



AGJENCIA E SIGURIMIT TË CILËSISË NË ARSIMIN E LARTË

**EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT FOR STUDY
PROGRAM PHD IN “ARCHITECTURE” OFFERED BY
EPOKA UNIVERSITY**

External Evaluation Group:

1. Assoc. Prof Denada Veizaj

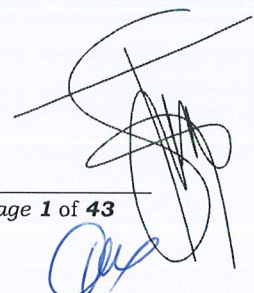
2. Assoc. Prof Teuta Jashari Kajtazi

July 2022

STUDY PROGRAM DATA SUMMARY TABLE

PhD in "Architecture"

Nr.		
1	Applicant HEI:	Epoka University
2	Basic unit that offers the program:	Department of Architecture
3	Name of the study program:	PhD in Architecture
4	Licensing order / DCM:	UMASH No.565, dated 19.11.2012
5	Reorganization order / DCM:	
6	Diploma registration form:	Order No.403, datë 08.09.2017
7	Order / VBA of the first accreditation:	UMAS No. 314, dated 10.06.2016
8	Study cycle:	3-rd Cycle
9	Duration of the study program:	3 Years
11	Form of study:	Full time
12	Language (Albanian / other):	English
13	The program is offered in cooperation with other institutions:	-
14	Joint degree (insert name):	-
15	Dual degree (insert name):	-
16	Level in the national qualifications framework:	Level 8
17	PAE / PWD academic staff for the study program:	
18	Number of students:	1
19	Comments / others:	This program is undergoing the external evaluation process only for the students registered before the reorganisation of doctoral studies.



INTRODUCTION

Epoka University is a private higher education institution established in 2008. Based on the provisions of the Albanian higher education legislation, the Institution has been granted the accreditation of the Bachelor and Master study programs in Banking and Finance, Economics, Business Administration, Political Science and International Relations, Architecture, Computer Engineering and Civil Engineering, as well as the Professional Master Programs in Banking and Finance, Computer Engineering, and Civil Engineering. Through the Ordinance dated 19.11.2012, the Higher Education Institution has been licensed to offer PhD (Doctorate) study programs in Architecture, Civil Engineering, Computer Engineering, Economics, Business Administration, and Political Science and International Relations (<https://admissions.epoka.edu.al/cat-phd-admissions-1932.html>) (<https://eis.epoka.edu.al/curricula>)

MEMBERS OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION GROUP (EEG)

1. Assoc. Prof Denada Veizaj
2. Assoc. Prof Teuta Jashari Kajtazi

The external evaluation group is assisted during the external evaluation process by the Technical Coordinator appointed by ASCAL, Msc. Erjon Xhako.

The draft report is sent to the institution through the AMS system on 06.06.2022. The institution on 10.06.2022 through the AMS system and with letter Prot. No 98/5 on date 13.06.2022, has sent comments on the draft report.

The external evaluation group after carefully reading the comments of the institution, states as follows:

Regarding the comment no. 1: The marketing strategy is of a great importance, especially in the process of giving a strong argument for reaccreditation or accreditation of one program. Therefore, the Institution should consider this suggestion as an argument for all ongoing and other new programs. **The report in this point does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 2: As stated above, the marketing strategy is an important general suggestion or recommendation, to be addressed by relevant bodies of the HEI. **The report in this point does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 3: The statement is clear enough while it does not address only the current doctoral program with one active student but refers to already considered restructuring of the future doctoral program in architecture. **The report in this point does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 4: The paragraph remains the same, having in mind that the HEI sees the possibility to take steps towards addressing the suggestion. **The report in this point does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 5: The paragraph or suggestion remains the same, for the fact that it is considered as a valid point for action by the HEI. **The report in this point does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 6: The paragraph remains the same, having in mind that the HEI plans to take concrete steps towards addressing the suggestion. **The report in this point does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 1 of the field 7: The paragraph remains the same, having in mind that the HEI plans to take concrete steps towards addressing the suggestion. **The report in this point does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 2 of the field 7: The paragraph remains the same, having in mind that the HEI plans to take concrete steps towards addressing the suggestion. **The report in this point does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 3 of the field 7: The paragraph remains the same. The HEI already applies practices that appear to be partially efficient in ensuring the desired number of professorship related to the fields of architecture. On the other hand, HEI plans to take concrete steps towards addressing the suggestion. **The report in this point does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 1 of the field 8: By consulting annex no 24 (Syllabus PHD in Arch) it is verified that in these documents are described in quantitative terms the theoretic and the practice workload of the student, as well as the academic objectives of the discipline. However, no specificities are given about **the form of conducting** these lectures/practices, considering the limited number of students. (1 student). **The report in this point does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 2 of the field 8: The paragraph remains the same, having in mind that the HEI plans to take concrete steps towards addressing the suggestion. **The report in this point does not change.**

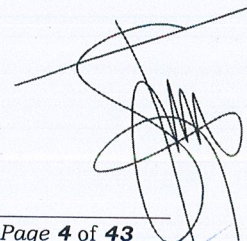
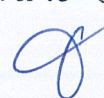
Regarding the comment no. 3 of the field 8: By consulting annex no 24 (Syllabus PHD in Arch) it is verified that in these documents are described in quantitative terms the theoretic and the practice workload of the student, as well as the academic objectives of the discipline. For all the disciplines offered by the study program, the distribution of the total of credits goes: 100% to theory; 0% to practices, 0% to laboratories. **The report in this point does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 1 of the field 9: The paragraph remains the same, having in mind that the HEI plans to take concrete steps towards addressing the suggestion. **The report in this point does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 1 of the field 10: The recommendation is related to the importance of active research projects adjoined or embedded to the PHD study programs, as the most efficient engines of producing qualitative research output. The paragraph remains the same, having in mind that the HEI plans to take concrete steps towards addressing the suggestion. **The report in this does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 1 of the field 11: The paragraph remains the same, having in mind that the HEI plans to take concrete steps towards addressing the suggestion. **The report in this point does not change.**

Regarding the comment no. 2 of the field 11: The paragraph remains the same, having in mind that the HEI plans to take concrete steps towards addressing the suggestion. **The report in this point does not change.**

MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATION OF DOCTORAL STUDY PROGRAM

1. Mission and Objectives of Doctoral Study Program

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: aims and objectives of the study program and scientific research, strategies in the short, medium and long terms, the number of students over the years, study programs of third cycle, HEI place (in the national and international contest).

The Doctoral Program in Architecture is being offered since the academic year 2012-2013, by the Department of Architecture, which is an integral part of the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering. During the first year of studies, completion of 8 courses (60 ECTS) is required, while during the following two years, thesis work/ final dissertation (120 ECTS), should be submitted in a total of 180 ECTS. The Doctoral program requires at least three academic years or six semesters.

During the discussions at the institution and the site visit, evaluation experts were informed about work the institution is doing towards the restructuring of the Doctoral Program in Architecture and collaborations with the international higher education institutions, for a possible joint Doctorate School in Architecture.

- All relevant documents, submitted by the institution and confirmed during the site visit, are taken into consideration, and confirmed.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.1 - General framework	
<p>Criterion 1 The study program of third cycle (doctorate) is a new program or a reorganized program.</p> <p>Criterion 2 If it is reorganized, the extent to which it affected the previous program.</p> <p>Criterion 3 The total number of students studying how doctor eight and number of those who attend this study program each year is in line with the policies of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) where the program is conducted as well as state policy for higher education and scientific research regarding recognition and validation of diploma and number of students studying for doctorate to one scientific mentor.</p> <p>Criterion 4 Doctorate study program is supported by national or international research groups accredited for research in relevant field or fields of studies.</p> <p>Criterion 7 Internal evaluation report of study program of the third cycle is reviewed by the</p>	<p>The Doctorate in Architecture program is an existing program, its curriculum is adapted in accordance with DCM No. 41 dated 14.01.2020 "On the Elements of the Study Programs in Higher Education Institutions" and the Bologna system.</p> <p>Not applicable. However, during the site visit and discussions, the institution gave information that they are currently undergoing through the re-organisation process of the doctoral program, making it ready for future application/accreditation process!</p> <p>One student is currently enrolled in the program, in compliance with the policies of Higher Education Institutions (HEI). The student is enrolled since the academic year 2018-2019, while 2 were enrolled in the academic year 2014-2015.</p> <p>Five fulltime teaching staff members are engaged in the program, each of them supervising not more than two doctoral students.</p> <p>Based on the provided documents and discussions during the visit, it can be noted that the program has agreements with 65 universities, 15 companies/institutions and is currently a member of 9 unions.</p>

Council of Professors.	It can be noted that the Council of Professors evaluates the Annual Internal evaluation report of the Doctoral study program in Architecture.
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Conclusions of EEG:

One student is currently enrolled in the program, in compliance with the policies of Higher Education Institutions (HEI), supervised by one scientific mentor. Five fulltime teaching staff members are engaged in the program and their international experience facilitates required relations and collaboration with research groups in different countries. It should be noted, as already discussed with members of internal evaluation group at the site visit, that the restructuring and reorganization of the doctoral program be planned and already taken into consideration. In addition, it is recommended to improve the marketing strategy for the doctoral program in architecture, ensuring a more competitive pool of candidates during the application and selection process.

2. Academic Organisation chart of the Doctoral School

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: the place of the Doctoral School in the organization chart of the HEI (University / Faculty / Department), data for the academic staff responsible for the doctorate, the number of Full-time Academic Staff (FAS), Part-time Academic Staff (PAS), Administrative employes (AE), teaching coordination with other units.

The Doctoral Program in Architecture is managed by the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering, which consists of three departments: Department of Architecture, Department of Civil Engineering, and Department of Computer Engineering. The responsible body for the ongoing program is the Permanent Commission (Annex 7), composed of five members elected by the faculty voting (two full professors and three associate professors) and a person appointed to report on the proceedings (Rapporteur).

Measurable indicators:

- Organizational structure (chart)

The presented organisational chart shows the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering leading the entire structure of three Departments (Architecture, Computer, and Civil Engineering), further organised in the Deans office, Assembly of Academic staff, and Permanent Commission. The entire structure includes the Faculty Administrator, as well.

- Hierarchical units, decision- making

Shown in the Regulation “On the Organization and Functioning of the Permanent Commission on the Conferring of the PhD Scientific Degree” (Annex 9).

- Academic Structures of doctoral school

Organisational chart and the tables bellow correspond to this measurable indicator

- Database of HEI, updating and the responsibility for retaining and sharing information.

Links bellow indicate various databases the HEI uses and provides information!

<https://lms.epoka.edu.al/>

<https://eis.epoka.edu.al/apply>

- Number of academic staff (verify the data, according to Table 1 and 2)

Table 1

Academic Year 2019-2020	Number of FAS		Number of PAS		Number of AE		Total number	
	Total number	Number of Degree's	Total number	Number of Degree's	Total number	Number of Degree's	Total number	Number of Degree's
Doctoral Program Faculty staff	3	3	0	0	3	0	6	3
Faculty staff engaged from the Department of Architecture	3	3	0	0	1	1	4	3

The self-evaluation report in addition indicates the number of academic staff for previous academic years, as well, while Table 1 shows the most recent. During the AY 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 the active student is on the Qualifying Examination Stage.

- Council of Professors or Permanent Commission and the coordinator of the study program

Table 2

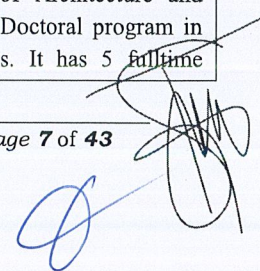
Name /Surname	Degree	Position (Member / Chairman)
Sokol Dervishi	Prof. Dr.	Chair
Ahmet Öztaş	Prof. Dr.	Member
Hüseyin Bilgin	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Member
Carlo Ciulla	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Member
Mirjam Ndini	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Member
Fadile Gezen	M.Sc	Rapporteur

The above Permanent Commission is active since October 26th, 2021, while the academic coordinator of the Doctoral program in Architecture is Dr Edmond Manahasa. It functions based on the: Regulation of EPOKA University "On the Organization and Functioning of the Permanent Commission on the Conferring of the PhD Scientific Degree" (Annex 9).

- All relevant documents, submitted by the institution and confirmed during the site visit, are taken into consideration, and confirmed.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard III.1 - Management and financing tools for doctorate study program	
Criterion 1 Unit that organizes doctorate study program has accredited two first cycles of studies in the field, in which it offers the doctorate study program.	Unit that organizes the doctoral study program under evaluation, has previously accredited two first cycles of studies in the field, which are: Integrated Diploma In Architecture, five-year program (Bachelor + Master), dated 28.09.2018 (Annex 10) and Master of Science in Architecture Program, dated 28.09.2018 (Annex 11). Based on the provided documentation, the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering is responsible for the management of the Doctoral program in Architecture and has adequate administrative premises. It has 5 fulltime
Criterion 2 Unit that organizes the doctorate study program has adequate administrative premises to realize its good functioning.	
Criterion 3 In order to carry out the doctorate	



<p>study program, the unit that proposes its opening engages the necessary personnel, ranging from teaching secretary that follows the third cycle progress.</p> <p>Criterion 4 Responsible bodies for its supervision are established in doctorate study program regulation.</p> <p>Criterion 5 Board of Professors, which is responsible for organizing and supervising doctorate study program has a sufficient number of members that cover all its issues. Minimum number of professors in PC should be 7 (seven). Board of Professors may be also raised to the level of higher education institution, when its main units do not meet the required number of full-time professors.</p> <p>Criterion 6 Board of Professors of the main unit that organizes and manages the doctorate study program meets periodically throughout the year.</p>	<p>teaching staff members and the department coordinator that coordinates the program. The program is offered in line with “On Doctorate(PhD) study programs at Epoka University”, based on the Law No. 9741, dated 21.05.2007, "On Higher Education in the Republic of Albania", based on the license granted by the Council of Ministers Decision No. 281, dated 12.03.2008, “On the licensing of the Private Institution of Higher Education "EPOKA" Institution of Higher Education”, on the Ministry of Education and Science Directive No. 5, dated 22.01.2008 "On the opening, termination and reorganization of PhD study programs”.</p> <p>It can be noted that the faculty has engaged the necessary administrative personnel to support the ongoing doctorate program such as the Department and Faculty Coordinators, Dean of Student Office, International Relation Office, Research and Project Office, and other relevant offices.</p> <p>Based on the Regulation “On doctoral/PHD study programs”, the responsible body for the supervision of the program under evaluation is the Permanent Commission, established and holding regular meetings. In addition, it can be noted that the Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering ensures the administration and logistic aspects of the program (Annex 8).</p> <p>The Permanent Commission (since October 26th, 2021) has five members, two of them holding the title of Prof. Dr. and three holding the title Assoc. Prof. Dr. The council has been established in compliance with the regulation of the Ministry of Education and Sports. Its organization and functioning are based on the Law No. 80/2015 “On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania”, including the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 112, dated 23.02.2018 “On the Determining of Criteria for Obtaining the “Doctor” (PhD) Scientific Degree and State Standards for Obtaining the “Associate Professor” and “Professor” Academic Titles. (Including the Regulation “On PhD study Program”, Article 2 – Annex 8).</p> <p>During the site visit and discussions, it can be noted that The Permanent Commission meets at least once at the end of every semester to evaluate the progress report for each active PhD student.</p>
<p>Conclusions of EEG:</p> <p>The EEG has evaluated all supporting documents related to the academic structure of the HEI and the doctoral program itself, suggesting that it offers a well-organized environment to support currently active student towards the completion of doctoral studies. Again, it should be discussed amongst relevant bodies within the HEI on how to increase the interest and number of doctoral students in architecture.</p>	

3. Quality of Academic and Administrative (support) Staff

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: dates for qualifications of academic staff, FAS/PAS/AE rate, Academic Staff/student rate; work load for FAS, PAS and AE; staff recruitment criteria; Contracts, data base for human resource; etc.

The regulation of the PhD/Doctoral Study Programs at the Higher Education Institution requires that the Permanent Commission of the PhD Scientific Degree be composed of five members of the academic staff who hold the “Professor” and “Associate Professor” title. The teaching staff for the PhD Program in Architecture is composed of one full-time Lecturer with the Prof. Dr. title, six full

time Lecturers with the PhD title and one Department coordinator. Currently the program rate of Academic staff/students is 1/1, since the active student is currently in the Qualifying Examination Stage.

Measurable indicators:

- EEG should analyze and evaluate some datas such as:
 - o Number of professors;
 - o Number of associated professors
 - o Number of doctoral degree holders (or PhD)
 - o Number of assistants
 - o Number of administrative and support staff (lab assistants, technicians, administrative staff etc)

The self-evaluation report shows information for the 2019-2020, 2018-2019 and 2016-2017 Academic Years. However, the table below (Table 3) shows the most recent information for the AY 2021-2022 which cover staff members engaged at the Department of Architecture in general. It should be noted that during the AY 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, the student is on the Qualifying Examination Stage.

- Verify the data, according to Table 3

Table 3

Institution / Basic Unit / Doctoral School/Department of Architecture							
	<i>Full-time Academic Staff (Name/Surname)</i>	<i>Position in the Department</i>	Degree		<i>Part-time Academic Staff (Name/Surname)</i>	Degree	<i>Institution where he/her works full time</i>
1	Edmond Manahasa	Head of the Department	Dr.	1	Teuta Kodra	M.Sc	Academia 3D Shpk
2	Sokol Dervishi	Professor	Prof. Dr.	2	Julian Beqiri	M.Sc	Dispaced
3	Anna Yunitsyna	Lecturer	Dr.	...			
4	Odeta Manahasa	Lecturer	Dr.				
5	Fabio Naselli	Lecturer	Dr.				
6	Artan Hysa	Lecturer	Dr.				
7	Egin Zeka	Lecturer	Dr.				
8	Desantila Hysa	Ass. Lecturer	Dr.				
9	Kreshnik Merxhani	Ass. Lecturer	M.Sc				
10	Nerina Baçi	Ass. Lecturer	M.Sc				

- Qualification data and reports between them (verify the data, according to Table 4)

Table 4

Academic and administrative staff	FAS	PAS		FAS/PAS rate
		Albanian	Foreign (invited)	
Professors	0	0	0	0/0
Associate Professors	0	0	0	0/0
Doctor Degree or PHD degree (taken at European Universities)	4	0	0	4/0
Administrative employees	3	0	0	3/0

The table above shows qualification data and reports in the period 2019-2020, reported in the SER and the documentation provided

- Data by age (verify the data, according to Table 5)

Table 5

Academic and administrative staff	Data by age (years old)							
	(36-45)		(46-55)		(56-65)		(66-68)	
	FAS	PAS	FAS	PAS	FAS	PAS	FAS	PAS
Professors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Associate Professors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Doctor Degree or PHD degree (taken at European Universities)	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative employees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 5 indicates and has the age of teaching staff in focus (as presented in the SER)

- All relevant documents, submitted by the institution and confirmed during the site visit, are taken into consideration, and confirmed.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.1 - General framework	
Criterion 6 The number and level of researchers engaged in this program constitutes a guarantee for program implementation (60% of them should be internal academic staff, engaged in research and holders of academic titles "Professor", "Associate Professor" or scientific degree "Doctor" or "PhD" awarded in universities well known in the world for quality and rich research and publishing activities in the relevant field;	Based on the information provided, the program, has four full-time teaching staff members, engaged as internal academic staff. They are holders of academic titles or scientific degree "Doctor" or "PhD" awarded at Vienna University of Technology in Austria, Palermo University in Italy, Czech Technical University in Prague, Istanbul Technical University in Turkey. While 5 are lecturers of Albanian and 2 of foreign nationalities.
Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research	
Criterion 2 The institution that offers programs of study of third cycle (doctorate), has sufficient academic staff with scientific titles and degrees. Criterion 3 The institution has sufficient administrative and research structures for activities provided in the study program to conduct research. The institution may organize joint programs of doctorate study with one or more other institutions, based on agreements between them;	It can be noted that, if based on the teaching staff involved in the program, 2 doctoral students can be supervised. Based on the information gained from the submitted material and discussion during the site visit, it can be noted that Epoka University possesses qualified staff and a well-organized structure and environment to support the research activities. In addition, the higher education institution has agreements with other institutions that involve the co-supervision of doctoral students.
Conclusions of EEG:	
Compared with the number of enrolled students since the doctoral program commenced, it can be noted that the institution possesses a qualified teaching and administrative staff, and a well-organized structure and	

environment to support the research activities of the active doctoral student leading towards completion of her studies. However, it is important to work towards the possibility of engaging more full-time teaching staff members holding “Professor” and “Associate Professor” titles, which will help already considered process of restructuring and reorganizing the future doctoral program in architecture.

4. Facilities, Infrastructure, Logistics and Other Services of Doctoral Program

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: infrastructure, material resources, logistics and other services, information technology (IT), libraries, other services for students.

Epoka University provided documentation and showed during the site visit that it offers well organized facilities, infrastructure, and other supporting services for the third cycle program under the evaluation. The SER contains and explains all data specifying ICT services offered, which are of a great importance to various research activities (teaching services, google services, software opportunities, network, interactive services, library service/physical and digital, etc).

Measurable indicators:

- EEG should analyze and evaluate: the Facilities, infrastructure and logistics for doctoral school (verify the data, according to Table 6)

Table 6

Facilities for doctoral school or study program	Number or Square m ²
Auditoriums	1138
Classrooms	1604
Laboratories	233
Computer/internet laboratories	327
Library buildings	322
Corridors / halls	2707
University sports facilities	2100
Buildings for tertiary services	157
Rooms for student government activities	30
Recreational facilities such as cafeterias / fast-food/etc	1808
Toilets for students	328
Logistics Room (for photocopying machines, etc.)	34
Offices for Dean/ Chancellory/etc	468
Administrative offices	63
Department offices	387
Quality assurance Unit Office	12
Meeting halls	130
Toilet units for staff	140
Etc	512
Rate m²/per student (total sqm 10419.6) (1254 students)	8.3 m²
Rate m²/per personnel (total sqm 2157) (90 personnel)	23.97 m²

Table 6 above is supported by the layout plan of the institution (Annex 15) and the site visit

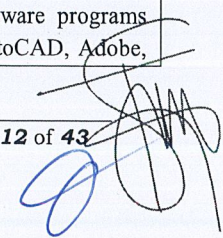
EEG should analyze and evaluate other logistics database, as:

- number of PC per students: 128
- number of PC furnished labs per students; 4
- number of PC for academic staff: 87
- number of PC for administration: 53
- number of printers: 15
- number of photocopying machines: 15
- number of head projectors: 1
- number of video-projectors: 30
- number of scanners: 10

All relevant documents, submitted by the institution and confirmed during the site visit, are taken into consideration, and confirmed.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard II.2 - Didactic basis and technical support	
<p>Criterion 1 Students admitted in the third cycle study program have necessary conditions to realize the study program with academic and research character;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Doctorate studies program provides harmonization of student's goals in scientific-research field, approved research projects and, at its conclusion, even the possibility of academic career and employment;</p> <p>Criterion 3 A scientific library with publications in hardcopy and electronic form and complete IT infrastructure available to of third cycle study program;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Students have sufficient technical support for scientific research development;</p> <p>Criterion 5 Researches that include laboratory researches are supported by sufficient scientific laboratory basis.</p>	<p>It can be noted that the student currently admitted in the doctoral study program at the Institution, has available conditions to accomplish the program with academic and research character.</p> <p>Based on the documentation provided, discussions and the site visit, it can be noted that doctoral studies program provides opportunities to harmonize student's goals in the scientific-research field supported by the different projects in respective courses during their studies, including possibilities related to their future career perspective.</p> <p>During the visit at the library presented by a very professional librarian, it can be noted that the book collection in the respective branches including the ones applicable to the doctoral level of studies is available. Books are inventoried and divided by areas and topics, mainly in three different languages: Albanian, English and Turkish, and selected in accordance with the needs and demands of students and academic staff at the faculties, including third cycle students. The institution has access and membership at JSTOR (shared digital library more than 2,000 academic journals). In addition to the above, IT infrastructure available at the institution provides sufficient needs to the third cycle students.</p> <p>It can be noted that the institution has adequate facilities, including two computer laboratories and one electronic laboratory. Scientific research development is in addition supported by the subscription the institution has in the Thomson Reuters Eikon platform (with innovative technology delivering critical information and powered by the world's most trusted news organization).</p> <p>As mentioned in the criterion above, the program has in its disposal two computer laboratories and one electronic laboratory, depending on the specific nature of the research. To enable a more effective teaching and research process, the institution has a large range of software programs available and installed, including Windows, MS Office, AutoCAD, Adobe,</p>



Visual Studio C ++, MATLAB, GNS3 Online, Cisco Packet Tracer, 3D-MAX, etc.

Conclusions of EEG:

The EEG evaluated available documentation and confirmed the same during the site visit, showing well organised facilities, infrastructure, logistics and other services required for the HEI and the doctoral program itself. It is suggested to continue further with other research support opportunities and possibilities, which will contribute within the process of restructuring and reorganization of the doctoral program in the future.

5. Financing and Management of Financial Resources

Descriptions part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: financial resources, data over the years, expenditures, costs per students, financial auditing, managing capacities.

Based on the information provided and gained during the site visit, it can be noted that financial resources are mostly from tuition fees of the study program. In addition, other financial resources include the Grants from International Projects and revenues from rents. If based on the official financial reports, the Institution has a positive annual balance and financial stability which guarantees the progress of the study programs.

Measurable indicators:

- EEG should analyze and evaluate the Financial resources, data over the three years (verify the data, according to Table 7)

Table 7

RESOURCES FROM:	For three or four years (as the PhD study program continues)
NON-PUBLIC FUNDS:	
Central government	
Local government	
NON-PUBLIC FUNDS:	
Grants on research and contracts	
Consultations, services	
All kinds of tuition fees (in euro)	3500; 750; 1750; 1093.75; 218.75;
Tuition and other student fees (in euro)	1462; 795.5; 1793; 824.11
Sponsorships	
Donations, assurance activities, foundations etc.	

Financial resources data over the 6 years is presented in Table 7 (all kinds of tuition fees), while the data from the annual institutional financial report related to the costs of the PhD in Architecture study program is presented within the same table (tuition and other student fees).

- EEG should analyze and evaluate the Costs for students and their mobility costs;

The use of the individual budget line for scientific research and development is regulated by the directive "On the promotion of scientific publications" (Annex 17).

- Transparency and internal financial control, audit and outcomes;

The institution functions under the Turgut Ozal Education sh. Company, and the same conducts annual external audits regarding the financial situation. The report contains all the analysis of the data on expenses and incomes of the institution, including the entries related to incomes (grants, students' fees) and all the expenses for the services it offers directly or indirectly (by outsourcing companies). A copy of the annual audit is found at the Finance Office at the institution keeps the copy of the annual audit.

- Financial management capacity;

The "Regulation on Scientific Research" (Annex 16) specifies two budget lines within the scientific research and development budget for individual use, as: participation in international scientific conferences; publication of scientific papers in an international scientific journal (listed in Thomson Reuters, Web of Science); and the publication of scientific papers in other international or national scientific journals. <https://epoka.edu.al/mat/regulations/regulation-on-scientific-research.pdf>

- All relevant documents, submitted by the institution and confirmed during the site visit, are taken into consideration, and confirmed.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.1 - General framework	
Criterion 5 Doctorate study program is supported by a sufficient budget for research:	The higher education institution has an independent budget. The annual budget contains an item for research within all the study programs, including the third cycle, however without specifically indicating the budget for research within the Doctorate study program.
Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research	
Criterion 6 External funding received for scientific research is indicative of high-level research activity and they are administered for the progress of relevant study program.	It can be noted that the scientific research activity which guarantees the progress of study programs, including the third cycle program, was presented within the documentation and the site visit, while can be accessed as follows: https://projects.epoka.edu.al/home-scientific-articles-proceedings-2364-2365.html https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QGf34fRrbgYk5V1Obx1PHwF064DYLKUE/view https://fae.epoka.edu.al/home-internal-projects-430-1883.html?lang=EN&dpid=2&t=internal-projects&catid=430&menuid=1883
Standard III.1 - Management and financing tools for doctorate study program	
Criterion 7 Financial budget of doctorate study program is sufficient to achieve research objectives for each doctorate student;	It can be noted that the institution has already established the necessary environment to support scientific research. The current funds cover all needs in terms of publication, participation in conferences and scientific meetings, and other equipment costs (Annex 17).
Criterion 8 Financial budget distribution structure of doctorate study program matches with scientific research policy and needs.	As mentioned above and having in mind a relatively small number of enrolled students since the third cycle program commenced (currently 1 active student), the financial budget distribution meets the program needs.
Standard III.3 - Financing of doctorate study program	

<p>Criterion 1 Number of research works funded by the ministry;</p>	<p>As stated by the Higher education Institution, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth has not published an open call for funding research projects.</p>
<p>Criterion 2 Distribution of funds to host and supervision teams of scientific research works is done in a balanced way;</p>	<p>Financial support and equal distribution of funds is supervised by the faculties and the financial office, at the same time ensuring an efficient distribution among all parties.</p>
<p>Criterion 3 Number of research works funded under national research projects, benefited by scientific supervisors of doctorate students for this study program;</p>	<p>Not applicable. No research work funded by national research projects</p>
<p>Criterion 4 Number of research works funded under international research projects benefited by scientific supervisors of doctorate students for this study program;</p>	<p>Not applicable. No research work funded by international research projects</p>
<p>Conclusions of EEG: It is clearly stated by the Higher Education Institution that one of the main financial possibilities are from the tuition, however third cycle studies require additional funding based on various projects in the field. It is suggested to continue with the engagement and see possibilities of securing funds, either from international projects organizations or governmental ones.</p>	

6. Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)

Description part

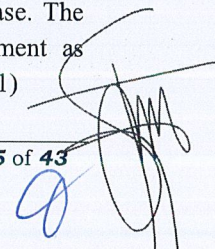
Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: Internal Monitoring for Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU), its functions in doctoral programs, self-assessment and continuous quality improvement.

Epoka University has a quality evaluation system which functions through a special structure that operates at the university level. The unit is coordinated with the level of Faculties and Departments. In the case of the doctoral program, the unit's work goes beyond the practices followed in other cycles; this is due to the limited number of students enrolled in this study program. However, the main responsible regarding the quality of the study program appears to be the Department of Architecture. The Department is the unit that implements the vision and the strategies expressed in the third level of education in Epoka University. (Annex 20, 21)

Measurable indicators:

- EEG should analyze and evaluate the quantitative data for IQAU, as:
 - o How many surveys are made with students?
 - o How many students were surveyed?
 - o How many surveys are processed, and what problems are issued?
 - o Which have been the next steps?
 - o etc.

In the case of the doctoral studies, there is only one active student enrolled in the program. In this sense, the practice followed at the bachelor and master levels does not apply; thus the withdrawal of the student's opinion is not carried out through the survey. The latter appears to be inefficient in these conditions. During the interview in the institution with the representatives of the quality assurance center, no information was given on the possible alternative ways applied in this specific case. The main source of information concerning the quality of the process involves the Department as academic and administrative unit, the lecturers and the council of professors. (Annex 29, 30, 31)



- ☑ EEG should analyze and evaluate the analyses for *Internal quality control*, as:
 - Responsibilities in monitoring and quality management, until the department level
 - Self assessments conducted, and their results
 - Quality improvement policies, on the basis of periodic self-assessment
 - The results of the audit and preview external assessment
 - Relevant documents, taken during visits to the institution

Ensuring the quality of the curriculum and of the organizational aspects of the study program is presented as a structured process. The Quality Assurance unit periodically applies for information and data from the academic and administrative staff of this study program. Members of this unit are also part of the Department of Architecture. During the visit with representatives of this unit it was asked if specific practices are applied for encouraging the Department and its lecturers to update and raise at the level of the third cycle the content of theoretical modules. The main tool of quality assurance in this program remains the annual report of research and teaching work lead by the Department. (Annex 30) Based on the periodic analysis of the potential problems encountered, the Department makes decisions with the aim of improving the scientific level of the program.

Another important unit, orienting the process of improving the quality of syllabuses and curriculum is the Curriculum Development Commission (Ref: IER)

The responsibilities of the Curriculum Development Commission (Curricula) are as follows: (as defined in the regulation on "Organization and Functioning of the Permanent Quality Assurance Commission" (Annex 19).

- a) Reviewing and making decisions on all proposals for new courses and changes that will be made to existing courses of curricula of study programs offered by the university;
- b) Recommending the approval of new subjects and changes in existing subjects of the curricula of study programs offered by the university;
- c) Providing support and advice to relevant departments for curriculum development.

7. Study Program, Its Organization

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: Title of Diploma (in Albanian and English), mission and objectives of the research program, the organization of the first year in doctorate school, the curriculum content of all its elements (subjects / modules, corresponding credits, sharing teaching hours per study forms, classes in /outside of auditorium under the forms of teaching), literature and other auxiliary materials, etc.

Epoka University offers the third cycle of doctoral studies in the field of Architecture and Built Environment Sciences. As articulated in the strategic and in the technical documents belonging to this study program but also to the vision of the Institution, the mission of this program is to expand the scientific work achieved in other cycles offered by this university in the field of architecture. Epoka University also aims to continuously improve its position within the Albanian context, as well as to gradually increase its regional ranking. (Annex 8, 9, 18) The structure of this study program is developed in accordance with the definitions of the legal framework.

The study program Doctorate in Architecture at EPOKA University is offered by the Department of Architecture, which is an integral part of the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering. The doctoral study program in Architecture is licensed based on Order no. 565, dated 19.11.2012, of the Ministry of Education and Science. Further, based on Decision no.156, dated 16.05.2016, of the Accreditation

Board, the accreditation process of the doctoral study program in Architecture was successfully completed.

The PhD program is the "Doctoral Program with Thesis". The first year of the doctorate requires the completion of 8 courses (60 ECTS / 24 US credits) and during the next two years the thesis or the final dissertation (120 ECTS) must be submitted. (In a total of 180 ECTS)

At the end of the theoretic phase the students attends the relevant exams and further, after being positively evaluated he enters the period of the individual research; after specifying the research topic in collaboration with the scientific mentor. The current active student is still in the conclusion phase of the theoretical year. Theoretical modules are organized in tutoring classes, as well as in individual workload of the doctoral student. The class workload is regulated according to the curriculum and the announced time-schedule determines the work plan of each subject in the theoretical year. (Annex 8)

The doctoral program will be completed in at least three academic years which will be divided into six semesters. When there are compulsory reasons, this period may be extended to twelve semesters with prior permission and / or admission by the Scientific Committee. The Basic Unit is carrying out as a program strategy the work of doctoral restructuring in Architecture, at the same time the Department of Architecture is working on possible collaborations with international universities for a joint doctoral school in Architecture

Measurable indicators:

- Analyses and evaluation for: general elements of the study program:
 - o Duration: not less than 3 years
 - o Year for advancing theoretical studies (1 year or 60 ECTS)
 - o Search / Creation: at least 2 years
 - o Thesis (within 4 years of enrollment)

According to the evaluation of the available documents, such as the curriculum and syllabi, the study program is organized in 3 academic years (in 6 semesters); The first year is formulated in 60 credits of theoretical subjects; while in the following two years the doctoral student conducts individual research equal to 120 credits. The following quantitative data confirm the above statement. (Annex 1, Additional Documents, no. 3)

- Analyses and evaluation for: academic curriculum plan of the first year, the division of subjects in credits, and according to the forms of teaching (verify the data, according to Table 8)

Table 8

	Year I Subjects/ Modules	Semester	Credits (ECTS)	Hour in week	Academic Curriculum Plan										Total In class	Total Individual student work	al exa		
					Lecture (hour)			Seminar (hour)			Laboratory (hour)			Practice (hour)					
					Total credits	In class	Individual student work	Total credits	In class	Individual student work	Total credits	In class	Individual student work	Total credits				In class	Individual student work
1	Arch 8xx	I	7.5	3	7.5											48	139.5	yes	
2	Arch 8xx	I	7.5	3	7.5											48	139.5	yes	
3	Arch 8xx	I	7.5	3	7.5											48	139.5	yes	

4	Arch 8xx	I	7.5	3	7.5												48	139.5	yes
1	Arch 8xx	II	7.5	3	7.5												48	139.5	yes
2	Arch 8xx	II	7.5	3	7.5												48	139.5	yes
3	Arch 8xx	II	7.5	3	7.5												48	139.5	yes
4	Arch 8xx	II	7.5	3	7.5												48	139.5	yes
Total																	384	1116	

- Analyses and evaluation for Academic Curriculum Plan, related to the relevant academic staff (verify the data, according to Table 9)

Table 9

Subject/Module		Responsible professor/s (Name Surname)	Title/degree	Department	FAS or PAS
1.	ARCH 800 Teza PhD	Sokol Dervishi	Assoc. Prof.	ARCH	FAS
2.	ARCH 800 Teza PhD	Anna Yunitsyna	Dr.	ARCH	FAS
	ARCH 804 Studimet e Kulturës dhe Hapësirës	Anna Yunitsyna	Dr.	ARCH	FAS
3.	ARCH 818 Tema të veçanta në Projektimin dhe Planifikimin Urban	Fabio Naselli	Dr.	ARCH	FAS
	ARCH 801 Teoritë e Mjedisit-Sjelljes	Odeta Manahasa	Dr.	ARCH	FAS
	ARCH 821 Efektet e Klimës dhe Energjisë në Projektimin e Vendbanimeve	Fabio Naselli	Dr.	ARCH	FAS
	ARCH 862 Urbanizmi i Peizazhit	Artan Hysa	Dr.	ARCH	FAS
	ARCH 807 Paradigma mbi Arkitekturën	Edmond Manahasa	Dr.	ARCH	FAS
	ARCH 819 Teknika të Avancuara të Planifikimit	Artan Hysa	Dr.	ARCH	FAS
	ARCH 864 Metodat e Kërkimit	Odeta Manahasa	Dr.	ARCH	FAS

The Department of Architecture offers a relatively wide range of elective subjects; which in its first year the doctoral student selects in relation to his / her research interests. The table above lists the subjects that have been activated in the last three years, as well as their leading lecturers/professors. Based on their CVs and their academic profile (Doc. No. 42-52), the profiles are fully competent in leading the research field described in the content of the syllabus and curriculum.

- EEG should analyze and evaluate the: the syllabuses for each subject, with all the elements

In the formal aspect, the activated syllabi are formulated in accordance with the provisions of DCM no 41." For the elements of the study program" date 2018. In terms of content, some syllabi have basic concepts, which are addressed in the lower cycles/levels of education. Except in cases where there are syllabi of inter-disciplinary subjects, it is recommended to update the knowledge in

accordance with the requirements of the third cycle of studies and education. (Annex no. 27, Additional Documents no. 1)

- EEG should analyze and evaluate: the procedures followed for the research project, proposed by candidates

The current candidate is still in the final stage of the theoretical part. The regulation of doctoral studies describes that (Annex 8):

- (1) The supervisor is responsible for accepting the manuscript as a dissertation. He / she ensures that the dissertation meets the standards that can generally be applied to a dissertation.
- (2) Before approving the manuscript as a dissertation, the supervisor evaluates the submitted text taking into account the requirements set out in the relevant legal acts and regulations.
- (3) If in the opinion of the leader, the manuscript meets the required standards and qualifies as proof of independent search competence, the leader shall then give his approval.

So the scientific leader plays a key role in the progress of the project proposal drafting process.

In the additional documents provided by the institution is shown that such procedures for previous graduated candidates have been followed (Additional Doc. No. 5.6.2)

- EEG should analyze and evaluate the second year of PhD: (Research/Creation), as database for institutions in/outside the country, where students have completed their scientific research, such as:

- university / research center and development of a University
- Institute / non-academic research unit
- Foundation / public entity / private entity
- Hospital structure
- Other

The doctoral student is still at the end of his first theoretical year. Meanwhile, a graduate student has completed her research on "Urban Regeneration of Unused Industrial Zones in Albania".

- Analyses and evaluation of third year of PhD: Research/creation/data processing /publication of articles /presentations to international conferences
- Data for publications / references of students;
 - Data for Magazines, publishing entities where these articles are published

The practice of finalizing/evaluating the theoretical subjects of the first year through publications or participation in conferences done by the candidate has been seen as positive in terms of promoting his publishing activity and his performance.

Nr	PhD Student	Title of Publication	Type	Subject
1	Enkela Hasa	Hasa, E., Hysa, A., & Teqja, Z. (2021). Quantifying Landscape Fragmentation via Effective Mesh Size Landscape Metric: Case of Albania. <i>Agriculture and Forestry</i> , 67(1), 215-230. doi:10.17707/AgricultForest.67.1.18	Artikull	ARCH 862 Urbanizmi i Peizazhit
2	Enkela Hasa	Hasa, E., & Yunitsyna, A. (2021). Space Syntax Analysis as a Tool for Evaluation of Social and Cultural Values of Albanian Housing—Case Study of Tirana. In <i>Current Challenges in Architecture and Urbanism in Albania</i> (pp. 163-176). Springer, Cham.	Kapitull Libri	
3	Enkela Hasa	Teqja, Z., & Hasa, E. Urban Pockets Design: Reclaiming Third Landscape Through Participatory Processes and Game Theory. <i>Jano, S.</i>	Konferencë	

- EEG should analyze and evaluate the: doctoral thesis and its presentation

During the visit to the institution and during the meetings with the Council of Professors, the external evaluation group has received information regarding the practices followed in terms of procedural aspects of the thesis evaluation and its presentation. Epoka University has made available all the required documents related to the process in question.

- All relevant documents, submitted by the institution and confirmed during the site visit, are taken into consideration, and confirmed.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards/ criterions
Standard I.4 - Design and realization of theoretical course of third cycle studies (Doctorate)	
<p>Criterion 1 Programs of third cycle studies include 60 credits for theoretical organized studies;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Theoretical organized studies anticipate balanced ratio of classes for academic and scientific general and specific training;</p> <p>Criterion 3 Detailed teaching program is approved pursuant to bylaws in force;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Theoretical doctorate course is evaluated with a general theoretical examination in relevant field of study, organized by Dean's office and Professors' Council, with a commission consisting of 5 (five) professors in the relevant research field or approximate to it. Candidates who achieve over 80% points are allowed to attend the doctorate research studies. Those who do not reach this result receive a certificate for conducted modules, together with accumulated credits and interrupt doctorate studies.</p>	<p>According to the verifications of the documentation as well as to the interviews held in the institution, the third cycle program is organized in the first year with 60 credits in terms of theoretical subjects. (Annex 1, 27)</p> <p>The nature of the first year courses combine knowledge related to research methods as well as specific knowledge according to the possible directions of the research phase of the doctoral student.</p> <p>According to the regulations of the doctoral program, the student is obliged to attend at least 80% of the theoretical and research courses held as well as laboratories. If students do not meet the above condition, they must retake the course with all relevant obligations.</p> <p>Students who at the end of the second semester have a CGPA of at least 3.00 (for grades according to the Albanian system see Student Guide, page 32, Annex 32) and no FD or FF grade, are considered to have successfully completed the theoretical phase of this study program. (Annex 8)</p> <p>Judging by the additional documentation made available by the institution during the visit, we can state that similar procedures have been followed for the graduate student. (Additional Doc. No. 5.4.1)</p>
Standard II.3 - Drafting and approval of proposed research project	

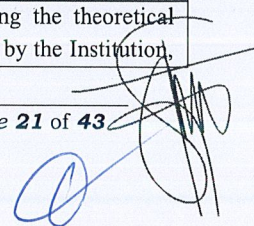
<p>Criterion 1 Applicant who requires to be admitted to doctorate studies program has submitted the request for a particular research area and this has been discussed with him in the interview;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Scope of research is selected in such a way that doctorate studies program can support it;</p> <p>Criterion 3 Proposal is approved by Professors' Council if criteria prescribed and announced in regulation of doctorate studies are met.</p> <p>The following should be also confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Duration of study program; b) Modalities of verification of research or creative activity of doctorate students; c) Manner of final presentation of scientific research result that doctorate student will achieve; <p>Criterion 4 A member of academic staff with the title "Professor", "Associate Professor" or with scientific degree "Doctor" or ("PhD") awarded in the scientific field in which doctorate student follows the studies in universities known in the world, for quality and rich researching and publishing activities in the relevant field, is appointed by Board of Professors to supervise and support student's research work;</p> <p>Criterion 5 Doctorate student presents to Board of Professors the research development plan, designed by him and discussed with his supervisor;</p> <p>Criterion 6 Supervisor has advised repeatedly the students that he supervises for didactic duties and research activities as well as research methodology to ensure the progress of his studies in this program.</p>	<p>Based on the verification of the required documents and on the interviews held in the institution (Council of Professors and the student), the interview of the candidate is applied in the admission procedure.</p> <p>Candidates are oriented in research fields and topics which are competently covered by the institution. This is the reason of the limited number of PhD students enrolled in this program, according to the academic leading authorities of Epoka University.</p> <p>According to the verification of the application documents of the current doctoral student, we can state that his project proposal has played an important role in the candidate's admission in the PhD program. The proposal was of a basic structure where the main focus stressed the research topic.</p> <p>Specific templates on structuring the project proposal can be applied, including work plan calendars, methodological aspects and the way of presenting the results; in accordance with criterion 3.</p> <p>During the academic year the student is assigned an academic advisor, who holds the PhD degree obtained at OECD Universities, who in accordance with criterion 4 guides and supervises the progress of the student's research work.</p> <p>The current student is still finalizing the theoretical studies phase. However, the Doctoral Regulation (Annex 8) document describes the practice followed in accordance with criterion 5</p> <p>Based on the teaching time-schedule of the theoretical year, the implemented agenda of the meetings between the academic advisor and the student is noticed; in accordance with criterion 6 (Additional Doc. No. 3)</p>
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Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research

<p>Criterion 1 A third cycle study program (doctorate) is integrated in research activity of Higher Education Institutions;</p>	<p>The research activity developed in the doctoral program at Epoka University is mostly related to the periodic scientific activities that the latter organizes. On the other hand, the research work of the candidate is also part of the individual research agendas of the lecturers/professors themselves. These elements are expressed through the evidence related to the organization of the annual conference ICAUD, as well as in the list of publications of students and lecturers (Annex 30)</p>
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Standard II.4 - Doctorate student's supervision and continuous evaluation of progress of doctorate studies

<p>Criterion 1 Scientific supervisor of student is responsible for directing, advising,</p>	<p>The current PhD student is still in the phase of concluding the theoretical courses. While reviewing the additional documents provided by the Institution,</p>
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assessment of student's needs and for developing and monitoring progress of student's research work. He has the academic title "Professor", "Associate Professor" or the scientific degree "Doctor" or ("PhD") awarded in Western universities and has a rich research and publishing activity;

Criterion 2 All scientific supervisors have had the expertise, instruction and proper guidance for their role in realization of scientific research project of doctorate students;

Criterion 3 Scientific supervisors work to update their knowledge and skills, based on institutional arrangements in order to enable the exchange of best practices and providing advice to support students effectively;

Criterion 4 Board of Professors selects scientific supervisors, capable to supervise doctorate students' research work, based on assessment of their publishing and research activities inside and outside the country;

Criterion 5 The main scientific supervisor and the other supervisor (when program of doctorate studies is offered by more than one university) guarantee that doctorate students receive sufficient support and guidance to facilitate their work to achieve success;

Criterion 6 In all cases, the student must have only one identified contact point, who should be his main supervisor. If his main supervisor is not available, the student must know who will be the person to replace him;

Criterion 7 University ensures that supervisor has enough time to supervise doctorate student;

If the main leader is unable to continue supervision of student, or will be absent for a considerable period, he should be replaced by another his main supervisor before the period of awarding the diploma for scientific degree "Doctor";

Criterion 8 If relationship student-supervisor does not function well, at the request of student or his supervisor, supervisor is changed, provided that this does not affect the project progress;

Criterion 9 Clear and transparent procedures are set for verification of knowledge or periodic evaluation of student (for example, an annual review by a panel called for this purpose or by a special commission set up by

the academic supervisor of the doctoral student in the academic year of 2015-2016 holds the title "Associate Professor", and has been a crucial actor in the drafting of the work program and methodology of the Doctoral student, in accordance with the definitions of criterion 1.(Additional Doc. No.5.1.2)

In accordance with criterion 2, for the PhD student of the academic year of 2015-2016, two scientific mentors have been appointed, where one of them is directly involved in the issues addressed in the scientific dissertation.

Judging by the research activity of the academic staff of Epoka University, is evident their continuous qualification expressed in continuous publishing activity. (Additional Doc. 4.2, 4.3, 4.4)

Based on additional documents provided by the institution, the process of selection of scientific leaders by the board of professors, happens in accordance with the definitions of criterion no. 4.(Additional Doc. No.5.3.2)

The student has a structured work program, which is approved by the board of professors. In case of being unable to contact its academic supervisor, he addresses the issue to the department and to the Dean's Office. They follow the necessary steps for replacing or appointing a second supervisor.

Based on the review of the documentation and on the interviews developed in the institution, the progress of the student's work and his meetings with the supervisor are in accordance with the definitions of criterion 7

The regulation of the doctoral program provides for the procedures taken in fulfilment of the definitions of criterion 8

Each year the student produces a progress report on his research work which is evaluated by the Board of Professors. (Additional Doc. No. 5.2.4)

The performance of the doctoral student is evaluated through a questionnaire, completed by a commission which is composed by the thesis supervisors and members of the Department.

The evaluation process is documented and transparent. (Annex 33)

Professors' Council).

Criterion 10 Doctorate student and his supervisor should be present during this process. The manner and periods of verification of knowledge or periodic evaluation of doctorate student are stipulated and specified in the beginning of doctorate studies program;

Criterion 11 Continuous evaluation conclusions for realization of scientific research project of program of doctorate studies are clear and transparent including suspension, extension or withdrawal from doctorate studies;

Criterion 12 Meetings between supervisors and doctorate students are documented, especially during the review of progress reports.

Conclusions of EEG:

EEG considers the overall policies and the structure of the organisation of the theoretical studies as efficient in terms of teaching and learning outcome. The institution follows and implements rules which ensure a normal development of the theoretical or of the individual research phase of the doctoral student. The institution pursues policies of integration of doctoral research work in other research processes of the institution.

It is recommended the continuous recruitment of the academic staff of the "Professor" category, with the aim of increasing the leading capacities and enriching the research fields of the doctoral program. This fact would lead to an increasing number of doctoral students.

- All relevant documents, submitted by the institution and confirmed during the site visit, are taken into consideration, and confirmed.

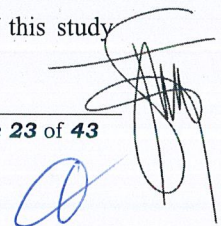
8. Teaching – Learning Outcome (in first year)

Description part

Terma reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: organization, teaching methods, quality of workload and realisation of it, teaching technologies, internal evaluation of teaching, students' participation in the activities of the doctoral school, control of student knowledge, student scientific leadership etj.

Teaching and research activity within this study program is organized in two main parts: the theoretical part which is developed through dedicated credits of theoretical subjects, and the individual research part that provides research activity under the guidance of the scientific director of the thesis. Teaching and research activity is structured in 60 credits, through 8 subjects developed in 7.5 credits each. As the program currently has one student, lecturers have tried to adapt specific forms of teaching considering this fact. In many subjects the practice of lecturer-student discussion on specific materials has been followed; as well as the finalization of the subject through various forms of publications.

Specifically quoted in the Internal Evaluation Report of the Institution, as objectives of this study program are listed:



- Design in Architecture, development of strategies and models to approach different topics of implementation and theory;
- Reviews of recent research topics, such as the dynamic experience of space, the sense of the environment, the memory of cities, illusion, identity, aesthetics and ethics;
- Interdisciplinary questions arising from the relationship between man and the environment; critical evaluation of the city and the links between space, culture, politics, economy, etc; understanding, interpreting and commenting on the connection of architecture with other disciplines;
- Development of new design strategies related to education in architectural design and past generations of architectural design knowledge;
- Generating ideas and thoughts for future challenges related to housing and residential areas.
- Knowledge and information gained in theory should be translated into architectural practice.

Measurable indicators:

- EEG should analyze and evaluate the student's workload, forms of teaching (verify the data, according to Table 10)

Table 10

Forms of teaching	Class hours for
Lecture	384
Seminars	0
Exercises	0
Laboratories	0
Practice for subjects	0
Professional practice	0
Etc.	

As it is seen in table no. 10, the entire quantity of credits is allocated in the form of lectures. Meanwhile, from the interviews with the academic staff and the student, it was confirmed that the form of development of theoretical subjects, due to the unusual number of the teaching group (only one student), was conducted in the form of colloquiums, and conversations. It is recommended to express in the curriculum of the first year this tailor-made form for the specific situation of this study program.

- EEG should analyze and evaluate the policies for Learning Outcomes control (verify the data, according to Table 11)

Table 11

Learning Outcomes control	in %
Active participation in lectures, seminars, etc.	0-10%
Implementation of obligations (laboratory course tasks, essays)	10-20%
Intermediate tests	20-30%
Final exam	40-70%
In total	100%

According to the evaluation of the syllabuses, we confirm the above allocation of percentages in terms of performance evaluation. (Annex 27)

- EEG should analyze and evaluate the: students's participation in the research activities of the University/Faculty/etc. (verify the data, according to Table 12)

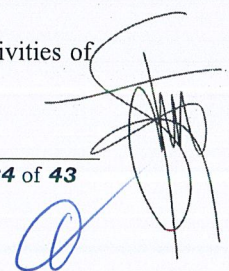


Table 12

HEI scientific activity	Number of students activated
For individual Papers of Lectures	1 Student: Hasa E., Yunitsyna A. (2021) Space Syntax Analysis as a Tool for Evaluation of Social and Cultural Values of Albanian Housing—Case Study of Tirana. In: Yunitsyna A., Hysa A., Manahasa E., Naselli F., Manahasa O.D., Dervishi S. (eds) Current Challenges in Architecture and Urbanism in Albania. The Urban Book Series. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-81919-4_12
For scientific projects of Faculty / Department / Doctoral School	1 student (Within the ARCH 862: Landscape Urbanism course) Hasa, E., Hysa, A., & Teqja, Z. (2021). Quantifying Landscape Fragmentation via Effective Mesh Size Landscape Metric: Case of Albania. Agriculture and Forestry, 67(1), 215-230. doi:10.17707/AgricultForest.67.1.181
For research projects, in collaboration with other	1 student: Jano, S., Teqja, Z., & Hasa, E. Urban Pockets Design: Reclaiming Third Landscape Through Participatory Processes and Game Theory.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.2 - Continuous increase of theoretical level and promotion of students' team work are targets of a study program of third cycle, doctorate.	
<p>Criterion 1 Level of scientific research development helps in student training to complete the study program successfully;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Students have the opportunity to participate in various research activities closely related to the specific area in which they attend doctorate studies, which help him/her to be trained for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Acquisition of research methodologies for independent creative activities, such as scientific articles, presentations, standard approach for references, bibliography, indexes and content writing as the basis for doctor a thesis processing; Independent work in laboratory; Use of information resources (e.g. libraries and Internet) and information management; Use of modern technologies for public 	<p>The syllabi of some of the subjects included in the curriculum consist in the treatment of fundamental and applied scientific research methods. For the most part these syllabi deal with third level of education issues, in some cases they are presented with more basic information. It is recommended to focus on the theoretical treatment of topics in accordance with the requirements of the doctoral level.</p> <p>Based on the documentation made available, as well as verifications during the visit to the institution, students have the opportunity to participate in several scientific and research activities in the institution. More specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student participates in joint publications with the academic staff of the program The student has access to sustainable and verified sources of information The student has access to generally a good infrastructure of laboratories. <p>In accordance with the definitions of criterion 3, the doctoral student is involved in academic processes of lower cycles such as:</p>

- presentations;
- e) Acquisition of advanced methods of analysis and data processing;
- f) Learning and mastery of specialized terminology associated with the research field of doctorate student;

Criterion 3 Doctorate students participate in foreseen activities young and their research work. A doctorate student is free to participate as a listener or as a speaker in:

- a) Lectures;
- b) Seminars;
- c) Interdisciplinary debates, organized in the framework of doctorate study program;
- d) Other possibilities of learning such as following presentations of post doctorate students and research projects, even when it is not related directly to the student's research interest.
- e) Scientific mentors advise students to take part in scientific activities and conferences that help them in their scientific research;

Criterion 4 Students have gained skills for appropriate communication with a scientific level (*Student's communication skills include: the competency to write clearly and with an appropriate style, use of persuasive arguments and clear articulation of ideas before the public concerned; the ability to debate and support others, involved in teaching, supervision or demonstrations*);

Criterion 5 Students have acquired the ability to communicate correctly with others, and necessary skill for a scholar, but also in other situations (*being able to develop and maintain cooperation and working relationships with others, awareness that their behavior affects them and others and be willing to listen, to give and to take reactions and responses with sharpness*);

Criterion 6 Development of communication skills of doctorate students encouraged them to be engaged in teaching in study programs of first and second cycle (e.g. by engaging in teaching as lecturers, in support of professors guiding their thesis).

- lectures
- workshops
- participation in conferences

The number of publications in indexed journals is another measurable criterion which indirectly proves the ability of candidates to handle arguments in a scientific and qualitative manner according to the definitions of criterion no. 4 (Annex 1)

Based on the fact that the doctoral student is currently a full-time academic staff in another academic institution, based as well in the interview conducted with him, it is confirmed the skills acquired in accordance with the content of criteria 5 and 6.

Conclusions of EEG:

The curriculum of this study program is structured in 60 theoretical credits in the first year of studies. The institution has taken measures in accordance with its capacities, as well as the aspirations of the doctoral student to compose a curriculum with elective courses, which are fully covered by the academic staff of the study program.

The credits of this phase are fully developed in the form of lectures; it is recommended the allocation of theoretic credits

as well in other teaching activities, such as seminars, laboratories etc.

Due to the limited number of students enrolled in this study program, the nature of teaching avoids the classical typologies, it is recommended that the applied tailor-made (which appears a mixture between lecture and seminar) be described in the curriculum as a specific teaching activity.

The involvement of the student in the research work of the professors, as well as its finalization with publications is evidenced as a good practice.

The involvement of the student in other teaching processes in lower cycles of education is evidenced as a good practice.

It is recommended to update specific syllabi in accordance with the requirements of a teaching process of the doctoral cycle

9. Doctoral Students

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the academic criteria and procedures for enrollment of doctoral student, quality of students enrolled, the number of students enrolled and who has finished in years, average duration of doctoral studies (in years), statistics, collaboration with students who have received diploma, student's information.

Based on the evaluation of the documentation made available, as well as interviews at the institution, it can be stated that Epoka University applies academic criteria and clear procedures regarding the way of selecting candidates for the doctoral program.

Measurable indicators:

- EEG should analyze and evaluate the statistical data for doctoral students:
 - The total number of PhDs students and the number for each year;
 - The number of PhDs students coming from outside of the university;
 - Number of graduates each year;
 - The average duration of doctoral studies and what has been the trend of this indicator;
 - Number and percentage of students, who have interrupted his doctoral studies.
 - Number and percentage of students, who come from Kosovo, Albanian territories, as well as from the Albanian diaspora;
 - Number and percentage of foreign students, who come from the Balkan region;
 - Number and percentage of students, who come from EU countries;
 - Number and percentage of students, who come from other countries of the world;

As mentioned in the documentation made available, as well as confirmed by the data obtained during the visit to the institution, due to the reduced professorship capacity, the number of students enrolled in this study program is limited. In overall there are: (Annex 1, Visit to the secretary of the faculty)

- One student graduated in the academic year 2018-2019
- One student interrupted his studies in the academic year 2016-2017
- One student is enrolled in the academic year 2017-2018

The trend of duration of the study cycle is conform the definitions specified by the legal framework. There are no students coming from Kosovo, Albanian territories or Albanian Diaspora. There are also no students coming from Balkan countries, EU countries or other countries.

- EEG should analyze and evaluate the information for the mobility of doctoral students at universities abroad

In the framework of Erasmus + projects, a graduate student of the academic year 2018-2019 has completed an exchange period at the Polytechnic University of Bari, Italy.

- All relevant documents, submitted by the institution and confirmed during the site visit, are taken into consideration, and confirmed.

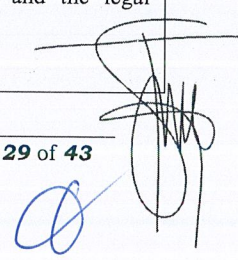
Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.3 - Admission of students in a doctorate study program	
<p>Criterion 1 The student admitted to doctorate study program has completed second study cycle with average grade (> 80% of points) and was awarded the university degree "Master of Science"/ "Master of Fine Arts" or an equivalent degree, following completion of university studies that include a scientific thesis evaluated with 30-40 ECTS;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Candidate who applies to continue the third cycle program, the doctorate, has profound theoretical knowledge in the relevant field of study. Some basic knowledge that doctorate student has is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Creative thinking; b) Development of critical sense about research; c) Connections between different fields of research; d) Skills developed for solving problems arising during research work; e) Competence to manage research complexity and to propose new ideas in research field; <p>Criterion 3 The student admitted to doctorate study program is ready to apply in practice the knowledge gained from research in relevant field of studies;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Student owns the English language certified in the international level, at least "C1", based on internationally recognized tests and a second foreign language as French, German, Italian, Spanish or Russian. In social sciences it may be Latin, Ancient Greek, Persian or other languages needed for research in the area;</p> <p>Criterion 5 Professors' Council set the criteria for admission to program of doctorate studies contained in regulation of doctorate program of studies;</p> <p>Criterion 6 The applicant has received detailed information about doctorate</p>	<p>Based on the evidences and on the evaluation of the admission procedure found in the secretariat of the institution (the complete application file of the candidate), criterion 1 is met. (Additional Doc. No. 5.1.2, 5.1.3)</p> <p>The application criteria also require the submission of a research proposal, which helps to evaluate the analytical and synthetic skills of the candidate. This has been identified as a good practice which helps to meet criterion 2 (Additional Doc. No. 5.1.3)</p> <p>The current candidate is still in the evaluation phase of theoretical phase. The results obtained in this phase, as well as the publications he has realized in the framework of the obligations of theoretical subjects indirectly prove his abilities to put into practice the acquired concepts.</p> <p>Proof of proficiency in the English language of the candidate is provided in the application documents. Epoka University conducts all study cycles in English; the candidate has been a master level student at this university and has attended a curriculum in English.</p> <p>At the application stage the student submits a project proposal and is interviewed by the Board of Professors. This with the aim of identifying the requirements articulated in criterion 2. From the review of the application file is verified the follow-up of this practice.</p> <p>From the review of the application documentation the student possesses the necessary requirements for mastering a foreign language.</p> <p>The criteria set by the board of professors are announced at the call stage for application.</p> <p>The student is informed about the study program in several ways.</p> <p>He is aware of the conditions and criteria he must meet, the obligations and the support that he gets from the institution, the duration of the study program, as well as the specific requirements related to the thesis.</p> <p>Recommendation letters are listed in the admission criteria.</p> <p>Admission practices do not provide for an exam.</p>

<p>program of study, before being admitted into it. He is fully informed regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Duration of study program; b) Conditions that student should meet before appearing in doctorate exam; c) Support that institution provides to the student through administrative and research structures for activities envisaged in the study program (laboratories, libraries, etc.). d) Modalities of exercise of research or creative activity of doctorate students, especially with regard to preparation of doctorate thesis; <p>Criterion 7 Admission criteria include also interviews and supports that can be provided by references and additional documents;</p> <p>Criterion 8 Admission policies include also doctorate admission exam.</p>	
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Standard II.5 - Final evaluation of students in this cycle of studies

<p>Criterion 1 Student provides evidence that he has acquired:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Profound knowledge in relevant scientific field; b. Profound knowledge in some areas approximate to it; c. Professional skills in using modern technology to solve critical problems related to his field of scientific research; d. Innovation, to expand and update existing knowledge; e. Autonomy, scientific, professional integrity and dedication for development of new ideas that encourage scientific research; <p>Criterion 2 Student provides evidence that he has brought original scientific products, scientific works of a high scientific level through conducted scientific research, some of which have deserved or deserve publication in scientific national and international magazines;</p> <p>Criterion 3 Final evaluation of doctorate students is based above all on an assessment of their scientific research product;</p> <p>Criterion 4 On the basis of an agreement reached in the phase of the study program approval, scientific research result is presented as a dissertation thesis, or cumulative with 3 scientific articles published in international journals with impact factor coefficient above 1;</p>	<p>The doctoral student periodically realizes progress-reports of research work. Prior to the final submission of the dissertation, it is subject to an evaluation by the council of the Department which is expressed regarding the content and methodological aspects of the research work. (Additional Doc. No. 5.2.2)</p> <p>The Council of the Department evaluates, together with the scientific supervisor, the originality and the value of the scientific conclusions of the work, before forwarding it to the council of professors.</p> <p>The current graduate student has presented scientific work in the form of a doctoral thesis.</p> <p>Based on the evaluation of the council of professors, before the candidate submits the final presentation before the jury, he has fulfilled all obligations under the provisions of the legal framework on the standards for awarding scientific degrees "PhD".</p> <p>Based on the additional documentation made available by the institution, the procedures followed are described after the doctoral student has submitted the dissertation to the Council of Professors. The dissertation is drafted according to the format published in the regulations and annexes of the doctoral school.</p> <p>The Council of Professors appoints two opponents; who have relevant research activity related to the field of research.</p> <p>The composition of the jury is proposed by the Department, and the council of professors approves it.</p> <p>The composition of the jury for the graduate student in 2018-2019 is in accordance with the definitions of the legal framework in use.</p> <p>The evaluation of the doctoral student by the jury was done in accordance with the provisions of the regulation of doctoral studies and the legal framework in force.</p>
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Criterion 5 In case of doctorate examination with dissertation thesis, doctorate student meets the following conditions:

- a. He has realized as first author at least three scientific papers or presentations (poster), of which two papers or presentations are held in a international scientific event, in a western country (symposium, conference, congress), accepted on the basis of a preliminary scientific assessment, published in "Proceedings", indexed with an ISBN code;
- b. He has published as first author, at least three scientific articles in scientific journals. At least two of the articles have been published or accepted for publication in well-known western journals with editorial board;
- c. He has prepared and presented to Faculty Board of Professors the dissertation, along with a summary, approved by scientific supervisor. Structure of dissertation and its summary are defined in doctorate study regulation;

Criterion 6 Board of Professors defines two or three opponents, one of which is from outside the institution. Opponents are also members of the jury to assess dissertation. They have required academic titles and rich research and publishing activities inside and outside the country in the relevant field of study in which program doctorate studies is offered;

Criterion 7 Opponents who have had a substantial involvement in the work of doctorate student, or whose work is the very focus of research project;

Criterion 8 A dissertation copy is given to every opponent, giving enough time to read it and to write a separate report. Opponents should not communicate among themselves, with doctorate student or its scientific supervisor during this period. Opponents must verify the authenticity of data used in dissertation, observance of scientific research practice as well citations of scientific research works and articles of other authors.

Criterion 9 Opponents express clearly that

The evaluation of the research work and its finalization in the dissertation was done in accordance with the legal definitions, by fulfilling criterions 8 to 18

scientific paper is free of plagiarism. If they notice and find that this has happened, they ask for termination of dissertation assessment;

Criterion 10 Dissertation is accompanied by a summary, about 10 pages in English. This review is published in the official website of the institution, in the section designated for information for this study;

Criterion 11 Scientific supervisor of the student should not be an opponent;

Criterion 12 When opponents have completed their reports, they are called by the Dean and Head of Board of Professors to agree to conduct oral examination;

Criterion 13 It is recommended, that a jury member of doctorate examination be from universities known in the world for quality and rich research and publishing activities in the relevant field, which has at least the scientific degree "Doctor" awarded in the scientific field in which doctorate student follows the studies and over 5 years academic and research experience. This criterion may not be applied to Albanology sciences.

Assessment of doctorate student in examination is made open by consensus, provided that all members are pronounced for a passing grade. Even if one member has evaluated doctorate student by convincing arguments, with a failing grade, the final outcome will be failing;

Criterion 14 Opponents submit to dean of unit that organizes the program of doctorate studies and chairperson of doctorate examination jury a copy of their individual reports;

Criterion 15 Dissertation defense for obtaining the diploma for scientific degree "Doctor" is public. It is announced at least 4 weeks before and it is done in the presence of department interested members, students and teachers in the relevant Higher Education Institution;

Criterion 16 Evaluations that opponents can make include: granting diploma of scientific degree "Doctor", or resubmission of written scientific research paper after completion of their recommendations, or a further extension of study program, or denial of diploma for scientific degree "Doctor";

<p>Criterion 17 A copy of dissertation of student who received a diploma for scientific degree "Doctor" is deposited in library of faculty, research institute, university research centers, university where study program is carried out and scientific paper and a copy in National Library. Scientific degree "Doctor" is not issued without dissertation being deposited in aforementioned institutions, published in paper and on disk (CD) and without making it public in the official website of respective higher education institution;</p> <p>Criterion 18 Scientific degree "Doctor" is not issued without being registered in National Register of Doctorates of Securities Commission Academic Assessment (KVTA) in MES.</p>	
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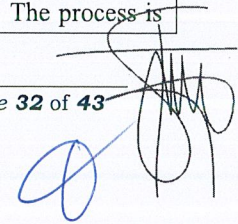
Standard III.2 - Quantitative aspects of doctorate study program

<p>Criterion 1 Total number of registered doctorate students and doctorate number for each year;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Number of registered doctorate students coming from outside the unit that has opened the doctorate study program;</p> <p>Criterion 3 Number of diplomas issued to receive "Doctor" degree for each year;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Average duration of doctorate studies and trend of this indicator;</p> <p>Criterion 5 Number and percentage of those who gave up doctorate studies in the level of study program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One student graduated in the academic year 2018-2019 • One student interrupted his studies in the academic year 2016-2017 • One student is enrolled in the academic year 2017-2018 <p>The trend of duration of the study cycle is conform the definitions specified by the legal framework (Annex 1)</p>
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Standard III.4 - Internationalization of doctorate study program

<p>Criterion 1 Number, expressed in percentage, of registered doctorate students coming from Kosovo and other areas where Albanians live and Albanian diaspora;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Number, expressed in percentage, of registered doctorate students coming from Balkans region.</p> <p>Criterion 3 Number, expressed in percentage, of registered doctorate students coming from the EU countries;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Number, expressed in percentage, of registered doctorate students coming from other countries of the world;</p>	<p>Although it is conducted in English, and even the institution presents an active performance in terms of agreements with other institutions outside Albania, there are no foreign students enrolled in this study program. There are no students coming from Kosovo, Albanian territories or Albanian Diaspora. There are also no students coming from Balkan countries, EU countries or other countries (Annex 1)</p>
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Conclusions of EEG:
 Epoka University applies clear and public criteria for the selection of candidates in this study program. The admission procedure is based on the evaluation of the application file, which includes, among other things, a project-proposal, which turns into an evaluation instrument on the candidate's skills. The process is



finalized through the interview of the candidate from the Council of Professors.
 The institution applies clear procedures regarding the progress of the teaching process in this study program and has produced the necessary documentation for this aspect as well as for informing students. The institution assigns professors/tutors dedicated to the supervision of the students' work, by monitoring every aspect. The study program is characterized by a low number of students over the years, while had no students enrolled/coming from abroad.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH POLICIES

10. Research in Doctoral School and Involvement of Doctoral Students

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: research policies of HEI /Doctoral School, publications over the years, acquired and implemented projects, participation of doctoral student in activities at home and abroad, the activities organized by the unit, etc..

Epoka University develops a multiple strategic approach on conducting research work in its different didactic and research programs (including the doctoral program as well). Strategies and policies for developing and encouraging research processes (involving the PhD students as well) are expressed in many provided documents such as Regulation on PhD study program (Annex 8), Directive "On the promotion of scientific publications" (Annex 17), POLICY "ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF STUDY PROGRAMS" (Annex 31)

Based on the documentation provided and on the visits to Epoka University, it can be stated that the research strategies are implemented mainly by departmental agendas, by the faculty's vision and are as well supported by specific units operating in the university level such as: office of research and projects and the internationalization one.

Epoka University periodically organizes research activities, in collaboration with international and local partners, by providing good opportunities for its PhD students to promote their research work. (ICAUD conference can be listed as a good practice)

Based on the documentation provided and on the visits to Epoka University, the institution develops strategies aiming an active performance in terms of participation in national and international research projects.

The PhD candidate has been involved as a research assistant near the Department of Architecture; by becoming part of the research work that has been conducted at the department level as well.

Measurable indicators:

- EEG should analyze and evaluate: data for research (verify the data, according to Table 13)

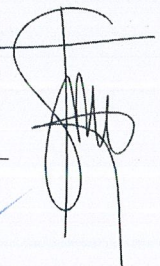
Table 13

Planned activities, individual and institution, who are involved in doctoral students	Number	The titles of scientific journals, projects, research activities
1. Publications, where students have scientific articles	20	Krosi E., Yunitsyna A., Space Syntax Analysis as a Tool for Evaluation of Social and Cultural Values of Albanian Housing. Case Study of Tirana, in Yunitsyna A., Hysa A., Manahasa E., Naselli F., Durmishi Manahasa O., Dervishi S. (Eds.) Current Challenges in Architecture and Urbanism in Albania, Springer Nature (2021). 2. ICAETA -2021 International Conference on Advanced

		<p>Engineering, Technology and Applications, Naselli F., Krosi E., Influences of urban fabrics onto microclimate assessment within the city of Tirana, Proceedings Book (2021).</p> <p>3. Edmond MANAHASA, Ahsen ÖZSOY, Place Attachment in a Tirana Neighborhood: The Influence of the “Rebirth of the City” Project, ITU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture, ITU A/Z , Vol 14, No 1 (2017).</p> <p>4. Odeta Manahasa, Ahsen Özsoy, Do architects’ and users’ reality coincide? A post occupancy evaluation in a university lecture hall, ITU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture, ITU J Faculty Arch., 13(3) (2016).</p> <p>5. Anna Yunitsyna, Ernest Shtepani, Optimization of the Urban Pattern Using the Galapagos Evolutionary Solver, Journal of Civil Engineering and Architecture Research, Vol. 3, No.8 (2016).</p> <p>6. Anna Yunitsyna, Ernest Shtepani, Urban Pattern Geometry and its Potential Energy Efficiency, International Journal of Contemporary Architecture, Volume IV, No.1 (2017).</p> <p>7. Hysa Artan, & Zeka Egin, Landscape Perspective on Disaster Risk - Indexing the vegetated natural surfaces within the OhridPrespa Transboundary Biosphere Reserve by their wildfire ignition probability and spreading capacity. In J. Keci, & E. Pojani (Eds.), Disaster Risk Management in the Western Balkans (pp. 119-131). Novi Sad: University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Technical Sciences (2020).</p> <p>8. Hysa A., & Teqja Z., Counting fuel properties as input in the wildfire spreading capacities of vegetated surfaces: case of Albania. Notulae Botanicae Horti Agrobotanici Cluj-Napoca, 48(3) (2020).</p> <p>9. Manahasa Edmond & Manahasa Odeta, Defining urban identity in a post-socialist 78 turbulent context: The role of housing typologies and urban layers in Tirana, Habitat International, Vol 102 (2020).</p> <p>10. Manahasa O, Özsoy A, & Manahasa E, Evaluative, Inclusive, Participatory: Developing a New Language with Children for School Building Design, Building and Environment, Journal of Building and Environment, Elsevier, Volume 188, 15 (2020).</p> <p>11. Manahasa O., Ozsoy A., School Buildings, Spatial Knowledge and Children Participation, in Al Sensoy, S. edition. Egitim Yapilari ve Tasarimi, PEGEM AKADEMI Publications (2019).</p> <p>12. Hysa D., & Özkar M., Open Design Education: Addressing Accountability in the Age of Computing/ Açık Tasarım Eğitimine Doğru: Hesaplama ve Hesap Verebilme. MEGARON / Yıldız Technical University, Faculty of Architecture E-Journal, 15(3) (2020).</p> <p>13. Bilgin H. and Hysenliu M., Comparison of near and far-fault ground motion effects on low and mid-rise masonry buildings, Journal of Building Engineering, Volume 30 (2020).</p> <p>14. Boriana Vrusho Golgota, Anna Yunitsyna, Space Syntax Analysis in the Albanian Dwellings, Scientific Research and Information Technology Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologie dell'Informazione, Vol 6, Issue 1 (2016).</p> <p>15. Fabio Naselli and Eva Jazaj, Tirana Adaptive City. “Creativity and Spontaneity” in ActiveStreets and Living Super-Blocks, in Carmelina Bevilacqua, Francesco Calabrò, Lucia Della Spina (Eds), New Metropolitan Perspectives. Knowledge</p>
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		<p>Dynamics, Innovation-driven Policies Towards the Territories' Attractiveness, Volume 1, Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies Book Series n.177, Springer Nature Switzerland (2021).</p> <p>16. Fabio Andreassi, Cinzia Barbara Bellone, and Fabio Naselli, Between Crisis and In-Settlement Speeding-Up: The Case of L'Aquila, in Daniele La Rosa and Riccardo Privitera (Eds), Innovation 79 in Urban and Regional Planning, Proceedings of the 11th INPUT Conference, Volume 1, Lecture Notes in Civil Engineering Book Series n.146, Springer Nature Switzerland (2021).</p> <p>17. Mohamed Hany B. Moussa, Fabio Naselli, and Islam Momtaz Mohamed, Towards a Better Quality of Life. Proposing a Prototype Model of Substitute Accommodation Facilities at Gamalyah in Cairo, in Edmond Manahasa, Anna Yunitsyna, Fabio Naselli, Artan Hysa, Ina Osmani, Artemis Hasa, Next Places, Next Spaces, Proceedings Book of the 3rd ICAUD, Forthcoming approaches in architectural and urban designing, Department of Architecture, Epoka University Tirana (2020).</p> <p>18. Bellone Cinzia B., Naselli Fabio, Andreassi Fabio, New Governance Path through Digital Platforms and the Old Urban Planning Process in Italy, Sustainability, 13, 6911 (2021).</p> <p>19. Shehu R., Angjeliu G., Bilgin, H., A Simple Approach for the Design of Ductile Earthquake Resisting Frame Structures Counting for P-Delta Effect. Buildings, 9(10), 216 (2019).</p> <p>20. Hysenbelliu M., Bilgin, H., The use of macro element approach for the seismic risk assessment of brick masonry buildings. Critical Thinking in the Sustainable Rehabilitation and Risk Management of the Built Environment, Ancuta Rotaru (Ed.), Springer Series in Geomechanics and Geoengineering (2020). "Efficient Object Detection for Ground Penetrating Radar Signals" "Urban Preservation of Durres City, Case Study: "Liria Square" "The Laç Superphosphate Factory" "Promoting Manufacturing Industry in Albania" "Proposal for a Cultural and Congress Centre in Shkodra"</p>
2.	<p>Research projects, acquired by leading professors or doctoral students</p>	<p>11</p> <p>"Sustainable Urban Regeneration of Underused Industrial Sites in Albania", Kordinatore Boriana Vrusho Golgota, studente doktrature Mbikqyrës: Dr Frida Pashako, July 2014 - August 2015</p> <p>COST Action "International Interdisciplinary Network on Smart Healthy Age-friendly Environments", National Delegates: Dr Odeta Durmishi Manahasa and Dr Fabio Naselli, Master Student Jason Duka, October 2019-October 2024</p> <p>TNPP – Tirana Next Pilot Project, in agreement with Tirana Municipality-Design Department and G. Marconi University in Rome, Scientific Coordinators: Assoc. Professor Cinzia B. Bellone and Dr Fabio Naselli, participants: Fabio Andreassi (PhD student) and Klaudia Tufina (MT student). September 2020-August 2024.</p> <p>SpaRe.Life 2019 IWS - IV International Summer School on PG Pocket Gardens: Ephemeral Regeneration of super-blocks in Tirana, in cooperation with Design Dept at Tirana Municipality, Director: Dr Fabio Naselli, Didactic Tutors: Valentina Sapio & Gabriele Ajo, PhD Students, Tutors: Rexhina Basha, Mirjana Pali and Sindi Balla, Master Students. September 2019.</p> <p>Academy 100+ Villages. EPOKA University, participated in the first workshop of the Academy 100+ Villages. Coordinators: Dr Egin Zeka and MSc Jurtin Hajro, plus representatives and students from the Department of Architecture. September 14, 2018.</p>

			<p>Architectural Design and Architectural Theory. Research on the impact of physical, social and cultural environments on human behaviour. The main purpose of this research field is to develop activities in order to create social awareness of the model; to establish concrete links between practice, theory and education in modelling, architecture, urban and environmental issues.</p> <p>Given the developmental challenges (urban and architectural) of the 21st century, it is more necessary to use this discipline with an interdisciplinary character, including professors from the field of computer engineering. Thus, doctoral students acquire the necessary knowledge in the field of both architectural theory and computer programming. Research Group: Prof. Dr. Sokol Dervishi, Prof. As. Dr. Carlo Ciulla, Dr. Edmond Manahasa, Dr. Odeta Manahasa, Dr. Desantila Hysa. (2021)</p> <p>Urban and Building Physics, Environmental Sustainability, Smart Cities. The research area provides coverage of heat transfer, humidity, sound/acoustics and urban and building lighting. Research activities include a wide range of work including the performance of buildings assisted by calculation, control of building systems, urban and building ecology, human ecology, sustainable architectural design and optimization. Research Group: Prof. Dr. Sokol Dervishi, Prof. Dr. Ahmet Oztas, Prof. Dr. Prof. As. Dr. Carlo Ciulla, Prof. As. Dr. Hüseyin Bilgin, PhD Candidate Artemis Hasa, PhD-Candidate Ina Dervishi (2021)</p> <p>Research Agreement with 82 Guglielmo Marconi University focused on a bilateral international research project on "Smart Landscape", involved staff Edmond Manahasa (Head of Architecture Dept), Arban Uka (Head of Computer Engineering Dept) and Fabio Naselli (Contact Person) by Epoka) and Matteo Martini (Head of Nuclear, Subnuclear and Radiation Physics Dept), Alessandra Pieroni (USGM & Smart Landscape Hub co-founder at UniMarconi) and Cinzia Bellone (Contact Person) by UniMarconi, together with the Director of AGID Alessandro Casacchia, as external Partner of the ongoing Research Project. June 2019-ongoing "Natural Flood Retention on Private Land" "Finding the lost skyline! Gjirokastra, the demolition and transformation of religious buildings during 70" "External shear strengthening of damaged masonry walls by fiber reinforced plastering" "Making Nubots Fault-tolerant"</p>
3.	Projects Implemented	2	<p>"Sustainable Urban Regeneration of Underused Industrial Sites in Albania" , Kordinatore Boriana Vrusho Golgota, studente doktorature Mbikqyrës: Frida Pashako, July 2014 - August 2015.</p> <p>SpaRe.Life 2019 IWS - IV International Summer School on PG Pocket Gardens: Ephemeral Regeneration of super-blocks in Tirana, in cooperation with Design Dept at Tirana Municipality, Director: Dr Fabio Naselli, Didactic Tutors: Valentina Sapio & Gabriele Ajo, PhD Students, Tutors: Rexhina Basha, Mirjana Pali and Sindi Balla, Master Students. September 2019.</p>
4.	Scientific activities organized by the HEI	8	<p>1.ICAUD-2012 International Conference on Architecture and Urban Design Dorina Pojani, Chair Sokol Dervishi, Co-Chair Organizing Team: Ahmet Öztaş, Valbona Koçi, Edmond Manahasa, Anna Yunitsyna, Artan Hysa, Odeta Manahasa, Egin Zeka, Desantila Hysa, Klodian Xhexhi, Ledita Mezini. 19-21 April 2012.</p> <p>2.ICAUD-2014 International Conference on Architecture and Urban Design, Sokol Dervishi, Chair, Frida Pashako, Co-Chair, Organizing Committee: Hamza Aksoy, Artemis Hasa, Ina Osmani, Elton Demirxhiu, Nimet Isufi, Eduard Pagria, Yunus Bayram, Ilir Nase, Valbona Koçi, Edmond Manahasa, Anna Yunitsyna, Artan Hysa, Odeta Durmishi, Egin Zeka, Desantila Hysa, Adelina Greca, Kamela Guza. 8-10 May 2014</p>



			<p>Academy 100+ Villages project. Coordinators: Dr Egin Zeka and MSc Jurtin Hajro, plus representatives and students from the Department of Architecture, EPOKA University. September 2017- 2018.</p> <p>SpaRe.Life 2019 IWS - IV International Summer School on PG Pocket Gardens: Ephemeral Regeneration of super-blocks in Tirana, in cooperation with Design Dept at Tirana Municipality, Director: Dr Fabio Naselli, Didactic Tutors: Valentina Sapio & Gabriele Ajo, PhD Students, Tutors: Rexhina Basha, Mirjana Pali and Sindi Balla, Master Students. September 2019.</p> <p>3.ICAUD-2019 International Conference on Architecture and Urban Design "Next PlacesNext Spaces", Chair Edmond Manahasa, Co-chair Anna Yunitsyna, Organizing Committee: Fabio Naselli, Sokol Dervishi, Kujtim Elezi, Enis Jakup, Ina Osmani, Artan Hysa, Odeta Manahasa, Egin Zeka, Desantila Hysa, Ramazan Rameta, Oltjon Rukaj, Eugert Skura, Alban Bathorja, Rexhina Basha, Mario Alla, Miriana Pali. 24-26 October 2019.</p> <p>LUR'20 Workshop 84 Post-pandemic expectations and Urban Resilience, Coordinator Dr Fabio Naselli, Participants: Master Theses Students in the 2020 A.Y. January 2021.</p> <p>4.ICAUD-2021 International Conference on Architecture and Urban Design, co-organized with COST Action Net4Age-Friendly and in partnership with several universities & scientific bodies, Co-chairs Dr Fabio Naselli & Dr Anna Yunitsyna, Organizing Team: Artan Hysa, Edmond Manahasa, Artemis Hasa, Odeta Durmishi, Sokol Dervishi, Egin Zeka, Desantila Hysa, Ina Osmani. 24-26 November 2021</p> <p>TNPP – Tirana Next Pilot Project, in agreement with Tirana Municipality-Design Department and G. Marconi University in Rome, Scientific Coordinators: Ass. Professor Cinzia B. Bellone and Dr Fabio Naselli, participants: Fabio Andreassi (PhD student) and Klaudia Tufina (MT student). September 2020-August 2024</p>
5.	Participants in scientific activities	Scholars: 14 - PhD Students: 7 -Former Students: 11	Scholars: Anna Yunitsyna, Artan Hysa, Edmond Manahasa, Fabio Naselli, Odeta Durmishi, Sokol Dervishi, Egin Zeka, Desantila Hysa, Frida Pashako, Jurtin Hajro, Arban Uka, Cinzia Barbara Bellone, Matteo Martini, Alessandra Pieroni, PhD Students: Boriana Vrusho Golgota, Valentina Sapio, Gabriele Ajo, Enkela Krosi, Fabio Andreassi, Islam Momtaz Mohamed, Dervishi Ina Former Students: Mirjana Pali, Sindi Balla, Rexhina Basha, Mario Alla, Klaudia Tufina, Albert Jimy, Gledisa Golica, Marilena Hamzaj, Eva Jacaj, Jason Duka, Alban Bathorja
6.	Students involved in research	PhD Students: 7 - Former Students: 11	PhD Students: Boriana Vrusho Golgota, Valentina Sapio, Gabriele Ajo, Enkela Krosi, Fabio Andreassi, Islam Momtaz Mohamed, Dervishi Ina Former Students: Mirjana Pali, Sindi Balla, Rexhina Basha, Mario Alla, Klaudia Tufina, Albert Jimy, Gledisa Golica, Marilena Hamzaj, Eva Jacaj, Jason Duka, Alban Bathorja
	Etc		

- All relevant documents, submitted by the institution and confirmed during the site visit, are taken into consideration, and confirmed.

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards/ criterions
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Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research

Criterion 1 A third cycle study program (doctorate) is integrated in research activity of Higher Education Institutions;

Criterion 4 The institution has the capacity to perform supervision of each doctorate student in research activities and respective didactic duties;

Criterion 6 Academic staff must show achievements in the research field through such creative activities as: presentations, scientific publications, magazines, books or monographs;

Criterion 7 Indicators of high level research activity are publications that contain statements from publishing and scientific research activity by other scholars outside doctorate study program, especially international, regarding the outcome of scientific research in the institution that offers doctorate programs;

This doctoral program appears to be based on the research of candidates and their academic supervisors. According to the data provided and site visits, the doctoral program seems integrated in other research activities of the Unit.

The research topics are mainly related to Architecture and Built Environment Sciences, as the base field of the competence of the university and of the main staff of the Department of Architecture. **It is necessary that the academic staff mentoring the PhD candidate in its thesis period should hold a professorship in the field of Architecture.**

Although the research activity seems to be intensive, there is no clear structure of organization of the research. It is recommended the implementation of the research group unit: a distinct group of researchers (Professors, post-docs and PhD candidates) within the department attached to a specific research project.

No long term funded research project has been identified.

The overall research environment seems to be rich and active. Beyond the regular academic activity, there is other periodical research activities and publications mainly related to the ICAUD conference (Site visit and documents).

The university has provided a detailed list of the research activity for the members of the academic staff

Conclusions of EEG:

The research environment in Epoka University appears to be dynamic and supported by qualified academic staff. The PhD candidates are involved in research activities organized by the institution. Epoka University applies strategies to encourage the academic staff and students of the study program, for conducting research work and publications. This good practice is reflected in a wide culture of publications, even in the early stages of research work in this study program. Doctoral students are involved in the research work and publications of the academic teaching staff. They are also involved in other activities organized by the institution, where we mention the international conferences that take place periodically.

11. National and International Cooperation, in Function of Doctoral Study

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: Doctoral School's cooperation with institutions /national or international research organizations, invited academic staff, etc..

Epoka University develops strategies for enhancing cooperation with national and international institutions, academic and non-academic ones. In this frame, the doctoral programs benefit from these collaborations mainly in terms of mobility and exchange of students enrolled. The panorama needs to be improved in terms of foreign academic staff contributing in the research program.

According to the documents provided and to the site visit, Epoka University encourages all members of academic staff to be active in the research by providing financial support. At the end of each academic year, all scientific publications published by the academic staff members are evaluated by a special jury based on the criteria set out in the Epoka University regulation "On the Promotion of

Scientific Publications" (Annex 17). Each year, the Rectorate decides the amount of remuneration for each earned point and based on the points collected, each member of the academic staff receives the appropriate remuneration. Epoka University also offers financial support for the participation of academic staff in conferences and scientific activities, organized inside and outside the country under the same regulation

Measurable indicators:

- EEG should analyze and evaluate: the national and international cooperation (verify the data, according to Table 14)

Table 14

Scientific activities in the framework of international cooperation		
1	Number of students participating as partners in national and international projects	2
2	Number of Students participating in scientific activities, outside of HEI / presentations abroad	2
3	The number of foreign lecturers, who are invited to teaching	-
4	The number of classes held by invited foreign lecturers	-
5	Number of participants in training, in the field of abroad research	-
6	Mobility of students to and from HEI	2
7	The number of international awards in the field of research	-

According to the interviews conducted during the visit to the institution, as well as after reviewing the available documentation, the data of the above table are confirmed. The main activities described are related to the mobility of doctoral students in foreign partner institutions. The exchanges took place mainly under the umbrella of the Erasmus + program (Annex 1)

- EEG should analyze and evaluate: the Cooperation with scientific institutions (verify the data, according to Table 15)

Table 15

Institutions and scientific organizations, which is cooperating with	
Polytechnic University of Bari Italy	Erasmus +, Key Action 1, Mobility of Individuals
Gdańsk University of Technology Poland	Erasmus +, Key Action 1, Mobility of Individuals
University of Napoli Frederico II Italy	Erasmus +, Key Action 1, Mobility of Individuals
Polis University Albania	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
University of New York Tirana Albania	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
Marin Barleti University Albania	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
Aleksander Moisiu University Albania	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
University of Prishtina Kosovo	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
University for Business and Technology Kosovo	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
South East European University North Macedonia	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
Technical University of Denmark Denmark	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
Aalborg University Denmark	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
Lund University, Sweden	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
University of Tirana Albania	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
VSJ-Technical University of Ostrava Czech Republic	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania Albania	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
Albanian Radio Television (RTSH) Albania	Erasmus +, Key Action 2, Capacity Building
Aalto University Finland	PANBioRA, HORIZON2020
Agricultural University of Tirana Albania	Memorandum of Understanding
Dublin City University Ireland	PANBioRA, HORIZON2020
Elvesys Microfluid Innovation Center France	PANBioRA, HORIZON2020
Gdańsk University of Technology Poland	Erasmus +, KA1, Memorandum of

	Understanding
International Burch University Bosnia & Herzegovina	Memorandum of Understanding
University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli Italy	Memorandum of Understanding
University of Liege Belgium	PANBioRA, HORIZON2020
University of Nottingham England	PANBioRA, HORIZON2020

According to the documentation provided on the cooperation agreements (annex), as well as based on the interviews conducted during the visit to the institution, the information summarized in the table above is confirmed.

- Relevant documents, taken during visits to the institution

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards/ criterions
Standard III.4 - Internationalization of doctorate study program	
<p>Criterion 5 Doctorate study program encourages doctorate mobility by paying a considerable amount of expenditures for academic training outside doctorate study program;</p> <p>Criterion 6 Doctorate study program encourages mobility of doctorate students by paying a considerable amount of expenditures for presentation of research results in national and international scientific activities (symposium, conference, congress);</p> <p>Criterion 7 The institution has an agreement, at least with one Western university, guaranteeing programs of exchange of academic staff and doctorate students and realization of joint research projects. For Albanological Sciences cooperation could also be with a Higher Education Institution or research centre in Kosovo and lands where Albanians live;</p> <p>Criterion 8 Doctorate study program creates the necessary space to develop joint doctorate study programs with homologous universities in the region, Europe and beyond;</p> <p>Criterion 9 Doctorate study program provides for 3-4 modules (not less than 15 ECTS) to be conducted, organized in theoretical studies and doctorate students have the exam by professors of partner universities, known in the world, for quality and research, publishing activities in the relevant field of study. Exception cited in criterion 7 applies for Albanological</p>	<p>Epoka University pursues a financial policy that encourages participations in training and qualifications outside the study program.</p> <p>The same strategy is followed in terms of participation in conferences or academic publications. This approach is expressed either in the strategic documents of the institution or those of the study program;</p> <p>The practice was also verified during interviews with the students and staff at the institution.</p> <p>Epoka University has a complete and active list of agreements with foreign and western universities. Most of these agreements are related to the Erasmus and Horizon programs.</p> <p>These agreements, as well as those of cooperation, create a good basis for the further development of this study program and its reorganization into a joint program.</p> <p>Based on the curriculum of the program, there are 60 credits organized in the form of theoretical courses. Based on the information provided in the institution, these theoretical subjects are developed in the form of teaching load in classes and in the individual workload of the doctoral student.</p> <p>During the interviews with the leading group of the University, it was articulated the aspiration for involving as scientific thesis supervisors professors from western universities, specifically from Gdansk in Poland.</p>

<p>Sciences;</p> <p>Criterion 10 Doctorate study program promotes involvement of professors from foreign universities as scientific supervisors or as scientific collaborators of doctorate students.</p>	
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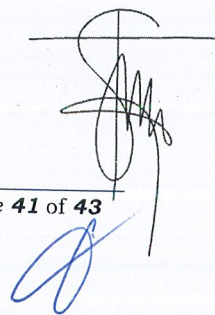
Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research

<p>Criterion 5 The institution has agreements with other academic or research institutions at home and abroad, supporting the exchange of academic staff and doctorate students and academic and research activities of doctorate school;</p>	<p>The list of partners presented in table 15 gives a clear overview of the full number of institutional collaborators who directly and indirectly contribute to this study program. The documents provided from the institution, as well as the information extracted from the site interviews confirm the exchange activities.</p>
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Conclusions of EEG:

Epoka University, according to the evidence, is presented as a reputable institution of Higher Education, and this fact is reflected in a dynamic panorama of collaborations with parallel institutions (private and public) inside the country and abroad. This situation has brought a favorable climate for the students of this study program, who according to the data have carried out teaching and research exchange activities, mostly in the framework of Erasmus + project.

Students have been part of exchanges and collaborations of academic programs. It is recommended to integrate the activity of the autonomous research centers that the institution has in its structure with that of the doctoral program. It is recommended to intensify relations with diverse sectors of industry to increase the opportunities for funded studies, as well as to enrich the range of research fields.



SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

1. The academic staff involved in the doctoral program is qualified and with international experience in research.
2. The quality of physical infrastructure, library and laboratories offers a qualitative environment for the research development.
3. The inclusion of the PhD candidates as research/teaching assistants contributes to the creation of a research-oriented environment.
4. The research work is supervised and monitored for plagiarism through a well-established system.
5. The program is supported by mobility agreements, which enable the PhD candidates to conduct research and gain experience in other partner universities.
6. The institution elaborates strategies (mainly based in financial support) for encouraging the publishing activity of the enrolled candidates in the doctoral program.
7. The mentoring process of the PhD candidate from an adviser during its first year of theoretic studies appears to be a positive practice.

Weaknesses

1. The institution does not have a clear strategy in terms of marketing and dissemination of the doctoral program.
2. The limited number of the vacancies offered by this program (only one student enrolled in the program), imposes the necessity of offering tailor-made methodologies for teaching processes and does not go in favour of group work and of a competitive environment.
3. The limited number of professors and associated professors related to the specific field of research offered by the doctoral program

Opportunities

1. Epoka University should develop strategies for obtaining research funding from the industry which would increase the impact of the research outcome for the Albanian context. On the other hand, such practice ensures the duration and contributes on the financial sustainability of the doctoral program.
2. Epoka University can rely on its established collaboration with foreign universities, to redesign the curriculum for offering joint doctoral programs; to fulfil the objectives and ambitions of this level of education. (Istanbul Technical University-Turkey).
3. Due to the profile of the institution and of its academic staff, Epoka University has increased chances of developing and enhancing the capacity to accommodate more international students (Internationalization).
4. Epoka University should continue investments in their laboratories, and in their physical infrastructure supporting third cycle research program.
5. The continuous qualification of the full-time academic staff of Epoka University; They appear to have active research and publishing profiles aiming to raise their academic achievements and obtaining the required qualifications for mentoring PhD students.

Threats

1. Limited number of academic staff, brings a limited number of research fields offered by the study program.