



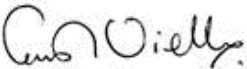


# **Institutional Review of Higher Education Institutions in Albania**

**Report of University of  
Medicine, Tirana**

**May 2017**

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## About this review

The overall aim of Institutional Review is to assess the extent to which each HEI meets the Albanian State Quality Standards, which came into force in 2011. Institutional Review is a peer-review process with each review team composed of a mix of UK reviewers appointed by QAA and Albanian reviewers appointed by the Albanian Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (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 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 action in progress and weaknesses for each Evaluation Area, together with a judgement as to how well the HEI meets the standards. The Judgements that the reviewers may assign are: standards are fully met; standards are substantially met; standards are partly met; or standards are not met.

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

- **State Quality Standards are fully 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 below.

## **The context of this review**

The University of Medicine, Tirana is a public higher education institution which has its origins in the Higher Medical Institute, founded in 1952. The Institute became part of the University of Tirana, as its Faculty of Medicine, in 1957. The Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Medical Technical Sciences later separated from the University of Tirana to become the University of Medicine, Tirana in 2013.

The University has three faculties: the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Technical Medical Sciences, and the Faculty of Dental Medicine. Beneath the faculties are twenty two departments. The University offers first cycle, second cycle and third cycle programmes delivered in Albanian. The Faculty of Medicine offers a Bachelor's degree in Public Health in the first cycle; a Master of Science degree in Public Health and integrated study programmes in General Medicine and Pharmacy in the second cycle; and specialisations and doctoral programmes in medicine in the third cycle. The Faculty of Dental Medicine offers an integrated diploma (Master of Science in Dentistry) in the second cycle and third cycle specialisations and doctoral programmes in dentistry. The Faculty of Technical Medical Sciences offers Bachelors and Master's degrees (i.e. first and second cycle programmes) in Nursing, Midwifery, Physiotherapy, Medical Imaging, Medical laboratory Technician and Speech Therapy and third cycle doctoral programmes in those areas.

The mission of the University is to educate students in the fields of medical sciences in all cycles of study, based on the highest professional standards; to prepare professionals who are able to provide optimal care for patients; to prevent and treat diseases; and to advance scientific research. **[SER p.30; 1.0]**

## Summary report

A self-evaluation report was developed by a team at the University which included senior staff, academic and administrative staff and a student representative. Drafts were circulated to a wide audience within the University before being finalised and approved by the Rector and the self-evaluation writing team. The review team found the report to be helpful and appropriately self-critical.

The review visit took place over two and a half days. The review team was made up of four senior higher education reviewers from the UK and two experienced higher education members of staff from an Albanian institution. The review team was supported by a Review Manager and a note-taker provided by APAAL, the agency responsible for reviews of higher education in Albania. The review team received a self-evaluation report (SER) and a portfolio of supporting evidence eight weeks in advance of the review visit, and supplemented by additional documentation requested. In all some 178 documents were considered, which enabled the team to familiarise themselves with the structure, policies, management procedures, facilities and teaching and research activity undertaken by the University. Evidence considered included the Statute of the University, Academic Regulations, Annual Reports, admission and orientation procedures, the range of external agreements, examples of programme information and evidence from deliberative meetings.

A series of meetings took place during the review visit that allowed the review team to gain a clearer understanding of responsibilities, procedures and the views of staff and students. The review team met with the Rector, senior managers, students, academic staff and administrative and support staff. Notes were taken at all meetings. As part of a tour of the campus the review team viewed the library, teaching spaces, clinical practice areas and laboratories, and was able to view the University's electronic information systems for staff and students. Having reviewed all evidence available, the team reached the conclusions set out below.

The University meets the standards fully for the Organisation and its Management. The organisation of the University is defined within its Statute and Regulations, and established procedures and protocols are followed for formal meetings. The review team identified good practice in the effective close collaborative relationships that the University has developed with the health sector. The review team affirmed the University's work to meet the requirements of law 80/2015 and the steps being taken to strengthen the evaluation of quality and standards through the establishment of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. The review team did not identify any weaknesses or recommendations.

The University meets the standards fully for Resourcing. The responsibilities for resources are clearly set out in the Statute and Regulations of the University and carried out appropriately through the Rectorate, Senate and Administration Board. The review team noted that the University is able to draw on a wide range of resources and support from across the health sector, and in particular benefits from its close location to the Mother Teresa University Hospital and health centre facilities. This provides a seamless and rich extension of resource for staff and students. The review team did not identify any good practice, weaknesses, recommendations or affirmations.

The University meets the standards fully for the Curriculum. As befits medicine and subjects allied to medicine, the curriculum relates closely to the requirements of the profession and is supported by a strong network of practitioners and professional bodies. Study programmes are clearly defined, and appropriate and timely information is given to

students. The review team did not identify any good practice, weaknesses, recommendations or affirmations.

The University meets the standards substantially for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research. Study rules and requirements are clearly set out in the University's regulation and there is a very strong relationship with professional practice, with much teaching taking place in cooperation with other organisations. However, the review team identified as a weakness the lack of a University-wide effective approach to promoting continuous improvement in teaching quality for both new and established staff. It is recommended that the University implements an effective system and accompanying procedure to develop all teaching staff in teaching, learning and assessment, taking into account current best practice. The review team did not identify any good practice or affirmations.

The University meets the standards fully for the Students and their Support. Students benefit from close relationships with academic staff and from access to strong networks of practitioners. Students are well supported and have access to a wide range of social and community activities through the Student Council. The review team affirmed the steps being taken across the University to strengthen careers support and the collection of statistics on graduate employment. The review team did not identify any good practice, weaknesses or recommendations

## Summary of findings

### Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- the effective close collaborative relationships that the University has developed with the health sector (paragraphs 1.22 and 4.1; **Chapter III Standard III.3**).

### Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weakness:

- the lack of a University-wide effective approach to promoting continuous improvement in teaching quality for both new and established staff (paragraphs 4.13 and 4.14; **Chapter II Standard I.1**).

### Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendation:

- that the University implement an effective system and accompanying procedure to develop all teaching staff in teaching, learning and assessment, taking into account current best practice (paragraph 4.14; **Chapter II Standard I.1**).

### Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirms the following actions already in progress:

- the work being undertaken to meet the requirements of law 80/2015 (paragraph 1.1; **Chapter III Standard I.1**)
- the steps being taken to strengthen the evaluation of quality and standards through the establishment of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (paragraphs 1.8 and 4.23; **Chapter III Standard I.4**)

- the steps being taken across the University to strengthen careers support and the collection of statistics on graduate employment(paragraphs 5.12, 3.9 and 4.12; **Chapter I Standard III.9**).

## **Summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area**

- 1 The Standards for the Organisation and its Management are **fully met**.
- 2 The Standards for Resourcing are **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 review team recommends to the Accreditation Council that at the University of Medicine, Tirana the State Quality Standards are **fully met**.



## Detailed report

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

1.1 The University of Medicine is a public higher education institution established in 2013 by central government decree. It has its own statutes, which are designed to reflect higher education law and the University's mission. **[1.0]** The institution and its structures work in accordance with its statutes. The statutes have been amended over time by Senate to reflect legislative changes and to facilitate improvements in the operation of the University. **[Decision of 19.03.2016 quoted in SER]** In addition to its statutes, the University has a set of formal regulations which provide the basis for the structure, organisation and operation of the University as well as defining the rights and obligations of staff and students. **[3.0]** Regulations are updated by Senate as appropriate. The new law relating to higher education, 80/2015, requires changes to both the University's statutes and regulations. The review team **affirms** that action is underway to meet the requirements of law 80/2015. A working group was set up to address the issue in March 2017. **[FE1.4.1]** New draft statutes have been completed. They are currently under internal consultation before formal confirmation by Senate later in the year and submission to the Ministry of Education and Sports. **[M1]** Changes to regulations are expected to follow as required. **[Chapter III Standard I.1]**

1.2 The organisation of the University is defined within its statutes and regulations and centres on three key bodies - the Rectorate, the Senate and the Administration Board. The Rectorate, comprising the Rector, his deputy and central administrative departments and directorates, is responsible for the overall management of the institution. **[1.0; 18.0; 18.2]** The Rector is elected by the full-time staff and students for a period of four years. The Senate, chaired by the Rector, is the University's highest academic authority and consists of elected representatives of the staff and students. **[7.0]** The Administration Board, formerly the Administration Council, supervises financial and administrative affairs and works with the Senate and Rectorate to develop budgets and resource plans. **[8.0]** A fourth central body is the elected Council of Ethics which advises on matters relating to ethics and standards of academic life as well as investigating breaches of the University Code of Ethics. **[15; FE Index of documents supplied; AE5; M7]**

1.3 The University is structured around three faculties each of which is headed by an elected dean. Each faculty has a set of formal regulations derived from the University's statutes and regulations. **[3.1]** Below the faculties are 22 departments, each led by an elected head. Under previous legislation each faculty had a collegial Council of Faculty which, among other responsibilities oversaw the design and delivery of programmes of study and the overall management of the faculty. These responsibilities have been transferred to the deans pending the implementation of the new statutes and regulations mentioned above (paragraph 1.1). **[M1]** Legislative changes have also resulted in the suspension of faculty level Councils of Professors which played a key role in the award of doctoral degrees and the award of professorial titles. **[4.0; 4.1]** A new structure has been created to handle staff promotions; however, the award of doctorates is currently on hold until new government guidance is circulated and structures are put in place at departmental level in line with the requirements of 80/2015. The Rector stated that the issue of possible delays in the award of doctoral degrees as a result of changes in the legislative framework was being addressed as a matter of urgency. **[M1]**

1.4 Elections have been held recently for the elected posts noted above and for key bodies such as the Senate and Administration Board. The written documentary evidence presented by the University, and discussions held with staff and students, indicate that the

structure of the institution is appropriate and results in effective management. [**Chapter III Standard I.2**]

1.5 Senate, the Administration Board, and other University bodies meet formally on a regular basis. They operate within University regulations which set out their role, purpose and mode of operation. [**7.0;8.0**] In the past year, Senate met on more than a dozen occasions as well as conducting some business by circulation. [**Ev 7.1**] These meetings resulted in over 100 formal resolutions. The University has established procedures and protocols for arranging meetings, assembling papers, taking minutes and circulating decisions relating to both Senate and Administration Board. [**7.3; 8.3; 8.4**]

1.6 The University has effective systems for alerting staff and students to matters which are to be discussed and decided at Senate, and for cascading down Senate's decisions, which those met by the team confirmed as operating effectively. [**M5;M7**] Departmental meetings as well as the faculty-level deans' offices play a key role in supporting the work of Senate and other bodies and in following up on the implementation of decisions taken. [**Chapter III Standard I.3**]

1.7 The University's autonomy with respect to the external world is guaranteed in the law pertinent to higher education. Internally the University's autonomy is guaranteed through its statutes and regulations. The University is subject to both external and internal audit. External audit, which is carried out by the Ministry of Education and Sport, focuses on control systems, risk assessment and the effectiveness of systems at central and faculty level. [**FE2.2**] The University has its own Auditing Unit which undertakes internal audit focused on the effectiveness of controls and management processes. [**FE1.10**]

1.8 In order to strengthen the University's evaluation of the quality and standards of its provision an Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQUA) has recently been established. [**17.0**] Oversight of the unit's work is provided by a team headed by a vice-dean and involving academic staff, a student and an external expert. The technical support needed for the unit to carry out its work is provided by two central administrative areas, the General Services Directorate and the Department of Curriculum and Academic Management. The unit initially has a four-year remit. The IQUA is intended to undertake periodic assessment of teaching and research activity in accordance with the framework provided by the Albanian Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (APAAL). Staff and student questionnaires have been developed as part of this work. [**M7**] The review team **affirms** the steps being taken to strengthen the evaluation of quality and standards through the establishment of the IQUA, whose impact has yet to be demonstrated.

1.9 The Communications Sector within the Department of Curriculum and Standards manages University projects including applications for international cooperation and funding. The University has several agreements supporting exchanges and cooperative working with European universities and other agencies. [**21; 21.1; 21.2**] It also participates in a considerable number of internationally funded projects. [**23.0**] [**Chapter III Standard I.4**]

1.10 A new institutional strategy for the years 2017-20 has been agreed, superseding the previous strategy which ran from 2013-16. [**2.1; 2.2**] The new strategy is designed to reflect the mission and purpose of the University in the context of a new legal framework as well as developments in medical science and the broader field of higher education. The strategy has clear aims and objectives as well as action plans with target delivery dates relating to students, staff, internationalisation, funding and University structures and organisation. The new strategy was widely discussed at all levels among staff and students before being adopted by Senate. [**Chapter III Standard I.5**]

1.11 The University publishes an institutional level annual report on its academic, research and financial activity. [**16**] The report is developed from the annual reports of

individual faculties. **[16.1]** The report is discussed widely across the University and presented at an open meeting of Senate. **[M9]** The report contains extensive statistical and quantitative analysis of activity including comparisons with previous years, as well as qualitative commentary. The agreed report is published on the University website [\[http://umed.edu.al/universiteti/dokumenta-per-umt\]](http://umed.edu.al/universiteti/dokumenta-per-umt) and a copy is sent to the Ministry of Education and Sport.

1.12 The report leads to the production of an action plan by the Rectorate. **[AE4]** The plan is compiled by the Deputy Rector for Scientific Research, the Head of the IQAU and the Head of the Audit Unit. Once approved by the Rectorate the faculties, departments and other units are given deadlines for implementing the agreed actions. Progress is monitored by the Vice-Rector for Academic Management and Curriculum who reports back on a regular basis to the Rectorate. **[Chapter III Standard I.6]**

1.13 Academic freedom is enshrined in the statutes and regulations of the University. **[1.0; 3.0]** It is realised through the delegation of responsibilities downwards to faculties and departments; appointment of suitably qualified staff; the encouragement of independent scholarship and research; and the formal processes in place that are designed to ensure both the currency and relevance of teaching and fair assessment. The principle of academic freedom underpins the responsibilities placed on all staff by the University's code of ethics. **[15.0]** Staff have the right to organise their teaching, research and scholarship independently within the framework provided by the University's mission and purpose and their department's agreed policies. **[M7]** The University uses its autonomy to pursue its mission by signing agreements with higher education institutions and other relevant organisations locally, nationally and internationally.

1.14 The University has a full-time academic staff of around 300, all of whom are well qualified in their discipline. Academic staff are organised into three faculties, each of which encompasses at least three departments and meet the stated requirements for critical mass and qualifications. **[18.0; 19.0]** The University has a public website containing a broad range of information, some of which is available in English. [\[www.umed.edu.al\]](http://www.umed.edu.al) **[Chapter III Standard II.1]**

1.15 Formal boards - Senate, Administration Board, and Council of Ethics - are currently in operation within the University at institutional level. Councils of Faculty and Professors previously operated at faculty level. Following the enactment of the law 80/2015, the work of the former has passed to the Dean's office and the latter have been suspended pending reorganisation. Both staff and students report that there is widespread opportunity for them to raise issues, engage in debate, and be kept informed of the work of these formal boards and decisions taken. **[M3a; M3b; M4; M5; M7; M9]** For staff, both academic and professional, issues and decisions move upwards or downwards through frequent open departmental meetings and the Dean's office or the directorate. Students can raise matters through the Student Council and their elected representatives on Senate (see paragraphs 4.9 and 5.9 below). **[Chapter III Standard II.3]**

1.16 The University maintains a close dialogue with the health sector and employers of health professionals which provides insight into trends in demand for doctors, nurses, dentists and other specialists. **[1.11.1]** Conferences, research activities and job fairs also contribute knowledge about the demand for different professions and skills both in Albania and overseas. **[11.2]** An agreement has been signed with a leading German medical employment agency to provide students with enhanced training to facilitate those wishing to work abroad. **[37.5]**

1.17 Students enter the Medical University of Tirana with the intention of pursuing careers in medicine and allied professions and study on career-oriented tracks that become

more specialised in the second and third cycles. Data is solicited from the Ministry of Education and Sport on the performance of the University's graduates in the exams of regulated professions in the field of medicine and from regulatory bodies themselves. [37.4; 37.6; 37.7] The University accumulates considerable knowledge of the subsequent careers of its graduates through networking and interaction with the health sector. This data is largely collected on a faculty and departmental basis and in relation to specific health professions for which training is provided. [AE8] Alumni surveys have been carried out to check on the relevance of programmes to practice. [1] However, the University has noted the increasing complexity and geographical range of the careers of its graduates and is aware of the challenges this may pose in the future for data collection and analysis of graduate employment (see paragraph 5.12). [M5; FE3.5]

1.18 The University endeavours to compete fairly for staff, students and resources. It employs transparent, meritocratic selection and recruitment criteria, and publishes these along with programme information and fees on its website. [Chapter III Standard III.1]

1.19 The University develops cooperation and partnership arrangements in order to raise the quality and standards of its provision through mobility, joint research and exposure to international best practice in medicine. [22; 23] The University's strategy identifies internationalisation as a priority, including plans for further inter-institutional mobility agreements; more joint research projects; and the development of joint programmes taught in English. [2.2]

1.20 The University has signed a considerable number of agreements with higher education institutions, health care institutions and a range of other governmental and private organisations, located both in Albania and overseas. [21; 21.1; 21.2] Exchange arrangements cover both academic and professional staff as well as students. The University also cooperates closely with universities and hospitals in Albanian-speaking countries such as Kosovo and Macedonia including the recognition of staff and the admittance of pre-defined student numbers. [Chapter III Standard III.2]

1.21 Under law 80/2015 the University is part of Albania's University Healthcare system. Departments of the University have clinical, teaching and research roles. [18.1] The University works with six public hospitals and clinics, the blood transfusion service, the Institute of Public Health, primary care clinics and private structures such as pharmacies.

1.22 The review team identified as a feature of **good practice** the effective close collaborative relationships that the University has developed with the health sector, which enables the seamless pursuit of academic and applied medical practice, research and training. These links enhance the quality of the student experience through access to health infrastructure and professionals; the design and delivery of programmes; opportunities for students to engage in practice; research; and the provision of employment opportunities. The relationship with the health sector operates at multiple levels across all areas of the University and is both constructive and mutually beneficial. Because of this close cooperation, the University is better enabled to fulfil its mission of preparing health professionals that practice optimal care to patients, with the aim of preventing and treating diseases, as well as advancing scientific research to the benefit of health (see also paragraphs 2.12, 2.13, 3.11, 4.1). [2.2] [Chapter III Standard III.3]

1.23 The University recruits a significant minority of non-Albanian students from neighbouring Balkan states. [FE: Index of Documents Supplied] A small number of non-Albanian academic staff are employed and others may be invited to give guest lectures and master-classes. The University participates in international projects sponsored by the European Union such as the Erasmus scheme and Horizon 2020, which are publicised widely to staff and students. [23] Participation in such programmes was reported on several

occasions by staff and students who met the review team. **[M7; M8a; M8b]** Students are briefed on mobility opportunities and credits earned abroad are recognised. Incoming students are welcomed and benefit particularly from modules taught in English. Increased opportunities for staff and student mobility; international joint research and publication; increased inward flows of international lecturers and guest speakers; and the development of a joint programme with an overseas partner are identified in the University's strategic plan. **[0.2.2; M1] [Chapter III Standard III.4]**

## Findings

### Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- the effective close collaborative relationships that the University has developed with the health sector (paragraph 1.22 and 4.1; **Chapter III Standard III.3**).

### Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

### Recommendations

The review team did not identify any recommendations.

### Affirmation of action being taken

The review team affirmed the following actions already in progress:

- the work being undertaken to meet the requirements of law 80/2015 (paragraph 1.1; **Chapter III Standard I.1**)
- the steps being taken to strengthen the evaluation of quality and standards through the establishment of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (paragraph 1.8 and 4.23; **Chapter III Standard I.4**).

## Judgement

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

## Evaluation Area 2: Resourcing

2.1 The University has an open policy for the recruitment and appointment of academic, administrative and support staff, underpinned by systematic procedures. **[Articles 64-79; 24; 24.1; 24.4; 42]** The University establishes its human resource needs at the beginning of each year for both full and part-time staff. These are reviewed by Senate and the Rector, approved by the Administration Board and advertised both on the University's website and on the website of the Public Procurement Office. Numerically weighted criteria are published in advance against which applicants are scored by a commission convened for the purpose. The criteria include favourable weightings for applicants from internationally recognised universities. Applicants are informed of their ranking in the process and those that are unsuccessful have the opportunity to appeal. The University publishes its organisation chart, together with a range of other key documents on its website [\[http://umed.edu.al/universiteti/organiqrama-umt/\]](http://umed.edu.al/universiteti/organiqrama-umt/). **[Chapter III Standard IV.1]**

2.2 All new, full-time, academic staff are assigned a teaching mentor for their probationary year. During this period they must shadow and observe all classes delivered by their mentor and are observed by their mentor in all the classes they deliver. **[M7]** This serves as a highly personalised induction to the University and its teaching requirements. Both new academic and administrative staff are invited to engage in University social and cultural activities and activities organised for the benefit of students and the wider community. **[26.1, 26.2, 26.3]** These activities and the integration and induction of new staff are supported by written information about the University including a guide for students, a guide to the estate, and a History of Medical Higher Education in Albania. **[27.1; 27.3; 27.4; 27.5]** **[Chapter III Standard IV.2]**

2.3 The University reviews its staff at least annually through a range of mechanisms which include execution of workload, effectiveness of programme delivery (student retention and achievement), analysis of student feedback, evaluation of research activity and effective administration. Staff reviews are undertaken by the Head of Department and reported to the Dean of Faculty. The evidence that is drawn upon is now being collated systematically by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. **[SER p.19; 1.0 Article 27; 3.0 Article 24; 17.0; 37.3; FE13]** Academic staff stated that professional development was a priority; however, this related to their field of professional practice rather than to learning and teaching. **[M7]** The University is actively engaged in promoting an internationalisation agenda and has signed a number of agreements with universities outside Albania. **[21.2]** The University has a wide range of international collaborative activities that provide opportunities for staff to work with and in international universities. **[16; 23]** The University's criteria for promotion to professor require candidates to have taught or carried out research in an international university and its procedures require the inclusion of a foreign professor on the Assessment Commission for academic titles. **[4; 4.1; 5.0]** **[Chapter III Standard IV.3]**

2.4 A wide range of social, cultural and community events are organised by the University's staff and students with the assistance of the Student Council. They include celebrations of national holidays, cultural festivals, anniversaries, graduation ceremonies, book launches and sports events. In particular the review team noted the number of events that the students organised within the wider community to support disadvantaged groups or raise awareness of health and social issues and thereby promoting social dialogue. **[26.2; M8]** The University provides health and social insurance to its staff. **[M9]** **[Chapter III Standard IV.4]**

2.5 Effective management of human resources is supported through the clear specification of contractual obligations, rights, responsibilities and role for each employee in

their terms of employment and job description. **[3 Ch 2; 3.1; 24.3]** Workload and performance is reviewed annually, which provides the opportunity for adjustments to be made to the terms of employment, such as hours and subject coverage. The employment contracts are filed by the Human Resources Department which oversees their maintenance and currency.**[24.4] [Chapter III Standard II.2]**

2.6 The University operates a medium-term budgeting model that extends over a three-year period and which is reviewed and amended annually. **[1.0 Article 88]** This provides greater stability in predicting income and expenditure. The funds allocated from the state budget, as well as the revenues it has generated itself from services and third stream activities, are managed in accordance with statutory regulations. The budget is driven from bottom up with bids from departments and administrative units through faculties to the Rectorate. The budget is collated together with supporting arguments by the University's Office of Budget and Investments and is sent by the University Chancellor to the Academic Senate for scrutiny and approval. Once approved by Senate the budget progresses to the Administration Board where it is reviewed against efficiency and benefit criteria.**[10]** When approved by the Board the detailed budget is devolved back down to faculty and department level for implementation. In future, the University plans to devolve greater autonomy over the budget to faculties.**[M4] [Chapter III Standard VI.1]**

2.7 The responsibilities of accountable officers within the University are clearly set out in the statutes and regulations of the University **[1.0, Article 3]** together with the roles of units established to assist with budget preparation and implementation: the Office for Budget and Investment and the Audit Unit, which are also responsible for ensuring that the budget process conforms to accounting rules and State law.**[10]** Oversight by Academic Senate and the Administration Board ensures transparency. In its scrutiny, the Academic Senate references the budget to the University's mission, development policy and strategic plan.**[10.3][Chapter III Standard VI.2]**

2.8 In compliance with Law No. 114/2015 the University has a detailed internal audit process.**[10]** This results in an analytical and self-critical report and action plan,**[10.1]** which is provided to the Rector, discussed in staff meetings and disseminated to Faculties and Departments for implementation.**[10.2]** The University is subject to external audits by the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Regional Tax Office, the State Audit Institution and the Ministry of Finance.**[SER p.22]** Directives in recent audit reports by the Ministry of Education and Sport led to improvements in the formalisation of a systematic approach to the resourcing and conduct of internal audit. The external audit report is published and available to all staff and students.**[Chapter III Standard VI.3]**

2.9 The University's information management system is effective in supporting the work of staff, students and administration. The University is part of the Albanian Academic Network (AAN) which enables it to access functionality through ESSE3 IRIS for teaching, research and administrative needs. The University's data is forwarded through this system to the Ministry of Education and Sports. The University also has a relationship with the Albanian National Examination Association through this system that enables it to draw down applicant data. The University also uses the APAAL electronic management system through which it manages current and archive information about its programmes of study, students and staff.**[SER p.23; 45.2; 45.8]** The IT Sector of the University's General Services Directorate supports and coordinates IT facilities which, in addition to academic and administrative staff facilities, comprise six computer laboratories housing 176 computers giving a favourable student to PC ratio of circa 10:1. The APAAL student survey indicated a comparatively high level of dissatisfaction with the quality of access to computers and connectivity to the internet. However, this was not reflected in the meetings that the review team had with students during the visit.**[M3a;M3b;M8a;M8b]** The University publishes all key regulatory and academic information on its website including data on student intake.

**[SED p.23; 45.3; 45.4; 45.9]**The University also benefits from its association with the hospitals in Tirana in accessing professional IT facilities and databases such as Telemedicine.**[25.3] [Chapter III Standard VII.1; Chapter III Standard VII.2]**

2.10 The University has appropriate mechanisms and infrastructure in place to manage its real estate. It maintains a documentary record of its real estate.**[27.4; 28; 28.1; 28.2]** The Strategic Plan 2017-20 provides an overarching context for the University's development but is necessarily broad in its approach. **[2.2]** Operational responsibility for real estate lies with the Budget and Investments Department which monitors and compiles inventories of the University's assets and implements maintenance and expansion plans in accordance with the approved budget under the direction of the Chancellor and the Administration Board. **[SER p.25] [Chapter III Standards VII.3; Chapter III Standard VII.5]**

2.11 The University has policies and resources in place to collate, store, protect and develop its cultural and scientific heritage. The library is responsible for cataloguing the scientific and cultural texts of the University, protecting hard copy editions and digitising them to establish a permanent and accessible historical resource.**[SER p.26.M9]** The Publishing Council of the University provides a gateway to quality publications in the scientific journal published by the University **[3.0 Articles 19, 6, 6.1, 39]** and which provides a facility and opportunity for staff. **[Chapter III Standard VII.4]**

2.12 The University provides essential services of common interest, both at a macro and micro level, to the local and wider community through its provision of medical practitioners to the Health Service of Albania, its contribution to medical research, its provision of diagnostic, preventative and screening services, and its activities through staff and students in raising awareness of social and public health issues. The University's students also carry out a range of activities related to supporting the community such as visits to the children's orphanage. **[1; 2.2; 2.2; 3;M6; 26.1; 26.3] [Chapter III Standard VII.6]**

2.13 The University provides appropriate facilities and infrastructure for its academic and research activity. The University owns its own buildings and facilities and is closely located to Mother Teresa University Hospital and health centre facilities with which it is inherently interlinked.This provides a seamless and rich extension of resource for staff and students.**[SER p.28; 1.0, 3.0;M1;M6]** The University's facilities include an appropriate range of lecture auditoriums, academic and administrative offices, laboratories, seminar rooms, IT labs and library.**[SER p.28-29; site visit]**

2.14 All University buildings have been built with contemporary materials, with sufficient light, and ceiling heights of not less than 3.0m in teaching areas.They meet hygiene and sanitary standards, soundproofing and temperature regulation, and security and fire safety requirements and are located in a district of Tirana sufficiently distant from industrial areas. **[29; 30]** Laboratories, teaching facilities and library resources appeared sufficient to the team to meet the needs of students and staff of the University, especially when considered in relation to the access the University enjoys to hospital accommodation and facilities. The determination of the University to improve these facilities further is recognised.**[SER p.30][Chapter III Standard V.1]**

2.15 The University possesses full documentation of academic activity in hard and electronic form from which it draws strategic information and statistics. This is assured by the Protocol-Archive Sector of the General Services Directorate and which operates in accordance with the Law on Archives No 9154. The collation and archiving of activity includes the complete student file, staff contracts and programme information. The University's website includes key reports that draw on the data collected. **[SER p.29; 24.4; 31; 42; 45.2-3] [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 taking place.

## **Judgement**

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

## Evaluation Area 3: The Curriculum

3.1 The University sets out its mission as the education of students in the fields of medical sciences in all cycles of study, based on the highest professional standards, to prepare professionals who are able to provide optimal care for patients, to prevent and treat diseases and to advance scientific research. [SER p.30; 1.0] In accordance with this mission the University offers programmes in three study cycles. [UMT-Institution profile: 33; FE4.5] Information about the study programmes offered is made available through its website, [<http://umed.edu.al/?lang=en>] informative leaflets, [27.3] contacts with local high schools and work fairs. [M5] A further resource is the student portal, which contains information for applicants and includes an online forum for questions. [M2; M5] [Chapter I Standard I.1]

3.2 The University provides modules of continuing education across all its fields of study, to update practising professionals [SER p.32; 25.2; M2] and has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mother Teresa University Hospital for the development of continuing education, [25.2; M2] as well as working closely with professional bodies. The University's continuing education activity is accredited by the National Centre for Continuing Education (NCCE). The University also provides expertise to the NCCE for the evaluation of training activities as part of its contribution to the lifelong learning and education of the medical staff of hospitals and clinics. [SER p.33; 25.2.1] Continuing education is seen as an important source of income generation for the University. [M4] [Chapter I Standard I.2]

3.3 The Strategic Plan 2017-20 sets out, as a major aim, the preparation of students in both theory and practice. [2.2] The regulations regarding provision of diplomas are clearly set out. [3.0, articles 55-59] Study programme details include information about diplomas issued on the completion of studies. [35.1; 35.2; 35.3] A diploma supplement accompanies the diploma and follows the requirements of European standards. [FE3.1] [Chapter I Standard I.3]

3.4 By their nature, the University's study programmes in medicine, dentistry and health prepare students for employment. A very significant feature is the close integration of theory with clinical, scientific and professional studies. [20.2; 20.3] There are no joint degrees at present although one such master's is under discussion. [M5] Academic staff from abroad are invited to teach as visiting lecturers on the University's courses. [38.1] As part of its collaborative agreements, many members of the University's academic staff also have academic staff status at universities and hospital centres in the region. [SER p.15] [Chapter I Standard I.4]

3.5 The University operates a workload planning model for its academic staff, with the teaching load of lecturers being assigned in accordance with the bylaws in force. [42.0] Any additional teaching load is financed from the University's own resources. [SER p.34] Study programmes are offered according to the academic and infrastructure capacities available. [SER p.34] In order to increase the number of students enrolled, the University is performing a financial analysis of its resources with a view to hiring additional new staff. [M1] Activities in which the academic staff of the University are involved are: teaching (50-70 per cent of the annual workload); research and development (20-30 per cent of the annual workload); and providing support to the institution (10-20 per cent of the annual workload). [SER p.34, FE1.2] [Chapter I Standard I.5]

3.6 Study programmes and their objectives are clearly defined. [35.1; 35.2] General information about study programmes is published on the official faculty websites. [<http://umed.edu.al/university-event/fakultetet/fakulteti-i-mjekesise->

[dentare/programet-e-studimit/](#)Information is also published on the portal U-Albania, [\[http://ualbania.arsimi.gov.al\]](http://ualbania.arsimi.gov.al) where the University has its own space. In this can be found admission criteria, as well as a forum on which the applicants can get answers in real time to their questions. [SER p.32;M5] This is, however, only in Albanian and does not include detailed syllabuses. Student admission criteria are defined by departments [14.0] and approved by the Senate [14.1] before being made public through the University's website and U-Albania portal. [\[http://ualbania.arsimi.gov.al/DeGES/ProgramDetails/37\]](http://ualbania.arsimi.gov.al/DeGES/ProgramDetails/37) Admissions quotas are proposed by departments and faculties, taking into account their capacity, [14.0] and then approved by the Senate prior to final approval by the Ministry of Education. [Chapter I Standard I.6]

3.7 Students whom the review team met confirmed that admissions criteria, programme content and learning objectives were clear to them. [M3a; M3b; M8a] The University seeks to guarantee a high quality of admitted students setting as an admission criterion an average grade above 8/10 for the first cycle of study programmes and an average grade above 8.5/10 for the second cycle of Master of Science integrated study programmes. [16.0] The University offers students in intermediate years the opportunity to transfer between similar programs of the same cycle from various institutions of higher education. At the beginning of the year the University decides on the quota of transfers allowed. [3.0;M5] First-cycle students are informed during and at the end of their studies about employment opportunities relevant to their diploma. [M3b] In general, students prefer to continue to the second cycle, but they can gain employment after the first cycle where they have been granted a professional licence. [M5] A significant number of students are hired abroad, in particular students with a first degree in nursing. [M6;M3b] The University has no systematic data for employees after the end of the first cycle. [M5] [Chapter I Standard I.7]

3.8 Students whom the review team met spoke positively about their introduction to the University and about the curriculum information provided. [SER p.51;M3b] First-cycle teaching methods balance theory and practical experience, drawing on staff from the University Hospital as well as University staff. The recruitment of new academic staff to the University is based on criteria that give priority not only to teaching experience but also to their commitment to scientific research. [SER p.36;M4] More than 85 per cent of full-time academic staff have at least a PhD degree, with 58 per cent having the academic title Professor or Associate Professor. [FE4.5] The close involvement in teaching of employees of the University Hospital, covering preclinical and clinical processes, enables each student to meet his/her learning needs, especially in acquiring practical skills. [SER p.36;M5;M3b] [Chapter I Standard I.8]

3.9 The University offers 17 second-cycle study programs: seven Scientific Master's, seven Professional Master's and three integrated second-cycle Scientific Master's programmes. [FE4.5] Over 70 per cent of the academic staff employed full time at the University are committed to second-cycle programmes. [AE12] Second-cycle studies promote extension of knowledge and independent research and a diploma thesis is obligatory for these programmes. [35.1; 35.2] Scientific Master's and long-term specialisation students participate in research and present their scientific work to the annual conferences organised by the University. [26.1;M8a] The Master of Science second cycle and integrated Master of Science second-cycle programmes are drafted in compliance with the University's scientific research and professional policies. [SER p.37] The professional and clinical practice of students is an important component of these study programmes and is conducted in cooperation with University Hospital units and other public or private health sector services. [SER p.37] University Hospital staff are involved in teaching in second-cycle programmes and act as supervisors of diploma theses and professional practice. [M5] The University is able to gather some statistical data regarding the employment of its graduates from professional bodies and from the Ministry of Health, [SER p.52; 37.6; 37.7] but this practice is not generalised (see also paragraph 5.12). [Chapter I Standard I.9]

3.10 The University's study programmes are organised in three successive cycles in line with the Bologna Process. **[SER p.37; 1.0]** The study programmes offered are organised in modules and evaluated in credits, according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). **[3.0; 35.1; 35.2; 35.3]** In line with criteria established by the Senate, Master of Science and PhD students are expected to prove the ability to communicate in a foreign language based on internationally recognised tests (level B2 for master's degree). **[AE3; 1.0]** There are some successful cases of student mobility in European partner universities, **[AE9; M8a]** but the mobility of students is currently low. **[AE9]** The University offers students in intermediate years the opportunity to transfer between similar programmes of the same cycle from various institutions of higher education. **[1.0; 32.1]** The University recognises credits earned at other institutions both at home and/or abroad in accordance with its regulations. **[1.0; 3.0] [Chapter I Standard I.10]**

3.11 A significant strength of the organisation of study programmes at the University is the way in which resources (human and physical) are shared with the University Hospital. **[28.0; 28.1; M6]** This strongly contributes to the acquisition of practical skills in support of theory. **[M6]** The number of credits allocated to each teaching activity, such as laboratory work, assignments and projects, professional practice and the final thesis are in line with the programme objectives. **[35.1; 35.2; 35.3]** The curriculum is kept up-to-date through annual reviews to ensure that the latest developments in the field of medicine are incorporated. **[34.0; M7]** Professional practice is undertaken through public and private health service networks under the direction of a supervisor professor designated by the University, and are assessed according to the respective credits. **[SER p.38; 20.0]** In first-cycle study programmes the diploma is assessed through a final exam (the diploma thesis is included only for excellent students), **[M4]** whereas for a second cycle, students must submit an original diploma thesis on a topic approved by the department. **[SER p.38]** The University supports the participation of Master of Science students in research as part of their study programme. Annual conferences are organised where students, guided by their professors, present their research results. **[M8a; FE3.4] [Chapter I Standard I.11]**

3.12 Study programmes integrate theoretical skills with professional practice throughout. **[35.1; 35.2]** and students are enabled to develop their clinical skills within the University's health structures or within its framework of agreements with other institutions. **[SER p.39; 20.2; 20.3]** Students are thus well prepared for employment. The ongoing efforts to open interdisciplinary study programmes demonstrate the University's intention to provide the labour market with graduates with extended knowledge and abilities. **[M5; 21.3] [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 As befits medicine and subjects allied to medicine, there is a very strong relationship with professional practice through clinical facilities, such as hospitals, owned by other organisations. Formal agreements covering the relationships are in place **[20.2; 20.3]** and much teaching is in cooperation with these external bodies to the extent that many staff have dual employment, both at the University and in clinical practice. The University manages these necessary relationships well and the students benefit from gaining exposure to teachers who are experienced and experts in clinical practice. These effective close collaborative relationships with the health sector are identified as a feature of **good practice** at paragraph 1.22.

4.2 Programme-level curricula are developed by the appropriate academic units and are approved annually by Faculty Councils and Academic Senate as stipulated in the regulation. **[3.0 article 36]** Course-level curricula are developed in parallel and in accordance with the programme-level curricula, and are approved at the level of academic unit (the Department). Workload planning follows, including an analysis of part-time staff needed, and is approved by the relevant Dean's office. **[SER p.40]**

4.3 When programmes are running their efficiency is checked by an audit group, which makes spot-checks on activity, receives documentary evidence and interviews staff. **[AE4.4]** The check results in a report that includes recommendations to improve quality. **[AE4.4]**

4.4 Students are generally content with the organisation of study programmes, the methods used by the lecturers, the quality of the lecturers **[AE13.0]** and the provision of study material. **[M3a; M3b]** **[Chapter I Standard II.1]**

4.5 As noted in paragraph 3.3 above, the University provides students who have passed all obligations of a study programme with an official diploma document. **[M3a; M3b; M8b]** Examination rules and requirements are stipulated in the University's regulation **[3.0, articles 45-50]** and are available on the website. In summary, examination schedules are publicised in advance; students' identities are checked in examinations and there is a procedure for subsequently anonymising scripts; results are released electronically by academic staff but the anonymity code is kept by administrative staff; students have right of appeal against procedural violations during examinations and may be offered a re-assessment; **[Ev 3.0, article 51]** students can complain about their mark and such complaints are dealt with swiftly by an ad hoc committee. **[3.0 article 52]** Students also have appropriately limited rights to grade re-evaluation. **[3.0 article 54]**

4.6 Academic and administrative staff whom the team met were clear about their respective roles in assessment and mark handling, **[M3a; M3b; M9]** and students were content with the assessment arrangements and confirmed that those arrangements complied with University policy. **[M3a; M3b]** Students knew how to make complaints **[M8a; M8b]** and were able to cite instances of where marks had been adjusted as a result of an appeal. **[M8a]**

4.7 Over half the students surveyed for this review reported that students copy in examinations, but the staff whom the team met **[M5]** were unaware of such large-scale cheating and the team was unable to determine the extent of this malpractice. The University, in its regulation, has appropriate procedures to be followed concerning cheating, to ensure

security and integrity of assessment,[3.0 articles 84-86] and some [M7] but by no means all,[M9] staff were aware of these. [*Chapter I Standard II.2*]

4.8 The IQAU assesses staff and programmes, including suitability for the labour market, according to its terms of reference,[17.0] which encompass surveying students [37.1-3; M1] for their opinions on individual modules, on individual staff, and on the provision offered by the Faculty. On the basis of its findings the IQAU will in future produce actions plans.[SER; 17.0 article 8] The self-assessment report noted that the IQAU also influences programme improvement through its contribution to the annual Report on the Academic, Scientific research and Financial Activities,[AE1.2; M1] although it was not clear to the team how the quantitative data the report contains might be used to improve programmes.

4.9 Though some information on which to base programme improvement action comes from state examinations and licensing bodies,[SER] programmes are discussed at annual meetings,[SER; M9] from which proposals for change go to the Dean of Faculty and the Rectorate, and then to Academic Senate for approval.[M9; AE3.14] The University provided two clear examples, in the provision of medical communication and organic chemistry, where improvements to teaching quality had occurred, each in partial response to the wishes of students.[AE4.2.1; AE4.2.2; M1] Students whom the team met were able to give additional examples, for instance in the provision of an additional examinations period and more practical classes, where the programmes had been improved in response to their suggestions.[M3a] Improvements, however, do not solely occur as responses to students, but can be initiated by the University and an example of this was also provided.[M3a]

4.10 In comparison to other programmes the pass rates for Nursing are consistently low, at below 80 per cent.[37.4] Although in the action plan arising from the University Annual Report there is an item concerning improving pass rates generically,[AE1.3] staff met by the team were in the main not aware of the issue in Nursing, and the University may wish to consider taking specific steps to ensure the pass rate in Nursing improves.

4.11 The University is aware of its resource base in relation to teaching and has plans and business cases for improvement, such as the establishment of a Simulation Centre, but is fiscally constrained.[M1] Resources are allocated partly in relation to student numbers; thus recently more teaching staff were approved for Nursing,[M1] with an appropriate appreciation of the long-term sustainability of staffing levels.[M1]

4.12 There is some awareness of graduate employability but this is at an early stage of development and does not yet feed into the programme improvement process. As noted in paragraph 5.12 below, the University is seeking a better understanding of the destinations of its graduates and this will enable it to exploit the data in programme improvement.[*Chapter I Standard II.3*]

4.13 The self-evaluation report noted that the improvement of teaching quality was IQAU's responsibility, which it carries out by issuing surveys to students on staff performance.[M7; M8a] The team also heard that teaching quality is monitored by the Deans of Faculty, again drawing on feedback from students,[M4; M7] and that some staff observe the teaching of others as a means of improving their abilities.[SER] New teaching staff are typically initially appointed part-time [M7] and must complete a year teaching alongside a more experienced person.[M4; M7; M9] However, the lack of any benchmarking of practice or use of experts in learning and teaching renders this process potentially ineffective, since there is no guarantee that experience equates to effective practice. Though established staff may update themselves professionally in learning, teaching and assessment by attending conferences,[M4; M7] the onus is on staff to self-identify any need for professional updating.[M4]

4.14 The University ensures that academic staff are qualified in scientific research, but does not ensure that staff are trained effectively in teaching or are supported in teaching experimentation. The lack of a University-wide effective approach to promoting continuous improvement in teaching quality for both new and established staff is a **weakness**, and the review team considers that **Chapter I Standard II.4** is not met. It **recommends** that the University implement an effective system and accompanying procedure to develop all teaching staff in teaching, learning and assessment, taking into account current best practice. [**Chapter I Standard II.4**]

4.15 Given the close relationship with clinical facilities, the University focuses its research on patient care and the development of clinical practice in Albania, rather than the basic sciences. [M1; M2] Accordingly, research groups tend to be aligned with national priorities. [SER] [**Chapter II Standard I.1**]

4.16 The department is the basic unit where coordination of research occurs, [M2; M4] and it is the department that specifies in which fields PhD study can occur. [M2] Staff are free to propose their own research, but it is the department that approves individual projects and allocates funding, [SER] typically through a tendering process. [M7] Such coordination is commensurate with working in partnership with clinical units and in ensuring that the work of relevance to Albania and state directives is prioritised. [M4] Time for research is allocated through dialogue based on research plans. [SER] The University can also fund priority areas directly, for example the provision of new pharmacy laboratories and consumables. [SER] [**Chapter II Standard I.5, Chapter II Standard I.4**]

4.17 There are partnerships with other bodies, mainly universities, that encompass research activity, [21.0; 21.1] and the focus remains local in terms of health improvement. [M1] The University capitalises on this local focus through its relationships with clinical partners. These partners expressed to the team their enthusiasm for participation in joint research projects, and were able to demonstrate how integral their participation was to the success of the University's research activities across a spectrum of actions ranging from the provision of data to surgical intervention. [M6] Funding for such activities has come from professional bodies and local clinical units. [M4; M7] [**Chapter II Standard I.2; Chapter II Standard I.5; Chapter II Standard I.4**]

4.18 The University is well represented internationally through its research activities. There is much participation in collaborative international research, [GID; 23.0] showing good access to international funding sources including from the European Commission (Horizon 2020). [M4; M7] Staff whom the review team met expressed great pride in their international activities, [M4] in particular their collaboration with other European universities. Research experience and the quality and quantity of research outputs are a factor in the appointment of staff. [24.0] [**Chapter II Standard I.3; Chapter II Standard I.5**]

4.19 Though international conference participation by staff is extensive, [25.1] few of the staff met by the review team had been reimbursed by the University for attendance. [M7] Scientific conference organisation by the University is significant (35 since 2010). [AE3.4] [**Chapter II Standard I.3**]

4.20 Students, in part through the Student Council, have opportunity to contribute to research conferences, [M3a; M4; M8a] some of which are organised for them, [26.1; AE1.2; 26.1; AE4.8.1] and they receive academic credit for doing so. [M3a] Third-cycle students (medical residents) are routinely involved in research activities, including publishing. [M8b] These activities are indicative of a supportive policy for research culture promotion. [**Chapter II Standard I.6**]

4.21 There is considerable international publishing of research outputs [25.1; 25.1.1] and staff indicated that where there was local publication, including in Albanian, it indicated work



of a local focus or which has a lesser impact.[M7]Although there are three in-house medical journals,[39.0; 39.1; 39.2; 39.3] only one is in English and while this may be limiting exposure of the work, the team considered that it might also be a positive feature in ensuring access for those without sufficient knowledge of English.[Chapter II Standard I.3; Chapter II Standard I.7]

4.22 In its self-evaluation report,the University noted that IQAU has a steering role [17.0] in evaluation of research activity through IQAU's contribution to the annual Report on the Academic, Scientific research and Financial Activities.[AE1.2]This report shows commitment in organising national and international conferences and in promoting and managing international collaboration in a range of activities, and also documents research outputs.From the report an action plan is produced,[AE3.1] although some of the action points lack the specificity to drive change.[e.g. #8, #9] Monitoring of staff activity is through staff annual research reports [25.0] that, via departmental reports,[M7] ultimately feed into the University Annual Report.[M2]The individual reports are used by departments to plan research-informed teaching.

4.23 Given the relatively recent creation of the IQAU, the University is at an early stage in systemically understanding its overall research activity, strengths and outputs, and this contributes to the affirmation noted in Evaluation Area 1 concerning the IQAU (see paragraph 1.8).At present **Chapter II Standard I.8**is not met.However, as research reporting becomes more established, the University will be able to set priorities and goals, and monitor progress towards them.[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:

- the lack of a University-wide effective approach to promoting continuous improvement in teaching quality for both new and established staff(paragraphs 4.13 and4.14; **Chapter II Standard I.1**).

### Recommendations

The review team identified the following recommendation:

- that the University implement an effective system and accompanying procedure to develop all teaching staff in teaching, learning and assessment, taking into account current best practice(paragraph 4.14; **Chapter II Standard I.1**).

### Affirmation of action being taken

The review team did not make any affirmations.

## Judgement

The Standards for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are

**substantially met.**

## Evaluation Area 5: Students and their Support

5.1 Student admission to the University is in line with the quotas for study programmes approved by the Ministry of Education and Sports. The admissions process and criteria are available on the University's website. In addition, the University undertakes a range of admissions activities including work fairs, weekly information meetings organised by the faculties in high schools, applicant counselling and visits to the University by applicants in order to meet staff and students. **[M3b; M5; 27.1]**

5.2 Once enrolled, students receive information in a range of ways -online, via emails from the department, through published guidance, **[M3a; M3b; 27.3]** and directly from academic staff. At the beginning of the academic year there is a 'White Coat Day' **[27.2]** when students symbolically receive their white coat and are provided with information on their studies, their rights and responsibilities, and details of their contacts within the University. **[SER p.48]** The students whom the team met were happy with the information they had received when applying to the University and when starting their programme. **[M3b]**

5.3 The University has an appropriate academic staff/student ratio of 1:8 for first and second-cycle students. **[M5] [Chapter I Standard III.1]**

5.4 The University uses a range of communication methods with students, including its website, social media pages, email, announcements on screens and posters, tutorials and regular meetings. Personal files for each student are kept in hard copy in the Teaching Secretariats in each Faculty. **[SER p.49, M5]** Students confirmed that they were content with the availability of information and the accessibility of staff. **[M3a; M3b] [Chapter I Standard III.2]**

5.5 Advice for students is provided by a range of University staff **[3.1 article 22; M3a; M7]** as well as through published guidance. **[27.3; 27.4]** The University has a clear procedure for students wishing to change their study programme and provides information, **[32 Paragraph III; M8a]** which is also made public at the beginning of the new academic year. In addition, the University has the role of 'Protector of the Students' in one faculty, **[1 article 37]** a nominated member of academic staff who supports students and acts as a mediator where necessary. Students reported that they had benefited from the Protector's assistance when they had sought to develop a feedback questionnaire. **[M9] [Chapter I Standard III.3]**

5.6 Students from minority groups, such as Roma students and Balkan Egyptians are provided with support through scholarships and fee waivers in accordance with national statutory requirements. **[40; M9]** The University also aims in future to give a 50 per cent fee waiver to second-cycle students in these special categories -a step which is beyond the requirement of the legislation. **[M9] [Chapter I Standard III.4]**

5.7 Students are provided with a suitable range of online materials, periodicals and textbooks through the main University library, **[36.1; 36.2; 36.3, 43]** where many books are in English. There are also smaller, subject-specific libraries, and students confirmed that they could access all the materials they needed. **[site tour; M3b]** The library is continuously updated through different means, including with the publications of the institution. **[39; 39.1; 39.2; 39.3]** Students and lecturers have free membership of the library and are provided with a registration card. **[Chapter I Standard III.5]**

5.8 Mentoring and tutoring for students is provided throughout the academic year, primarily by academic staff, although students were content that they could equally approach the Departmental Secretary or the Dean's office if they had any queries or difficulties. **[M3b]** Both staff and students described a close relationship where there was frequent contact and

staff were easily accessible, with little need to formalise their meetings. **[M9]** Where students have more personal problems that they may not wish to share with one of their lecturers, they are able to speak to specialist staff in other parts of the University, for example those with psychiatric expertise. **[M9]** **[Chapter I Standard III.6]**

5.9 Students are represented on the main governing bodies of the University, including the Senate, Faculty Councils and the Internal Quality Assurance Unit, **[SER p.51]** and are encouraged to engage in decision-making. Students reported that there are widespread opportunities for them to raise issues and that they can formally raise matters through their representatives on Senate and through the Student Council. **[M3a; M3b]** An example given of where their concern had been acted upon by the University was the request for additional assessment opportunity ('exam term'). **[9.1; M3a; M3b]** Students were fully involved in the development of the self-assessment report, collecting evidence and providing useful feedback on it. **[M2]**

5.10 The Student Council, with its elected representatives from all courses, is very active both as the 'voice' of the student body and in organising activities for students, some at international level. These activities have included conferences, **[26.1]** preventive campaigns and winter and summer schools. **[26.2; M5; M8a]** The University supports the Student Council financially and has provided it with its own office. **[M8a]** At the start of the year the University looks at the programme of activities that the Student Council would like to undertake and usually finances them to about 30 per cent, with the rest of the money coming from donors. **[M5; M8a]** Students also acknowledged the non-financial support it gets from the University in being allowed to use University facilities, to promote activities through the departments, and having support and engagement from staff. **[M8a]** **[Chapter I Standard III.7]**

5.11 As noted in paragraph 2.4 above, a wide range of social, cultural and community events is organised by the University's staff and students with the assistance of the Student Council. **[26.1; 26.2; M8]** In addition, within the University the Student Council is developing the project 'Students for Students', through which older students with good results tutor younger students. **[M8a]** **[Chapter I Standard III.8]**

5.12 Careers counselling within the University takes place through academic staff in faculties and specialist areas who are in close contact both with practice and with students. Students whom the review team met were happy with the information they received in this way. **[M3a; M3b]** A Careers Unit was established in the Faculty of Medicine in December 2016 and has two main functions: assistance with curriculum development, and careers counselling. Its projects to date include 'be a student for a day', for high school students to experience higher education, and collaboration with the Francophone agency which is bringing opportunities for internships abroad. The unit also runs surveys and is working to improve the employment destination data they have collected. **[M9]** The records collected by the University's Human Resources Department show that the majority of graduates gain employment in the private and public health sectors, **[SER p.52; 37.7; 24.5]** including those employed by the University itself and by the University Hospital. As noted in paragraphs 1.17 and 3.9 above, the University is aware of the limitations of its current collection and analysis of graduate employment data. The review team noted that there are plans to reorganise the structures dedicated to careers, including the integration of employment data currently held in faculties and departments. **[SER p.53; M9]** The review team **affirms** the steps being taken across the University to strengthen careers support and the collection of statistics on graduate employment. **[Chapter I Standard III.9]**

## **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 affirmed the following action already in progress:

- the steps being taken across the University to strengthen careers support and the collection of statistics on graduate employment (paragraph 5.12, 3.9 and 4.12; ***Chapter I Standard III.9***)

## **Judgement**

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

## Evidence list

Upload No.	Evidence No.	Title
4	1.0	The Statute of the University of Medicine, Tirana.
5	2.1	The Development Strategy, 2013-2016.UMT.
6	2.2	Strategic Plan 2017-2020, UMT.
7	3.0	Regulation of the University of Medicine, Tirana.
8	3.1	Regulation of the Faculty of Medicine.
9	4.0	Regulation of the Council of Professors of the Faculty of Medicine, UMT.
10	4.1	Procedures for promoting scientific degree and academic titles in UMT (Examples).
11	5.0	Regulation for the Organization of Doctoral Study Programme UMT.
12	6.0	Regulation of the Publishing Council of UMT.
13	6.1	Approved text from the Publishing Council, UMT.
14	7.0	List of meetings of the Academic Senate of UMT, 2013-2016.
15	7.1	List of meetings of the Academic Senate of UMT, 2013-2016.
16	7.2	List of Decisions of the Academic Senate of UMT, 2013-2016.
17	7.3	The Procedure followed for the development of an Academic Senate Meeting.
18	7.3.1	Concrete Example - Academic Senate Meeting.
19	8.0	Regulation on the Functioning of the Administration Council, UMT.
20	8.1	List of Meetings of Administration Council in UMT.2014-2016.
21	8.2	List of decisions of the Administration Council of UMT for 2014-2016.
22	8.3	The procedure followed for the development of a meeting of Administration Council.
23	8.4	Concrete example of an Administration Council meeting.
24	9.0	Statute of the Students Council of the University of Medicine, Tirana.
25	9.1	Concrete Example - Request of Student Council for new exam term
26	10.0	The procedure for preparation of the Mid-Term Draft Budget.
27	10.1	Internal Audit by the audit Unit.
28	10.2	The Audit by audit unit (Example MoES).
29	10.3	Concrete Example - The Approval of the Annual Budget.
30	11.0	Regulation for Long-Term Specialization III-Cycle in Medical Sciences of UMT.
31	12.0	Guidance on Admission and Registration in Long-Term Specialization programme 16-17,UMT.
32	12.1	Example Appeal by students in the ranking process.
33	13.0	Documentation List of the Department.
34	14.0	Procedure for the admission criteria and fees in UMT.
35	14.1	Example for the approval of the criteria for admission to programmes of study 2017- 2018.
36	14.2	Example for the approval of the quotas of Long-Term Specializations in UMT, 2016-2017.
37	15.0	Code of Ethics, University of Medicine, Tirana.

38	15.1	Regulation on the Functioning of the Board of Ethics, University of Medicine, Tirana.
39	16.0	Report of Academic, Financial and Scientific Research Activity of UMT for 2016.
40	16.1	Report of Academic, Financial and Scientific Research Activity 2016 Faculty of Technical Medical Sciences
41	16.2	Part of Report of Academic, Financial and scientific research activity 2016 Faculty of Dental Medicine
42	17.0	Regulation of the Functioning of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit in UMT.
43	18.0	Organogram of UMT.
44	18.1	Organogram of FM 2016.
45	18.2	Organogram of the Central Administration UMT
46	19.0	Structure of Full time Academic Staff 2016-2017 of UMT.
47	19.1	Structure of Part time Academic staff 2016-2017 UMT.
48	20.0	Regulation on teaching practice, Faculty of Pharmacy 2014).
49	20.1	Regulation of teaching practice Faculty of Technical Medical Sciences
50	20.2	Example-Agreement for teaching practice with other institutions Faculty of Technical Medical Sciences.
51	20.3	Example-Agreement for teaching practice with other institutions Pharmacy.
52	21.0	List of Partnership and cooperation with other universities
53	21.1	List of Partnership and cooperation with other Institutions
54	21.2	Example - Agreement national and international.
55	21.3	Example- Agreement for joint diploma
56	22.0	List of Projects at the national level of UMT.
57	23.0	Projects at International level of the University of Medicine, Tirana.
58	24.0	Procedure on the employment of staff at the University of Medicine, Tirana
59	24.1	Example of employment of academic staff in the UMT.
60	24.2	Example of employment of administrative staff in the UMT.
61	24.3	Employment contract, UMT.
62	24.4	Model of files from Human Resources (penalties and appeals).
63	24.5	Contract of the student of the Long term Specializations programme of study, UMT
64	25.0	Model of Template of the research activity and list of publications.
65	25.1	List of academic and research activities UMT.
66	25.1.1	Template of the research activity and list of publications.
67	25.2	List of continuing education activities of the UMT, QSUT.
68	25.2.1	Request of NCCE for the academic staff as evaluation expert.
69	25.3	Telemedicine.
70	26.1	List of professional, informative and academic-scientific activities with students.
71	26.2	List of cultural and sport activities with students.
72	26.3	Example of the scientific activity , culture and sports
73	26.4	Example -The financing of the activity, Summer School and Winter School.
74	26.5	Example -Scientific Conference organised by the Pharmacy
75	27.1	Orientation with mature students.
76	27.2	Orientation week with new students.

77	27.3	The Guide of the Student UMT
78	27.4	The Guide of the Infrastructure FM.
79	27.5	The History of the Medical Higher Education in Albania. .
80	28.0	List of UMT's infrastructure assets together with their surfaces in table framework.
81	28.1	List of UMT's infrastructure assets together with laboratories and the services offered.
82	28.2	The plan of assets of UMT
83	29.0	Hygienic and sanitary permission.
84	30.0	Technical Act no.PMNZSH.
85	31.0	Protocol-Archive Sector in the Rectorate of the University of Medicine, Tirana.
86	32.0	The procedure for application of registration and transfer students at UMT
87	32.1	Concrete example of transferring studies in UMT.
88	33.0	List of study programmes in UMT.
89	34.0	Procedures for opening a new programme, change or revision of an existing program at UMT
90	35.1	Curriculum programme of Study of FM (PICD+SPA).
91	35.2	Curriculum programme of study for two cycles of FMD (PICD+SPA)
92	35.3	Curriculum programme of study for two cycles of FSHMT.
93	36.1	List of basic educational literature to support the two programmes of the Faculty of Medicine.
94	36.2	List of basic educational literature to support the two programmes of the FMD.
95	36.3	List of basic educational literature to support the two programmes of the FSHMT.
96	37.1	Evaluation form of students for the subject.
97	37.2	Evaluation form of administrative staff for UMT.
98	37.3	Evaluation form of student for the subject.
99	37.4	Performance of the students of UMT in the national licensing exam.
100	37.5	Training for students on labour market.
101	37.6	Alumni performance, information from the Professional Order of Physicians.
102	37.7	Alumni performance, information from the Ministry of Health.
103	38.0	List of awards of the title Doctor Honoris Causa by UMT
104	38.1	List of foreign lecturers at the University of Medicine, Tirana.
105	39.0	Issues of the Official Scientific Publication of the University of Medicine, Tirana AJMHS.
106	39.1	List of the scientific journal published 3 years from FM.
107	39.2	List of the scientific journal published 3 years from FMD.
108	39.3	List of the scientific journal published 3 years from FSHMT.
109	40.0	Practice form of tuition waiver.
110	41.0	The practice of monitoring of the learning process.
111	42.0	The teaching hours of academic staff, planning and outcomes 2015-16 Faculty of Dental Medicine.
112	43.0	The Library Faculty of Medicine.
113	44.0	GID UMT.
114	45.1	The admission Criteria of the Study programme of the first cycle and the integrated programme of second cycle (screenshot)



115	45.2	The informatic service system. ESSE3 (screenshot)
116	45.3	UMT website (screenshot)
117	45.4	Social websites (screenshot)
118	45.5	List of Applicants and the winners of the Pharmacy study programme 2016-17 (screenshot)
119	45.6	Training Data by the ARTI (screenshot)
120	45.7	Recruitment of staff via website (screenshot)
121	45.8	The Public Agency of the Higher Education
122	45.9	Programmes of Study – website information
123	45.10	Department request for reagents.
124	45.11	The Work Fair (screenshot)

### Further Evidence (FE)

Upload No.	Evidence No.	Title
3	1.1	Old website of UMT, date 19.04.2017 and New website of UMT, date 22.04.2017 (screenshots)
4	1.2	Report of Academic and Scientific Research Activity of UMT for 2016.
5	1.3	Action plan based on the Annual Academic, Research and Financial Report.
6	1.4.1	Establishment of working group to compile draft Statute of UMT.
7	1.4.2	Example of the budget for reagent costs and laboratory materials as well as investments for 2017.
8	1.7	Regulation for Long-Term Specialization III-Cycle in Medical Sciences
9	1.9	Decision no. 539, date 6.8.2014 of the Council of Ministers and Decision no. 33, date 19.9.2014 of the Ministry of Education and Sports
10	1.10	Internal Audit by the Audit Unit.
11	1.11.1	Examples of proposals of the ministries for the needs of quotas of the Long term Specialisations
12	1.11.2	Labour Market Fair.
13	2.2	Audit by external audit Unit.
14	2.5	Report on non-discrimination in the employment procedures in the University of Medicine, Tirana.
15	2.6.1	Projects at International level
16	2.6.2	Example of the Results Report for successful conclusion of student's mobility.
17	2.8	Examples of the staff performance.
18	2.9	Example of the questionnaires report.
19	3.1	Diploma Supplements (General Medicine, Dentistry, Physiotherapy, Laboratory Technician).
20	3.4	List of Conferences of UMT 2010-2017
21	3.5	Employment of students in the international market.
22	3.7	Curriculum and timetable example for modules of continuing education.
23	3.13	Steps followed for the approval of the Doctoral Degree.
24	3.14	Example of procedures to improve study programme in Msc of Dentistry.
25	4.2.1	Case study of Teaching Improvement - Medical Communication Course for Year I Medical Students.

26	4.2.2	Case study of Teaching Improvements – Organic Chemistry.
27	4.4	Audit Report on teaching process.
28	4.5	General Information Data of UMT.
29	4.6	Budget for research purposes in UMT.
30	4.8	List of professional, informative and academic-scientific activities with students.
31	4.8.1	Example of activities completed by the University of Medicine, Tirana.

### Additional Evidence (AE)

Upload No.	Evidence No.	Title
1	1.0	Review of the Pharmacy Education Study Programme and the Labour Market
2	2.0	List of equipment and reagents for research activities for pharmacy and dentistry
3	3.0	Academic senate ruling for foreign language level
4	4.0	Action Plan compilation, implementation and follow up
5	5.0	Ethics Council evaluation
6	6.0	Minutes of Department of Pharmacy and Medical dentistry Faculty for curricula improvement
7	7.0	Structure Chart of IQAU
8	8.0	UMT Labour market.
9	9.0	Mobility of students from UMT
10	3.1	Table 1 with academic senate ruling for foreign language level
11	10.0	Regulation of UMT
12	11.0	Regulation of Faculty
13	12.0	Workload of academic staff 2015-2016 declaration to MoES
14	13.0	Survey completed by student and staff
15		secretary _ services and reports (screenshot)
16		secretary _ student management (screenshot)
17		secretary student profile (screenshot)
18		secretary _ exams calendar (screenshot)
19		secretary _ grades list (screenshot)
20		secretary _ statistics reports (screenshot)
21		students login profile (screenshot)
22		students portal (screenshot)
23		students _ grades list (screenshot)
24		students _ payment fee (screenshot)
25		students _ other information (screenshot)
26	14.0	Student e-portal (screenshot)
27	15.0	Secretary e-portal (screenshot)

### Meetings

M1	Meeting 1
M2	Meeting 2
M3	Meeting 3
M4	Meeting 4
M5	Meeting 5
M6	Meeting 6
M7	Meeting 7
M8	Meeting 8

M9	Meeting 9
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