to the access to technology.
<b>Criterion 5.</b> The institution guarantees, with its available capacities and/or in cooperation with other institutions and entities (certified through special partnership agreements), that the premises are adequate, appropriate and tailored to internships and other practical activities. In cases of study programs in the field of medicine, the institution should provide hospital and health post facilities that have the necessary capacities.	We noticed that the teaching environment on the campus of Epoka University provides all forms of spaces necessary for a qualitative process. Studios, lecture auditoriums, seminar rooms, computer labs, library, exhibition spaces etc. are all functional and available. The infrastructure necessary for internships is achieved in collaboration with partners from the professional market, being architecture practices or construction companies (see supplementary documents 2 and 4).
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The physical infrastructure is one of the strong aspects of the university and of the study program. The environment is</i>

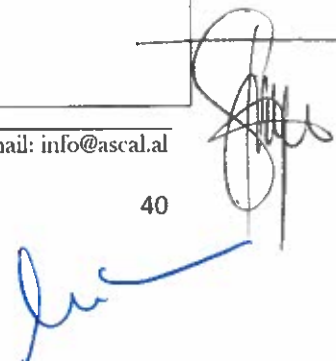


	<i>qualitative and suitable to the specificities of the program in architecture. Still, other laboratories could be created such as drawing lab, model making lab, 3d printers, survey lab, environmental physics lab etc.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not used	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				X

<b>Standard IV.3.</b>	
<b>The study program should comprise the necessary and updated literature to support teaching, and it should provide support learning premises (a library, special premises).</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The required and recommended literature made available to students in the language of the study program (physical and digital) guarantees the acquisition of necessary knowledge and information, foreseen under the study program.	Considering that the studies in Epoka University are conducted in English, the access in literature in the language of the program is wider. The library has a rich collection of books, part of which are dedicated to architecture (Annex 34.1). The collection mainly in English and in Albanian is displayed also online in: <a href="http://lib.epoka.edu.al/">http://lib.epoka.edu.al/</a> Access to online sources is achieved through JSTOR which results to be available to students and to the academic staff (Annex 34.5).
<b>Criterion 2.</b> The responsible unit should report whenever literature is updated with publications from recent years.	In the evidence presented (Annex 34.2) there is only one new item (book) that was introduced in recent years in the library physical collection. One more request from the department was approved in 2023 (Annex 34.3). On the other hand, JSTOR as an online source gets updated and enriched regularly. EEG encourages for more efforts to be made for the continuous enrichment of the physical fund of the library.
<b>Criterion 3.</b> The institution makes available the academic library to students, guaranteeing students equal access to the study program.	The library is easily accessible by both staff and students. Guests can also use the library after an initial registration procedure. The library provides access to the collection and a pleasant environment to study. The operation of the library is regulated by the Library Directive (Annex 34.6).
<b>Criterion 4.</b> The library should be equipped with physical literature such as: sufficient required textbooks, recommended literature, both in Albanian and foreign	The literature available is appropriate and supports the program content. The books dedicated to architecture are listed in Annex 34.1. The collection mainly in English and in Albanian is displayed also online in: <a href="http://lib.epoka.edu.al/">http://lib.epoka.edu.al/</a>




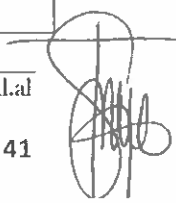
languages, necessary, sufficient and appropriate books or journals to cover all modules and courses according to each study program specifics.	Considering that the titles introduced recently are very few, a continuous enrichment of the physical collection is to be encouraged.
<b>Criterion 5.</b> The institution should enable the adequate conditions for students' free and equal access to online libraries for each study program field.	Access to online sources is achieved through JSTOR which results to be available to students and to the academic staff (Annex 34.5). JSTOR can be accessed in the university library and university network. JSTOR offers a wide range of titles and articles in the architecture field and being that the program is taught in English, it is easier for the students to use them.
<b>Criterion 6.</b> The library should be equipped with computer software and other technical equipment, enabling unrestricted use by all students.	Through the visit to the library the EEG could see that the infrastructure was in optimal condition, providing equal access to students. The library was also equipped with computers connected to the internet and providing access both to the library catalog and the internal communication system. On the other hand, most of students use their personal laptops.
<b>Criterion 7.</b> The library hours (opening hours) should be in line with the teaching process hours, but also appropriate with student number and needs, as well as its capacity.	The library offers daily service from Monday to Friday from 8.30-12.30 and 13.00 to 16.30. Considering the Library also as a studying environment, longer operation hours would be helpful to students, especially weekends (Saturday) and during the examination period.
<b>Criterion 8.</b> The library and the responsible units of the program monitor and report on the library's physical and online literature (the main titles provided for the program) quality, update, and level of use by the academic staff and program students. Moreover, they provide information on the use of study halls, by highlighting how effective the efforts to enrich the physical and online literature of the library have been. They also provide data	The library is constantly monitoring the use of the space and the utilization of the collection. It can be noticed that from the previous accreditation the hard copy collection has been increased by only two books (see criterion 2 of this standard), although procedures for ordering new materials and books exist (Annex 40.13). On the other hand, the library operation hours have been reduced since the last accreditation. Still, the access to online sources guarantees continuous access to a large database of articles and chapters which are particularly helpful during the research work conducted by the academic staff and students.



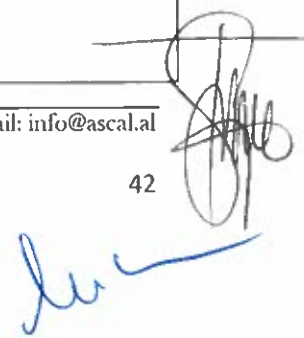


on needs for other literature and the performance of the academic staff.				
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The library is well structured and well equipped with hard copy literature and online sources. The environment is pleasant and attractive for students. We encourage the department to put more effort in enriching the hard copy collection. On the other hand, we suggest to the university administration to extend the operating hours of the library in weekends and in exam periods.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				X

<b>Standard IV.4.</b>	
<b>The Higher Education Institution has an internal institutional management system, which is made available to the management, information and monitoring of academic, financial and administrative activity for the study program.</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution has in place a management system for the management of all student-related information and activity from enrollment up to graduation from the study program.	The University has its own internal system (EIS – Epoka Interactive System) that can be accessed both by students and staff and which is administrated by the internal IT office. The system crosses all data and information and can be used by users with different roles and attributes. In Annexes 36.1 and 36.2 it is explained and illustrated in detail the operation of the system for students and academic staff.
<b>Criterion 2.</b> The internal management system manages the information, documentation and activities of academic staff, academic assisting staff, administrative staff and partners engaged in the program implementation.	All parties involved in the everyday activity of the university use the EIS system, being students, academic staff, or administrative staff. This is achieved through accounts that provide attributes for each position. Information can be displayed, stored, distributed, and content can be generated according to the specific category or role a user belongs to. A detailed description of EIS can be found in Annex 37.
<b>Criterion 3.</b> The management system provides dedicated access to information and documents for all study program staff and students.	The system is designed to fit the needs both of academic staff and students. Both parties access the system through a login portal and can use the provided tools. Being created and maintained in house, the system seems to be tailor made and best serving the needs of the university. Two guides that explain in detail the functioning of the EIS system for students and for the academic staff are provide in Annexes 36.1 and 36.2

<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> The management system has integrated platforms and modules that enable interactive communication and information exchange between the academic staff and students.</p>	<p>Referring to Annex 37, the management system and services include:</p> <p>Teaching Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Turnitin</li> <li>- LMS</li> <li>- Koha Library</li> <li>- DSpace</li> </ul> <p>Epoka Interactive System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Admission office</li> <li>- Registrar office</li> <li>- Coordinators</li> <li>- Instructors</li> <li>- Students</li> <li>- Human resources</li> <li>- Finance office</li> </ul> <p>Google Services</p> <p>Network and maintenance services</p> <p>Smart Card</p> <p>Help Desk</p> <p>The above modules result in a developed system of information and services that are being offered to support the whole educational process.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 5.</b> The management system guarantees real-time monitoring of academic and administrative staff activity and enables individual and real-time reporting to governing bodies and authorities.</p>	<p>As described in the previous criterions, the system involves multiple actors that use in real time the system. The IT office can generate statistical data or extract information for needed reports and analysis. All other users can generate data or analysis related to their role or attributes.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 6.</b> Information related to the study program, academic staff, and various activities is published on the website in at least two languages, one of which is Albanian.</p>	<p>The website of the university provides detailed information about the program both in Albanian and English.</p> <p><a href="https://arch.epoka.edu.al/home-architecture-5-year-integrated-1893-1985.html">https://arch.epoka.edu.al/home-architecture-5-year-integrated-1893-1985.html</a></p> <p><a href="https://arch.epoka.edu.al/kat-arkitekture-cikel-5-vjecar-i-integrUAR-3138.html">https://arch.epoka.edu.al/kat-arkitekture-cikel-5-vjecar-i-integrUAR-3138.html</a></p> <p>Staff information is available only in English.</p> <p><a href="https://epoka.edu.al/arch-academic-staff.html">https://epoka.edu.al/arch-academic-staff.html</a></p>

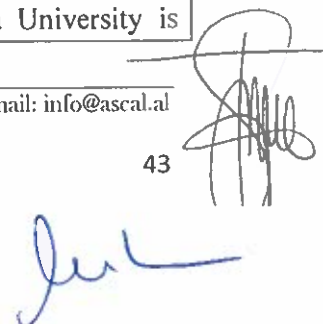


<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The University provides a developed and efficient information and management system serving all parties involved in the academic processes. The web information about the academic staff should be provided also in Albanian.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				X

**Standard IV.5.**

**The Higher Education Institution guarantees the necessary financial support for the implementation of the teaching/research process, study program progress and students' support.**

Criteria	Expert evaluation
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution drafts a financial report on the costs of the basic units that are in charge of a study program, and the financial support plan required for the study program progress for at least one full cycle study program.	The annual budget is planned based on requests from all basic and main units, that plan the advancement of the single study programs. We could not identify a specific financial report that plans the budget dedicated to the program for a short term or long term. All financial data are provided at the university scale (Annex 35.2) and then divided for the number of students of the program, which does not provide realistic numbers. Still these data indicate a stable and growing performance of the university. On the other hand, regardless the financial analysis, the program has demonstrated to be consolidated in terms of numbers of students and positive accreditation results.
<b>Criterion 2.</b> A funding plan for the basic unit in charge of a study program should include funding for human resources made available to the program implementation, operating costs for the maintenance of premises and teaching process support technologies, library and literature enrichment costs, and access to online libraries,	As stated in Criterion 1, there is no financial data for the Department of Architecture. We can only perceive that the financial planning in university level is efficient, as long as the needs of the program seem to sufficiently fulfilled.
<b>Criterion 3.</b> The institution conducts an annual audit,	A yearly external audit is conducted for Turgut Ozal Sh. A., which is the commercial umbrella under which Epoka University is



assesses and documents its financial situation and its financial effectiveness.	registered. These reports are kept confidential and are available at the Finance office. Internal audits are also conducted periodically (Annex 40.12). Referring to the overall numbers provided (Annex 35.1), the university indicates constant growth in income.								
<b>Criterion 4.</b> The institution reports up to the level of the unit responsible for the study program regarding the realization of the approved budget for the previous year.	It seems that there is no direct involvement of the department in the budget realization. The centralized structure seems to be efficient from the financial point of view, still not encouraging an active and somehow independent department organization and performance.								
<b>Criterion 5.</b> The institution guarantees financial sustainability and capacities of the basic unit to develop and progress with the study programs. Where there is a need to improve the financial situation, the institution plans ad hoc interventions and eventual diversification of the study programs financing.	The financial data provided (Annex 35.2) indicate as follows: Academic Year / Income (euros)/ Cost (euros)/ Percentage of cost - 2018-2019: 512 257 / 363 605 / 71% - 2019-2020: 500 878 / 318 029 / 63.5% - 2020-2021: 526 882 / 412 014 / 78.2% - 2021-2022: 611 882 / 481 381 / 78.7% - 2022-2023: 614 272 / 456 977 / 74.4% These data cannot be analyzed for the program, as they are not directly related to it. They are just average indicators of the financial performance of the university. Still, we see a stable situation and an increase of almost 20% in income and cost at the university level.								
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The university proves to have financial stability and good management at a centralized level. On the other hand, there is no specific analysis on the financial situation of the study program, and no active role of the department in the budget realization.</i>								
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Not met</th> <th>Partially met</th> <th>Substantially met</th> <th>Fully met</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>X</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met			X	
Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met						
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Field IV Standards' Fulfillment Degree	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
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## V. STUDENTS AND THEIR SUPPORT

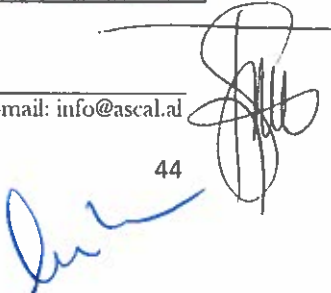
### Standard V.1

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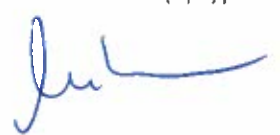
E-mail: [info@ascal.al](mailto:info@ascal.al)

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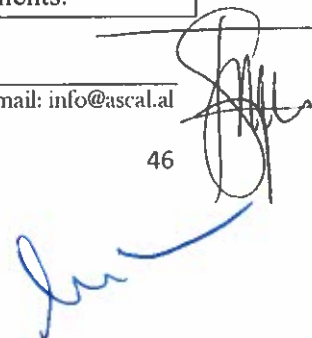


**The Higher Education Institution drafts, follows and implements policies and procedures on students admission, selection, progress, transfer, recognition, knowledge assessment and graduation in the study program.**

Criteria	Expert evaluation
<p><b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution develops and implements policies and procedures that cover the full study program academic cycle, from enrollment to graduation, in accordance with applicable legislation and its own regulatory acts.</p>	<p>Epoka university has listed a set of policies and procedures that show a well-structured regulatory framework for the full 5-year academic cycle of the program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admission Policies (Annex 17.4)</li> <li>• Basic Regulation (Annex 1.2)</li> <li>• Regulation on Second Cycle Programs (Annex 3)</li> <li>• Directive on Scholarships (Annex 40.3)</li> </ul> <p>These and other documentations cover the full study program academic cycle.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> Policies and procedures from enrollment to graduation guarantee equality and equal rights to all study program applicants and students.</p>	<p>During the site visit and the different meetings held, the EEG noticed NO traces of discrimination, inequality or behavior that does not fit the academic ethics. An inclusive, harmonious, democratic, and respectful environment was perceived both among students and academic staff.</p> <p>According to the Basic Regulation, Article 18, the administrative staff cannot make discrimination on ethnic, linguistic, racial, gender, political opinion, philosophical and religious beliefs (Annex 1.2).</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> At the start of each academic year, the institution drafts and publishes special criteria for the selection of candidates to be admitted to the integrated study program. The institution cooperates with structures established in the framework of the State Matura, and pursuant to the relevant law and instructions.</p>	<p>Admissions follow the directives of the Ministry of Education and Sports issued for each academic year. The EEG noticed that the information on admissions is clear and accessible.</p> <p>The admission criteria are approved by the Academic Senate each year (Annex 17.5).</p> <p>Admission information and procedures related to the specific program are available on the website of the university.  <a href="https://epoka.edu.al/study-programs/en/DIND-ARCH/NDEz/Admission">https://epoka.edu.al/study-programs/en/DIND-ARCH/NDEz/Admission</a></p>
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> Student selection criteria and procedures, progress throughout the study course, transfer, and</p>	<p>The admission criteria are approved by the Academic Senate each year (Annex 17.5).</p> <p>Transfer procedures are indicated in the Directive for Student Transfer (Annex 17.2).</p>

<p>recognition of previous or part-time studies, knowledge assessment and graduation are easily understandable and accessible to the public.</p>	<p>The Basic Regulation (Annex 1.2) and the Regulation on Second Cycle Programs (Annex 3) regulate the academic process from admission to graduation.</p> <p>All regulations, directives, guidelines, policies and legal acts are accessible in <a href="https://epoka.edu.al/al/content/NzUw/About-Us/Documents-Publications/Legal-Acts">https://epoka.edu.al/al/content/NzUw/About-Us/Documents-Publications/Legal-Acts</a></p>
<p><b>Criterion 5.</b> Prior to the start of each academic year, the institution instructs the public and interested parties on study program general and specific criteria and requirements.</p>	<p>The information for prospective students is easily accessible on the web of the university. The admission office has an important role during the information process, providing support to all interested candidates. The office organizes meetings and information sessions which are assisted also by the staff of the specific department.</p> <p>Admissions are made according to the following procedure published on the web:</p> <p>First Round</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Candidates select the study program they want to enroll at Epoka University by completing the Application Form at the State Matura Portal of the Albanian Academic Network (RASH - <a href="https://ualbania.al">https://ualbania.al</a>)</li> <li>2. Epoka University announces the preliminary list of winners for each study program</li> <li>3. Epoka University announces the final list of winners for each study program</li> <li>4. Candidates carry out the final registration in the study program where they have been announced as winners by submitting by themselves or through an authorized person the registration documents.</li> </ol> <p>Second Round</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All candidates who have not been announced as winners in the First Round or have not been able to apply in the First Round, will be able to apply for admission at the programs of Epoka University where unfilled quotas remain.</li> <li>2. Candidates carry out the final registration in the study program where they have been announced as winners in the Second Round by submitting by themselves or through an authorized person the registration documents.</li> </ol>



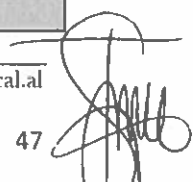
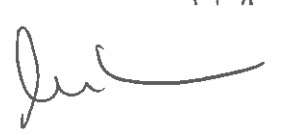
<p><b>Criterion 6.</b> The institution drafts and publishes at the start of each academic year, special criteria for the selection of candidates with disabilities, from minorities and marginalized groups.</p>	<p>The university declares to offer social scholarships (Annex 17.7) to candidates from the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children of Police officers killed on duty</li> <li>- Orphans coming from low-income families</li> <li>- Roma / Egyptian communities</li> </ul> <p>On the other hand, the university has drafted policies for students with disabilities (Annex 20.2). EEG did not identify cases belonging to the described categories in this program.</p>			
<p><b>Criterion 7.</b> The institution drafts and publishes at the start of each academic year the criteria for the selection of candidates from other countries.</p>	<p>The admission criteria are proposed by the Decanate of the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering and approved by the Academic Senate each year (Annex 17.5). Admission Criteria for Bachelor Programs offered in English</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students holding a high school degree or equivalent degree</li> <li>2. A minimum high school CGPA of 7.00 out of 10.00 or equivalent CGPA</li> <li>3. English proficiency level B1 according to CEFR</li> </ol> <p>No specific admission testing for creative skills is applied for this program. The criteria apply also to candidates from other countries.</p>			
<p><b>Criterion 8.</b> The institution drafts assistance/scholarship policies for groups in need and with the aim of enhancing the quality of admissions in priority programs for the institution and the country's economic development.</p>	<p>Merit based scholarships are awarded each year by the university. The scholarships are calculated based on a specific formula, considering the results achieved by the candidate. The formula is approved by the rectorate for each academic year (Annex 17.6). During the meeting with students, EEG confirmed such information. At the same time, the university has approved a Directive on the Scholarships, where the principles of obtaining and maintaining a scholarship are defined (Annex 40.3).</p>			
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p><i>The university provides a complete framework of policies, regulations and documentation that support the whole academic process, from admission, to graduation. The information is easily accessible via the website of the university.</i></p>			
<p><b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b></p>	<p>Not met</p>	<p>Partially met</p>	<p>Substantially met</p>	<p>Fully met <b>X</b></p>

**Standard V.2**

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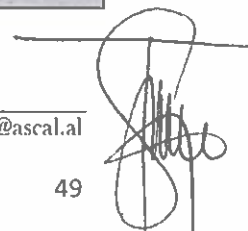
**The Higher Education Institution makes available to the students of the study program detailed and comprehensive information on the academic progress, recognition, and knowledge assessment up to the studies completion and graduation.**

Criteria	Expert evaluation
<p><b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution provides full and detailed information on the criteria and procedures for student academic progress and passing from one academic year to the other.</p>	<p>Students are informed for their progress and evaluation criteria and procedure through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regulations of the university available online <a href="https://epoka.edu.al/content/NzUx/About-Us/Documents-Publications/Regulations">https://epoka.edu.al/content/NzUx/About-Us/Documents-Publications/Regulations</a></li> <li>- Information given in class from the teaching staff</li> <li>- Information provided through the registration office</li> <li>- Information provided in the Department of Architecture</li> <li>- Information provided through the EIS system</li> </ul> <p>During the meeting with students EEG could notice that the students were well informed.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> The institution informs students about diploma recognition procedures and criteria regarding previous qualifications or part-time studies.</p>	<p>Students who have followed previous studies can apply for student transfer. The Directive on Student Transfer (Annex 17.2) describes the procedure, requirements, and assessment criteria in such cases.</p> <p>The registration office and the department offer detailed support and information to students in each case.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> The institution informs students about the criteria and procedures on knowledge and skills assessment during the study program.</p>	<p>Students are informed about the evaluation criteria and procedures through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students Guide (Annex 30)</li> <li>- Regulations of the university available online <a href="https://epoka.edu.al/content/NzUx/About-Us/Documents-Publications/Regulations">https://epoka.edu.al/content/NzUx/About-Us/Documents-Publications/Regulations</a></li> <li>- Information given in class from the teaching staff</li> <li>- Information provided in the Department of Architecture</li> <li>- Information provided through the EIS system</li> </ul> <p>Direct communication with the academic staff is usually the most effective way of communication and information. Students are informed at the beginning of each course about the course content and the evaluation criteria.</p> <p>During the meeting with students EEG could notice that the students were well informed.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> The Higher Education Institution informs students about study program</p>	<p>Students are informed about the graduation criteria and procedures through the following:</p>

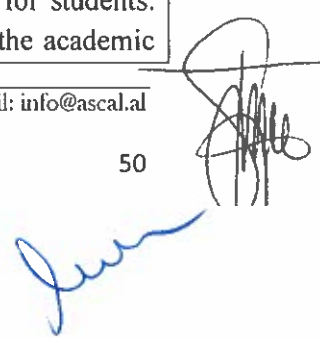


<p>graduation criteria and procedures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regulations of the university available online <a href="https://epoka.edu.al/content/NzUx/About-Us/Documents-Publications/Regulations">https://epoka.edu.al/content/NzUx/About-Us/Documents-Publications/Regulations</a></li> <li>- Information provided in the Department of Architecture</li> <li>- Information provided by the Thesis mentor</li> <li>- Information provided through the EIS system</li> </ul> <p>Direct communication with the thesis mentor is usually the most effective way of information. On the other hand, students get notified through the EIS system and via email if certain actions must be taken before the graduation process. Considering that Epoka has a relatively small number of students, the information process regarding graduation results efficient.</p> <p>During the meeting with students EEG could notice that the students were well informed.</p>								
<p><b>Criterion 5.</b> Before the start of and throughout each academic year, the higher education institution publishes special guidelines and organizes open briefings to inform potential students and current students about the study program.</p>	<p>The university conducts information campaigns through the Admission Office. The university is also present in different annual activities to get in touch with potential students. The university website and the Student Guide (Annex 30) offer a detailed description for the potential students.</p> <p>Based also on the constant numbers of the program, it can be assumed that the interest about the program and the contact with the student have reached a healthy balance.</p>								
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p><i>EEG noticed that the information for students is available and easily accessible. This was confirmed also by the students themselves. The information system results to be efficient considering the scale and the number of students for the specific program.</i></p>								
<p><b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b></p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="572 1402 751 1469">Not met</th> <th data-bbox="751 1402 943 1469">Partially met</th> <th data-bbox="943 1402 1158 1469">Substantially met</th> <th data-bbox="1158 1402 1377 1469">Fully met</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="572 1469 751 1516"></td> <td data-bbox="751 1469 943 1516"></td> <td data-bbox="943 1469 1158 1516"></td> <td data-bbox="1158 1469 1377 1516" style="text-align: center;"><b>X</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met				<b>X</b>
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<p><b>Standardi V.3</b></p>	
<p><b>The Higher Education Institution provides students with detailed and comprehensive information on training objectives, structure, organization, study program content, expected learning outcomes and employment opportunities.</b></p>	
<p><b>Criteria</b></p>	<p><b>Expert evaluation</b></p>

<p><b>Criterion 1.</b> The students are thoroughly informed on study program structure, organization and duration.</p>	<p>EEG could notice that the students are well informed about the program structure, duration and organization. They get the information through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regulations of the university available online <a href="https://epoka.edu.al/content/NzUx/About-Us/Documents-Publications/Regulations">https://epoka.edu.al/content/NzUx/About-Us/Documents-Publications/Regulations</a></li> <li>- The university website <a href="https://epoka.edu.al/study-programs/en/DIND-ARCH/NDEy/Overview">https://epoka.edu.al/study-programs/en/DIND-ARCH/NDEy/Overview</a> <a href="https://epoka.edu.al/study-programs/en/DIND-ARCH/MA==/Curricula">https://epoka.edu.al/study-programs/en/DIND-ARCH/MA==/Curricula</a></li> <li>- Information provided in the Department of Architecture</li> <li>- Information provided through the EIS system</li> </ul>
<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> The institution provides students with the necessary information and documentation on modules/course, content and training activities.</p>	<p>EEG could notice that the students can access the information on course content. They get the information through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The university website <a href="https://epoka.edu.al/study-programs/en/DIND-ARCH/MA==/Curricula">https://epoka.edu.al/study-programs/en/DIND-ARCH/MA==/Curricula</a></li> <li>- Information given in class from the teaching staff</li> <li>- Information provided in the Department of Architecture</li> <li>- Information provided through the EIS system</li> </ul> <p>Not only that, students are well informed by the academic staff at the beginning of the academic year, where each professor goes in detail for their subject.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> The institution informs students on employment opportunities, as well as institutional support for career counseling and labor market.</p>	<p>The Career and Alumni office is responsible for creating connections with the labor market and facilitating internships. Besides several events, the career fair is the main organization by the Career office, with over 65 participating companies. Last one was organized in March 2024</p> <p><a href="https://epoka.edu.al/en/OTUzMA==/news/2023-epoka-11th-successful-career-fair-with-prestigious-companies">https://epoka.edu.al/en/OTUzMA==/news/2023-epoka-11th-successful-career-fair-with-prestigious-companies</a></p> <p>The university has many agreements with companies and institutions (Table 5, Annex 39) which contribute to closing the gap between academia and professional life.</p> <p>It is a fact, for all architecture students in Albania, that they are immediately absorbed from the labor market, often also in their last years of studies. In this context, institutional work becomes easier. EEG could notice that the students are well informed and in continuous contact with the labor market.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> Students are provided with extensive and</p>	<p>Information campaigns are undertaken periodically for students. The welcome ceremony is held at the beginning of the academic</p>



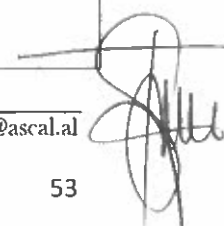
<p>up-to-date information on the teaching process development and organization, logistics, infrastructure and services for its realization.</p>	<p>year and helps in establishing contacts with new students, and refreshing those with the existing ones  <a href="https://epoka.edu.al/en/NDM3Mw==/news/2023-ceremony-for-20222023-academic-year">https://epoka.edu.al/en/NDM3Mw==/news/2023-ceremony-for-20222023-academic-year</a>  The Student Guide (Annex 30) is also a detailed document that help the students get informed about the overall functioning of the university and their respective program. Students get informed through the EIS system and through course instructors for the detailed content of courses (Annex 2.2) and of the teaching process.</p>			
<p><b>Criterion 5.</b> Information about the study program is provided through the internal information management system and should be easily accessible even to distance students.</p>	<p>The University has its own internal system (EIS – Epoka Interactive System) that can be accessed both by students and staff and which is administrated by the internal IT office.  In Annexes 36.1 and 36.2 it is explained and illustrated in detail the operation of the system for students and academic staff. All parties involved in the everyday activity of the university use the EIS system, being students, academic staff, or administrative staff. This is achieved through accounts that provide attributes for each position. A detailed description of EIS can be found in Annex 37. EEG noticed that the students find the system helpful and functional.</p>			
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p><i>EEG noticed that the information for students is available and easily accessible. The information system results to be efficient considering the scale and the number of students for the specific program.</i></p>			
<p><b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b></p>	<p>Not met</p>	<p>Partially met</p>	<p>Substantially met</p>	<p>Fully met <b>X</b></p>

<p><b>Standard V.4</b>  <b>The Higher Education Institution collects, manages, updates and stores detailed data about the number and profile of students attending the study program, from their university admission to graduation, as well as their employment data.</b></p>	
<p><b>Criteria</b></p>	<p><b>Expert evaluation</b></p>
<p><b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution produces and maintains annual statistics on the number of students and alumni in each study program.</p>	<p>The registration office collects and stores detailed data regarding students and their performance. The data regarding alumni a kept in the Career and Alumni office. The data and official statistics are reported annually in the Ministry of Education of Sports, but not only, also for internal use.</p>

<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> The institution generates annual statistics on the number of students enrolled in the study program until their graduation, withdrawals from the program, dropouts before the end of the program, or failures to successfully complete the academic year which the study program is delivered in.</p>	<p>-</p> <p>The annual institutional report (Annex 27) is a summary of data which is periodically reported to the Ministry of Education and Sports. Other data and statistics are also collected and used in the accreditation processes (see IER).</p> <p>The number of students, transfers, new registrations, graduated students are also reported periodically or on demand to the institutions. Many of these data are used to fill the tables of Annex 39. We could also verify the real time access of these data in the registration office.</p> <p>For the last 5 years, the number of students registered is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2018-2019 50 Students;</li> <li>- 2019-2022 49 Students;</li> <li>- 2020-2021 60 Students;</li> <li>- 2021-2022 62 Students;</li> </ul> <p>2022-2023 58 Students.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> Student's statistical data are managed by the internal information system and must be secured and easily verifiable by authorized persons.</p>	<p>EIS acts as a digital duplicate of the registration office, where data is stored for all students. This includes status, grades, attendance, and other information relevant to the student's advancement. Part of this data are visible by the students, and other are accessible by the specialized staff that can generate statistics or data analysis.</p> <p>In Annexes 36.1 and 36.2 it is explained and illustrated in detail the operation of the system for students and academic staff.</p> <p>All parties involved in the everyday activity of the university use the EIS system, being students, academic staff, or administrative staff. This is achieved through accounts that provide attributes for each position. A detailed description of EIS can be found in Annex 37.</p> <p>The registration office also keeps the official data in hard copy, according to the standard formats required.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> The institution issues acts to support the periodic control of all units responsible for management (academic secretariats, internal information management system, etc.), assesses and records the state and accuracy of the</p>	<p>The university conducts periodical internal audit where records and documentation are subject to control in each unit. The university has presented documentation related to the internal audit group formed on 19.12.2018 in Annex 40.12.</p> <p>Being a relatively small university, the registration office is centralized, and the procedures followed are unified. The continuous accreditation processes include also checking the documentation of the registration office from the IEG and EEG.</p>

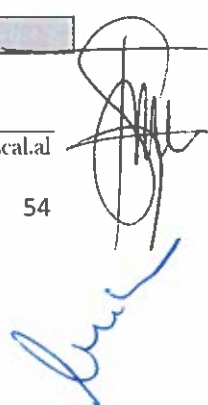
information and documentation related to students and their activities.									
<b>Criterion 5.</b> The basic unit should develop periodic analytical reports on incoming and exiting students' profile and quality, as well as their employment rate, along with appropriate measures to improve these indicators.	<p>Being a small university, the registration office is a single office covering all faculties and programs. The same applies for the Career and Alumni office. Data and analytical reports are provided on demand from these offices to the Department, Faculty and Rectorate level.</p> <p>These offices contribute on a series of reports and analysis that are produced periodically, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual Report (Annex 27)</li> <li>- Data for IER (see Annex 39)</li> <li>- Alumni Survey Report (Annex 4.1)</li> </ul>								
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>EEG noticed that the data records are kept both in hard copy and in digital form. The data are detailed and easily accessible. The university produces periodical reports an analysis based on the stored data.</i>								
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <th style="background-color: #cccccc;">Not met</th> <th style="background-color: #cccccc;">Partially met</th> <th style="background-color: #cccccc;">Substantially met</th> <th style="background-color: #cccccc;">Fully met</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>X</b></td> </tr> </table>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met				<b>X</b>
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<b>Standard V.5</b>	
<b>The Higher Education Institution includes and engages students in decision-making and advisory bodies, in the framework of drafting, approving, reviewing and improving the study programs, teaching methods and the quality of provided resources and services.</b>	
Criteria	Expert evaluation
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution envisages students and/or their representatives' involvement and engagement in decision-making and advisory bodies, according legal acts and HEI's own regulatory acts.	<p>Students are represented in the following bodies (Annex 1.1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Academic Senate (2/15 members)</li> <li>- Ethical Council (2/5 members)</li> <li>- Permanent commission on QA (1/8 membres)</li> <li>- Permanent commission on Student Affairs.</li> </ul> <p>The students are also organized in the student's council (Annex 20.1), which is the official representation of students in the university.</p>
<b>Criterion 2.</b> The institution should ensure that students and/or their representatives' involvement in decision-	<p>From the meeting with the students, results that they are aware of their representation, and they find somehow efficient the way their problems and opinions are addressed.</p>

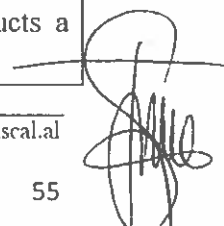
<p>making, advising or evaluation of the academic process is realistic, concrete, productive and with easily verifiable and measurable results.</p>	<p>It is to be mentioned that being a small university, it is easy for everyone to be heard. The university results to be an inclusive community and at the same time, communication between all actors is relatively easy and efficient.</p>			
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> The responsible unit guarantees student involvement in drafting, reviewing and improving the study program on a regular basis and includes their suggestions and contributions during joint meetings with the departments, through questionnaires, at focus group discussions, etc.</p>	<p>The Department of Architecture is in constant communication with students through the teaching activities. The department is also analyzing the data of the periodic Course Instructor Survey (Annex 12.4), which is filled by students every semester. The Department is also considering the Alumni Survey Report (Annex 4.1) and Student Satisfaction Survey (Annex 20.5). It is to be mentioned that being a small university, it is easy for everyone to be heard. The university results to be an inclusive community and at the same time, communication between all actors is relatively easy and efficient.</p>			
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> Students have the opportunity to give their input on equality and fairness of the knowledge assessment process, including their right to appeal with the responsible body/unit/lecturer the result, assessment, and evaluation awarded.</p>	<p>The periodic Course Instructor Survey (Annex 12.4), the Alumni Survey (Annex 4.1) and Student Satisfaction Survey (Annex 20.5) are part of the continuous feedback provided to the university by students, which gets analyzed and when necessary, reflected in improvements to the program content or infrastructure. Students have their right to complain about the evaluation given. The university has provided standard procedures and forms related to this (Annex 15.2, 15.3) No case of complain was identified during the EEG visit.</p>			
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p><i>EEG could notice that students are well informed and engaged in different levels as an important part of the university and of the specific program. The university results to be an inclusive community and at the same time, because of the small scale, communication between all actors is relatively easy and efficient.</i></p>			
<p><b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b></p>	<p>Not met</p>	<p>Partially met</p>	<p>Substantially met</p>	<p>Fully met <b>X</b></p>

**Standard V.6**



**The Higher Education Institution has special units and procedures for student admission, induction, counseling, complaints and issues management, which are permanent and easily accessible by students.**

Criteria	Expert evaluation
<p><b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution has a special units and procedures which ensure student information and assistance, in accordance with legal provisions and HEI's regulatory acts.</p>	<p>The university has established the Student Coordination Office, Dean of Students, and the Career and Alumni office, which are responsible for informing and assisting students for their everyday activity within the university.</p> <p>The Dean of Students office is responsible for planning, support, advocacy and coordination of various educational programs and resources for students (Annex 20.4).</p>
<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> The institution has set up and introduced a special system for student information, counseling, progress and assistance in matters related to the teaching process and study program.</p>	<p>Students are in continuous contact with the university structure and result to be well informed and satisfied with the communication and assistance level. They get the main information through the web and the EIS system which allows them to access data and information relevant to their individual advancement in the program. On the other hand, the supporting offices, the department, and the academic advisor seem to be efficient and helpful with the information and counseling process.</p> <p>The Student Guide (Annex 30) is also a useful instrument that is provided to students in order to obtain the general overview of the institution.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> The institution provides students with career counseling. The Career Counseling Office/Unit continuously and periodically welcomes students, providing specific information and guidance in terms of completing the learning process, selection and induction regarding internships in other institutions, and advice on the labor market.</p>	<p>The Career and Alumni office is established and fully functional. The office is a bridge between academia and the labor market, and organizes a career fair annually.</p> <p><a href="https://epoka.edu.al/en/OTUzMA==/news/2023-epoka-11th-successful-career-fair-with-prestigious-companies">https://epoka.edu.al/en/OTUzMA==/news/2023-epoka-11th-successful-career-fair-with-prestigious-companies</a></p> <p>In the case of the specific program, students get in touch with the labor market before graduation. The labor market for architects is still thirsty for young professionals, so in this case, the work of the career office is somehow of secondary importance.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> The Career Counseling Office/Unit follows-up with students after</p>	<p>The Career and Alumni office has detailed data on Alumni and their employment status (Annex 39, Table 23) and conducts a</p>




graduation, by collecting, processing and storing data on the level and quality of the study program students' employment, and makes them available to students and relevant bodies and authorities.	<p>periodic Alumni survey (Annex 4.2) which helps get qualitative feedback from the graduated students.</p> <p>The Alumni survey report (Annex 4.1) is an analytical document that maps the employment situation of graduated students. This report is useful to the university authorities to be able to strategically respond to the demands of the labor market.</p>			
<b>Conclusion</b>	<p><i>EEG could notice that the university provides all needed structures for a functional educational environment for students. The Dean of Students, the Career and Alumni office, together with the department's structures provide a continuous support for the students of the program.</i></p>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	<b>Not met</b>	<b>Partially met</b>	<b>Substantially met</b>	<b>Fully met</b>
				<b>X</b>

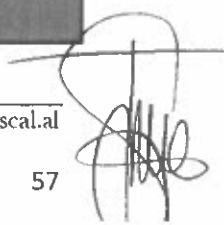

<b>Field V Standards' Fulfillment Degree</b>	<b>Not met</b>	<b>Partially met</b>	<b>Substantially met</b>	<b>Fully met</b>
				<b>X</b>

## VI. STUDY PROGRAMS' QUALITY ASSURANCE

<b>Standard VI.1</b>	
<b>The Higher Education Institution pursues a clear policy to guarantee and promote the quality of teaching and develops special guidelines designed for teaching methods development and monitoring.</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution designs guidelines at the institutional level for the development and use of different and innovative teaching methods based on the field of studies, subjects/modules.	<p>The University has prepared two Guideline Documents (for students and lecturers) that explain and facilitate the use of the Epoka Interactive System. The system assists the teaching environment through digital communication (Annex 36.1 and 36.2)</p> <p>Referring to the EER the university has also applied the Hyflex method during the COVID pandemics and has participated in VALUE-X project, related to contemporary teaching methodologies. The objective of VALUE-X was: Qualification of academic staff at Albanian HEIs for innovative virtual teaching and learning settings <a href="https://valeu-x.eu/about/">https://valeu-x.eu/about/</a></p>



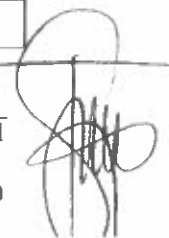
	The university has also provided a list of trainings of the academic staff, where several trainings focus on teaching methodologies (Annex 8.2).				
<b>Criterion 2.</b> Structures responsible develop monitoring mechanisms and periodically evaluate teaching and innovative skills of academic and academic support staff.	The Quality Assurance Handbook (Annex 16.1) foresees periodic course instructor evaluation (Annex 12.4) which is a feedback mechanism for the teaching activity. As resulted in the meetings with the academic staff, the quality of teaching is also an everyday work of the Department.				
<b>Criterion 3.</b> The institution guarantees student inclusion in the periodic assessment of teaching methods, and knowledge check, including complaint handling opportunity.	The course instructor evaluation (Annex 12.4) is a direct form of involving students in the assessment of the teaching process. On the other hand, students have their voice heard through the student council (Annex 20.1) and are represented in the academic senate and in the quality assurance commission. Forms and procedures are available for complains (Annex 15.2, 15.3).				
<b>Criterion 4.</b> Structures responsible for monitoring and teaching quality assurance make public evaluation results.	The reports on Internal Quality Assurance and the reports submitted to the Ministry of Education and Sports are accessible in the Internal Quality Assurance Unit web page <a href="https://iqau.epoka.edu.al/">https://iqau.epoka.edu.al/</a> . These reports do not disclose detailed data or data related to individuals.				
<b>Criterion 5.</b> The institution, through its assessment mechanism and results reached, promotes examples of good practice, encourages and prompts the academic staff to further improve teaching.	Through continuous trainings, the university aims to promote good practices (Annex 8.2). On the other hand, results of surveys are communicated to the academic staff, encouraging in this way self-improvement.				
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>During the site visit and the assessment of documentation the EEG noticed a structured and continuous effort in the improvement and evaluation of the quality of teaching. Students are also included and important actors in the evaluation process.</i>				
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Not met</td> <td>Partially met</td> <td>Substantially met</td> <td>Fully met</td> </tr> </table>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
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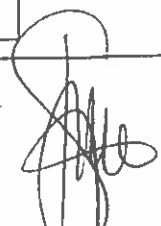
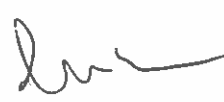
<b>Standard VI.2</b>	
<b>The Higher Education Institution drafts and implements transparent policies and procedures on the study program quality assurance within the framework of internal quality assurance system.</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<p><b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution has in place policies, structures and procedures for Internal Quality Assurance (IQA), in accordance with applicable legal and sub-legal provisions and with institutional regulatory acts.</p>	<p>The Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance is a key organism that develops policies and procedures related to the QA (Annex 16.2).</p> <p>The commission is established by the Statute of the University (Annex 1.1) in fulfillment of the legal requirements.</p> <p>Some documents / policies related to QA presented by the university are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policies of Department Faculty in terms of Learning, teaching and quality in teaching (Annex 11.1)</li> <li>- Directive on Academic and Administrative Performance Assessment and Quality Improvement (Annex 12.1)</li> <li>- EPOKA University Quality Assurance Handbook (Annex 16.1)</li> <li>- EPOKA University Quality Policy (Annex 16.3)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> The institution has established and uses the Internal Quality Assurance System and implements an institutional strategy for continuous quality improvement, including students, external partners and experts.</p>	<p>Referring to the Regulation on the Organization and Functioning of the Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance (Annex 16.2), the composition of the Commission is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One member of the academic staff from each faculty</li> <li>- Two members from the administrative staff</li> <li>- One representative of the Alumni</li> <li>- One external expert</li> <li>- The vice president of the student's council</li> </ul> <p>The composition of the council results in involving the most important parties related to the academic process.</p> <p>At the same time, the Development Strategy of the university (Annex 5.1) and the periodic accreditations are important documents and processes that keep active the QA system.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> The Institution uses appropriate quality assurance tools and indicators. External Quality Assurance in Higher</p>	<p>The university is subject to periodic institutional and program accreditation, which has been an established practice for many years. Internal evaluation reports are generated as part of the standard procedure, followed by external evaluation reports.</p>

<p>Education is carried out through external accreditation evaluation processes, analytical and comparative evaluations, as well as other processes that promote and improve study programs quality.</p>	<p>The results of the accreditations show that the university has a constant performance related to the quality of the programs, which proves efficient measures and tools for QA.</p>			
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> The institution uses clear and measurable indicators in teaching and research, with the aim of reflecting the situation, achievements, and weaknesses that are stipulated in institutional regulatory acts. The institutions employs qualitative indicators to promote and encourage the best achievements in the study program.</p>	<p>Referring to Directive on Academic and Administrative Performance Assessment and Quality Improvement (Annex 12.1) and to the Academic Performance Measurement and Assessment Form (Annex 12.2) the university has defined a set of measurable indicators to evaluate and to promote the performance of the staff, both in teaching and research activities.</p> <p>Some indicators related to research include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of participations in international projects;</li> <li>• Number of applications in international projects;</li> <li>• Number of applications in national / regional projects;</li> <li>• Number of applications in national / regional projects;</li> <li>• Publications in indexed journals;</li> <li>• Publications in journals / book chapters;</li> <li>• Presentation in conferences, workshops, meetings, trainings;</li> <li>• Participation in staff exchange programs;</li> <li>• Number of supervisions of PhD thesis;</li> <li>• Number of awards;</li> <li>• Number of Patents;</li> <li>• Participation in internal Epoka projects.</li> </ul> <p>Other indicators related to teaching load or administrative work are part of Epoka regulations.</p>			
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p><i>The policies and procedures related to Quality Assurance are detailed, effective and consolidated. Such practices have been integrated into the everyday work of the academic staff and help the continuous improvement of the program.</i></p>			
<p><b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b></p>	<p>Not met</p>	<p>Partially met</p>	<p>Substantially met</p>	<p>Fully met</p>
				X




<b>Standard VI.3</b>	
<b>The Higher Education Institution periodically monitors and evaluates the study program through the special units, in order to achieve training objectives and the intended learning outcomes.</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<p><b>Criterion 1.</b> The Higher Education Institution uses formal and documented processes and mechanisms for periodically reviewing, approving and supervising the second cycle study program, to the service of its accreditation. During this process, the institution identifies achievements and weaknesses, motivates best practices and attainments, and it develops the improvement measures plan. The results of these assessments are documented and put forward to the study program responsible and decision-making authorities.</p>	<p>The quality assurance of the program is the responsibility of the Department of Architecture. The department monitors the everyday activity, conducts periodic analysis and initiates changes and improvements to the program structure and content.</p> <p>An example of curriculum change procedure / form has been provided with the submitted documentation (Annex 2.4).</p> <p>The university has approved the Policy on Continuous Improvement of Study Program (Annex 11.2) which is intended to serve specific departments as an instrument for QA.</p> <p>The analysis of the annual work is documented through the department reports and institutional report (Annex 27), which includes a section related to QA and the fulfillment of the quality standards.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 2.</b> Evaluation reports should include expected outcomes, evaluations results, motivation of best practices and achievements, and measures taken to address gaps and to further improve quality, as well as encouragement of the best achievements in the performance and research conducted by the academic staff and students.</p>	<p>Based on the survey evaluation, reports with data and information are delivered to the faculties and departments (Annex 12.3). As an obligation from the accreditation processes the university is drafting action plans, where they address the recommendations of the accreditation board (Annex 23).</p> <p>Although the documentation formally exists, the in-depth analysis (expected outcomes, evaluations results, motivation of best practices and achievements etc.) is carried out into the routine work of the department and not through documented processes.</p>

<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> In the framework of evaluating study program realization, progress and quality, the institution employs direct methods such as: assessment of teaching quality; didactics, curricula, learning evaluation; parallel assessment of student examinations or assignments; observations in the auditorium during exercises/practice; local or standardized tests; results achieved in interinstitutional or national tests, such as state exam for regulated professions, etc.</p>	<p>Based on the documentation provided and on the meetings with students and academic staff, EEG could notice that direct evaluation methods are applied to verify the progress of students and their performance. Such methods include exams, homework, tests and quizzes, group work assessment, assignments, presence and participation etc. In design studios, the assessment is made on design work / projects which are specific for the discipline of architecture (Annex 2.2 and supplementary documents 1). These are all elements that are mostly valued by the academic staff.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 4.</b> In the framework of study program realization, performance and quality evaluation, the institution uses indirect assessment methods and instruments such as: students, graduates (alumni), and academic staff's surveys and interviews; academic and administrative assistance, employers and institutions that cooperate for the study program delivery and other parties involved in conducting the assessment of knowledge and competences acquired during this program.</p>	<p>Indirect assessment methods (mainly surveys and data analysis) are used to obtain data and perceptions that can help in the overall QA of the program. Identified methods are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instructor evaluation survey (Annex 12.4)</li> <li>- Student satisfaction survey (Annex 20.5)</li> <li>- Academic satisfaction survey (Annex 7.4)</li> <li>- Alumni survey (Annex 4.2)</li> <li>- Analysis of exam results (Annex 24)</li> </ul> <p>These analysis and data help in identifying problems and improvement possibilities, based on perception of different actors or on the data provided from measurable indicators.</p>

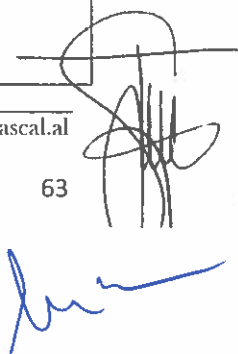
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>The EEG noticed that the department and the university structures related to QA, conduct a continuous effort to monitor and to control the quality of the program through instruments and practices that are well established.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				<b>X</b>

#### Standard VI.4

**The Higher Education Institution includes the academic units, academic staff and students in the study program IQA process, and informs interested parties on the results and the subsequent measures.**

Criteria	Expert evaluation
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The institution should provide for and guarantee the involvement of internal and external actors, interested in continuously ensuring and improving the study program in internal quality policies and procedures.	Referring to the Regulation on the Organization and Functioning of the Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance (Annex 16.2), the composition of the Commission is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One member of the academic staff from each faculty</li> <li>- Two members from the administrative staff</li> <li>- One representative of the Alumni</li> <li>- One external expert</li> <li>- The vice president of the student's council</li> </ul> The composition of the council results in involving the most important parties related to the academic process. The activity of the commission is documented in Annex 25.
<b>Criterion 2.</b> The institution defines the specific responsibilities and tasks of main units, individuals, students and other parties engaged in the study program internal quality and guarantees the responsible performance of these tasks.	Responsibilities and tasks are defined by the Statute of the University (Annex 1.1). Referring to the Statute, the department and Permanent Commission of Quality Assurance are the main figure related to QA. Article 12 ... The department is responsible for the well-functioning of the respective study programs as well as the internal quality assurance of the respective study programs. Article 35 Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance 1. The Permanent Commission of Quality Assurance is responsible for developing policies and procedures for internal quality assurance, acts which are approved by the Academic Senate. 2. The Permanent Commission of Quality Assurance is responsible for developing standards for quality assurance in accordance with the Quality Code, approved by the Academic Senate.

	<p>...</p> <p>4. The Permanent Commission of Quality Assurance is responsible for conducting the periodic evaluation of results of the educational activities and scientific research, monitoring and coordination of activities undertaken within the academic and administrative evaluation, to improve quality through evaluation reports, periodic inspection and monitoring of improvement of quality in the university.</p> <p>...</p> <p>6. The Permanent Commission of Quality Assurance is responsible for planning and coordinating of the implementation of the internal and external evaluation procedures of the University, as well as study programs, in accordance with the applicable legal framework, state quality standards, regulations, guidelines, University policies and procedures.</p> <p>The Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance is a key organism that develops policies and procedures related to the QA (Annex 16.2).</p> <p>The commission is established by in fulfillment of the legal requirements.</p> <p>Some documents / policies related to QA presented by the university are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policies of Department Faculty in terms of Learning, teaching and quality in teaching (Annex 11.1)</li> <li>- Directive on Academic and Administrative Performance Assessment and Quality Improvement (Annex 12.1)</li> <li>- EPOKA University Quality Assurance Handbook (Annex 16.1)</li> <li>- EPOKA University Quality Policy (Annex 16.3)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Criterion 3.</b> During the study program assessment and quality assurance, it is important to guarantee the inclusion of the main and basic unit in charge of the study program, academic, support academic and administrative staff, and study program students.</p>	<p>The internal evaluation report, part of the assessment of the quality of the program, has been prepared by a group composed of 13 people that represent the Department of Architecture, the university administration, the QA unit, and the students. All members of the group have been involved in the data collection, analysis and report writing, according to their position and competencies.</p> <p>Involvement of different actors and stakeholders has been illustrated also in Criterion 1 of this standard.</p>

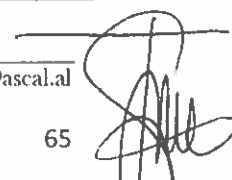


<b>Criterion 4.</b> Internal actors inclusion and engagement in the continuous assessment procedures should observe the academic integrity and avoid any kind of discrimination or inequality against staff and students.	During the site visit and the different meetings held the EEG noticed NO traces of discrimination, inequality or behavior that does not fit the academic ethics. An inclusive, harmonious, democratic and respectful environment was perceived both among students and academic staff.			
<b>Criterion 5.</b> Partners and/or external experts, who are related to the study program, or can provide valuable expertise and input about the program quality and improvement should actively participate in the assessment and internal quality assurance processes	As indicated in Criterion 1 of this standard, the Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance is composed also of representatives of students, external experts, and alumni. On the other hand, alumni and companies that collaborate with the university, provide their feedback related to the study program through surveys conducted periodically (Annex 4.1, 4.3).			
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>EEG has noticed an environment where all parties are included in the Internal Quality Assurance Process, with no discrimination or inequality. Beyond university actors, alumni, external experts and representatives of the labor market are involved in different processes relevant to their role.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				X

<b>Standard VI.5</b>	
<b>Policies, processes and activities for the study program Internal Quality Assurance should be made public, transparent, and effective, with the view to establish an Internal Quality Assurance Culture.</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>
<b>Criterion 1.</b> The policy, strategy, organization and activities within the framework of study program Internal Quality Assurance system are transparent and	All relevant information (structure, standards, policies, reports) about the QA of the program is available on <a href="https://iqau.epoka.edu.al/">https://iqau.epoka.edu.al/</a> Information is also available in the students' guide (Annex 30, chapter 25 and 26). All interested parties can get information easily.

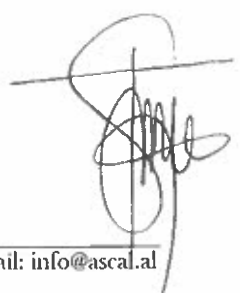


are made public to all students and parties concerned.	
<b>Criterion 2.</b> The Higher Education Institution publishes the results of the study programs assessment, by observing the academic freedom and ethics, as well as the legislation on personal data.	All reports (IER, EER, Annual Report, QA Report) published are generic and avoid personal data. They represent the overall institutional or program findings and respect academic freedom and ethics. The reports are available online in <a href="https://iqau.epoka.edu.al/">https://iqau.epoka.edu.al/</a>
<b>Criterion 3.</b> The assessment results should go along with an action plan designed to address and improve the identified weaknesses and issues.	As an obligation from the accreditation processes the university is drafting action plans, where they address the recommendations of the accreditation board (Annex 23). Such plans are proposed by the department in response to the findings and recommendations of the accreditation process and are approved by the Academic Senate. No other types of action plans were identified. Still the Department is following on day-to-day basis the advancement of the program.
<b>Criterion 4.</b> The institution assesses and ensures activities' effectiveness and impact in the framework of monitoring and quality assessment, with the view to ensure the ongoing study program improvement.	It is to be noticed that the QA system is formally consolidated and complete in documentation if compared to the previous accreditation. The annual reports on QA (Annex 25) illustrate the methodology of work and approach during a 12-month span. The work of the Commission on QA, combined with the program sensitive approach of the department, provide efficient tools for the continuous improvement of the study program.
<b>Criterion 5.</b> The institution organizes periodic activities with staff and students for their information and awareness-raising on the long-term study program quality assurance and improvement.	The QA office conducts periodic training (Annex), promotional and informative activities (Annex 25) to spread the culture of quality assurance, and to assist the department in the continuous improvement of the program. Regarding this topic, web information is also complete. Students are also provided with the student guide (Annex 30) which have complete information about QA system.
<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>EEG found that information related to Quality Assurance is available and easily accessible for all interested parties. Although</i>




	<i>the information is generic and not program-specific, we conclude that the university has a well-established quality culture.</i>			
<b>Standard's Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				X

<b>Field VI Standards' Fulfillment Degree</b>	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
				X




**Përfundime të Vlerësimit të programit të studimit të ciklit të dytë Program i Integruar i Nivelit të Dytë në Master i Shkencës në “Arkitekturë”, ofruar nga institucioni i arsimit të lartë Universiteti “EPOKA”.**

**Pikat e forta dhe afirmime**

1. Personeli akademik i përfshirë në programin Master i Shkencave është i kualifikuar dhe me përvojë ndërkombëtare.
2. Cilësia e infrastrukturës fizike, bibliotekës dhe laboratorëve ofron një mjedis cilësor për procesin e mësimdhënies dhe mësimnxënies.
3. Mundësitë për ndërkombëtarizimin e programit, duke pasur parasysh një marrëveshje të arritur me Universitetin Federico II Napoli për të ofruar një diplomë të dyfishtë.
4. Gjuha e mësimin në Universitetin Epoka është anglishtja.

**Pika të dobta**

1. Personeli akademik është i mbingarkuar me mësimdhënie.
2. Universiteti përfshin në procesin mësimor personel me kualifikim jo të përshtatshëm.
3. Departamenti i Arkitekturës nuk ka personel ndihmës-akademik.

**Rekomandime**

1. Ngarkesa mësimore e personelit akademik duhet të reduktohet për të ndihmuar në përmirësimin cilësor të mësimdhënies dhe për të mundësuar më tej një përfshirje më të madhe të stafit në veprimtaritë kërkimore-shkencore.
2. Të rivlerësohet angazhimi i personelit akademik në procesin e mësimdhënies në përputhje me kualifikimin e tyre, sipas përcaktimeve të Ligjit 80/2015.
3. Rekomandohet zgjatja e orareve të bibliotekës gjatë sesionit të provimeve dhe hapja e saj edhe në fundjavë.
4. Informacioni mbi personelin akademik në web duhet të jetë i disponueshëm edhe në gjuhën shqipe.
5. Planifikimi financiar dhe realizimi i tij duhet të kryhet në nivel të programit të studimit duke forcuar rolin e departamentit, duke ofruar një panoramë të qartë për programin dhe duke e diferencuar këtë panoramë prej performancës së përgjithshme të universitetit.
6. Rekomandohet pasurimi i përvitshëm i bibliotekës me literature të përditësuar sipas literaturës së syllabuseve.
7. Rekomandohet shtimi i laboratoreve në funksion të programit të studimit.



## **Evaluation's conclusions for the second cycle study program Integrated Second Level Program "Master of Science in Architecture"**

### **Strengths and affirmations**


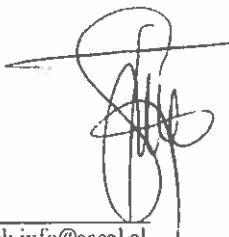
1. The academic staff involved in the Master of Science program are qualified and with international experience.
2. The quality of physical infrastructure, libraries, and laboratories offers a qualitative environment for the teaching and learning process.
3. Possibilities for Internationalization of the Program, having in mind an agreement reached with Napoli Federico II University to offer a double degree
4. The language of instruction in Epoka University is English

### **Weaknesses**

1. The academic staff is overloaded with teaching.
2. The university involves staff with non-appropriate qualification in the teaching process.
3. The Department of Architecture has no academic support staff.

### **Recommendation**

1. The teaching load of the academic staff should be reduced to help further the qualitative improvement of teaching and to secure a greater staff involvement in scientific research activities.
2. To reevaluate the engagement of academic staff in the teaching process in accordance with their qualification, according to the provisions of Law 80/2015.
3. It is recommended to extend the operating hours of the library during the exam session and to open it also during weekends.
4. The academic staff information in the website should be available also in Albanian.
5. Financial planning and its implementation should be carried out at the level of the study program by strengthening the role of the department, providing a clear overview of the program and differentiating this overview from the overall performance of the university.
6. The annual enrichment of the library with literature updated according to the syllabus literature is recommended.
7. The addition of laboratories in function of the study program is recommended.



**Program quality standards fulfillment degree.**

FIELDS OF EVALUATION	FIELD STANDARDS' FULFILLMENT DEGREE			
	Not met	Partially met	Substantially met	Fully met
I. STUDY PROGRAM PROVISION				X
II. ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF SECOND CYCLE PROGRAMS				X
III. TEACHING, LEARNING, EVALUATION AND COMPETENCES				X
IV. HUMAN, FINANCIAL, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND LOGISTICS RESOURCES FOR STUDY PROGRAM DELIVERY			X	
V. STUDENTS AND THEIR SUPPORT SUDENTËT DHE MBËSHETJA E TYRE				X
VI. STUDY PROGRAMS' QUALITY ASSURANCE				X
<b>TOTAL EVALUATION</b>				<b>X</b>



