



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

Report of the Institutional Review of:
University College “Pavarësia Vlorë”

February/2023

REVIEW TEAM:

1. Elvin Gjevori, PhD

Lead Reviewer

2. Prof. Asoc. Dr. Hemion Braho

Reviewer

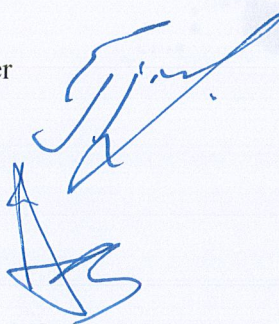


Table of Contents

The context of this review	6
Summary report.....	10
Summary of findings	12
Recommendations	14
Affirmation of action being taken	16
Summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area.....	16
Detailed report.....	17
Evaluation Area 1: Higher Education Institution - Management, Autonomy, and Quality Assurance	17
Findings	19
Recommendations	19
Affirmation of action being taken	20
Judgement.....	20
Evaluation Area 2: Resources and Partnerships.....	21
Findings.....	23
Recommendations	23
Affirmation of action being taken	24
Judgement.....	24
Evaluation Area 3: Study Programs, Teaching, and Evaluation	25
Findings.....	28
Recommendations	29
Affirmation of action being taken	29
Judgement.....	29
Evaluation Area 4: Scientific/Artistic Activity and Innovation	30
Findings.....	32
Recommendations	32

Affirmation of action being taken	33
Judgement.....	33
Evaluation Area 5: Students and their Support	34
Findings.....	36
Recommendations	36
Affirmation of action being taken	36
Judgement.....	36
List of Evidences.....	38

About this review

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

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

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

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

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

The context of this review

University College “Pavarësia Vlorë” (hereinafter UCPV) is one of two non-public higher education institutions (HEI) in Vlora. It was licensed by Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) no. 279, dated 12.03.2009 "On granting permission for Private School of Higher Education" Pavarësia. By Order no. 238, dated 30.04.2010 of the Minister of Education and Science it was given permission to provide academic programs of first level degree in following fields:

- a. Law
- b. Economy;
- c. Political Science
- d. Information Engineering;
- e. Integrated Diploma of Second Level (IDSL) in Architecture.

UCPV started its activity in the academic year 2009-2010, with the recruitment of students from the southern regions of the country. UCPV was originally composed of two main units, as follows:

- 1- Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, with the study programs in “Law”, “Economy” and “Political Science”.
- 2- Faculty of Applied Sciences, with the study programs in “Information Engineering” and “Architecture”.

UCPV was also licensed for study programs in the second cycle of studies (Professional Master and Master of Science) by Order no. 388, dated 10.08.2011 of the Minister of Education and Science. This decision was based on Decision no. 149, dated 18.02.2011 of the Accreditation Council, “For the opening of new study programs”.

With the entry into force of Law no. 80/2015 "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Republic of Albania", this HEI was reorganised as the University College “Pavarësia Vlorë”. By Order no. 586, dated 12.15.2016 of the Minister of Education and Sports it adopted the Statute of the College (UCPV).

UCPV has undergone two institutional accreditation processes. The first institutional accreditation for UCPV is sanctioned through Order no. 290, dated 09.07.2012 of the Minister of Education based on decision no. 340, dated 08.06.2012 of the Accreditation Council for Higher Education. The second institutional accreditation of UCPV was sanctioned by the Decision of the Accreditation Board no. 94 dated 20.10.2017 and was valid until 19.10.2020. *This means that the institution has had a two years void and delay until the current accreditation process. Despite the review team’s attempts to understand this very prolonged delay, as it will become clear further down, UCPV could not provide any minimally reasonable justification.*

The previous external evaluation report recorded the following judgements for each Evaluation Area:

- The Standards for the Organisation and its Management are **substantially met**.
- The Standards for Resourcing are **substantially met**.
- The Standards for the Curriculum are **substantially met**.
- The Standards for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are **partly met**.
- The Standards for Students and their Support are **fully met**.

Currently, the academic structure of UCPV is organized into two main units and six basic units as follows:

Main units:

1. Faculty of Economy and Social Sciences.
2. Faculty of Applied Sciences.

Basics units:

1. Department of Economy;
2. Department of Law and Political Sciences;
3. Research Centre Human Sciences;
4. Department of Computer Engineering;
5. Department of Architecture;
6. Research Centre of Applied Sciences.

According to UCPV, currently it counts 9 active study degree programs with respective profiles in two cycles, over three hundred students, 45 academic full-time staff, and 4 academic part-time staff (3 externals and 1 guests).

RECOMMENDATIONS' FULFILLMENT DEGREE FROM THE LAST ACCREDITATION

I. Recommendations of the Accreditation Board based on Decision 94 dated 20.10.2017 were:

- The institution, in immediate communication with the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, must resolve the issue of students registered before the licensing of the institution/study programs, as an obligation for the completion of their studies and graduation
- With the start of the 2017-2018 academic year, the Institution must review and ensure that the role and functions of the faculties and their leaders to continue in accordance with the Statute and approved regulations of the University College.
- During the academic year 2017-2018, the Institution must develop and implement an ad-hoc policy for improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- During the 2017-2018 academic year, the Institution must develop a strategic approach for the management, implementation and improvement of scientific research priorities at the institutional level.
- The institution must address and ensure the fulfilment of the standards for emergency exits and lighting, within the framework of the beginning of the academic year 2017-2018.
- The institution should continue with the fulfilment of the measures undertaken for the enrichment of the library and the full coverage of all study programs it offers.

II. Completion of recommendations by the Institution

The Review Team, upon examining the documentation provided by UCPV and after the data collected during two-day site visit, **concludes that the above recommendations have not been fulfilled either in letter or in spirit.** Regarding the first recommendation, the institution's activity is currently suspended by the Ministry of Education and Sports through decision no. 275, date 19.05.2022 because the UCPV was offering studies in unlicensed programs. So offering unlicensed programs appears to be a structural feature of this institution.

Regarding the second recommendation, from the meetings we had with UCPV leadership, and particularly the rector, we noticed an astounding lack of leadership and coordination. Regarding the third recommendation, we were unable to identify any structured policies and instruments dedicated to measuring and improving the quality of teaching.

Regarding the fourth recommendation on research, we can confidently state that we were unable to identify any meaningful research activities going on. While regarding the library, we can also confidently say that almost none of the books listed as mandatory reading in the course syllabi were present physically. Overall – it is the review team's opinion –the

UCPV has not fulfilled the recommendations, has not improved in any meaningful way and is beset by legal, structural, and leadership deficiencies.

Summary report

University College “Pavarësia Vlorë” (UCPV) is one of two non-public higher education institutions operation in Vlora. UCPV has been operating since 2009 when it was licensed by the ministry responsible for higher education.

As mentioned in the ‘context of the review section’, UCPV has undergone two previous institutional accreditation processes, this one being the third. There has been a two-year delay between the period when the third accreditation should have taken place and the time it actually did take place. During the site visit in meetings with the staff and UCPV leadership, when asked about this significant time lag, the review team was offered a number of justifications – mostly shifting blame on administrative delays of public institutions – that could not supported by verifiable evidence.

In the context of the review, UCPV developed a Self-evaluation Report through its Internal Self-evaluation working group, which included individuals from across the institution with an in-depth knowledge of the institution, and a student representative. The review team received the Self-evaluation Report and the portfolio of supporting evidence in advance of the review visit, later supplemented by additional requested documentation before and during the visit. The wide range of supporting information provided by the institution enabled the team to familiarise themselves with the structure, policies, management procedures and nature of teaching and research activity undertaken. Evidence included the Statute and Regulations, internal reports, the annual report to the Ministry, admission and orientation procedures, list of external agreements and memoranda, examples of programme information and evidence of deliberative meetings.

The site visit took place over two days on the **20 and 21 December 2022**. The review team was composed of two higher education reviewers supported by the review manager of the Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (ASCAL). The review team met with senior managers, students, lecturers, administrative and support staff, as well as external partners. Discussion enabled the clarification of procedures, responsibilities and findings. Notes were taken at all meetings. As part of the site visit, the review team visited the premises of UCPV focusing on the library premises.

The report recorded the following judgements for each Evaluation area:

- The Standards for the Higher Education Institution - Management, Autonomy, and Quality Assurance: **not met**;
- The Standards for Resources and Partnership: **partly met**;
- The Standards for Study Programs, Teaching, and Evaluation: **partly met**;
- The Standards for Scientific/Artistic Activity and Innovation: **not met**;
- The Standards for Students and their Support: **partly met**.

The Standards for the Higher Education Institution - Management, Autonomy, and Quality Assurance are **not met**. In reaching this conclusion, the review team identified 5 weaknesses, made 4 recommendations and found no instances of good practice of affirmations. The most crucial finding here is that UCPV did not respect the limits of its autonomy by registering students in unlicensed study degree programs. Despite the review

team's repeated attempts to receive explanations as to why or how this occurred, we did not receive any plausible or credible ones. What makes this even graver is that it appears to be a repeated offense since one of the recommendations of the previous accreditation had to do with the issue of students registered in programs before they had been licensed. This could be seen to mean that such behavior - registering students in unlicensed programs - is ingrained in UCPV's institutional culture. In addition, the review team found that UCPV's foundational documents such as its development strategy were incompatible with the institution's needs and situation and as such not useful to it in any meaningful way. Lastly, the review team found that UCPV's instruments to monitor and improve the quality of teaching were very weak and with no follow-up mechanisms.

The Standards for Resources and Partnership are **partly met**. In reaching this conclusion, the review team identified 6 weaknesses, made 6 recommendations and found no instances of good practice or affirmation. The main findings here concern the premises of the institution which is situated in a residential building that had not been designed to house academic activities and in which there were no dedicated access routes to people with physical disabilities. As important, the review team found that a number of processes, such as the budget, were neither inclusive nor deliberative, but top-down processes with very little outside input.

The Standards for Study Programs, Teaching, and Evaluation are **partly met**. In reaching this conclusion, the review team identified 6 weaknesses, 1 affirmation, made 6 recommendations and found no instances of good practice. The main findings here concern the lack of synergy between different study programs that can potentially lead to unnecessary overlap. In addition, as mentioned, in the evaluation for field one, the study programs must fulfill all legal requirements from the licensing to the accreditation, and the review team found evidence that not all programs fulfilled such requirements. Lastly, and importantly, the review team found that the services of the library were significantly under par, as it did not provide access for students to the mandatory texts listed in course syllabi.

The Standards for Scientific/Artistic Activity and Innovation: **not met**. In reaching this conclusion, the review team identified 6 weaknesses, made 6 recommendations and found no evidence of good practices or affirmations. From all the data collected, the institution's own self-evaluation, and the meetings it became clear that research was – at best – sporadic, unsupported institutionally, not connected to teaching or students, and overall insignificant to the institution's *modus operandi*. Overall, the review team were unable to identify any discernable research activity, output, and support structure.

The Standards for Students and their Support: **partly met**. In reaching this conclusion, the review team identified 4 weaknesses, made 5 recommendations and found no evidence of good practices or affirmations. The review team, while recognizing the difficulties caused by the COVID-19-related difficulties, was not able to identify any structured approach to supporting student life. In fact, outside of teaching, the review team were not able to identify any structured support of student life at UCPV.

The draft report is sent to the institution through the ASCAL Management System on 07.02.2023. The institution with letter no. 25, dated 14.02.2023, sent comments on the draft report. The Review Team, after attentive consideration and thorough deliberation regarding UCPV's response to the draft report, has decided not to accept any of the comments/explanations the HEI has forwarded to ASCAL. In general, the Review Team considers UCPV's response and claims not backed by any

material evidence and reflective of a superficial and mechanical reading of the draft report particularly as it regards the weaknesses identified and the recommendations provided.

We will only respond specifically to two of the claims/arguments brought forth by UCPV as the others were either without any trace of supporting evidence, or unnecessary such as the unsolicited advice/suggestion regarding the strong points the review team could/should include in the final report.

First, the Review Team has based its findings on facts, documents evidenced, and the site visit. The Review Team does not assess irrelevant information such as the background institutional relation between the Ministry of Education and Sports (MES) and UCPV. Despite lengthy and obtuse rationalizations, the HEI does not explain why it offered study degree programs without proper licensing. On this issue, in various tortured arguments, the HEI blames MES for their problems, but the Review Team cannot assess this relation and it only notes the factual situation as described in the report.

Second, regarding the affirmation in the draft report that “the infrastructure of the institution is not suitable for a HEI” the Review team is well aware of the relevant regulations and the evaluation process by MES and the Review Team did not duplicate that. However, the Review Team referred to the location of the institution inside a residential building, being not suitable for a HEI as – among many things – to get to UCPV we had to pass through a billiards club.

For the rest of the comments, as stated above, the Review Team concludes that UCPV has brought no evidence-based arguments warranting reconsideration of the assessment.

For all the reasons above the Review Team has decided not to modify the report and its findings and to consider it as final.

Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- The review team was not able to identify any good practices

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- The Self Evaluation Report answers’ in reference to different standards are not always correct or responding properly to the standards’ requests [*Annex No.1, / Standard I.1*]
- The Institution does not respect limits of its autonomy and does not involve internal and external stakeholders in decision-making [*Annex No.1, Standard I.2; Standard I.4; Standard I.5*]
- The current Development Strategy is not in line with the current situation of UCPV and it is unrealistic on some parts. [*Annex No.1, / Standard I.3*]
- Documents presented as evidence, often have only a formal relevance (often simply templates), without demonstrating effective ownership from the academic and administrative staff [*Annex No.1, / Standard I.6; Standard I.7; Standard I.8*]
- Instruments to monitor and improve quality of the study programs are very limited and weak [*Annex No.1, Standard I.9; Standard I.10; Standard I.11*]

- UCPV has poor policy and initiatives on staff development and academic activity monitoring. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.3; Standard II.6*]
- Social initiatives and development of the institution are minimal. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.4*]
- The institution has no support infrastructure for different abled persons particularly those with physical impairments. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.7; Standard II.8; Standard II.9; Standard II.10; Standard II.11*]
- UCPV has poor policy and regulation for protocol and archiving [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.13*]
- The budget preparation is a non-inclusive top down process, without general involvement of the other structures. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.16; Standard II.17*]
- UCPV has poor international cooperation and poor staff mobility [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.18; Standard II.19; Standard II.20; Standard II.21; Standard II.22*]
- Lack of a structured analysis of the academic and logistical capacities that would support the successful improvement and interconnection between all levels of study programs including the professional programs. [*Annex No.1, / Standard III.1*]
- Lack of a valid market study in the areas where the new programmes operate. [*Annex No.1, / Standard III.1; Standard III.3*]
- The Strategic Development Plan 2020-2025 is not realistic and shows lack of vision for the future of UCPV. [*Annex No.1, Standard III.3*]
- The international exchanges of the academic staff are very weak. [*Annex No.1, / Standard III.2; Standard III.11; Standard III.12*]
- The infrastructure of the Institution is not suitable for a HEI. [*Annex No.1, / Standard III.5; Standard III.6; Standard III.19*]
- The library does not offer a full coverage of the basic texts of the study programs. [*Annex No.1, / Standard III.20; Standard III.21*]
- The Scientific Research Strategy 2017 – 2022 has expired and its objectives have not been achieved [*Annex No.1, / Standard IV.3; Standard IV.5; Standard IV.6*]
- The institution has no effective scientific research and production activity, neither at an institutional level, nor at an individual one. [*Annex No.1, / Standard IV.3; Standard IV.5; Standard IV.6*]
- The two Research Centres' existence is merely formal, having no scientific profile or research activity [*Annex No.1, / Standard IV.4*]
- UCPV has no effective mechanisms to check and support scientific production of research activities [*Annex No.1, / Standard IV.10*]
- UCPV does not implement staff's annual obligations in the field of research consisting in participating in two scientific conferences and publish two articles in scientific journals with ISSN code or impact factor. [*Annex No.1, /Standard IV.11; Standard IV.13*]

- There is no structured activity in inviting foreign lecturers as guest lecturers for the development of the teaching process [*Annex No.1, /Standard IV.13; Standard IV.14*]
- Staff and students' mobility is very weak or inexistent [*Annex No.1, /Standard IV.13; Standard IV.14*]
- UCPV does not always have the correct or complete information about students' data [*Annex No.1, /Standard V.2; Standard V.3*]
- Institutional support for student life, beside lessons, is very poor. [*Annex No.1, / Standard V.4*]
- The library fund does not cover students' need, with impact on teaching and learning quality [*Annex No.1, / Standard V.7*]
- The institution does not have a structured policy towards alumni engagement. [*Annex No.1, / Standard V.9*].

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendations:

- The SER should be written in a coherent and direct way, with factual and correct information in line with the requests fixed in the standards. [*Annex No.1, / Standard I.1; Standard I.6; Standard I.7; Standard I.8*]
- The Institution should review its policies on decision making to ensure the institution complies with the legal requirements and all stakeholders are included. [*Annex No.1, / Standard I.2; Standard I.4; Standard I.5*]
- The institutions should rewrite its Development Strategy, because as it stands it is useless to its long-term development. [*Annex No.1, / Standard I.3*]
- UCPV should expand the instruments to monitor and improve quality of the study programs and implement policies that ensure the application of the findings. [*Annex No.1, / Standard I.9; Standard I.10; Standard I.11*]
- Practices in terms of staff monitoring and development should be improved and better coordinated. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.3; Standard II.6*]
- It is recommended to be more present in the local context in terms of social development. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.4*]
- It is necessary to offer proper infrastructure for different abled persons. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.7; Standard II.8; Standard II.9; Standard II.10; Standard II.11*]
- UCPV should improve and establish proper regulation and practices in terms of protocol and archiving. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.13*]
- Procedures to prepare and approve the institutional budget should be revised to be inclusive and bottom-up. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.16; Standard II.17*]
- International cooperation should increase in order to offer more possibilities for staff and students mobility. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.18; Standard II.19; Standard II.20; Standard II.21; Standard II.22*]

- UCPV should analyse its academic and logistical capacities to assess the successful improvement and interconnection between all levels of study programs including the professional programs. *[Annex No.1, / Standard III.1]*
- UCPV should prepare a valid market study on the areas where new and existing programmes operate. *[Annex No.1, / Standard III.1; Standard III.3]*
- UCPV should improve the Strategic Development Plan 2020-2025 making it more proportional to the dimensions and vision of the institution. *[Annex No.1, / Standard III.3]*
- UCPV should stimulate academic staff mobility and increase exchanges with external stakeholders to improve their study programs. *[Annex No.1, / Standard III.2; Standard III.11; Standard III.12]*
- The infrastructure of the Institution is not appropriate for a HEI, so it is recommended to UCPV to adapt it more to the academic needs of the students including those with physical disabilities. *[Annex No.1, / Standard III.5; Standard III.6; Standard III.19]*
- Library should - at the very least - provide access to all the mandatory texts for each module. *[Annex No.1, / Standard III.20; Standard III.21]*
- UCPV should renew its Scientific Research Strategy and pursue effectively its objectives. *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.3; Standard IV.5; Standard IV.6]*
- UCPV should increase and structure its scientific research and production activity. *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.3; Standard IV.5; Standard IV.6]*
- Research Centres should be effective and contribute to research activity. *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.4]*
- Antiplagiarism mechanisms and the Ethics Council should be put in place and used regularly to guarantee research integrity. *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.10]*
- UCPV should monitor regularly scientific and research activity of the academic staff. *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.11; Standard IV.13]*
- UCPV should invite foreign and local external lecturers as guest lecturers to improve and diversify the teaching process. *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.13; Standard IV.14]*
- Staff and students' mobility should be increased. *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.13; Standard IV.14]*
- The institution should have more human support to the secretariat office. *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.2; Standard V.3]*
- The institution should increase academic and extra-curricular opportunities for students, such as open lectures, information sessions, simulation trials, trainings, field research surveys, etc. *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.4]*
- The Career, Student Tutoring and Alumni Office should draft a career guide as a basic document to orientate students. *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.5, Standard V.8]*
- The institution should increase sources of texts access for students. *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.7]*

- UCPV should build a database for its alumni students and organise useful activities for the academic life and development. *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.9]*

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following actions already in progress:

- After the suspension of activities based on Order of the Ministry of Education and Sport no. 275, date 19.05.2022, a working group was set up bringing to the change of the structure of UCPV and departments were filled with missing staff. Students were provided with a certificate of deregistration. *[Annex No.1, / Standard III.13; Standard III.18]*

Summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area

1. The Standards for the Higher Education Institution - Management, Autonomy, And Quality Assurance: **not met**;
2. The Standards for Resources and Partnership: **partly met**;
3. The Standards for Study Programs, Teaching, and Evaluation: **partly met**;
4. The Standards for Scientific/Artistic Activity and Innovation: **not met**;
5. The Standards for Students and Their Support: **partly met**.

Summary Judgement

The reviewers recommend to the Accreditation Board that at University College “Pavarësia Vlorë”, the State Quality Standards are: **partly met**.

Detailed report

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

1.1 UCPV operates as a higher education institution (HEI), established by Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 279, dated 12.03.2009 granting the right to provide full-time study programs of the first cycle, as a non-public HEI with two faculties. The entrance in force of the Law on Higher Education in 2015, gave it the status of a University College. UCPV operates in the fields of law, economics, social sciences, applied sciences, creative activities and services in the respective teaching domains. It functions in accordance with the principles of its Statute, approved in December 2016 by the Minister of Education and Sports and Decision no. 20/2016 of the Academic Senate [**Annex Statute of UCPV**]. The institution designed its internal Regulation, approved by Decision no. 33, and dated 14.11.2017 of the Academic Senate. Both main documents are drafted in accordance with the legislation on higher education in Albania and aim to guarantee the principles of academic freedom and to regulate the teaching, scientific and administrative activity in accordance with its mission and objective. **Regrettably, the Review Team found wrong references in the self-evaluation report (SER) [SER p. 11] about the two main documents, Statute and Regulation of UCPV, indicating older versions and confusing information. [Annex No.1, Standard I.1]**

1.2 The University College academic structure is based on the law on higher education, the bylaws in force, and the Statute. The latter defines UCPV as a non-public higher education institution entitled to choose freely its structures, legal bodies and its staff to guarantee efficiency. Since the composition of these bodies includes representatives from different levels of academic and non-academic staff, students, etc., affect the efficiency of the institution's management. The Statute entitles the institution to provide study programs and define research domains that suit its strategic development. The UCPV Academic Senate, under Article 9 of the Statute, is a collegial decision-making body, which decides on the strategic planning and most important problems of the institution in the field of education, research and administrative organization, consisting of members of academic staff, non-academic staff, and students. **Although in letter the academic senate is the highest decision making body that guarantees, at the very least, the legality of the decisions of the institution, in reality it appears not to be so. The fact that the activity of the institution has been suspended by Order of the Ministry of Education and Sport, no. 275, date 19.05.2022 because of registering students in unlicensed programs, demonstrates that the academic senate has not fulfilled its main role. As concerning, we were not able to identify any internal action/meeting/analysis undertaken by the senate after the suspension. The Review team finds that the HEI has not respected the limits of its autonomy. [Annex No.1, Standard I.2; Standard I.4]**

1.3 The Institution has officially adopted a Strategic Development Plan for the period 2020 - 2025, approved by the Academic Senate [Annex 6]. The plan appeared designed in accordance with what the institution aims to achieve in its major long-term strategic goals. It was clear however, that the strategy was **incompatible** with the conditions on the ground at UCPV. When asked to clarify how the strategy was written, whether the previous strategy was analysed, how the strategic objectives were identified (one of which was to change the world through research undertaken at UCPV), we were not able to receive any reasonable answer [M5; M7]. **The Review team finds that the Development Strategy is not in line with the current situation and development of the Institution and highly unrealistic on some parts.** [Annex No.1, Standard I.3]

1.4 UCPV offers its academic programs through two main units, respectively the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Applied Sciences. Each faculty is composed of two departments and one scientific research unit [Annex 11]. They offer 2-year professional programs, bachelor and Master of Science study programs and integrated study program in "Law" and "Architecture". The Dean heads each faculty. The Dean's Office is a collegial decision-taking body that operates according to the provisions of the UCPV Statute, general Regulation and faculty regulations. [Annexes Statute of UCPV; Rregullore Fakulteti i Ekonomise dhe Shkencave Shoqerore; Rregullore Fakulteti i Shkencave te Aplikuar; Rregullore KUPV]. The Department is the basic unit in charge of undertaking the teaching and research activity of the faculty. The basic unit is responsible for the study programs and should encourage constructive debate. **The meeting with the academic and administrative staff reflected good and direct forms of communication - due to the small dimensions of the HEI - about the curriculum, enrolments and student evaluation. Nevertheless, the staff seemed not involved in the major processes of the institution such as the Development Strategy or measures adopted after the suspension decision adopted by the MES** [M5; M7]. [Annex No.1, Standard I.5]

1.5 UCPV submits each year its annual report to the MES according to the Law on Higher Education [Annex 7]. It includes information about the teaching activity, human resources and financial situation of UCPV. **Considering all objectives set in the report in the different academic areas, with the conclusion that all objectives are "completed", the Review Team finds it a formal document not properly assessed. Moreover, the report should be disseminated and discussed at the Academic Senate with an open meeting with the academic staff.** UCPV claimed that the report is published in the website of UCPV [SER p.14], but the Review Team could not confirm it. In addition, financial transparency is not assured because the tuition fees according to the study programs are not published. In terms of assessment and monitoring of all aspects related to the fulfilment of quality standards and criteria and relative transparency, the Review Team could not find any convincing evidences, beside the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQUA) annual work plan [Annex 10]. **During the visit, despite our repeated enquiries, it was not possible to assess the implementation of this plan and impact of IQUA in these processes because there were no documents** [M1; M5]. [Annex No.1, Standard I.6; Standard I.7; Standard I.8]

1.6 As an evaluation methodology for the progress of study programs, UCPV used the results of student questionnaires, which are considered the basic measuring instruments [Annexes 21; 48; 49]. The results of the questionnaires, after being processed, are reported by IQAU to the departments. **The Review Team did not find any other instruments used to improve or assess the quality of study programs and did not find any evidence of the structured mechanisms in place for the continuous improvement of teaching [M3; M4; M5; M7]. [Annex No.1, Standard I.9; Standard I.10; Standard I.11]**

Findings

Good practice

The review did not identify any features of good practice:

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- The Self Evaluation Report answers' in reference to different standards are not always correct or responding properly to the standards' requests *[Annex No.1, / Standard I.1]*
- The Institution does not respect limits of its autonomy and does not involve internal and external stakeholders in decision-making *[Annex No.1, Standard I.2; Standard I.4; Standard I.5]*
- The current Development Strategy is not in line with the current situation of UCPV and it is unrealistic on some parts. *[Annex No.1, / Standard I.3]*
- Documents presented as evidence, often have only a formal relevance (often simply templates), without demonstrating effective ownership from the academic and administrative staff *[Annex No.1, / Standard I.6; Standard I.7; Standard I.8]*
- Instruments to monitor and improve quality of the study programs are very limited and weak *[Annex No.1, Standard I.9; Standard I.10; Standard I.11]*

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendations:

- The SER should be written in a coherent and direct way, with factual and correct information in line with the requests fixed in the standards. *[Annex No.1, / Standard I.1; Standard I.6; Standard I.7; Standard I.8]*
- The Institution should review its policies on decision making to ensure the institution complies with the legal requirements and all stakeholders are included. *[Annex No.1, / Standard I.2; Standard I.4; Standard I.5]*
- The institutions should rewrite its Development Strategy, because as it stands it is useless to its long-term development. *[Annex No.1, / Standard I.3]*

- UCPV should expand the instruments to monitor and improve quality of the study programs and implement policies that ensure the application of the findings. **[Annex No.1, / Standard I.9; Standard I.10; Standard I.11]**

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team did not identify any actions in progress.

Judgement

The standards for the Higher Education Institution - Management, Autonomy, and Quality Assurance, are not met.

Evaluation Area 2: Resources and Partnerships

2.1 The organizational structure of UCPV is available online [<https://unipavaresia.edu.al/>]. The recruitment of the academic, the assistant academic and administrative staff is governed by the guidelines set out in the UCPV Statute [Annex Statute of UCPV] and are managed in compliance with the Law on Higher Education and the Labour Code. Proposals and criteria of vacancies are designed by the basic units and are announced by the Human Resources, Public Relations and Services Office (HRPSO) in the UCPV website [M5/M8/ Annex 12]. The Dean of the main unit approves the criteria. Staff is selected through competition following their fulfilment of job requirements, by an *ad hoc* commission, chaired by the Dean. The final appointment is made by the Rector. Selected candidates are hired upon signing the employment contract. [Annex 14] UCPV employs as well part-time academic staff, according to the HEI needs, and in accordance with LHE. For the academic year 2021 - 2022, UCPV has recruited four employees as part time academic staff of whom three external and one guest [Annex 15]. [Annex No.1, Standard II.1]

2.2 UCPV staff includes academic and non-academic staff. Administrative staff and supporting staff of teaching-scientific activities consists of secretary staff, information technology office, library, the finance office, office of protocol and archives, office of human resources, public relations and services, support services employees (sanitary and security of HEI), and the alumni branch. There are seven persons employed as administrative and supporting staff or teaching scientific activities meaning that there is only one person for each office. The institution has declared as full-time academic staff 45 persons employed [M8; Annex add. 8]. Each basic unit has seven members, of whom at least three are employees with degrees or academic titles, in accordance with Article 25, paragraph 4 of LME. The Review Team found no particular policy or good practice to integrate the different structures between them, but the small number of staff could enable continuous and direct relations. [Annex No.1, Standard II.2; Standard II.5]

2.3 The institution aims to assess the scientific, technical publishing activity of academic staff that is included in the annual report [Annex 17], or evaluation by IQAU special reports. Performance evaluation is prepared by the Head of the Department based on the annual report of self-evaluation [Annexes 21; 49]. Academic staff are also evaluated by UCPV students through periodic surveys [Annex 48]. **The Review Team suggests having a more systematic and coordinated use of this evaluations to bring to a unitary assessment of the single lecturer and overall conclusions on academic activity. On staff development and support to meet their yearly obligations, the Review Team did not find any ongoing initiative or policy and would recommend to the HEI to engage and involve on initiatives in this field [M7].** [Annex No.1, Standard II.3; Standard II.6]

2.4 Due to the relatively small context where, UCPV operates in the city of Vlora, the University College has a good local network and has the possibility to exchange experiences,

cooperation and social dialogue between staff, students, public and private institutions, associations, etc. with the aim of involvement and active participation in the community life of the Vlora Region [M9]. **Despite the good network, the Review team finds initiatives in this field still insufficient, and recommends intensifying social presence in the local community. In general, staff and students' social initiatives are absent both on social support or related issues. [Annex No.1, Standard II.4]**

2.5 The University College offers its academic services on rented premises. The Finance Office administers the assets of UCPV [Annex 23]. The institution currently is located inside a residential building in the city centre having rented two floors with a total area of over 2000 m², where 1500 m² is the internal area and 600 m² veranda. During the visit, the Review team found that one floor is utilized for academic activities, while the other floor has two recreational spaces, a **bar and a billiard**. The institution reports that total area available to the educational process are five lessons halls and nine seminar halls. Specifically, it has five lecture halls with a capacity of 60 seats each for a total of 300 seats, four seminar room with capacity 30 seats for a total of 120 seats, one specialized computer lab with 30 seats capacity, 1 architecture lab with 40 seats, a physical lab with 30 seats and an electro lab with 24 seats. The institution has fireproof certification, but **no facilities for differently abled persons [Annex 24]. While the space appears suitable, the infrastructure seems not appropriate for an HEI being inside a residential building. [Annex No.1, Standard II.7; Standard II.8; Standard II.9; Standard II.10; Standard II.11; Standard II.12]**

2.6 The HEI reports that the organizational Structure of UCPV includes the Office of Protocol-Archive where it is stored, documented and recorded every document / letter of the College [Annex 11]. In addition, it is reported that UCPV has drafted the Regulation of Archive on "Professional-technical rules and methodological procedures for the archive service at UCPV". **The Review Team has verified this information being incorrect and not based on evidences. Considering the poor general support evidences for the SER, the Review Team considers the fulfilment of this obligation as very important. [Annex No.1, Standard II.13]**

2.7 The responsible unit for the management and exchange of information at UCPV is the IT office. Official institutional communication is done through e-mail domain @unipavaresia.edu.al, with which all the academic staff, administrative staff and students are equipped. The information system is organized in the form of an Information Management System (UMS) to serve on the web [<https://kupv.unipavaresia.edu.al/>] for lecturers and students. **The Review Team did not find any evidences in terms of regulation or activity of the IT office or information technology area. [Annex No.1, Standard II.14; Standard II.15]**

2.8 The Academic Senate approves the annual budget after being drawn up by the Administrator [Annex 28]. Financial statements and reports on expenditures and revenues are provided each academic year but mostly this seems the responsibility of the Finance Office that is under the responsibility of the Administrator. During the meetings, **the Review Team**

did not find any involvement of the staff in this issue. It is recommended that the budget be coordinated with the annual report plan of the institution [Annex 7] and departments should be involved in the design of the annual budget plan by presenting their financial needs to the respective higher offices. [*Annex No.1, Standard II.16; Standard II.17*]

2.9 The institution has drafted a Strategic Development Plan [Annex 6] aiming to have a regional impact and to enhance partnerships and long-term cooperation, to mature benefits from strategic collaborations, local, national and international partnerships, with other universities, businesses and non-profit organizations, government institutions and civil society organizations. UCPV also aims to create stable partnership relations, signing cooperation agreements especially at local level [Annexes 30; 31]. **The Review Team found poor international cooperation of the visited HEI, resulting also in poor or absent staff mobility. Likewise, the Institution should be more proactive in the market study to better fulfil students' needs and orientation as well as internal academic activity.** [*Standard II.18; Standard II.19; Standard II.20; Standard II.21; Standard II.22*]

Findings

Good practice

The review team was not able to identify any good practice.

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- UCPV has poor policy and initiatives on staff development and academic activity monitoring. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.3; Standard II.6*]
- Social initiatives and development of the institution are minimal. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.4*]
- The institution has no support infrastructure for different abled persons particularly those with physical impairments. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.7; Standard II.8; Standard II.9; Standard II.10; Standard II.11*]
- UCPV has poor policy and regulation for protocol and archiving [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.13*]
- The budget preparation is a non-inclusive top down process, without general involvement of the other structures. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.16; Standard II.17*]
- UCPV has poor international cooperation and poor staff mobility [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.18; Standard II.19; Standard II.20; Standard II.21; Standard II.22*]

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendations:

- Practices in terms of staff monitoring and development should be improved and better coordinated. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.3; Standard II.6*]
- It is recommended to be more present in the local context in terms of social development. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.4*]
- It is necessary to offer proper infrastructure for different abled persons. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.7; Standard II.8; Standard II.9; Standard II.10; Standard II.11*]
- UCPV should improve and establish proper regulation and practices in terms of protocol and archiving. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.13*]
- Procedures to prepare and approve the institutional budget should be revised to be inclusive and bottom-up. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.16; Standard II.17*]
- International cooperation should increase in order to offer more possibilities for staff and students mobility. [*Annex No.1, / Standard II.18; Standard II.19; Standard II.20; Standard II.21; Standard II.22*]

Affirmation of action being taken

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

Judgement

The standards for Resources and Partnerships are: partly met

Evaluation Area 3: Study Programs, Teaching, and Evaluation

3.1 University College Pavarësia (UCPV) offers study programs with profiles oriented towards local, national, and international priorities. The institution is divided in two faculties with 9 active study degree programs with respective profiles in two cycles [Annexes 35, 36]. Study programs are understandable and indicate what a student is required to do in order to graduate [Ibid.]. In the academic year 2021-2022 two new programs were offered: a two-year professional program in Management, Tourism and Hospitality and a 5-year program in Law. The latter adapted due to the obligations of Law no. 80/2015, "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania", article 82 that foresees that the integrated programs of the second cycle studies in the field of justice are realized with 300 credits, for a duration of not less than 5 academic years. **Not all the study programmes comply with Albanian legislation in higher education and its mission and this has brought to the suspension of activities based on the Order of the Minister of Education and Sports, no. 275, date 19.05.2022. Therefore, no new students registered in the academic year 2022-2023.**

The Review team did not identify any analysis of the academic and logistical capacities that would support the successful improvement and interconnection between all levels of study programs including the professional programs opened in 2021-2022 on Management, Tourism and Hospitality. This particularly refers to the lack of analyses in the application for the study and professional programmes, lacking a valid market study on the areas where the new programmes operate. [Annex No.1, Standard III.1]

3.2 Study programmes offered by UCPV are full-time only [Annex Statute, Article 63]. Study programmes offer the possibility for students to pursue further studies and professional enhancement. International peer exchange has brought to self-evaluation mechanisms within the Institution from students and academic staff to help the improvement and further enhancement of the study programmes. Programmes are organized in accordance with the goals and mission of the institution [Annexes Statute; 6]. In the 2020-2025 Strategic Development Plan, UCPV envisioned the formation of qualified individuals through a qualitative education, integrated with valuable scientific research, use of the best achievements of science, as well as partnerships with the domestic and international labour market. [Annexes 21, 48, 49]. However, it seems there is no external evaluation at a national or international level based on institutional exchanges or projects' collaboration. In general, the review team found the international exchange of the academic staff very weak. In reference to Alumni, UCPV does not enable further qualification prospects for its alumni [M.7]. [Annex No.1, Standard III.2]

3.3 The orientation on the two-year professional programmes show that UCPV is attentive to the labour market study. However, the professional orientation of the University College is not included in the strategic development pillars of the Strategic Development Plan 2020-2025. Since some professional programmes curricula and the

development strategy have been prepared at the same period, it shows a weakness in the coordination at a management level regarding the future vision of the institution. It is recommended to review the Strategic Development Plan 2020-2025 in coherence with the programmes that UCPV is offering and the future vision of the institution. Additionally, the Strategic Development Plan should include only realistic objectives and not improbable or unfeasible ones. *[Annex No.1, Standard III.3]*

3.4 Proposals for new study programs or their revision are initiated at department level and sent to the relevant faculty for approval and are given final approval by the Academic Senate *[Annexes Rregullore KUPV article 37; 35; 38]*. In the additional evidences requested, the institution provided a full recruitment procedure administered in October 2022 *[Annex add. 12]*, although the staff recruited is not reflected in the additional evidences requested for the year 2022-2023 *[Annex add. 9]*. *[Annex No.1, Standard III.4]*

3.5 The capacity of UCPV in terms of infrastructure, staffing and finance are considered to fulfil basic academic needs of the institution, although there is no specific analysis on that. The institution is very small and inside a residential building, not creating an academic separation from city life, but also the number of students is very small. Distribution of teaching hours are conducted in line with departmental needs, based on the legal framework, taking into account the type of academic staff involved (part time/full time) *[Annexes add 8; 9]*. The teaching load includes lectures, seminars, exercises, laboratories and professional practices, defined for each discipline or formative activity in the curricula of the study program *[Annex 36]*. *[Annex No.1, Standard III.5; Standard III.6; Standard III.19]*

3.6 The content of study programmes, for example curricula and syllabi, are available to students and accessed by them easily in departments *[Annexes 40; 41]*. Admission requirements, including details of educational objectives, credit loads and other relevant information are described in the regulations and syllabi for each individual study programme *[Annexes Rregullore Departamenti Drejtesi dhe Shkenca Politike; Rregullore e ZKTSA; Rregullore Fakulteti i Ekonomise dhe Shkencave Shoqerore; Rregullore Fakulteti i Shkencave te Aplikuar; Rregullore KUPV; Rregullore NJBSC; Rregullore Programi Inxhinieri Informatike; Rregullore Programi MP dhe MSH; 42;]*. Short information about programmes, including policies and regulations on academic integrity, are approved by the Senate and published online [<https://unipavaresia.edu.al/programet-e-studimit>]. Students are informed about programmes by lecturers during the initial weeks of their course. The four first cycle programmes are intended to provide students with the basic knowledge, general analytical skills and specific abilities needed for employment or for progression to masters' level. *[Annex No.1, Standard III.7; Standard III.8]*

3.7 Second cycle study programmes include professional practice supported by agreements with other institutions such as state and private institutions, businesses and research institutions *[Annex 31]*. Professional Practice and thesis of students are conducted in collaboration with partners. Review team identified some examples of such practice involving partner institutions and associates in professional skills such as Municipality of Vlora and other private and businesses and public institutions *[Annexes 30; 31]*. The review

Team found that there is regular cooperation with these stakeholders. However, the review team was unable to identify any practice where such cooperation led to the change and/or improvement of an academic programme [M9]. [Annex No.1, Standard III.9]

3.8 UCPV has a general structure to promote continuous teaching improvement including support, monitoring and counselling structures for the improvement of teaching quality provided by the Internal Unit of Quality Assurance [Annex 10]. Such structure supports basic units to pursue the quality implementation of study programs, evaluate academic performance and support staff in their duties. The evaluation forms “follow-up” [Annex 21], the evaluation forms from the students [Annex 48] and the evaluation forms from the department responsible [Annex 49] are used and analysed to monitor the scientific research progress and quality of the programs and lecturing. **During the visit, the Review team could not establish the clear frequency of these evaluations forms and the follow up on the findings [M1; M4]. [Annex No.1, Standard III.10]**

3.9 The Institution aims to improve study programmes, but **the Review Team did not find any recent evidence of that [Annex 47].** The review team identify a weakness in the **fact that the majority of academic staff are not involved in research and mobility resulting in low international profile of programmes and low mobility of staff.** The review team therefore **recommends** stimulating academic staff mobility and increase as well exchanges with external stakeholders to improve the study programs [M7; M9]. **[Annex No.1, Standard III.11; Standard III.12]**

3.10 Study programmes are aligned to the Bologna process and evaluated in credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System [ECTS], credits earned at UCPV and abroad are recognised in the Regulations [Annex 50]. Students may transfer their studies to UCPV, as well as credits earned in programmes of the same cycle in Albania and abroad, in the same or similar fields, in line with their respective studies. The graduation process is completed with the diploma, after the student successfully concludes all exams provided for in the study program [Annex Rregullore KUPV, articles 52, 53, 54]. The diploma supplement of all UCPV study programs is prepared and expressed in two languages, Albanian and English [Annex 53]. **Two study programmes did not comply with Albanian legislation in higher education and this has brought to the suspension of activities based on Order of the Ministry of Education and Sport no. 275, date 19.05.2022. It was affirmed during the visit, that after that decision of the MES, a general meeting was held with the staff, conducting to an assessment of the situation and an action plan to repair the situation. A working group was set up. The structure was changed and departments were filled with missing staff. Students were provided with a certificate of deregistration. Nevertheless, despite the insistence of the review team, we were not told of the causes of such breach [M5; M8]. [Annex No.1, Standard III.13; Standard III.18]**

3.11 The integration of practical application and theoretical knowledge within study programmes is achieved through case studies, laboratory work, practical assignments and projects, professional practice and the final thesis [Annexes 36; 39]. The study programmes have a normal distribution among the academic activities. Theoretical and practical

knowledge, enabling students to apply the knowledge and skills gained in theoretical modules, also based on the competences acquired by students in each study programme. The study programmes are designed according to the level and specific area of study. Internships provide additional opportunities to develop employment-related skills and to establish useful contacts. The Review Team found that students' employment rate, according to UCPV, was very high, over 90% [M3]. Despite programs that UCPV has declared to be part, such as Erasmus +, **there is no evidence of student mobility [M5].** [*Annex No.1, Standard III.14; Standard III.15; Standard III.16; Standard III.17*]

3.12 UCPV has in its structure a specialized computer laboratory with a capacity of 30 places, as well as an architecture laboratory with a capacity of 40 places. The IT office is responsible for their maintenance. The library has in its collection over 581 book titles in Albanian, and over 3092 in foreign languages, where over 2975 titles are in English (texts, monographs, manuals, dictionaries, encyclopaedias) [SER p.37]. UCPV has created five libraries following the idea to have the library closer to the student. **Nevertheless, during the site visit, the review team learned that only around 50% of the compulsory texts in the syllabuses are present in the library [M5].** The review team also randomly sampled a number of syllabi to assess whether the compulsory books were present in the library, and was not able to find them. Therefore, the Review Team recommend that all compulsory texts should be present in the library. [*Annex No.1, Standard III.20; Standard III.21*]

Findings

Good practice

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

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- Lack of a structured analysis of the academic and logistical capacities that would support the successful improvement and interconnection between all levels of study programs including the professional programs. [*Annex No.1, / Standard III.1*]
- Lack of a valid market study in the areas where the new programmes operate. [*Annex No.1, / Standard III.1; Standard III.3*]
- The Strategic Development Plan 2020-2025 is not realistic and shows lack of vision for the future of UCPV. [*Annex No.1, Standard III.3*]
- The international exchanges of the academic staff are very weak. [*Annex No.1, / Standard III.2; Standard III.11; Standard III.12*]
- The infrastructure of the Institution is not suitable for a HEI. [*Annex No.1, / Standard III.5; Standard III.6; Standard III.19*]

- The library does not offer a full coverage of the basic texts of the study programs. **[Annex No.1, / Standard III.20; Standard III.21]**

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendations:

- UCPV should analyse its academic and logistical capacities to assess the successful improvement and interconnection between all levels of study programs including the professional programs. **[Annex No.1, / Standard III.1]**
- UCPV should prepare a valid market study on the areas where new and existing programmes operate. **[Annex No.1, / Standard III.1; Standard III.3]**
- UCPV should improve the Strategic Development Plan 2020-2025 making it more proportional to the dimensions and vision of the institution. **[Annex No.1, / Standard III.3]**
- UCPV should stimulate academic staff mobility and increase exchanges with external stakeholders to improve their study programs. **[Annex No.1, / Standard III.2; Standard III.11; Standard III.12]**
- The infrastructure of the Institution is not appropriate for a HEI, so it is recommended to UCPV to adapt it more to the academic needs of the students including those with physical inabilities. **[Annex No.1, / Standard III.5; Standard III.6; Standard III.19]**
- Library should - at the very least - provide access to all the mandatory texts for each module. **[Annex No.1, / Standard III.20; Standard III.21]**

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following actions already in progress:

- After the suspension of activities based on Order of the Ministry of Education and Sport no. 275, date 19.05.2022, a working group was set up bringing to the change of the structure of the UCPV and departments were filled with missing staff. Students were provided with a certificate of deregistration. **[Annex No.1, / Standard III.13; Standard III.18]**

Judgement

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

Evaluation Area 4: Scientific/Artistic Activity and Innovation

4.1 UCPV has settled its research priorities in the Scientific Research Strategy 2017 – 2022 [Annex 55]. The document was drawn up based on the scientific priorities fixed by the different departments where as an example is evidenced the Scientific Research Plan of the Informatics Department at FSHA [Annex 56]. The Institution has declared to have a “Scientific Research Plan” at department level in accordance with Article 45 of the UCPV Statute, **but this could not confirmed during the visit** [M7]. The research mission and objectives of the Scientific Research Strategy 2017 – 2022 were clearly laid out, **but the Review Team concludes that the mission and subsequent objectives were not achieved. As well, during the visit there were no affirmations of actions being taken to renew this Strategy. It is recommended that UCPV renews its Scientific and Research Strategy, identify achievable objectives, and work to meet them.** [Annex No.1, Standard IV.1; Standard IV.2; Standard IV.7; Standard IV.12; Standard IV. 15]

4.2 The institution states that it encourages the development and dynamism of scientific activities, through participation in international projects, mentioning the Enchase project, the TEAVET project and recently the EntrAL project [Annexes 32; 33]. **The Review Team could not identify the impact of the participation in these projects for the institution in general and the concrete scientific activity** [M5; M7]. The impression is that in the institution there is no effective scientific research and production activity, neither at an institutional level, nor at an individual one. Evidences in this field are limited and formal. [Annex No.1, Standard IV.3; Standard IV.5; Standard IV.6]

4.3 UCPV has two research centres configured as basic units, in its organizational chart, one centre for each main unit, respectively, the Research Centre of Social Sciences at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences and the Research Centre of Applied Sciences at the Faculty of Applied Sciences. Each centre has in its composition seven members [Annex add. 8]. **However, during the visit, there was no clarity on the staff division between Research Centres and Departments, as well as on Research Centres’ activity and products** [M7]. The Review Team concludes that the two Research Centres existence is merely formal, having no scientific profile or activity and the low number of evidences, beside Regulations, supports these affirmations [Annex 57]. [Annex No.1, Standard IV.4; Standard IV. 16]

4.4 The scientific journal of UCPV, “Pavarësia”, is the main internal source for publishing scientific papers, **although the last publication is in November 2019** [Annex 3]. The interruption was justified due to the arrival of the pandemic Covid19 [M7]. There were no other relevant evidences of participation of academic staff and students in national and international conference activities with its partners. In the SER, it is claimed that UCPV organizes open lectures, scientific activities, scientific conferences, youth conferences with the participation of academic staff and students, **but this was not confirmed from students**

during the visit [M4]. At the academic staff level, last scientific conference organised at the institutional level is in collaboration with AAB university in 2018 [Annex 4]. [Annex No.1, Standard IV.8; Standard IV.9]

4.5 For the evaluation of the articles published in the scientific journal “Pavarësia”, there is an Editorial Board, established by the Academic Senate with decision no. 28/2017 [Annex 61]. **This latter Senate decision has formal problems, having a regular stamp, but not the Rector’s signature.** To guarantee the integrity of the scientific work, the institution has at the disposal of the academic staff two workstations in which the Plagiarism Checker X program is installed [Annex add. 14], which serves for the authenticity of the diplomas of the Master of Science cycle and for the evaluation of scientific articles. **During the visit not all the administrative and academic staff were aware of this platform, showing that the system is used randomly, if at all [M5; M7]. In addition, the Review Team recommends to set up effectively the Ethics Council conform article 23 of the Statute.** Although the institution affirms this council has been set up and operates in the institution [SER 40], there is no evidence of this activity. [Annex No.1, Standard IV.10; Standard IV. 17]

4.6 Academic staff and students of UCPV can publish free of charge in the Scientific Journal of the Institution [Annex 22]. In general, the academic staff has an annual obligation to participate in two scientific conferences and publish two articles in scientific journals with ISSN code or impact factor. **The Review Team found that this internal obligation has not been effective [M7].** Regarding external collaborations, the internationalization of research is aimed to be done through the conclusion of partnership agreements with foreign HEIs [Annexes 31; 54]. **However, the Review Team, from evidences and the visit, could not assess if there are effective collaborations, concluding that these collaborations are mostly on paper [Annex 31] without supporting documents, or older in time [Annex 54]. [Annex No.1, Standard IV.11]**

4.7 UCPV policies aim to engage invited lecturers, personalities, high officials of state administration, or foreign lecturers as guest lecturers for the development of the teaching process [SER p.41]. However, **evidences have not supported this and the Review Team confirmed during the visit that there is no structured activity in this direction [M4].**

UCPV claimed that it was part of the project “ENCHASE” - Enhancing Albanian System of Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Application of the Process and Outcome-based Methodology”, from October 2013 to December 2016. This project has provided mobility of academic staff and UCPV students through training provided and summer school at the University of Koblenz. **This initiative is not supported by evidences.** UCPV was also part of the project: “TEAVET: Developing teacher competencies for a comprehensive VET system in Albania”, from October 2017 to December 2020 [Annex 32]. Currently UCPV is part of the project: “EntrAL: Entrepreneurial skills for a modern education in Albania”, which started in January 2021 and will end in January 2024 [Annex 33]. UCPV staff and students are continuously informed about the calls for applications in these projects via electronic means, informative meetings as well as posters posted in the HEI premises. **However, the review Team found that there is in general very weak response to these**

calls. At the same time, the Review Team found no positive response to questions about staff or students' mobility during its visit at UCPV [M3; M4; M7]. [Annex No.1, Standard IV.13; Standard IV.14]

Findings

Good practice

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

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- The Scientific Research Strategy 2017 – 2022 has expired and its objectives have not been achieved *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.3; Standard IV.5; Standard IV.6]*
- The institution has no effective scientific research and production activity, neither at an institutional level, nor at an individual one. *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.3; Standard IV.5; Standard IV.6]*
- The two Research Centres' existence is merely formal, having no scientific profile or research activity *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.4]*
- UCPV has no effective mechanisms to check and support scientific production of research activities *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.10]*
- UCPV does not implement staff's annual obligations in the field of research consisting in participating in two scientific conferences and publish two articles in scientific journals with ISSN code or impact factor. *[Annex No.1, /Standard IV.11; Standard IV.13]*
- There is no structured activity in inviting foreign lecturers as guest lecturers for the development of the teaching process *[Annex No.1, /Standard IV.13; Standard IV.14]*
- Staff and students' mobility is very weak or inexistent *[Annex No.1, /Standard IV.13; Standard IV.14]*

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendations:

- UCPV should renew its Scientific Research Strategy and pursue effectively its objectives. *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.3; Standard IV.5; Standard IV.6]*
- UCPV should increase and structure its scientific research and production activity. *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.3; Standard IV.5; Standard IV.6]*
- Research Centres should be effective and contribute to research activity. *[Annex No.1, / Standard IV.4]*
- Antiplagiarism mechanisms and the Ethics Council should be put in place and used regularly to guarantee research integrity. *[Annex No.1, /; Standard IV.10]*

- UCPV should monitor regularly scientific and research activity of the academic staff. *[Annex No.1, /Standard IV.11; Standard IV.13]*
- UCPV should invite foreign and local external lecturers as guest lecturers to improve and diversify the teaching process. *[Annex No.1, /Standard IV.13; Standard IV.14]*
- Staff and students' mobility should be increased. *[Annex No.1, /Standard IV.13; Standard IV.14]*

Affirmation of action being taken

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

Judgement

The standards for Scientific/Artistic Activity and Innovation are: not met.

Evaluation Area 5: Students and their Support

5.1 UCPV has structures, policies and a procedure in place for admission of new students based on the legal framework in force and criteria from the basic units approved by the senate [Annex 66]. The activities cover student recruitment and induction for organizing advisory meetings, media campaigns, and career orientation days for high school graduates and orientation days for new students [Annex 40]. UCPV also uses outreach meetings, including at high schools and media campaigns to recruit students. The criteria for admission, registration and rules are also defined in the Regulation of each study programme [Rregullore Departamenti Drejtesi dhe Shkenca Politike; Rregullore Fakulteti i Ekonomise dhe Shkencave Shoqerore; Rregullore Fakulteti i Shkencave te Aplikuara; Rregullore Programi Inxhinieri Informatike; Rregullore Programi MP dhe MSH]. UCPV is open to foreign student recruitment, but due to the lack of foreign language programmes, it is effectively not possible. The teaching secretariat is responsible for the registration of students and studies transfer. The students confirmed [M3; M4] that they were informed about the academic activities and obligations. [Annex No.1, Standard V.1]

5.2 Due to the small size of UCPV, every lecturer has direct contact with students based on general needs and the course taught. Students are oriented from lecturers for the necessary literature since the first class hour of every study program is dedicated to orienting students regarding their rights and obligations. The Career, Student Tutoring and Alumni Office advises and orients students on next career steps. This office has the task to offer information and advice to students regarding job offers from different companies. However, all the Master level students we met were already employed [M4]. UCPV keeps personal files of each student stored by Academic Secretaries of each faculty. Addresses, e-mail and telephone numbers of UCPV students are stored at the Secretaries of the HEI, and are included in the databases of the faculty [Annex 66]. **The Review Team had a visit in the Secretariat office and checked registers finding in some cases information missing, out of which the most relevant were the missing ID numbers of some students. Considering that only one person covers all student services and documentation, the Review Team considers opportune more human support to the secretariat office.** [Annex No.1, Standard V.2; Standard V.3]

5.3 The limited number of students and small dimensions of the institution facilitates the direct communication in relation to the activities of the institution. UCPV Students have their representatives in the collegial bodies such as the Academic Senate. The Student Council can address eventual issues encountered by students during their studies at the competent bodies of the university, and in cooperation with the UCPV structures, has organized open lectures, information sessions, simulation trials, training related to entrepreneurship, have become part of field research surveys, etc. [Annex 68]. **However, the Review Team found that the activities reported were organized before the pandemic or are not evidence based. In addition, during the visit, no ongoing or recent initiative was reported, meaning that the**

institutional life in relation to students' life is weak. [M3; M4] [Annex No.1, Standard V.4]

5.4 UCPV offers no specialization or practice on career counselling, information on jobs, on professional practice, trainings and workshops, probably because a large majority of the students are already employed [M4]. The Career, Student Tutoring and Alumni Office carry out orientation and student counselling [Annex 40]. It informs students on employment opportunities when necessary or requested. The office, the university claimed, has brochures available for students advising and guiding them towards the labour market. (Brochure). **The Review Team recommends the Career, Student Tutoring and Alumni Office drafts a career guide as a basic document to orientate students.** The Career, Student Tutoring and Alumni Office is available for students of both cycles of study offered by the institution to support and inform them during their studies. In addition, departments provide support for students regarding educational practice periods and guidance on development of diploma thesis for each cycle. On students' employment, UCPV has no particular activity due to the large number of students already employed. *[Annex No.1, Standard V.5, Standard V.8]*

5.5 UCPV declares to pursue a policy of support based on scholarship award for students with disabilities, certain social categories such as Roma and Egyptians, excellence students, or students who have suffered domestic or collective tragedies [Annex 71]. **However, the Review Team did not find any evidenced based document, statistics or database on the scholarship awards.** During the meeting one student confirmed having 50% scholarship award [M3]. *[Annex No.1, Standard V.6]*

5.6 The institution reports a library fund of over 581 titles of books in Albanian and more than 3092 in foreign languages, out of which 2975 in English (textbooks, monographs, dictionaries, encyclopaedias). These titles represent all disciplines that the two faculties of UCPV cover and **an even a larger spectre, such as, for example, health or medicine books, which do not bring any added value regarding the courses taught there.** During the meetings, students and academic staff confirmed **it is difficult to have some basic texts especially in foreign language.** Therefore, **it was confirmed many students work with pdf books or simply the presentation slides prepared by professors, even at the master level [M3; M4; M7].** The library stays open 10 hours every day except Sunday. Students can print or photocopy the relevant materials. To ensure coverage of all disciplines, UCPV declares cooperation with the National Library of Vlora branch Library and with the Library of the University of Vlora. **However, this cooperation is not evidenced and in the SER a wrong evidence is referred. Thus, the Review Team, concludes the UCPV library does not have the necessary fund for normal academic life and this should be improved.** *[Annex No.1, Standard V.7]*

5.7 Due to the small size of the University College, but relatively also of the city, the institution has a network of alumni students, thus referring to the group of people who graduated from this College. UCPV has shown to keep in touch with some of the graduates, since some of them were present at the respective meeting [M9]. **However, a database is**

missing and the Review Team could not affirm if there is an effective network or there are only sporadic contacts with some of them. Likewise, no particular alumni activity has been evidenced. *[Annex No.1, Standard V.9]*

Findings

Good practice

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

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- UCPV does not always have the correct or complete information about students' data *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.2; Standard V.3]*
- Institutional support for student life, beside lessons, is very poor. *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.4]*
- The library fund does not cover students' need, with impact on teaching and learning quality *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.7]*
- The institution does not have a structured policy towards alumni engagement. *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.9].*

Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendations:

- The institution should have more human support to the secretariat office. *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.2; Standard V.3]*
- The institution should increase academic and extra-curricular opportunities for students, such as open lectures, information sessions, simulation trials, trainings, field research surveys, etc. *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.4]*
- The Career, Student Tutoring and Alumni Office should draft a career guide as a basic document to orientate students. *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.5, Standard V.8]*
- The institution should increase sources of texts access for students. *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.7]*
- UCPV should build a database for its alumni students and organise useful activities for the academic life and development. *[Annex No.1, / Standard V.9]*

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team did not identify any actions already in progress:

Judgement

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

List of Evidences

A. List of evidences (self-evaluation phase)

1. Vetedeklarimi i dokumentacionit te KUPV.pdf
2. Raport i Vetevleresimit per Akreditimin Institucional.pdf
3. SER for Institutional Review.pdf
4. Statuti KUPV.pdf
5. Rregullore Departamenti Drejtesi dhe Shkenca Politike.pdf
6. Rregullore e ZK TSA.pdf
7. Rregullore Fakulteti i Ekonomise dhe Shkencave Shoqerore.pdf
8. Rregullore Fakulteti i Shkencave te Aplikuara.pdf
9. Rregullore KUPV.pdf
10. Rregullore NJBSC.pdf
11. Rregullore Programi Inxhinieri Informatike.pdf
12. Rregullore Programi MP dhe MSH.pdf
13. Vendim per Akreditimin Institucional 2017.pdf
14. Vendim Rektorati i KUPV per ngritjen e GVI.pdf
15. Revista shkencore Pavaresia Scientific Journal ISSN 2304-2664.pdf
16. Conference Proceeding Book. Konferenca me Kolegjin AAB.pdf
17. Relacion per procesin zgjedhor.pdf
18. Plani i Zhvillimit Strategjik 2020-2025.pdf
19. Raporti vjetor i institucionit 2020-2021.pdf
20. Vendim Senati per perberjen e stafit te NJBSC.pdf
21. Urdher dekani per ngritjen e grupeve te punes per hartimin e RVB.pdf
22. Plan vjetor pune NJBSC.pdf
23. Organigrama e KUPV.pdf
24. Dokumentat e nje procedure rekrutimi.pdf
25. Formular aplikimi per pune.pdf
26. Shembull kontrate pune.pdf
27. Lista e stafit akademik te jashtem dhe te ftuar per vitin akademik 2021-2022.pdf
28. CV stafi akademik.pdf
29. Shembull Raporti i kerkimit shkencor.pdf
30. Relacion aktiviteti.pdf
31. Aktivitet Panairi i Punes.pdf
32. Formulari Follow Up.pdf
33. Shkrese per perjashtimin e stafit akademik te KUPV nga pagesa e botimit ne Revisten Shkencore Pavaresia.pdf
34. Dokumentacioni lidhur me pasurite me qira ne administrim te KUPV.pdf
35. Relacion teknik.pdf
36. Plani i masave gjate pandemise.pdf
37. Leja Higjeno Sanitare.pdf
38. Poster aktiviteti.pdf
39. Bilanci per vitin 2020.pdf
40. Raport auditi.pdf

41. Marreveshje bashkepunimi me AKPA Vlore.pdf
42. Lista e marreveshjeve te bashkepunimit.pdf
43. Raport i projektit TEAVET.pdf
44. Mandati i projektit EntrAL.pdf
45. Formular Alumni.pdf
46. Urdher hapje programi te ri nga MAS.pdf
47. Lista e programeve te studimit.pdf
48. Vendim Senati apo shkrese per kuotat dhe per kriteret shtese per regjistrimin e studenteve ne ciklin e pare dhe te dyte.pdf
49. Propozim hapje programi.pdf
50. Shembull programi mesimor.pdf
51. Shkresa per javen e informimit.pdf
52. Shembull syllabus.pdf
53. Shembull dosje praktike.pdf
54. Shembull RVB program studimi.pdf
55. Shembull dosje transferimi.pdf
56. Certifikimi EIPASS.pdf
57. Ekspozita Momentum.pdf
58. Vendim Senati per ndryshim kurrikule.pdf
59. Formular vleresimi per pedagogun.pdf
60. Formular vleresimi per lektorin nga Pergjegjesi i departamentit.pdf
61. Shembull kurrikule.pdf
62. Manuali i punimit te diplomes.pdf
63. Shembull vizite mesimore.pdf
64. Supplement Diplome.pdf
65. Marreveshje bashkepunimi me Kolegjin AAB.pdf
66. Strategjia e Kerkimit Shkencor 2017-2022.pdf
67. Plani i kerkimit shkencor te Departamentit te Inxhinierise Informatike.pdf
68. Rregullore Qender Kerkimi.pdf
69. Politikat e kerkimit shkencor.pdf
70. Aktivitet ne rang fakulteti.pdf
71. Proceedings te Konferences Studentore.pdf
72. Lista e anetareve te Bordit Editorial miratuar me VSA.pdf
73. Poster leksion i hapur me lektore te huaj.pdf
74. Newsletter nga projekti EntrAL.pdf
75. Broshure informimi.pdf
76. Relacion tutorimi.pdf
77. Shembull dosje studenti.pdf
78. Databaze me te dhena studentesh.pdf
79. Relacion aktiviteti Esse Competition.pdf
80. Relacion per zgjedhjet e Unionit Studentor.pdf
81. Vendim Senati per studentet nga shtresat ne nevoje.pdf
82. Aktiviteti mbi kampionatin e shahut.pdf
83. Aktiviteti mbi Eco Marketing.pdf

84. Statute of UCPV.pdf
85. Decision on Institutional Accreditation 2017.pdf
86. Decision of the Rectorate of KUPV for the establishment of SEG.pdf
87. Pavaresia Scientific Journal ISSN 2304-2664.pdf
88. Conference Proceeding Book. Conference with AAB College.pdf
89. Strategic Development Plan 2020-2025.pdf
90. Annual Report of the Institution 2020-2021.pdf
91. Senate decision on the composition of the IQAU staff.pdf
92. Dean's order for the establishment of working groups for the drafting of the IER.pdf
93. Annual work plan IQAU.pdf
94. UCPV Organigram.pdf
95. Documents of a recruitment procedure.pdf
96. Job application form.pdf
97. Work contract example.pdf
98. List of external and invited academic staff for the academic year 2021-2022.pdf
99. CV academic staff.pdf
100. Example Scientific research report.pdf
101. Activity report.pdf
102. Job Fair Activity.pdf
103. Follow Up Form.pdf
104. Letter on the exclusion of the academic staff of UCPV from the payment of the publication in the Scientific Journal Pavaresia.pdf
105. Documentatic n related to leased assets under the administration of UCPV.pdf
106. Technical Relation.pdf
107. The plan of measures during the pandemic.pdf
108. Sanitary Hygiene Permit.pdf
109. Poster activity.pdf
110. Balance sheet for 2020.pdf
111. Audit report.pdf
112. Cooperation Agreement with AKPA Vlore.pdf
113. List of cooperation agreements.pdf
114. Report of TEAVET Project.pdf
115. EntrAL Project Mandate.pdf
116. Alumni Form.pdf
117. Order opening of a new program MAS.pdf
118. List of study programs.pdf
119. Senate decision or letter on quotas and additional criteria for student registration in the first and second cycle.pdf
120. Program opening proposal.pdf
121. Program study example.pdf
122. Information week report.pdf
123. Syllabuses examples.pdf
124. Example of students practice file.pdf
125. Example of Periodic Self Evaluation Report of study program.pdf

126. Example transfer file.pdf
127. EIPASS Certification.pdf
128. Momentum Exhibition.pdf
129. Senate decision for curriculum change.pdf
130. Evaluation form for the lecturer.pdf
131. Evaluation form for the lecturer by the Head of the department.pdf
132. Curricula example.pdf
133. Diploma thesis manual.pdf
134. Example of educational visit.pdf
135. Diploma Supplement.pdf
136. Cooperation Agreement with College AAB.pdf
137. Scientific Research Strategy 2017-2022.pdf
138. Research plan of the Department of Computer Engineering.pdf
139. Research Center Regulation.pdf
140. Scientific Research Policies.pdf
141. Activity at the faculty level.pdf
142. Proceedings of Student Conference.pdf
143. List of Editorial Board members approved by ASD.pdf
144. Open lecture with foreign lecturers.pdf
145. Newsletter from EntrAL project.pdf
146. Information brochure.pdf
147. Tutoring report.pdf
148. Example student file.pdf
149. Student Database.pdf
150. Activity Report Essay Competition.pdf
151. Report on the Student Union elections.pdf
152. Senate decision for students from needy strata.pdf
153. Chess Tournament Activity.pdf
154. Eco Marketing activity.pdf

B. List of evidences provided during the visit

1. Vendim i Senatit Akademik per miratimin e kategorive te bursave.pdf
2. Minutat e Mbledhjes se Dhjetorit te Senatit Akademik.pdf
3. Minutat e mbledhjes se fundit te realizuar ne rang departamenti.pdf
4. Raporti Vjetor te fundit, te hartuar nga NJBSC.pdf
5. Model Pyetesori per studentet per vitin akademik 2019-2020.pdf
8. Stafin akademik te institucionit, me kohe te plote dhe te pjesshme nga viti 2018-2022.pdf
9. Stafi akademik sipas departamenteve per vitin akademik 2020-2021,2021-2022 dhe 2022-2023.pdf
10. Orari mesimor te miratuar per semestrin e pare te ketij viti akademik.pdf
11. Minutat e nje mbledhje te realizuar ne kuader te diskutimit pas daljes se urdherit te MAS per pezullimin e regjistrimit te studenteve me kohe te caktuar.pdf
12. Procedura e rekrutimit te stafit akademik per vitin 2022-2023.pdf

13. Marreveshja me laboratorin e turizmit.pdf
14. Evidence per sistemin antiplagjiature.pdf
15. Komunikimi shkresor me QSHA per studentet te pa pajisur NIM.pdf

C. Meetings held during the visit

- BM1: Review team meet with the Institutional Coordinator.
- BM2: Review Team meet with the Rector.
- BM3: Review team meet with a sample of first-cycle students.
- BM4: Review team meet with a sample of second-cycle students.
- BM5: Review team meet with a sample of support/administrative staff.
- BM6: Review team meet with the Institutional Coordinator. BM7: Review team meet with a sample of teaching staff.
- BM8: Review team meet with senior university managers.
- BM9: Review team meet with external partners and alumni.
- BM10: Review team meet with meet representatives of the Internal quality assurance unit
- BM11: Review team meet with the Self-evaluation team.
- BM12: Review Team meet with the Rector to summarize the major lines of enquiry and related matters pursued during the review.