



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

**Report of University College Beder**  
June 2017

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## Contents

About this review.....	1
The context of this review .....	2
Summary report .....	3
Summary of findings .....	6
Detailed report .....	7
Evaluation Area 1: The Organisation and its Management.....	7
Evaluation Area 2: Resourcing.....	11
Evaluation Area 3: The Curriculum.....	15
Evaluation Area 4: Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research .....	18
Evaluation Area 5: Students and their Support.....	24
Evidence list.....	28

## About this review

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

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

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

The review team referred to the APAAL Handbook 2016-17, the self-evaluation report, a range of pertinent documents in the evidence base, the further requested evidence and meetings held with various staff, students and stakeholders

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

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

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

## **The context of this review**

University College Beder (UCB) was opened in April 2011 upon the request of the Muslim Community of Albania and under the decision of the Council of Ministers No. 286, dated 06.04.2011, granting the license to operate as an institution of higher education. UCB is an institution in the field of higher education which operates as a non-profit organisation. The accreditation of the institution and all of its study programmes reflects the quality and standards of UCB. It offers study programmes in the field of humanities and social sciences in the context of a distinctive profile in the Albanian and international market of the higher education.

The aim of UCB is to provide academic and institutional quality, which defines the operational vision of the institution for a target student number of between 1,250 to 1500 students in all the programmes of study of its first and second cycles, bachelor's and master's provision. The goal of the UCB is the creation and consolidation of an international profile. During the six years of its activity, the Institution has accepted students from all Albanian-speaking territories in the region and in the Diaspora, as well as from European countries and beyond. The national range of incoming students has grown steadily over the six years and now includes students from 16 countries. In addition, the composition of the academic staff reflects the international aspirations of the institution, which is continually strengthened through new and established collaborations with other universities and companies in many countries. In the last six years of its activity, 621 students have benefited from discount tuition fees. UCB has organised numerous national and international conferences, and open seminars and workshops, which provide a contribution to science and society.

## Summary report

UCB is a private not for profit institution with facilities located in Tirana. It offers first cycle and second cycle programmes in Albanian, Turkish and English. Two faculties make up the University: the Faculty of Philology and Education and the Faculty of Humanities. Its mission is to prepare qualified individuals through a philosophy of education which is based in universal values, and to support scientific research aiming to realise the ideas and projects that affect the improvement of life of human and society. It does this through six departments and two research centres in the fields of English Language and Literature, Turkish Language and Literature, Education, Law, Communication, and Islamic Sciences. In 2016-17 UCB had 745 students enrolled on full-time study programmes.

A self-evaluation report (SER) was developed by a team of six people at the University, which included senior managers, academic staff, support staff and a student representative. The official format was distributed college-wide and completed. Then when responses were received, each member was assigned a specific area of responsibility. They identified gaps, then requested more information as appropriate. The student representative was involved throughout and chairs of department discussed drafts with their staff and students. The final draft went to the Rector for approval. The quality of the self-evaluation report was adequate but had a few issues. The English was sometimes difficult to understand and statements were sometimes not fully referenced, but UCB supplied additional evidence when requested in good time, which helped the review team.

The visit took place over two days on 12 and 13 June 2017. The review team was made up of two senior higher education reviewers from the United Kingdom and one experienced higher education member of staff from an Albanian institution. The review team was supported by the Review Manager and a note-taker provided by the Albanian Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (APAAL). The review team received a self-evaluation report and the portfolio of supporting evidence eight weeks in advance of the review visit, later supplemented by additional documentation requested before and at the review visit. In all, some 176 documents enabled the team to familiarise themselves with the structure, policies, management procedures and nature of teaching and research activity undertaken by UCB. Evidence included the Statute of UCB, academic regulations, annual reports, admission and orientation procedures, lists of external agreements and memoranda, examples of programme information and evidence of deliberative meetings.

The review team met senior managers, students, lecturers, administrative and support staff, as well as external partners, employers and alumni during the review visit. Discussion supported the clarification of procedures, responsibilities and viewpoints. Notes were taken at all meetings by both United Kingdom and Albanian participants. As part of a tour of the campus the review team viewed the library, teaching areas, social areas and offices, and saw a demonstration of the University's online and electronic information systems. The UCB provided translation for all of the meetings.

The Standards for the Organisation and its Management are substantially met. One standard is not fully met, **Chapter III Standard III.4**, but this does not present any serious risks to the management of the area. UCB works in accordance with its statute and regulations and regularly improves them. It is efficiently managed through its governing bodies, such as the Administrative Board, Academic Senate and faculty councils, in which staff engage in constructive debate to facilitate decisionmaking. UCB has constructed a developmental strategy. It is particularly aware of its quality assurance responsibilities for which it has established an Internal Quality Assurance Unit and a new Permanent Commission for the Guarantee of the Institutional and Study Programmes Quality Standards. It assembles a thorough annual monitoring report which it makes available to all staff and students and submits to the Ministry of Education and Sport. UCB is well-organised and has appropriate

structures to carry out its mission to deliver quality education to first cycle and second cycle students through its six departments within two faculties. UCB collaborates with partners locally, nationally and internationally to the benefit of its staff and students. International staff and students also attend UCB. The absence of a written integration policy for foreign staff and students is a weakness. The review team recommends for attention in the near future that UCB write and implement an integration policy for foreign staff and students.

The Standards for Resourcing are fully met. Although the review team did not identify any features of good practice, it also did not identify any weaknesses. UCB manages its human resources well. It openly recruits staff through a transparent advertising policy. It integrates its academic scientific and administrative staff, all of whom are aware of their responsibilities, at the beginning of every year. It has a specific regulation for the evaluation of the academic staff. UCB manages its finances effectively by drafting its budget in accordance with procedures defined by law and adapted to its own internal bottom-up process, which is then distributed downward by the High Council. UCB has a good information management system, Beder Information System (BIS) through which it effectively manages its operations. It manages its real estate well and stores its archive in line with its internal regulation. UCB has an adequate and contemporary infrastructure for the development of its activity. It possesses full documentation of its academic activity in hard copy and electronic form.

The Standards for the Curriculum are fully met. Although the review team did not identify any features of good practice, it also did not identify any weaknesses. UCB clearly offers study programmes in accordance with its mission and capacities, although it does not offer opportunities for constant qualification. The study programmes are just as clearly offered in line with its developmental strategy with local, national, (particularly law) and international (particularly Turkish) trends. The programmes are clearly defined and offered well within the capacities, both human and physical, of the Institution. First-cycle programmes provide students with basic knowledge and not only are they drafted to help students acclimatise to the institution, but UCB staff, including the Dean of Students, also help with that acclimatisation. Second-cycle programmes rely on research active staff and collaborative partner input. UCB owns statistical data for its graduates and 87 percent of them are employed. It has designed its programmes according to the Bologna process to provide opportunities for student mobility in Europe. UCB's study programmes blend theoretical and practical work, which prepares students for employment.

The Standards for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are substantially met. One standard is not fully met, **Chapter II Standard I.8**, but this does not present any serious risks to the management of the area. All elements of student study programmes are effectively organised and applied, including those involving placement and internship, and UCB awards a diploma to students who have passed all elements. UCB ensures that all study programmes are continuously improved under the oversight of its Internal Quality Assurance Unit and its new Permanent Commission for the Guarantee of the Institutional and Study Programmes Quality Standards. It has a clear policy to improve teaching through staff appraisal and training programmes. UCB highlights and supports its scientific research through its departments and research centres. Its success at research development and internationalisation, although limited, is adequate for an institution which does not deliver third cycle education. UCB states its research priorities in its Strategic Plan, but they are general and do not list specific outcomes. They are, however, applied through its departments and research centres and there is some continuity of research. UCB publicises its scientific research outcomes, but it does not adequately evaluate them. Essential evaluation mechanisms are not currently functioning for scientific conferences, grants and research projects, which is a weakness. The review team therefore recommends for immediate attention that UCB take steps to strengthen the evaluation of its scientific

research by fully implementing its intended guide on the preparation of scientific conferences and its new Permanent Commission on Research, Projects, Applications and Innovation.

The Standards for Students and their Support are fully met. UCB pursues the correct policy for new students' entrance. It informs and communicates with its staff and students effectively through face-to-face meetings, email, social media, and its website. It has appropriate structures in place to mentor and guide students through their study programmes, including through its support services and individual academic advisers. It provides the basic literature, in hard copy and electronic formats, for student needs, and its Student Guide, which ensures that students have easily accessible and detailed information in one place about their study programmes and all other aspects of student life at the University, is a feature of good practice. It supports students from different social categories, including those with disabilities. UCB encourages students to participate in institutional life through the Student Council and student representation on its governing bodies. It assures the cultural and sports quality of student life in a limited way. It significantly assists students' transition into employment with its dedicated Office of Career Planning and its numerous collaborative agreements with local institutions.

The review team concludes that the Quality Standards are fully met in three areas and substantially met in two areas.



## Summary of findings

### Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- UCB's Student Guide, which ensures that students have easily accessible and detailed information in one place about their study programmes and all other aspects of student life at the University (paragraph 5.3; **Chapter I Standard III.3**).

### Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- the absence of a written integration policy for foreign staff and students (paragraph 1.11; **Chapter III Standard III.4**)
- essential evaluation mechanisms are not currently functioning for scientific conferences, grants and research projects (paragraph 4.12; **Chapter II Standard I.8**).

### Recommendations

The review team makes the following recommendations:

- for attention in the near future that UCB write and implement an integration policy for foreign staff and students (paragraph 1.11; **Chapter III Standard III.4**)
- for immediate attention that UCB take steps to strengthen the evaluation of its scientific research by fully implementing its intended guide on the preparation of scientific conferences and its new Permanent Commission on Research, Projects, Applications and Innovation (paragraph 4.12; **Chapter II Standard I.8**).

### Affirmation of action being taken

The review team did not make any affirmations.

### Summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area

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

### Summary Judgement

The reviewers recommend to the Accreditation Council that at the University College Beder that the State Quality Standards are **substantially met**.

## Detailed report

### Evaluation Area 1: The Organisation and its Management

1.1 UCB was opened in 2011 on the request of the Muslim Community of Albania and by the decision of the Council of Ministers No.286, dated 6 April 2011, granting the licence to operate as a Higher Education Institution.[SER p.9; 4] UCB operates as a foundation with three routes of income, namely student fees, donations from sponsors and interventions by the Government in land for a new building. It is a non-profit, private higher education institution according to the 107 Articles of its internal legal statute.[2]UCB complies with the provisions of Law No. 80/2015, dated 22 July 2015, 'On Higher Education and scientific research in the institutions of Higher Education in the Republic of Albania'.UCB is committed to improving its regulations, guidelines and statutes in accordance with discussions in the Student Government and Academic Senate.[18][Chapter III Standard 1.1]

1.2 UCB's Mission is the preparation of qualified individuals through education that has universal values and the support of scientific research, implementing ideas and projects in the service of society.[B4, p.2]UCB's Statute states that the internal management bodies are the Academic Senate, the Board of Administration, the Rectorate, the Faculty Deans, the Council of Ethics and the Internal Quality Assurance Unit.[2; 8]The management authorities are the Rector, deans, heads of departments, heads of research centres, and the Administrator of the University College.[4; 5]Two faculties and six academic departments offer seven bachelor, seven Master of Science and two professional master's programmes in the humanities and the social sciences.[SER p.9; 4][Chapter III Standard I.2]

1.3 The agendas and documentation for meetings are distributed two days before Council meetings. This is the minimum legal time for notice and usually considered to be sufficient advanced notice for preparation. If the Academic Senate decides that more time is needed, then agendas and documents are distributed earlier.[M3; M4]Meetings follow the Statute and relevant regulations.[SER p.12; 4]. The Academic Senate meets at least once each month and the Rector can convene additional meetings when necessary.[2, Article 13]All decisions by the Administrative Council and Administrators [M13] are published both online and in writing - the latter, when signed, is an official receipt. The Senate and councils both have proposing and decision-making powers [SER p.13; 4] and the implementation of decisions is monitored by the Academic Chancellor.[M3;M4]The Chancellor is the head of administration and reports to the Rector.[5, Article 25] Decisions taken by the departmental councils are numbered, registered and signed by those receiving them. They are then scanned and circulated to all staff and students by email. Outcomes contribute to the Annual Report. [M10] Outcomes of annual bids by departments for resources are announced in departmental councils and are fully transparent.[M10][Chapter III Standard I.3]

1.4 UCB's Internal Quality Assurance Unit is responsible for monitoring and coordinating the activities of the management, academic and administrative evaluation of quality development and external assessment.[SER p.13; 4]It also works with the Human Resources Department to deliver staff training.[M2] The Unit has adopted the provisions and obligations arising from the Bologna Process.[9; 21] It has also established two additional, permanent commissions, one for Research, Projects, Applications and Innovation; and another for the Quality Assurance of International Standards and Study Programmes. The Internal Quality Assurance Unit and the commissions operate independently, and their roles and responsibilities are clearly stated.[9; 21; Clarifications 2]The Internal Quality Assurance Unit is responsible for operational issues, such as monitoring and reporting, while the Quality Assurance Commission is responsible for strategic issues, such as coordinating the quality assurance process. It prepares strategies, objectives, policies and procedures regarding quality assurance.[M2; M3; M4] An external expert was appointed by the Senate

in 2014 to the Unit and the Quality Assurance Commission [37] to conduct a critical review of all academic and administrative activities. Each unit submitted a self-assessment report and the external expert gave feedback, [A56] which fed into the Annual Report 2015-16. [B4] This expert visited UCB on six occasions, attended meetings with each unit and offered an external evaluation of all matters discussed. In addition to specific comments on individual programmes, she suggested common areas for improvement, such as the needs for more detailed and specific market research, consistency of information in the syllabuses and the web pages, further input from student surveys, and for more diversification of programmes, titles and content. [M3; M4] [Chapter III Standard I.4]

1.5 In 2012 UCB adopted a five-year strategic plan with a primary challenge to maintain and improve the academic quality of the Institution. It aimed to develop teaching, research and social contribution. Further objectives were to establish an international agenda in discipline areas and interdisciplinary research; provide contemporary teaching in first and second-cycle programmes; and attract, train and retain qualified staff at an international level. The strategy has been reviewed and amended by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. [SER p.15; 4; 35] A working group has been established, chaired by the Rector, to develop a new strategic plan for 2017-22, composed of representatives of the Rectorate, departments, main units, the Student Senate and graduate students. [SER p.15; 4; 46]. Groups have been tasked to ensure a bottom-up process. The new plan is expected in September 2017. [M1; M6] There will be an action plan for research following the acceptance of the 2017-22 Strategic Plan. [M13] [Chapter III Standard I.5]

1.6 The Rector issued a directive for all academic and administrative units to prepare an annual report for 2015-16. [71; 58] It is based on a format provided by the Ministry of Education and Sport, which does not request an action plan. [B4] Outcomes of departmental meetings, which students attend, contribute to the Annual Report, and the departments consult students on each draft. [M10] The Academic Chancellor monitors the outcomes of the previous reports and works with departments to ensure that they enact Senate decisions. [M3; M4] The report reflects the internal and external activities of UCB and it circulates it widely. [Chapter III Standard I.6]

1.7 UCB operates academic autonomy and freedom as key elements in its mission and aims, as stated and defined in the Statutes. [SER p.16; 1 Article 6; 2 Articles 2, and 87; 4] The focus of the Academic Senate was previously on academic issues. It now also approves academic budgets and proposes them to the High Council, soon to be Administrative Council, for final outcomes. [M3; M4] The highest decision-making body is the High Council, which is chaired by one of the Founders. The Chancellor, who is the Senior Administrative Officer, sits on it and the Academic Senate. There are seven members of the High Council; four are Founders from the Muslim community and three are selected from the Academic Senate. [M13] The faculty councils and departmental councils are the faculty bodies. Their roles are detailed in the Statute, Regulation for Academic Organisation, and Regulation for Administrative Organisation that describe the methods for decisionmaking. [SER p.17; 2; 3; 4; 5] [Chapter III Standard II.1]

1.8 UCB respects participation in debates. The councils propose, recommend and make decisions, which are communicated in writing and by email. [SER p.17; 4] Staff are encouraged to participate and contribute to every issue related to their respective unit. Issues raised are often fed into higher meetings, such as in faculty councils or Academic Senate. [B5] Reports on annual activities and plans, including a strength, weakness, opportunities, threats analysis, feed into future plans. [72] Staff are encouraged to present and discuss problems encountered and to propose solutions. [Chapter III Standard II.3]

1.9 The Media Office monitors regional economic developments in newspapers and magazines to inform the Rectorate for its strategic planning. The Public Relations Office

monitors the higher education media for the Rector's Office. The Careers Council in each academic department reviews the employment of their graduates. The Central Office of Graduates and the Career Planning monitor the employment of graduates. Seventy-eight percent of students graduating with a Bachelor degree and 88 percent of master's graduates in the last three years are employed or are continuing in higher education. [SER p.18; 84] While there is no evidence of a specific marketing strategy, UCB bases new programmes on market research. [M3; M4] An external expert, however, noted the need for more specific and detailed market research as an area for improvement. [56] UCB cooperates with public and private companies, and offers opportunities for cooperation with competitor organisations. [54] The meeting with alumni, employers and external partners revealed a close cooperation with the Muslim community in Albania and the region in keeping with the goals of UCB, especially with internships managed by the Careers Office. The review team was informed that an internship was often the first step towards employment in the areas of journalism, psychology, theology, human resources, teaching, and criminal law. A Board of Graduates exists for alumni to meet and UCB surveys career development each year. [M7] [Chapter III, Standard III.1]

1.10 UCB cooperates with other institutions to provide services for students and has signed memoranda of understanding with 56 higher education institutions, both inside and outside of Albania, including 14 in Turkey and 24 in 15 other countries. [SER p.19; 92; 4] The Office of International Relations was established in 2011 according to regulations [5, Articles 21 and 22] and the Director of the Office reports to the Rector. [5, Article 22]. It has enabled a small number of staff and students to gain international experience in teaching and research. It also organises student exchanges and encourages staff and student mobility. [66] [Chapter III Standard III.2; Chapter III Standard III.3]

1.11 In the last five years, UCB has organised 26 international conferences with organisations both inside of and outside Albania. Academic staff have participated in activities abroad. [B7; C2] Twenty five percent of UCB students come from a total of 16 countries. Lecturers are also hired from abroad. [SER p.19; 66] The integration of new staff and students is described in the Staff Guide and the Student Guide, but they give very limited information for foreign staff and none for foreign students. [49p.15; 50; Clarifications 7] There is no overarching written policy. The review team heard that UCB aims to produce a formal integration policy in the near future. [M13] The absence of a written integration policy for foreign staff and students is a **weakness**. The review team **recommends** for attention in the near future that UCB write and implement an integration policy for foreign staff and students. [Chapter III Standard III.4]

## **Findings**

### **Good practice**

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

### **Weaknesses**

The review team identified the following weakness:

- the absence of a written integration policy for foreign staff and students (paragraph 1.11; **Chapter III Standard III.4**).

### **Recommendations**

The review team identified the following recommendation:

- for attention in the near future that UCB write and implement an integration policy for foreign staff and students (paragraph 1.11; **Chapter III Standard III.4**).

### **Affirmation of action being taken**

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

## **Judgement**

**The Standards for the Organisation and its Management are substantially met.**

## Evaluation Area 2: Resourcing

2.1 UCB follows a policy on the employment of full and part-time staff. **[SER p.21; 13; M12]** Staff vacancies are prepared by the Human Resources Office in close liaison with the respective department's needs for new staff, and conforms with the required procedures for the employment of staff. Vacancies are announced on the UCB website and in the employment office. **[SER p.21; 29; 6; M12]** UCB pursues a policy of promotion of full and part-time staff and financially supports them. This support sometimes ensures their mobility, as in the case of academic staff participation in the Mevlana Exchange Programme, which is a programme of the exchange of students and academic staff between the Turkish higher education institutions and the higher education institutions of other countries. **[SER p.21; 13; M12]** UCB gives priority to candidates who have studied at universities abroad when it recruits academic staff. **[SER p.21; M11]** **[Chapter III Standard IV.1]**

2.2 At the beginning of each academic year, the Rectorate organises a meeting with the academic and administrative staff for the presentation of upcoming UCB activities and objectives. Some focal points of these meetings are the introduction of the newly employed staff and possible amendments in the strategic plan. **[SER p.22; M12]** In the framework of the career counselling for senior students, the academic staff, under the direction of the Dean of Students Office, visit high schools and attend all activities organised by the Ministry of Education and Sports, and the Regional Education Agencies. The updated information for every academic year is made available to the academic staff and students through the respective guides, such as the Staff Guide and the Student Guide. **[SER p.22; 49; 50; M12]** UCB integrates its staff into its social life in practice through, for instance, the organisation of conferences, workshops, seminars and training sessions. It does not, however, have a formal written integration policy for its foreign staff and students (see paragraph 1.11). Notices of such events are communicated through personal academic email, the website and social networks. **[SER p.23; BIS system; M12]** **[Chapter III Standard IV.2]**

2.3 UCB has approved a specific regulation for the evaluation of the academic staff at the end of the first semester and at the end of the academic year. The regulations describe the methodology and procedure for surveys and evaluations. These include student evaluations of academic staff, staff self-evaluation, and evaluation of staff by their superiors. **[SER p.23; 52; 10; M2; M5; M6; M12]** UCB trains academic staff through exchanges with national and international universities, especially in the context of the specific subjects it teaches, such as theological sciences. The mobility programme under the Mevlana project is a good example of this. **[78; M12]** UCB also encourages its academic staff to publish, which they do, in two University peer-reviewed journals, Scientific Journal of Education Sciences, and Beder Journal of Humanities. **[23; M12]** **[Chapter III Standard IV.3]**

2.4 The academic staff, in cooperation with the students, organise social activities. These activities include blood donation campaigns, the collection of money for children suffering from cancer and supporting the home schooling technological infrastructure for the children confined in their homes because of blood feuds in Shkoder. **[SER p.24; 58; M12]** UCB promotes social dialogue, thorough, for instance, the numerous activities it organises with other religious communities, including schools that provide religious education. **[SER p.24; 106; M12]** UCB pursues a policy of life and health insurance for its students and staff through a cooperation agreement with the American Hospital. It has also employed a doctor to be available at UCB four hours per day. **[SER p.24; 40; M9]** **[Chapter III Standard IV.4]**

2.5 UCB has implemented rules to determine the responsibilities of its structures according to their respective functions. Thus, pursuant to the new law no. 80/2015 'On

higher education', UCB defines the functions and duties of the academic and administrative bodies through its Statute and regulations. It must soon begin to function according to its new structure as is obligatory by law no. 80/2015 for higher education, especially in relation to the Administrative Board, which is still currently operating as the High Council from its old structure. **[SER p.25; 4; 5; M13][Chapter III Standard II.2]**

2.6 Before the legal changes made by Law No. 80/2015 'On Higher Education', the draft budget was prepared by the Finance Office in cooperation with the Chancellor of UCB and submitted for approval to High Council. The UCB budget was then delegated from management to the departments and units. **[SER p.25; M2; M10;M13]** With the new legal amendments, departments and units propose their needs, which are submitted to the Rectorate. The Rectorate then presents it to Senate as the whole organisation's needs. The Senate then approves the budget in principle before it goes for final approval to the Administration Board. **[M2; M3; M4; M10;M13][Chapter III Standard VI.1]**

2.7 The distribution of financial resources is made by the High Council according to a preliminary budget approved and accepted by all units. **[SER p.25; M3; M4; M10;M13]** UCB respects accounting rules, particularly the national accounting standards. It maintains its records in accordance with the law on Accounting and Financial Statements. **[SER p.25; M13]** UCB is a private institution of higher education and its rules of internal management are determined by the acts it adopts. **[SER p.25; M13]** UCB's Statute sets out the procedure for the allocation and follow up of its budget. **[SER p.25; 1 Articles 12, 15 and 23] [Chapter III Standard VI.2]**

2.8 Being a private non-profit institution, UCB is not directly subject to financial audit by State agencies. However, at the end of every year, UCB submits its annual report to the Ministry of Education and Sports, including the previous year's budget as well as a draft budget for the coming academic year. The High Council oversees the implementation of the budget and the investment plan as well as every other financial activity. **[SER p.26; 57; 1, Article 12; M13]** The presentation of the annual report every year to the Ministry of Education and Sports where UCB, in addition to the budget of the previous year, also presents the budget of the following year, demonstrates that it takes account its teaching needs and quality services to students. **[SER p.26; 1, Article 12, point 5; 57, point 5; M13]. [Chapter III Standard VI.3]**

2.9 The administrative units responsible for the implementation of the information system and information management are the Public Relations Office and the Information Technology Office. Their duties are established in the Regulation for the Academic Organisation. **[SER p.26; 5, Articles. 34, 39 and 78; M13]**. UCB uses the well-developed Beder Information System (BIS) to help manage its activities. Students and staff have access to it. Among other functions, the system handles student registration and the organisation of the teaching process, including the recording of assessment grades. Students and staff find the system helpful. **[SER p.26; M5; M6; M12; M13; BIS demonstration]** The UCB website contains essential information, such as, the study programmes offered; academic fees; and the two basic acts of the Institution, the Statutes and the General Regulation **[SER, p 23; 57, point 3.3; <http://ww.beder.edu.al>] [Chapter III Standard VII.1]**

2.10 UCB's technical and technological infrastructure enables an effective teaching and learning process. **[SER p.27; M9]** Each member of staff has an office space that is equipped with a computer connected to the internet, a telephone and shelves for storage. Students have access to computers in the library and in laboratory rooms. UCB does not provide distance learning. See also paragraph 5.5. **[SER p.27; 30; M9] [Chapter III Standard VII.2]**

2.11 UCB has a record of its real estate. It currently conducts its activities in rented premises which are leased for a period of 10 years to 2021. [SER p.27; 103] UCB intends to relocate to new premises in the near future and has purchased the land to build its new campus. The review team was unable to identify any structures within the University to manage this development. [SER p.28; 95] [Chapter III Standard VII.3]

2.12 UCB submits five copies of all of its publications to the National Library to preserve its academic, cultural and scientific heritage. It supports its staff to participate in and engage with scientific research projects. It also provides annual rewards for academic achievements based on transparent indicators as stipulated by its internal directive. [SER p.28; 65; M12; M13] UCB pursues a policy of the maintenance and development of its academic, cultural and scientific property. The Regulation on Archive sets out the basic rules for the functioning of the UCB archive for all documents of the management bodies, main units, base units and administrative units. [SER p.28; 12; M12] [Chapter III Standard VII.4]

2.13 UCB has an adequate and contemporary infrastructure for the development of its activity. The facilities are equipped with all the necessary tools to deliver its provision, such as adequate natural lighting, interactive whiteboards, computers, video projectors and air conditioning. Other facilities such as conference halls and libraries contribute to the teaching process. UCB has additional facilities for its academic staff, in proportion to their number (see paragraph 2.10). [SER p.28; 107; M9] [Chapter III Standard VII.5]

2.14 UCB carries out some functions of common interest. For instance, it offers services such as English language exams, including TOEFL and APTIS. [SER p.29; 100] [Chapter III Standard VII.6]

2.15 UCB conducts its activity in two buildings, A and B. The infrastructure in general meets the criteria established by law. [96; M9] It uses building A mainly for the teaching activities of the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Philology and Education, and their departments. [SER p.31-33; M9] Building A also contains academic and administrative staff offices; the library, secretarial offices, a doctor's office and, on the third floor, the Foundation offices. Building A's classrooms are well-equipped (see paragraph 2.13). [M9] Building B contains several classrooms, a gym and a conference room. The air and lighting system in part of this building could be better because some of the classrooms are underground. However, UCB is taking steps to monitor both air and lighting qualities by engaging outside experts. [M9] According to the number of students currently enrolled, the University offers an average of 7.6 m<sup>2</sup> per student. UCB meets the technical norms of natural lighting and the building has emergency exits and stairs. There is also an alternative source for the electricity supply. [SER p.30-31; M9] [Chapter III Standard V.1]

2.16 UCB possesses full documentation of its academic activity in hard copy and electronic form. [SER p.31; 108; M9] There is a special regulation for archiving and managing the documentation. UCB's Registrar Office is responsible for the preservation and archiving of all relevant data in accordance with the bylaws and Regulations of the Registrar Office. [SER p.31; 14; M10] The Institution keeps a register of students in hard copy and electronic form in permanent storage, with grades received during the study programme, data for the diploma or diplomas obtained, the diploma supplement and matriculation number. All of this is in accordance with the current legislation. [SER p.31; M5; M6; M10] [Chapter III Standard V.2]



## **Findings**

### **Good practice**

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

### **Weaknesses**

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

### **Recommendations**

The review team did not identify any recommendations.

### **Affirmation of action being taken**

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

## **Judgement**

**The Standards for Resourcing are fully met.**

## Evaluation Area 3: The Curriculum

3.1 UCB offers study programmes in accordance with its mission and capacities. It informs the public about them through its website and various other ways, such as through brochures, guides, participation in fairs, presentations in schools and open days. **[SER p.33; M5; M6]** UCB has defined the field of humanities and social sciences as a priority in the establishment of its profile. It offers study programmes in the first and second cycle. The Curriculum Development Office ensures that these study programmes are organised to meet all the components specified in the relevant specifications. **[SER p.33; E87; M5; M6; M12]** UCB has adopted regulations for first and second-cycle studies and exams to address its teaching methodology and evaluation of student achievement. These were approved by the Academic Senate and the High Council. **[SER p.33; 6; 7; M5; M6]** **[Chapter I Standard I.1]**

3.2 UCB does not offer constant moulding study programmes, such as short-term special courses to deepen or update knowledge as a form of lifelong learning. **[M5; M6]** It has, however, established the Career Planning Office, which organises a series of work placements and internships for its students. **[M7]** **[Chapter I Standard I.2]**

3.3 UCB study programmes are offered in accordance with its development strategy. **[SER p.34; 33, Chapter V]** The academic offer of UCB study programmes coherently integrates the information about diplomas issued at the completion of studies. The Student Guide, the student contracts, the website of the relevant programme and the meetings organised in the framework of the support provided by the UCB provide information concerning the title of the diploma and its supplement. **[SER p.34; 50; M5; M6]** **[Chapter I Standard I.3]**

3.4 UCB develops its policies in compliance with the national policies as envisaged in the Strategic Plan for Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Sports. **[SER p.35; M3; M4]** It admits students from many different countries, provides foreign language programs, such as English Language and Literature and Turkish Language and Literature, and offers interdisciplinary studies with a common diploma, such as Islamic Science and Education. **[SER p.35; M5; M6]** **[Chapter I Standard I.4]**

3.5 UCB sets the teaching load of lecturers in accordance with criteria set by the bylaws in force. It supports new academic staff members who are in the studying for PhDs by reducing their teaching hours to allow them time for research. The organisation of the teaching workload is also closely linked to the managerial duties carried out by certain academic staff, such as the Heads of Department or Deans. **[11]** The calculation criteria for the academic staff employed either full or part-time in both programme cycles are established in the Directive on the Teaching Workload. The workloads of lecturers who exceed legal maximums are financed by UCB's own resources. The directive defines the overtime payment and limits for additional hours. **[SER p.35; 25; M11; M12]** **[Chapter I Standard I.5]**

3.6 The programmes, curriculums and syllabuses are easily accessible on the UCB website. In the first class of every module, the lecturers inform their students in detail about the syllabus, course outline and assessment details. **[SER p.35; M5; M6; M12]** Programme objectives are submitted to Ministry of Education and Sport and are also published on the web page of each department. These details are outlined in the respective study regulations. **[SER p.35; 19; M5; M6]** UCB has also clearly defined the admission criteria, which are included in the Basic Regulation and the regulation of the Bachelor studies and exams. **[SER p.35; M5]** **[Chapter I Standard I.6]**

3.7 Study programmes allow a progressive transition from the first to the second cycle, based on the legal framework and the Bologna Process. **[SER p.36; M6]** For example, a first-

cycle graduate in Law will have the opportunity to continue his or her study in a second-cycle Master of Science or Professional Master in one of the courses offered by UCB. **[SER p.36; M6]** First-cycle study programmes provide students with basic knowledge, general scientific methods and principles, and specific moulding skills. **[SER p.36; M5]** Students are informed and advised about the possibility of the transfer of study programmes or credits received during their studies. UCB respects and applies the criteria and legal provisions according to its internal regulation and the Law on Higher Education. The review team met several students who transferred their studies to UCB and who described their experiences positively. **[SER p.36; 15; M5]** **[Chapter I Standard I.7]**

3.8 UCB supports students through orientation activities and its tutor. At an institutional level it has created a Dean of Students. Every department appoints one person who is responsible for student career counselling and who works under the coordination of the Dean of Students. In addition, every department appoints one academic adviser for a group of students, who supports those students' education process. **[SER p.36-37; 6, Article 6; 55; M5; M6; M12]** UCB uses a variety of teaching methods depending on its students' interests. Students described their lecturers' use of illustrated presentations, interactive debate and visits to various institutions, such as law students' trips to court. UCB also has a priority to recruit academic staff with scientific titles and degrees, not only to meet the legal criteria for the number of academic staff members with degrees and titles, but also to enhance the quality of teaching. Some of them have finished their PhDs abroad, usually at Turkish universities. Academic staff employed full-time conduct 83 per cent of the teaching of teaching first-cycle programmes. **[SER p.37; M3; M4; M12]** **[Chapter I Standard I.8]**

3.9 Academic staff that engage in research activity participate in study programme drafting and implementation. **[SER p.37; 86; M12]** Master of Science study programmes are drafted in support of UCB research policies. Private sector and state companies sometimes assist with Professional Practice modules and student draft theses. Students are offered internship opportunities over the summer months and UCB has signed cooperation agreements with companies in the private sector in Albania and Turkey to facilitate them. During the academic year 2015-16, 74 students completed their summer internship in Albania. **[SER p.38; 92; M7]** The employment of students after they have graduated is overseen by the Dean of Students Office and monitored through the Office of Graduates and the Career Planning Office. According to the statistics that UCB tracks, 87 per cent of their former students are employed, but not all of them within the professions for which they trained. **[SER p.38; 85; M13]** UCB recruits, as a matter of policy, representatives from business or industry, such as the Director of the Women's Prison, in their professional master's teaching and research programmes. **[M7]** **[Chapter I Standard I.9]**

3.10 UCB study programmes are offered in accordance with the Bologna Process. **[SER p.38; M5; M6]** The curriculum content is organised in modules and assessed in European credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). It is also available through the website in Albanian and English. **[SER p.38; M5; M6]** The diplomas issued upon completion of the first and second-cycle programmes are accompanied by a diploma supplement. **[SER p.38; 73; M5; M6]** UCB designs study programmes to facilitate students' mobility. The review team met two students who had participated in an Erasmus exchange programme and who were pleased with their experience. They were law students and had attended one semester in the Faculty of Law at Ankara University. The credits that they earned were recognised by UCB. **[SER p.39; 17; M5; M6]** **[Chapter I Standard I.10]**

3.11 UCB study programmes include student preparation and presentation of scientific research projects according to the various studies regulations for the diploma topic, thesis and dissertation. Since 2011-12, UCB has organised five annual student conferences where students present their own scientific papers. The organisation and management of these

conferences is now being devolved to the students remaining, however, under UCB care and support. [SER p.40; 75; 22; M5; M6][Chapter I Standard I.11]

3.12 UCB study programmes offer special modules with true professional character and knowledge from socio-economic areas. They include knowledge about entrepreneurship, professional practices and internships. All study programmes are based on legal requirements to offer a professional practice module. For example, law students did their professional practice at legal premises and communication students at a radio station. This experience often creates opportunities for future employment with these initial contacts.[88; M5; M6][Chapter I Standard I.12]

## **Findings**

### **Good practice**

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

### **Weaknesses**

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

### **Recommendations**

The review team did not identify any recommendations.

### **Affirmation of action being taken**

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

## **Judgement**

**The Standards for the Curriculum are fully met.**

## Evaluation Area 4: Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research

4.1 UCB applies announced study programmes. It has a system for ensuring that the delivery of its study programmes is correct and up to date. At the beginning of every semester departments approve the teaching workload, materials to be distributed, relevant documents and updates of curriculum. The process is then audited by a working group appointed by the Rector. **[64]** UCB supports its students in their practical and professional training via, for instance, its Media and Communication Centre, Foreign Language Laboratory, Computer Laboratory and the Courtroom. **[SER p.42; M9]** UCB administers its students' professional practice and internships through its Career Planning Office, as overseen by the Dean of Students. The process is organised into two stages, the student application and the internship report. **[Clarifications 4.20; B17; B18]** The host institution also attests the internship. **[Clarifications 4.20; B19]** Some programmes, such as those in teaching, use special forms to monitor the process. **[SER p.42; 5, Article 5; 67]** Although individual student internships are evaluated, there is no overall internal review or evaluation of internships. **[67; Clarifications 4.21]** Academic advisers guide students in the preparation of their dissertation or master's thesis, and keep a report on the process. Students are required to meet their master's thesis supervisor at least five times during the semester. The preparation and management of the diploma thesis is outlined in the regulations. **[SER p.42; 7; Clarifications 4.6]** The library and its resources support all study programmes. **[SER p.42; 30; M9]** See also paragraphs 5.5 and 5.6. **[Chapter I Standard II.1]**

4.2 UCB provides students who have passed all obligations of a study programme with the relevant diploma. UCB rules and regulations for first and for second cycles, including those for examinations and graduation, are in its official regulations documents, **[6; 7]** which are in the Student Guide and on its website. **[50, p.23-24, p.28; <http://beder.edu.al/sh/fcontent/default/rregulloret-akademike-administrative-19-14/187/204of29 April 17>]** There is also a specific directive on examinations, which was approved by Senate Decision. **[51; Clarifications 4.7; B11]** There is a general regulation on student academic misconduct which covers cheating, but the majority of students surveyed say copying in exams is a problem. **[20, Articles 9- 10; Student questionnaire 9.ii]** Complaints against examination results are covered in the University regulations. **[6, Article 23; 7, Articles 33/a and 34/a]** Students have the right to appeal within five days of the publication of results by submitting a request in writing to the Secretary of Education. The respective lecturer handles the appeal to check for miscalculations before it is then considered by the Department Council, without the presence of the lecturer. **[SER p.43; 6, Article 23; 7, Articles 33/a and 34/a]** Students confirmed that they had confidential access to their exam scores through the Beder Information System, which also worked well for other information, including timetables, lecture choice and attendance monitoring. **[SER p.43; M6][Chapter I Standard II.2]**

4.3 UCB ensures that its study programmes are continually improved. It has adequate quality assurance policies and procedures, as stated in its regulations. Before the new law, UCB had a Quality Assurance Council. They reorganised and now have an Internal Quality Assurance Unit, which replaced the Quality Assurance Council and handles operational matters, and a new Permanent Commission for the Guarantee of the Institutional and Study Programmes Quality Standards, which is in charge of the vision for quality assurance. **[SER p.43-44; 2, Articles 28-29; 8; 9; <http://gau.beder.edu.al> – link tested 29/04/17; M3; M4]** The Unit oversees and monitors a range of surveys, including the student satisfaction survey, the academic staff satisfaction survey and the administrative satisfaction staff survey. The review team saw results for only the Students' Satisfaction Survey and they were entirely positive. **[SER p.23, 29, 44; 10; 52; 74; 81; Clarifications 4.8]** Lecturers are evaluated in several ways, including through student surveys, self-evaluations and yearly

appraisals by their superiors, which evaluates each lecturer's teaching and research. The review team was told that the results of the student evaluations led to various changes. They fed into academic staff yearly appraisals and contributed to setting targets for the coming year. Academic staff members cited changes to the curriculum, which included the rebalancing of overall content towards practical rather than theoretical work and the introduction of peer counselling. Students cited curriculum changes including more continuous assessment as opposed to exam-based assessment. **[SER p.44; 74; 10; M6; M12]** Examination results are published through the University's BIS system and results of competitions, such as the Innovative Bachelors Project Contest or the Outstanding Master's Thesis Award, are published anonymously on the University website. **[SER p.44; 105; M5]** The Curriculum Development Office oversees changes to programs, including improvements brought about by staff or student evaluations. **[SER p.44; 24]** Each module is evaluated through student questionnaires, the results of which lecturers see and act upon. Recent examples of improvements include updating law courses to reflect changes in Albanian law, changing the language options and assessment towards more essay papers based on current, practical topics. **[SER p.44; Clarifications 4.9; B12; M5; M6; M12]** Graduate employment is part of programme evaluation, and UCB uses employer feedback to change curriculum, such as the inclusion of aspects of social media suggested by a professional journalist for a journalism programme, and construct new programmes, such as the new course on traditional Albanian scholars. **[SER p.44; 84; M7]** **[Chapter I Standard II.3]**

4.4 UCB has a clear policy to improve teaching quality. In addition to the measures outlined in the previous paragraph, all departments review all of their provision at the beginning of each academic year. Each lecturer must update syllabuses on BIS in light of new subject developments and student survey feedback. **[SER p.44; Clarifications 4.10; B13; M10]** UCB organised training programmes for its own academic staff through its Internal Quality Assurance Unit and Human Resources Office. Ten activities are listed on the webpage for 2014-15. There were eight activities in 2016-17, including training on how to teach effectively in the classroom, how to supervise a thesis, and how to publish an article, all delivered by external consultants. Academic staff that the review team met are aware of other opportunities for continuing professional development through, for example, teaching exchanges and links with industry, such as the media. **[SER p.44-45; <http://qac.beder.edu.al/pages.php?s=14> – checked 30/04/17 and working; M2; M3; M4; M11; M12; M13]** The Internal Quality Assurance Unit monitors teaching quality through, for instance, student surveys. **[SER p.45; 2, Article 8, 1.j and Articles 28-29, Article 29, b mentions a Code of Quality; M5]** UCB supports a range of teaching methods, including presentation skills in some classes, newsroom skills for communication sciences students, courtroom skills for law students and a special room for the students of Islamic sciences. **[Clarifications, 4.11: M2]** It also provides training to update its lecturers in the use of new information technologies and teaching methodologies. **[<http://qac.beder.edu.al/pages.php?s=14>; Clarifications 4.3 and 4.12] [Chapter I Standard II.4]**

4.5 UCB highlights its scientific research through departments, which have sound arrangements for supporting and monitoring research carrying out by its academic staff. The department is a basic unit and includes homogeneous fields of research and scientific disciplines. Departments and research groups are established and governed according to the Statute. **[SER p.45; 1, Articles 30-31; 2, Articles 45, 46, 47 and 48; B16]** The department sets the academic staff teaching workload every semester and takes into account individual scientific research when making the calculation. **[77; 25; Clarifications 4.18]** Departments monitor and review scientific research activity at the end of each of each academic year through academic staff appraisals. **[52, Section A.1]** UCB also financially supports scientific activities centrally, based on its internal directive, respecting academic freedom. **[SER p.45-46; 23; 65; Clarifications 4.17; B15]** It defines academic freedom as 'the freedom to conduct scientific research, teaching, publication and the freedom of speech,

based on scientific research standards without any interference or penalty and without prejudice to the final result that the study could lead to'. [SER p.47; 3, Article 23-24 (in particular)] Departments produce annual reports, which include records of scientific activities such as publications, conferences and a strength, weaknesses, opportunities, threats analysis, [SER p.46; 72, 6, p.387-390; 7, p.390-391] but there is no mention of reviews of scientific research activity for the purposes of the continuance or termination of funding. The majority of the research output in the sample annual report is in house. There is a procedure to open, close or merge departments. A proposal from a faculty council goes to Academic Senate for consideration, then, if approved, on to the High Council for final approval. [SER p.45][Chapter II Standard I.1]

4.6 UCB encourages development, dynamism and scientific research as follows, but with limited success beyond staff attending conferences. It supports scientific research through its units, including the research development centres, the Research Office, the Centre for Young Researchers, and the new Permanent Commission for the Scientific Research, Projects, Application and Innovation (for the latter, see paragraph 4.12). [SER p.46; 3, Article 4; 22; 47] UCB's International Relations Office supports the cooperation of these units with other institutions and research centres. [SER p.46; 4, Articles 21 and 22] UCB has engaged in a number of conferences with other institutions in the country and abroad. [SER p.46; 90] These efforts demonstrate a commitment to develop scientific research output, but results to date are meagre. [Chapter II Standard I.2]

4.7 UCB concentrates on internationalising its research with some success. Its International Relations Unit remit is to enhance the quality of its education and contribute to the development of society through facilitating its own student and staff international experience and through helping students and staff from universities abroad to integrate into UCB. [SER p.46-47; 4, Articles 21 and 22] Examples of UCB staff exchanges include one through the Central European University Network and participation in the French University Observatory of Local Economy project, which involved 70 universities. [M10] Examples of student exchanges include an exchange to Turkey and one with Mevlana. [M6] Through its International Relations Unit, UCB has signed agreements with national universities, international universities and research centres to participate in conferences, seminars, research projects and mobility programmes, and nine of these have received funding. [SER p.47; 91; C6] It has applied for two Horizon 2020 projects, one with Burch University for a 2014-16 project [Clarifications 4.4; 9] and another with Terre des Homme. [Clarifications 4.4; B9; B10] There is no mention of outcomes. A future project may involve a conference with the University of Bari Aldo Moro, in Italy. [Clarifications 4.4] UCB supports and, in addition, provides financial incentives to its academic staff to publish their research in international scientific journals, which has led to the publication of 408 articles, the majority of which appear to be conference papers and not refereed publications in, for instance, internationally peer-reviewed journals. [SER p.47; 23; 65; 86] [Chapter II Standard I.3]

4.8 UCB determines its priority areas of scientific research using a top-down and bottom-up method. An example of a top down priority is the Rector meeting with the government and deciding to launch an Islamic Studies programme. An example of a bottom-up approach came from the Communications Department to set up small libraries in schools and prisons. [M1] The Deputy Rector has overall responsibility for scientific research. [SER p.47; 2, Article 49, 2.d] The Office of Research, after consultation with faculty, directors, and department heads, prepares an action plan and develops research agendas, which are presented to the Rectorate, and then move on to Senate for approval. [Clarifications 4.13] The priorities are stated in the Strategic Plan, but they are general and do not list specific outcomes. [33; 5.3, p. 449-450; M11] The Annual Report notes research policies and some outcomes, but it is not clear precisely how these are related to the priorities in the Strategic Plan. [B4; 4.1.a p.44-45][Chapter II Standard I.4]

4.9 UCB applies its scientific research priorities. The SER states that it funds a number of its scientific research priorities out of its budget, [SER p.48] including the media museum, the laboratories for foreign languages, and the enrichment of the library, but these are not normally recognised as research priorities by universities worldwide. There is, however, a budget line for research, [M13] and UCB has established seven research groups that roughly correspond to its departments and research and development centres as outlined in its regulation. [SER p.47; 3, Article 4] The groups are International and European Law, Human Rights and Conflict Resolution, Media Studies, Education Sciences, Religious Studies; Turkology, and English as a Secondary Language. [SER p.47; Clarifications 4.19; B16] UCB recruits, evaluates and promotes academic staff in line with its employment regulation, which includes the requirement for the lecturers to engage in scientific research. [13, Article 5, 1.b and 2.h; Article 10, 1.b; Article 12; M12; M11] The process for establishing research priorities is outlined in the previous paragraph and they are monitored every year as described in paragraph 4.5. [Chapter II Standard I.5]

4.10 UCB provides some continuity in scientific research at the level of individual activity. Research is one of the Strategic Aims of the University's Strategic Plan. Most academic staff are engaged in research [SER p.48; 33 5.3; 23; Clarifications 4.14; B4, 4.1.a, p.44] and each year, it lists staff publications in an annual report. [57 p.90-98; B4, p.48-58 – mostly conferences] UCB pursues a policy of cooperation with national and international scientific organisations, mainly through its annual departmental and faculty conference organisation. [SER p.48; M3; M4] It also pursues a policy of integration for foreign researchers by hiring lecturers from a number of different countries, including Turkey, USA, England, Germany, Spain, Costa Rica and Kosovo. [SER p.48; M11; M12] The agreements with the partner universities of Mevlana and Erasmus+ projects have supported the exchange of academic staff and students. [SER p.49; 66] UCB works with national agencies for research and innovation, such as the Agency for Research Technology and Innovation, who have trained staff in project implementation and the Horizon 2020 programme. [SER p.49; B4, 4.1.a, p.45] It has also organised conferences focusing on the priorities of the National Strategy of Science, Technology and Innovation 2009-15. [Clarifications 4.5; <http://ich.beder.edu.al/>; <http://iccms.beder.edu.al/> – working on 30/05/17] UCB has established a Center for Young Researchers and a competition for the best thesis. [SER p.49; 41; 105] [Chapter II Standard I.6]

4.11 UCB publicises its scientific research outcomes. It has held two large conferences, one on media studies and communication, and another on the field of justice. [SER p.49] It publishes all conference proceedings in book form with a National Library ISBN and on its website. [SER p.50; <http://beder.edu.al/en/content/default/publications-12-2/8/165> – checked 30/04/17 and publications are there] Both UCB faculties periodically publish two scientific journals, with a National Library ISSN: Beder Journal of Educational Sciences [<http://bjes.beder.edu.al/> (ISSN 2306-0557) – checked 30/04/17] and Beder Journal of Humanities. [<http://bjh.beder.edu.al/> (ISSN: 2306- 6083) – checked 30/04/17] See also paragraph 4.5 and 4.6. [Chapter II Standard I.7]

4.12 UCB does not currently pursue an adequate policy of evaluation of scientific outcomes. Its Research Office drafts and manages the policies governing the conduct of research. It also oversees all research activities. [SER p.50; 4, Articles 19, 20 and 23; 11] There appears to be no mention of institutional oversight mechanisms for the evaluation of scientific research outcomes [11; 68, Section 8.2] beyond the appraisal process. [52; B4, 4.9 (4.1.a para 2)] individual project management, and [91, 1.1.5, bullet 2 and 1.2.1 bullet 4] assessment for financial support. [23] The Research Office, however, intends to present a guide on the preparation of scientific conferences to the Rector as a tool for evaluation purposes. [Clarifications 4.17] The new Permanent Commission on Research, Projects, Applications and Innovation is responsible for overseeing the progress and final reports of all grants and research projects and will be evaluating research output as good, fair or bad. The



order to establish the commission was passed by Academic Senate on 25 January 2017. There is no evidence that the commission responsibilities have been formally approved, or that it has evaluated scientific research output. [SER p.50; 21; 47; M11] The fact that these essential evaluation mechanisms are not currently functioning for scientific conferences, grants and research projects is a **weakness**. The review team **recommends** for immediate attention that UCB take steps to strengthen the evaluation of its scientific research by fully implementing its intended guide on the preparation of scientific conferences and its new Permanent Commission on Research, Projects, Applications and Innovation. [Chapter II Standard I.8]

4.13 UCB pursues a policy of the transfer of scientific outcomes. It financially supports scientific activities inside of and outside of the country with a budget line with an internal directive. [SER p.50; 23, Articles 5 and 6] Its collaborations with local and foreign businesses have led to the signing of 56 cooperation agreements with national and international private companies. [SER p.50; 91; M2] One example of output from such agreements is a joint research project with the Audiovisual Media Authority during both 2015-16 and 2016-17. [SER p.50; [lccms.beder.edu.ai](http://lccms.beder.edu.ai) - checked 30/04/17] The proceedings, like all similar University activity, are published in book form (see paragraph 4.11), and the intellectual property of all academic staff is protected as outlined in the standard employment contract. [SER p.50; 53, Article 8, 8.1 and 8.2] UCB supports the research initiatives of the students through the organisation of student conferences and thesis competitions whose winners are financially rewarded. [SER p.50; 105] UCB supports young researchers through its new Centre for Young Researchers, established in January 2017. [SER p. 50; 70] [Chapter II Standard I.8]

## Findings

### Good practice

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

### Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weakness:

- essential evaluation mechanisms are not currently functioning for scientific conferences, grants and research projects (paragraph 4.12; **Chapter II Standard I.8**).

### Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendation:

- for immediate attention that UCB take steps to strengthen the evaluation of its scientific research by fully implementing its intended guide on the preparation of scientific conferences and its new Permanent Commission on Research, Projects, Applications and Innovation (paragraph 4.12; **Chapter II Standard I.8**).

### Affirmation of action being taken

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

## **Judgement**

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

## Evaluation Area 5: Students and their Support

5.1 UCB pursues the correct policy for new students' entrance. It presents its offer, including entrance criteria for potential students, through leaflets, meetings, high school visits, fairs, open days and its website. [SER p.53; 2, Articles 69, 76; 3 Articles 55, 56; 6, Article 5; 7, Article 15; 63; website (checked on 25/04/17)]UCB maintains close relations with the Regional Education Directorates. [SER p.50; Clarifications 5.1; B20; B21] The responsibility for welcoming, informing and admitting new students rests with the Selection and Admissions Office. It ensures that all documentation is up to date and produces yearly reports on its activities. [SER p.50; 3, Article 4; 5, Article 32; C4] Students were pleased with their experiences from the time they first made contact with the University to their early days of their study. [M5] Foreign students are admitted on the basis of qualifying examinations in their state, or secondary school results, and there is a dedicated office to advise them. [6, Article 5; 5, Article 42; M2; M12] The University academic staff to student ratio is 1:10. [SER p.50] [Chapter I Standard III.1]

5.2 UCB informs and communicates with its students and academic staff in a variety of ways. Departments assign academic lecturers to each of their students, who act as tutors. [SER p.53-54; 3, Article 61; 6, Article 6] The Registrar Office posts announcements on information boards and e-mails them to students. All students have institutional email addresses, and when decisions are made in governing bodies that affect them, the decision is scanned and emailed to all students. [SER p.54; M5; M10] With the assistance of the Office of Protocol and Correspondence, UCB communicates externally with students through its website, social media and its Beder Information System. [SER p.54; 5, Article 42; M5; M6]UCB communicates internally through its Secretariat. [SER p.4; M10] When decisions are made in governing bodies that affect students, the decision is scanned and emailed to all students.[M10; M13] All staff have internal email addresses. The Registrar Office holds files, in accordance with the law, on all students.[50][Chapter I Standard III.2]

5.3 UCB orientates and mentors its students in a variety of ways. In addition to UCB departments assigning academic lecturers to each of their students and advisers for each year group, [SER p.54; 3, Article 61; 6, Article 6; M12] it also offers student advice through the Career Planning Office, which is under the direction of the Dean of Students. Each department appoints an advisor to this office to offer students seminars on job seeking techniques, such as CV writing, interviewing, and employment opportunities. [SER p.54-55; 3, Articles 4, 6, and 9 (in particular for Dean of Students); 1, Article 24; 5, Article 42] UCB provides a 40 page Student Guide, which students said that they found very useful. The Student Guide is a feature of **good practice** because it ensures that students have easily accessible and detailed information in one place about their study programmes and all other aspects of student life at the University.[50; M5]UCB supports students at the master's thesis level by assigning a supervisor to each student who will meet with that student face to face at least five times and provide two pre-defences before the final defence. [M6; M10] The study programmes at UCB are developed based on the criteria established in the Bologna Process in order to enable the progressive adaptation of students to their study programme and the opportunity for European mobility. [SER p.55; B12] UCB informs students periodically about any significant institutional developments through its website, information material and brochures. [SER p.55] It has very thorough regulations for student transfers, which are covered in a basic regulation as well as a separate individual regulation of 12 articles. [3, Articles 67-72; 15][Chapter I Standard III.3]

5.4 UCB supports all students regardless of race, colour, national origin or religion, including Roma and Balkan-Egyptian. It also offers scholarships to these groups and others, such as people in need, orphans of policemen, and Ministry of Interior Officials. [SER p.55; 3, Article 111; 101; 102, Article 1; 109] Students with mobility disabilities can use an

entrance ramp and an elevator, which gives access to all parts of the premises. There are also special toilet facilities for students with disabilities. Blind students can use an electronic system that converts lectures into braille. **[SER p.5; 3, Articles 57 and 58; M9; M10][Chapter I Standard III.4]**

5.5 UCB provides its students with a variety of literature and electronic materials for their study. The library management office maintains the documentation of library resources. It is responsible for registering new titles, keeping track of all of its purchases and organising its holdings, as covered by a specific directive. **[SER p.56; 26]** The library holds about 36,000 titles and is open every day of the week except Sunday. Its opening hours are posted at its entrance. **[SER p.56; M5; M9]** UCB provides funds to departments for the purchase of specialized scientific literature to enrich the library with recent publications in the various fields of study. **[SER p.56; M13]** As a way of further enriching the University and the libraries of other institutions, the Department of Communication Sciences raised and donated around 10,000 books through a student project, 'I donate, you also should'. **[SER p.56; 58; M9]** The library functions through an automated system. **[<http://library.beder.edu.al/> – checked 25/04/17 working; M9]** It provides materials in electronic form, enabled with the subscription in the EbscoHost online library, where students can assess 45,000 books and 5,000 magazines. The library also enables communication with the Book Academic Collection. Students can access the electronic resources of the library off campus. **[SER p.56-57; 30; M9]** Students have student cards and are satisfied with the library resources. **[3, Article 63; M5; M6][Chapter I Standard III.5]**

5.6 UCB offers first-cycle students support through its services to help them progress (see also paragraph 3.8). Every course syllabus is published on the UCB website and lecturers explain each course in detail at the first class meeting. **[SER p.57; 6, Article 6; Clarifications 5.7]** Students who are having difficulties with their studies can call on their lecturers for one-to-one help. Each lecturer has specific office hours dedicated to each class. **[SER p.57; M5; M10]** UCB has recently begun to offer intensive English language courses for students through its English Language and Literature Department. In the 2016-17 academic year, 176 students were enrolled in five English classes. **[SER p.57; Clarifications 5.8; <http://law.beder.edu.al/sh/content/default/-bachelor-ne-drejtisi-11-4/372/373/?con=0&cid=2763&t=1&oid=2433>; checked 28/05/17 and working]** See also paragraph 5.3. **[Chapter I Standard III.6]**

5.7 UCB encourages its students to participate in University life. It supports a Student Council. It has designated a very large room for Student Council meetings and another medium sized office for its eight student clubs. **[SER p.57; 2, Article 99; 5, Article 42; 82; Clarifications 5.4; M9]** The Student Council expresses opinions and proposals on issues of general interest, such as, educational plans, regulations and programmes of study, through their representatives who sit on the various collegial bodies of the University, and they were instrumental in the production of the self-evaluation report for this review. **[SER p.57; Clarifications 5.4; M2]** One student representative sits on the Academic Senate. **[2, Article 10, 1.e; 3, Article 11; 4, Article 5, a]** The student voice on Academic Senate is not as active as the Rector wishes and he is holding meetings with students to rectify this. Nevertheless, student issues raised and acted upon at Academic Senate include the need for a student gym, and students' concerns that the mark average required to progress from Year 1 into Year 3 of the first cycle was prohibitively high. **[M1; M3; M4]** One student representative sits on the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. **[2, Article 28]** Two students, one from cycle one and one from cycle two, sit on each department council. **[39]** Three students are invited to each faculty council. **[39]** Student issues brought to departments and faculties and acted upon include pass rates, new book buying and financial support for special category students. **[M1; M6][Chapter I Standard III.7]**

5.8 UCB pursues a policy to assure the cultural and sports quality of student life in some small ways. Based on the budget of the Dean of Students, the University supports the Student Councils and student clubs, the latter of which aim to develop students' social, cultural, intellectual and sports skills. [SER p.57-58; 27; 82]UCB provides some support for sporting activities, such as two personalised football uniforms and transport for the inter-university championships, Universiada Tirana. There is also a small gym that students can use and they have their own sports club. [SER p.55; 82; Clarifications 5.3; M9]Students noted some cultural activities, including an international fair, and some sports activities, including football, basketball, table tennis and a gym. [M5; M6; Student questionnaire, 15.ix and 15.x]UCB employs physical security companies, whose representatives are on site 24 hours a day, and a doctor, who is on site four hours a day in a dedicated office. [SER p.58; 98; B22; Clarifications 5.9; M9]It has signed a cooperation agreement with the American Hospital that offers discounted tariffs for the medical services for its staff and students. [SER p.58; 99] UCB also has an Office of Psychological and Health Care. [5, Article 42][Chapter I Standard III.8]

5.9 UCB assists in helping students find employment. It has an Office of Alumni and an Office of Career Planning that is overseen by the Dean of Students. [SER p.58; 5, Article 42; M2; M13] It has a clearly defined procedure, supported by all academic and administrative staff, to integrate students into employment through professional practices organised throughout the year and the agreements signed with various companies. At present, out of 497 graduates from both cycles, 87 percent are either employed or pursuing further education. [M3; M4; M13] Although it is not a requirement, students have the right to participate in professional practice and internships. [SER p.58; 88; 92; Clarifications 5.8; M3; M4] Many students cited examples of working within Albania and abroad, which prepared them well for the world of work and many employers said that they were pleased to hire students full-time after they had engaged them on placements. [M5; M6; M7] UCB keeps graduation employment statistics in their Beder Information System. [SER p.58; 2, Articles 100-101; 84; 85; C7; M3; M4] It favours its graduates since 15 students are employed at the Institution. [SER, p.58][Chapter I Standard III.9]

## Findings

### Good Practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- UCB's Student Guide, which ensures that students have easily accessible and detailed information in one place about their study programmes and all other aspects of student life at the University (paragraph 5.3; Chapter I Standard III.3).

### Weakness

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

### Recommendations

The review team did not identify any recommendations.

### Affirmation of action being taken

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

**Judgement**

**The Standards for Students and their Support are fully met.**

## Evidence list

GID - General Information Data

SER – Self-evaluation report in the framework of the institutional accreditation

1 The Statute of the HEI Hëna e Plotë” (Bedër)

2 The Statute of University College Bedër

3 Basic Regulation

4 Regulation On Academic Organization

5 Regulation On Administrative Organization

6 Regulation On the First Cycle of Studies and Exams

7 Regulation On the Second Cycle of Studies and Exams

8 Regulation On the Functioning and Organization Quality Assurance Council

9 Regulation On the Organization and Functioning of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit

10 Regulation on surveys and evaluation

11 Regulation on Research Projects

12 Regulation on Archive

13 Regulations On Employment, Promotion and Evaluation of Staff Performance

14 Regulation on Registrar Office

15 Regulation On the Transfer of Studies

16 Regulation On the Transfer of Studies Regulation on the Research-Development Center on Islamic Sciences

17 Regulation on the Research-Development Center for Media Studies and Communication

18 Regulation On the discount of the tuition fee

19 Regulation of a program (Regulation on the MSc in law, criminal law and international law profile)

20 Regulation on the student discipline

21 Regulation on the operation and organization of the Permanent Commission for Ensuring Quality Standards of Institution and Programs

22 The Statute of the Center for Young Researchers

23 Directive on Encouragement of Publications and Research

24 Directive On the Process of the Curriculum Development”

25 Directive on Teaching Workload

26 Directive on On the Functioning of the Library

27 Directive on Student Clubs

28 The updated procedure for the staff employment

29 Staff employment procedure

30 Detailed information on the library

31 Operating Procedures of the Curriculum Development Office

32 Organizational chart

33 Strategic Plan 2012-2017

34 Senate decision on the approval of the Strategic Plan 2012-2017

34 Vendim i senatit për miratimin e planit strategjik 2012-2017

35 Senate Decision on amendments to the strategic plan

35 Vendim i senatit për ndryshimin e planit strategjik

36 Senate Decision on amendments to the regulation On the first cycle of studies and exams

36 Vendimi i senatit për ndryshimin e rregullores “Për studimet e ciklit të parë dhe provimeve”

37 Senate decisions on the appointment of external experts in the Quality Assurance Council

37 Vendime senati për emërimet e ekspertit të jashtëm në Këshillin e Sigurimit të Cilësisë

38 Decision of the Council of Ministers On Licensing of High School Hëna e Plotë (Bedër)

39 Senate decision for the involvement of students in collegial bodies

39 Vendimi i senatit për përfshirjen e studentëve në organet kolegjinale.pdf

40 Senate decision for the establishment of the Council for the Security and Health at Work

40 Vendimi i senatit për ngritjen këshillin e sigurisë dhe shëndetit në punë

41 Senate decision for the establishment of the Center of Young Researchers

41 Vendimi i Senatit për ngritjen e qendrës së kërkuesve të rinj

42 Invitation by the Public Agency for Accreditation of Higher Education for the initiation of the process of external institutional evaluation with t

42 Ftesë nga Agjencia Publike e Akreditimit të Arsimit të Lartë për aplikim për fillimin e procesit të vlerësimit të jashtëm institucional me Agjencinë Britanike të Sigurimi

43 Order No. 223, dated 04.06.2013 On accreditation of the institutional and academic programs

43 Urdhër nr 223, datë 4.06.2013 “Për akreditimin institucional dhe të programeve të studimit”

44 Order of the Minister no. 616, dated 12.30.2016 for the approval of the statute UCB

44 Urdhri i ministres nr. 616, datë 30.12.2016 “Për miratimin e statutit të KUB”

45 Order on establishment of Internal Evaluation Group (IEG)

45 Urdhër mbi ngritjen e grupit të vlerësimit të brendshëm (GVB)

46 Order of the working group for the Strategic Plan 2017-2022

46 Urdhër për ngritjen e komisionit për hartimin e planit të ri strategjik 2017-2022

47 Senate Order on the establishment of permanent commissions

47 Vendime senati për miratimin e ngritjes së komisioneve të përhershme

48 Certificate ISO 9001 2008

49 Staff Guide

50 Student Guide

51 Rules on the Organization of Exams

52 Form on the evaluation of the academic staff performance

53 Form of staff recruitment contract

54 Cover Model of the conference proceedings books demonstrating cooperation between institutions

55 Model of appointments for academic advisers by the department

55 Model i emërimeve i bërë nga një departament për këshilltarët akademik

56 The external evaluation report required by HEI

57 Annual Institutional Report

58 Reports of activities

59 Meeting documentation

59 Dokumentacioni i një mbledhjeje

60 Sample of budget approval

60 Shembull “miratimi i buxhetit”

61 Practical implementation of the recruitment process

61 Praktikë e zbatimit të procedurës së rekrutimit

62 Statistics on the promotion of academic staff in years



63 Sample-Practice for the approval of the admission criteria  
63 Praktika e ndjekur për miratim të kriterëve të pranimit të studentëve  
64 Sample-Practice of Internal Auditing  
64 Praktikë e auditimit të brendshëm  
65 Sample-Practice of financial support for participation in the conference  
65 Praktikë e mbështetjes financiare për pjesëmarrje në konferenca  
66 Practical cases, exchange students and staff  
67 Evaluation of teaching internships  
68 Quality Assurance Handbook  
69 Exam sheet sample  
69 Shembull flete provimi  
70 The decision to support Start Up and Mentorship programs  
70 Vendime për organizimin e programeve Start Up dhe Mentorship  
71 Notice on annual reports submission to the Rectorate  
71 Njoftim për dorëzimin e raporteve vjetore në rektorat  
72 Sample of the annual report of the Department of English Language and Literature  
73 Sample of diploma and its supplement  
74 Students evaluation surveys for the course and lecturer  
75 Student Conferences  
76 Fulbright, Mevlana documentation  
77 Course allocation and workload (update)  
78 Staff and students exchange programs  
79 The staff training action plan  
80 Job Description  
81 Students' Satisfaction Survey (update)  
82 Student clubs activities  
83 List of academic staff per department and respective degrees and titles  
84 Statistics on student graduation and employment  
85 Statistics of graduates  
86 List of academic staff publications  
87 List of programs and a program sample  
88 List of student internships  
89 List of technological infrastructure  
90 Scientific Conferences  
91 Projects with other institutions  
92 List of partner institutions  
93 Hygiene and Sanitation Act  
94 Fire Protection Technical Act  
95 Certificate of ownership and campus plan  
96 The layout of the current building  
97 The contract with the security company ALSIG  
97 Kontrata me kompaninë e sigurisë ALSIG  
98 The contract with AlbPastrim  
98 Kontrata me Albpastrim  
99 Agreement with American Hospital  
99 Marrëveshja me spitalin amerikan  
100 The contract with British Council  
101 Agreement with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth  
101 Marrëveshja me Ministrinë e Mirëqenies Sociale dhe Rinisë

102 Agreement with Ministry of Interiors  
102 Marrëveshja me Ministrinë e Brendshme  
103 The lease contract with USLUGA  
103 Kontrata e qirasë me USLUGA  
104 Projects applied  
105 Competition on student best thesis  
106 HEI activities on inter-religious dialogue  
107 UCB Facilities (update)  
108 Directive on Bedër Information System (BIS)  
109 Statistics on scholarships in form of tuition fee discounts in years  
LIST OF HEI'S SUPPORTING EVIDENCE  
Evidenca nr.34 Vendim i senatit për miratimin e planit strategjik 2012-2017 (i përditësuar)  
RAPORTI I VETËVLERËSIMIT NË KUADËR TË AKREDITIMIT

### **B. List of additional documents (Desk based evaluation phase)**

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS.pdf -- Clarifications  
B1 Minutes of the meetings and decisions.pdf  
B2 IQAU meeting 2017-002 on 25.03. 2017.pdf  
B3 QAC meeting 2014-013 on 18.10. 2014.pdf  
B4 Annual Report in English 2015-2016.pdf  
B5 Faculty Council decision send to the Senate.pdf  
B6 Department decision on the budget and the consequent decision of the faculty.pdf  
B7 Seminars and workshops.pdf  
B8 MoU with TURGUT OZAL EDUCATION SH.A.pdf  
B9 Project applied with Burch University.pdf  
B10 Project applied with Terre des Hommes.pdf  
B11 Senate decision.pdf  
B12 The syllabus of the Comparative Legal Systems.pdf  
B13 QAC meeting 2014-004 on 8.09. 2014.pdf  
B14 "Procedure for development, application and management of research projects".pdf  
B15 Evidences project application and approvals and reports provided to OR..pdf  
B16 Research groups.pdf  
B17 Application form.pdf  
B18 Students' Internship report.pdf  
B19 Internship attestation.pdf  
B20 Workshop.pdf  
B21 Correspondence with DAR Tirana.pdf  
BAdditional Evidence No. 22 The contract of UCB with the doctor employed.pdf  
LIST OF ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE.pdf

### **C. List of additional documents of review visit**

C.1 Data on UCB, bachelor and master graduates Students.pdf  
C.2 Priorities and Policies of the International Cooperation\_ Students and Staff Mobility.pdf  
C. 3 Master Students Entrance Average grade 2016.pdf

- C.4 Orientation day 2016.pdf
- C.5 Bachelor Students Entrance Average grade 2016.pdf
- C.6 LIST OF EXTERNAL FUNDED PROJECTS.pdf
- C.7 Information Form for Graduate Students.pdf

### **Meetings**

- M1 - Meeting 1 Rector
- M2 - Meeting 2 Self-evaluation team
- M3 & M4 - Meeting 3 & 4 Senate & Rectorate
- M5 - Meeting 5 Students, first cycle
- M6 - Meeting 6 Students, second cycle
- M7 - Meeting 7 Alumni and partners
- M9 - Meeting 9 Univ tour
- M10 - Meeting 10 Chairs and secs
- M11 - Meeting 11 Profs and research
- M12 - Meeting 12 Teaching staff
- M13 - Meeting 13 Admin