



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

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

**Report of the Periodic Institutional Accreditation
of Polytechnic University of Tirana**

MAY 2021

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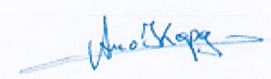
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About this review

The overall aim of Institutional Review is to assess the extent to which each higher education institution (HEI) meets the Albanian State Quality Standards which came into force in 2011. Institutional Review is a peer review process with each review team composed of a mix of experienced higher education reviewers from the United Kingdom and Albanian reviewers appointed by ASCAL. The review team is led by an experienced higher education reviewer from the United Kingdom.

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

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

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

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

As part of the report writing process, ASCAL has provided expert advice and assistance to the review team by ensuring that the findings made in the report are underpinned by evidence, and also by proofreading and summarising the full report for the summary below.

The context of this review

The Polytechnic University of Tirana (PUT) can trace its existence and engineering background to the establishment of the Higher Polytechnic Institute in Tirana in 1951. In 1957 the union of six engineering institutes led to the formation of the State University of Tirana from which engineers graduated in one of four fields. PUT was established in 1991 with four engineering faculties. A reorganization in 2007 led to the addition of two further faculties and the establishment of two institutes which were subsequently merged in 2011. A further faculty was added in 2013. PUT is the only engineering university in Albania.

In 2005 study programmes were restructured to take account of *Bologna Declaration* expectations. Study programmes were introduced in two cycles, Bachelor in the first cycle and Masters in the second cycle with Masters programmes classified as either labour-orientated Professional Master programmes or Scientific Master programmes. Third cycle study programmes at Doctorate-level were introduced in 2009.

PUT is engaged in a number of recognised academic networks and has established relationships with over 50 higher education institutions from 87 countries. Locally, PUT has established links with a number of prestigious companies throughout Albania and the wider region.

At the time of this Institutional Review PUT consists of eight main units (Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Faculty of Geology and Mining, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Mechanics Engineering and Physics Engineering, Faculty of Information Technology and Institute of Geosciences, Energy, Water and Environment) and 30 base units. There are also 32 administrative units. The University employs 605 employees, of which, 366 are full-time academic staff, 124 academic support staff and 106 administrative staff. PUT offers the following programmes: 21 Bachelor (first cycle), 43 Master (second cycle), 10 Doctorate (third cycle) and five constant education study programmes. In academic year 2019-20 there were 8,500 active students enrolled at PUT. **[SED, pp2-5; ASCAL HEI info on review site]**

Summary report

The Polytechnic University of Tirana (PUT) is the only engineering university in Albania consisting of seven faculties (Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Faculty of Geology and Mining, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Mechanics Engineering and Physics Engineering, Faculty of Information Technology), one research centres (Institute of Geosciences, Energy, Water and Environment) and 32 administrative departments. PUT offers the following programmes: 21 first cycle; 20 professional masters; 23 Master of Science, and 10 Doctorate-level. PUT currently employs 366 full-time academic staff and, in academic year 2019-20, had 8,500 active students.

This is the second Institutional Review of PUT to assess the extent to which the Albanian State Quality Standards, which came into force in 2011, have been met. The report of the first review in September 2016 did not include any features of good practice, made 16 recommendations for PUT to consider as a means of addressing identified areas of weakness and affirmed five actions already in progress. The report recorded the following judgements for each Evaluation area:

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

In December 2016 the reviewers recommended to the Accreditation Board that at PUT the State Quality Standards were **substantially met** and as a consequence PUT was granted accreditation by the Board for a period of three years.

A Self-evaluation Report was developed by an Internal Self-evaluation Working Group which included 10 individuals from across the University with an in-depth knowledge of the institution, and a student representative. Drafts were circulated to a wider audience within the University before being finalised. The Academic Senate authorised the release of the final report and for sending this to the Agency.

The visit took place over two days on the 1 and 2 April 2021. The review team was made up of one senior higher education reviewer from the United Kingdom and two experienced higher education members of staff from Albanian and Kosovo institutions. While the two Albanian speaking reviewers were present in PUT during the visit, the Lead Reviewer from the United Kingdom was present through an online link. The review team was supported by the Review Manager and a note-taker provided by the Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (ASCAL). The review team received the Self-evaluation Report and the portfolio of supporting evidence four weeks in advance of the review visit, later supplemented by additional requested documentation before and during the visit. The wide range of supporting information provided by PUT enabled the team to familiarize themselves with

the structure, policies, management procedures and nature of teaching and research activity undertaken. Evidence included the Statute and Regulations, internal reports, the annual report to the Ministry, admission and orientation procedures, list of external agreements and memoranda, examples of programme information and evidence of deliberative meetings.

The review team met with senior managers, students, lecturers, administrative and support staff, as well as external partners during the review visit. Discussion supported the clarification of procedures, responsibilities and findings. Notes were taken at all meetings.

The Standards for the Organization and its Management are **substantially met**. In reaching this judgement, the review team did not note any features of good practice. However, two weaknesses were identified: the Internal Quality Assurance Unit is not fully established as some faculty-level appointments remain unfilled (**Chapter III, Standard I.4**); the Career and Alumni Office is not fully established as a number of appointments remain unfilled (**Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2**). As a result, two **recommendations** have been made in order to address in full the recommendations made following the September 2016 visit: that PUT addresses as a matter of the highest priority the full establishment and staffing levels required to support a fully functional Internal Quality Assurance Unit institution-wide as a means of developing and implementing a mechanism which encourages the promotion and ownership of a quality culture across all units and all levels and the development of appropriate academic quality monitoring and review procedures. (**Chapter III, Standard I.4**); that PUT addresses as a matter of the highest priority the full establishment and staffing levels required to support a fully functional Career and Alumni Office as a means of establishing an Alumni Association for its graduates and to monitor centrally graduate employment destinations and outcomes (**Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2**). As the Self-evaluation Report acknowledged that the development of a long-term policy for improving the number of incoming international students and academic experts in all departments and faculties remains a challenge it is **recommended** that PUT continues to develop its internationalization strategy to ensure that mobility opportunities for staff and students and the integration of foreign students and staff can be realized effectively. (**Chapter III, Standard III.4**). The Self-evaluation Report also indicated an aspiration to promote further short-term vocational training. The review team **reaffirms** this aspiration and encourages PUT to take action to promote further short-term vocational training in cooperation with the network of external partners. (**Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2**). Throughout the review process PUT provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate its commitment to addressing matters discussed in the report resulting from the September 2016 accreditation visit. As a result, the review team was able to confirm that all remaining weaknesses and recommendations identified under Evaluation Area 1 have been addressed fully.

The Standards for Resourcing are **fully met**. In reaching this judgement, the review team did not note any features of good practice or identify any weaknesses but made one **recommendation** that PUT monitors all faculty-based websites regularly at institutional level to ensure the information provided is consistent, clear, current and accurate. (**Chapter III, Standard VII.1**). In areas where access is not possible for people with disabilities an action plan has been developed to address this omission and the review team **reaffirms**

the action proposed by PUT to ensure that all students, and people with disabilities in particular, are able to have full and unrestricted access to areas of the institution. (**Chapter III, Standard VII.3; Chapter III, Standard VII.5; Chapter III, Standard V.1**). Throughout the review process PUT provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate its commitment to addressing matters discussed in the report resulting from the September 2016 accreditation visit. As a result, the review team was able to confirm that the three weaknesses and three recommendations identified under Evaluation Area 2 have been addressed fully.

The Standards for the Curriculum are **fully met**. In reaching this judgement, the review team did not note any features of good practice, identify any weaknesses, make recommendations or reaffirm actions already being implemented. Throughout the review process PUT provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate its commitment to addressing matters discussed in the report resulting from the September 2016 accreditation visit. As a result, the review team was able to confirm that the four recommendations identified under Evaluation Area 3 have been addressed fully.

The Standards for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are **fully met**. In reaching this judgement, the review team did not note any features of good practice, identify any weaknesses, make recommendations or reaffirm actions already being implemented. Throughout the review process PUT provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate its commitment to addressing matters discussed in the report resulting from the September 2016 accreditation visit. As a result, the review team was able to confirm that the four recommendations identified under Evaluation Area 4 have been addressed fully.

The Standards for Students and their Support are **fully met**. In reaching this judgement, the review team noted one feature of **good practice**: the provision of individual tutors for first-cycle students to facilitate their progress through their programme by offering one-to-one support and guidance through formal timetabled meetings (**Chapter I, Standard III.6**). No weaknesses, recommendations or reaffirm actions already being implemented were identified. Throughout the review process PUT provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate its commitment to addressing matters discussed in the report resulting from the September 2016 accreditation visit. As a result, the review team was able to confirm that the one weakness and resulting recommendation identified under Evaluation Area 5 have been addressed fully.

PUT undertook the review in accordance with ASCAL guidelines. The review team acknowledge the University's level of engagement with the process and the cooperation provided to the review team throughout the visit phase. The review team consisted of Mr. Grant Horsburgh (Lead Reviewer), Prof. Florim Grajcevcic and Prof. Ana Mane (External Reviewers).

Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- the provision of individual tutors for first-cycle students to facilitate their progress through their programme. (**Chapter I, Standard III.6**).

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- the Internal Quality Assurance Unit is not fully established as some faculty-level appointments remain unfilled (**Chapter III, Standard I.4**)
- the Career and Alumni Office is not fully established as a number of appointments remain unfilled (**Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2**).

Recommendations

The review team made the following recommendations:

- PUT addresses as a matter of the highest priority the full establishment and staffing levels required to support a fully functional Internal Quality Assurance Unit institution wide. (**Chapter III, Standard I.4**)
- PUT addresses as a matter of the highest priority the full establishment and staffing levels required to support a fully functional Career and Alumni Office institution wide. (**Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2**)
- PUT continues to develop its internationalisation strategy to ensure that mobility opportunities for staff and students and the integration of foreign students and staff can be realised effectively. (**Chapter III, Standard III.4**)
- PUT ensures that all faculty-based websites are monitored regularly at institutional level to ensure the information provided is consistent, clear, current and accurate. (**Chapter III, Standard VII.1**).

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team noted affirmation of the following action being taken:

- to promote further short-term vocational training in cooperation with the network of external partners. (**Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2**)
- the action proposed by PUT to ensure that all students, and people with disabilities in particular, are able to have full and unrestricted access to areas of the institution. (**Chapter III, Standard VII.3; Chapter III, Standard VII.5; Chapter III, Standard V.1**).

Summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area

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

Summary Judgement

The reviewers recommend to the Accreditation Board that at the Polytechnic University of Tirana the State Quality Standards are fully met.

Detailed Report

Evaluation Area 1: The Organisation and its Management

1.1 PUT's governance and regulatory frameworks are designed to align with national legal requirements for higher education institutions. **[SER pp14&15; Ref.1.01_EN; Meetings 6,7,11&13]** The Statute sets out the mission, internal organisation and management structures. **[Ref.1.01_EN, Ch2]** Individual and formal board and council responsibilities are also defined in regulations. **[Ref.1.01_EN, Ch3]** PUT amends and changes its Statute and regulations as required. **[SER p14; Meeting11]** The Board of Administration and Academic Senate have approved the Statute to take account of higher education law and this has been confirmed by the Ministry responsible for higher education. **[SER p15] (Chapter III, Standard I.1)**

1.2 PUT is organised to secure management efficiency in accordance with legislative requirements and the *Strategic Plan 2019-2024*. **[Meetings 6-8,10,11&13]** The flow of information from base units to the Board of Administration and Academic Senate, and the promulgation of decisions made by management bodies to staff and students, is effective. **[Meetings 3-7]** Arrangements for the management and administration of the institution and for collegial decision making, take account of legal expectations, work appropriately and are understood by staff at all levels. **[SER pp15-17; Ref.1.03_EN; Ref.1.05_EN; Ref.1.06_EN; Ref.1.07_EN; Ref.1.08_EN; Ref.1.12] (Chapter III, Standard I.2)**

1.3 Management bodies meet regularly and information on agenda items is made available to all staff in advance electronically. **[SER pp17&19; Meetings6&7]** Arrangements for the operation of deliberative councils and boards, and to support collegial discussion and debate, are understood by staff and students. **[SER pp17&19; Meetings3-7]** Deans and heads of departments are responsible for monitoring locally the implementation of decisions made by formally constituted boards and councils. **[Meeting 11] (Chapter III, Standard I.3; Chapter III, Standard II.3)**

1.4 PUT ensures that the limits of its autonomy are respected and that it operates within the confines of prevailing laws and regulations. **[SER p17; Meeting11]** Self-governance is evident in organisational academic and administrative units, teaching and scientific activities, financial and administrative matters. **[Meeting 11]** The Internal Quality Assurance Unit has a key role in monitoring and analysing the effectiveness of internal evaluation activities. **[SER p17]** The introduction of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit has been designed to address the recommendation made following the September 2016 accreditation visit to develop and implement a mechanism which encourages the promotion and ownership of a quality culture across all units and all levels and the development of appropriate academic quality monitoring and review procedures. **[SER p6; Meetings 8,11&13]** However, it became apparent during the visit that the Internal Quality Assurance Unit is not fully established as some faculty-level appointments remain unfilled and the review team found this to be a **weakness**. **[Meetings 8,11&13]** In order to addresses in full the recommendation made following the September 2016 accreditation visit to develop and implement a mechanism which encourages the promotion and

ownership of a quality culture across all units and all levels and the development of appropriate academic quality monitoring and review procedures the review team **recommends** that PUT addresses as a matter of the highest priority the full establishment and staffing levels required to support a fully functional Internal Quality Assurance Unit institution-wide. (**Chapter III, Standard I.4**)

1.5 PUT has an appropriate development strategy in the form of the *Strategic Plan 2019-2024* which has been approved by Academic Senate and the Board of Administration. **[SER pp17&18; Ref.1.12_EN; Meetings 2&11]** The Strategy has been drafted in accordance with PUT's mission and objectives and was considered during various stages of its development by management bodies and councils. **[SER pp17&18; Meetings 2&11]** Main and Base Units have developed and implemented action plans to meet the requirements of the Strategy. **[SER p18; Ref.1.15_EN; Meetings 6,7&11]** The development of the *Strategic Plan 2019-2024* addresses in full the recommendation made following the September 2016 accreditation visit to identify a set of University priorities, supported by appropriate objectives and targets that faculties are required to address in their faculty and department plans. **[SER pp6&7; Ref.1.12_EN & Ref.1.15_EN]** (**Chapter III, Standard I.5**)

1.6 The annual report to the Ministry responsible for higher education provides accounts of teaching and study programmes, scientific research, staffing, project activity and economic and financial matters. **[SER p18]** The drafting process is informed by internal evaluation and self-assessment reports by each Main and Base Unit. **[Meetings 8&13]** The final report is approved by Academic Senate. (**Chapter III, Standard I.6**)

1.7 Faculties and departments are organised in accordance with legal requirements. **[SER p19; Ref.1.02; HEI info on APAAL site; Meetings 6&7]** Management, executive, and administrative structures are separate from academic structures and organisational units. **[Meetings 6&7,11&13]** Academic staff are qualified appropriately and exercise autonomy and academic freedom in teaching, research and all other academic activities. **[Meetings 6&7,11&13]** PUT has an official web site and offers first, second and third cycle programmes in accordance with its legal status. **[SER p19; Ref.1.02; HEI info on APAAL site; www.upt.al; Meetings 3-5]** (**Chapter III, Standard II.1**)

1.8 PUT has a network of partners at national and regional level including higher education institutions, public bodies and independent firms. **[SER p8; SER pp20&21; Meetings 3-6,12&13]** Internationalisation is included as a key feature within the *Strategic Plan 2019-2024*. **[Ref.1.12_EN]** While no written evidence was provided to indicate that PUT conducts annual surveys for labour market needs as recommended in the report from the September 2016 accreditation visit, the Self-evaluation report indicated that up to date labour market information is obtained through constant contact between academic staff and industry. **[SER p8]** This was confirmed during a meeting with a number of external partners and alumni. **[Meeting 12]** Students, academic staff, alumni and industry representatives indicated that there are strong links between local and regional organisations and Main and Base Unit academic staff. **[Meetings 3-7,11&12]** The strong links between academic staff and relevant industries confirms that the

recommendation to conduct labour market surveys to inform curricula and programme development at all levels of study has been met in full. The Self-evaluation report indicated an aspiration to promote further short-term vocational training. [SER p21] The review team **reaffirms** this aspiration and encourages PUT to take action to promote further short-term vocational training in cooperation with the network of external partners. (*Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2*)

1.9 The development of the Career and Alumni Office to monitor graduate employment and the establishment of an alumni network have been introduced to take account of the recommendation following the first visit to establish an Alumni Association for its graduates and to monitor centrally graduate employment destinations and outcomes. [SER p8; SER p20] However, it became apparent during the visit that the Career and Alumni Office is not fully established as a number of appointments remain unfilled and the review team found this to be a **weakness**. [Meetings 8,10&13] In order to address in full the recommendation made following the September 2016 accreditation visit to establish an Alumni Association for its graduates and to monitor centrally graduate employment destinations and outcomes the review team **recommends** that PUT addresses as a matter of the highest priority the full establishment and staffing levels required to support a fully functional Career and Alumni Office. (*Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2*)

1.10 PUT has developed partnership arrangements with state and private institutions to provide services to students and to ensure that its study programmes are improved and adapted to meet their needs and expectations. [SER p8; SER p21; Meetings 6,7&11-13] Oversight of partnership arrangements is managed by each Base Unit. [SER p21; Meetings 6,7&11] (*Chapter III, Standard III.3*)

1.11 The university has established a number of formal agreements which enable staff and students to participate in international activities. [SER pp21&22; Meetings 3-7,11&12] The report from the September 2016 accreditation visit noted that PUT had modest levels of incoming and outgoing mobility, with incoming student mobility representing a particular challenge. Further, PUT lacked institutional capability to deliver study programmes in international languages such as English and noted that provision for study programmes in international languages would be beneficial as would a long-term mobility policy. This led to a recommendation being made that PUT develop a long-term policy for improving the number of incoming international students and academic experts in all departments and faculties. The Self-evaluation report acknowledges that this topic remains a challenge for PUT. [SER p22; Meeting 11] As such it is **recommended** that PUT continues to develop its internationalisation strategy to ensure that mobility opportunities for staff and students and the integration of foreign students and staff can be realised effectively. (*Chapter III, Standard III.4*)

Findings

Good practice

The review team did not identify any features of good practice in this Evaluation Area.

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weakness:

- the Internal Quality Assurance Unit is not fully established as some faculty-level appointments remain unfilled (**Chapter III, Standard I.4**)
- the Career and Alumni Office is not fully established as a number of appointments remain unfilled (**Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2**)

Recommendations

The review team made the following recommendations:

- PUT addresses as a matter of the highest priority the full establishment and staffing levels required to support a fully functional Internal Quality Assurance Unit institution wide. (**Chapter III, Standard I.4**)
- PUT addresses as a matter of the highest priority the full establishment and staffing levels required to support a fully functional Career and Alumni Office institution wide. (**Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2**)
- PUT continues to develop its internationalisation strategy to ensure that mobility opportunities for staff and students and the integration of foreign students and staff can be realised effectively. (**Chapter III, Standard III.4**)

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team noted affirmation of the following action being taken:

- to promote further short-term vocational training in cooperation with the network of external partners. (**Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2**)

Judgement

The standards for the Organisation and its Management are substantially met.

Evaluation Area 2: Resourcing

2.1 PUT has developed and operates progressive academic staff recruitment policies. The organisational structure is discussed and approved at the Academic Senate and approved by the Administration Board. [SER pp23&24; Ref.1.02_EN; Meetings 6,7,11&13] An organisational chart is made public on the website. [www.upt.al] Within the approved general structure academic and administrative staff roles are presented in detail. [SER pp23&24; Ref.2.01_EN] Recruitment to academic units is supported by needs analysis specific to the faculty, department, study programme and the curricula and whether the role is full or part-time. Vacancies are made public through the online portal. [http://upt.al/vendepune] The recruitment process for teaching, scientific and administrative staff follow the same process set out in the Statute and Regulations which take account of relevant law. [SER pp23&24; Ref.1.01_EN; Ref.1.03_EN] A commission is formed to scrutinize applications from candidates, the evaluation is undertaken on individual merit and the employment contract is signed by the Rector. In line with the specific nature of the institution, current academic staff are professional and qualified in engineering-specific technical fields. (Chapter III, Standard IV.1; Chapter III, Standard II.2)

2.2 PUT is committed to the implementation of integration policies of academic and administrative staff which are set out in the *Strategic Plan 2019-2024*. [SER p25; Ref.1.12_EN; Meetings 6,7&11] Staff supported the view in the Self-evaluation report that academic staff are engaged in a variety of activities, such as workshops, field events and social organizations in addition to teaching. [SER p25; Ref.2.09_EN; Meetings 6,7&11] Following the November 2019 earthquake academic staff were engaged in the field to assist in assessing the extent of damage caused. Subsequently, academic staff produced a number of study reports and in 2020 the Faculty of Civil Engineering organized an international symposium to explore effects of the earthquake. [Ref.2.15-EN; http://isdee-al.com] In collaboration with students, academic staff are involved in extracurricular activities and social activities. [Ref.3.33_EN; Meetings 6,7&11] (Chapter III, Standard IV.2)

2.3 Staff development strategic goals are set out in the *Strategic Plan 2019-2024* and PUT pursues a policy of continuous training of staff in accordance with these goals. [SER pp25&26; Ref.1.12_EN; Ref.1.24_EN; Meetings 6,7&11] Support is provided for academic staff to enable them to participate in training activities at other institutions and internationally. [SER p26; Ref.2.08_EN] The Standing Committee for the Promotion of Academic Titles prepares and promotes academic staff for advanced academic titles in accordance with statutory requirements. [SER p26; Ref. 2.35] (Chapter III, Standard IV.3)

2.4 PUT has organized a wide range of activities to encourage social dialogue between staff, students and the general community. [SER pp26&27; Ref.2.10_EN; Ref.2.11_EN; Meetings 3-7] Examples include, social activities, the weekly awareness campaign and open days for prospective students. Academic staff have been involved in a variety of workshop conferences and students have been engaged with the local institutions in projects such as the Academy 100+ villages project in cooperation with the National Agency for Territorial Planning. [SER pp26&27; Ref.2.09_EN] In addition, PUT periodical publication *Bulletin of Technical Sciences* includes

articles that provide scientific contributions to technical fields. [<http://www.upt.al/botime>] PUT also makes a social contribution through participation in higher education reforms legislation, as well as strategic projects such as cultural heritage, building codes and contributions to the development of industrial areas from the past. [SER pp26&27; Ref.2.16_EN] (*Chapter III, Standard IV.4*)

2.5 PUT exercises financial autonomy in accordance with the rules and standards of budgetary programming and public financial management. [SER pp27-29; Ref.1.01_EN; Ref.2.21_EN; Ref.4.11_EN; Meetings 1,6,7&11] The Board of Directors approves the budget which is drafted by the Administrator and staff confirmed that budgetary matters are discussed at all relevant boards and committees at Base and Main Units and Academic Senate. The review team noted that the 2021 financial budget has been approved by the Administration Board. As financial management and budgetary control is centralized, academic units do not hold full financial autonomy. However, transparency is assured through financial matters being discussed at Academic Senate which includes staff and student representatives. The budget design process and financial administrative management system is well structured, efficient and known to staff. [SER p28; Ref.2.20_EN; Meeting 11] In accordance with statutory requirements, PUT has been subject to periodic internal audit. [SER p29; Additional Ref.6] Financial information is available to the public through the PUT web site and on the U-Transparency portal. [SER pp28&29; www.upt.al; <https://u-transparenca.al/#buxheti>] (*Chapter III, Standard VI.1; Chapter III, Standard VI.2; Chapter III, Standard VI.3*)

2.6 PUT has a coordinated information management system. In addition to the main website, each faculty maintains a website specific to the needs of students and staff. [SER pp10,11&30-33; www.upt.al] While the institutional website provides a holistic overview and strategic information, faculty websites provide data, information and public announcements relating to the academic needs of Main and Base Units. [SER pp10,11&30-33; www.upt.al] While the majority of faculty-based websites provide relevant and current information, the review team found that there are a number which do not provide students with information relating to their studies, social activities or alumni networks. In order to addresses in full the recommendation made following the September 2016 accreditation visit to develop and implement an information management system which ensures complete, accurate and clear presentation of information at programme, cycle, Base Unit, Main Unit and institutional levels it is **recommended** that PUT monitors faculty-based websites regularly at institutional level to ensure the information provided is consistent, clear, current and accurate. (*Chapter III, Standard VII.1*)

2.7 PUT is committed to developing its digital infrastructure in support of student learning and the professional development of academic staff. [SER p32; Ref.1.02_EN; Ref.4.07_EN; Meetings 3-7&11] As a consequence, the majority of institutional activities are available in an electronic form including protocol and archiving services, library systems and an e-Learning platform created to facilitate remote learning. [SER p32; Ref.2.25; <https://fau.easy-web.cloud/?crd=8870>; Meetings 3-7&11] While at the time of the visit PUT did not offer distance learning programmes, during the 2020 pandemic, all teaching was provided online. PUT provides a range of computer laboratories supplied with relevant hardware to support students' learning

and the teaching process in general. [SER pp30-33; Ref.2.28_EN; Meetings 3-7&11] Staff and students stated that the computers and software provided by PUT are suitable for their needs. [Meetings 3-7,11&12] (*Chapter III, Standard VII.2*)

2.8 PUT has a record of its real estate which extends to six sites within Tirana. [SER pp34-37; Ref.2.31_EN; Meeting 11] It closely monitors the use of resources according to the requirements for teaching and research. [SER pp34-37; Ref.2.28_EN; Ref.2.32_EN] Buildings rendered unserviceable following the 2019 earthquake are being rebuilt under the management of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism with the aim of providing modern learning and research facilities. [SER pp34-37; Ref.1.12_EN; Ref.2.18_EN; Ref.2.28_EN; Learning resource tour] Annual investment ensures that PUT's infrastructure is maintained at the required standard and the review team commented on the quality of learning accommodation and that facilities and access for individuals with disabilities generally meet statutory requirements. [Learning resources tour] In areas where access is not possible for people with disabilities an action plan has been developed to address this omission. [SER p38; Ref.2.40_EN] The review team reaffirms the action proposed by PUT to ensure that all students, and people with disabilities in particular, are able to have full and unrestricted access to areas of the institution. (*Chapter III, Standard VII.3; Chapter III, Standard VII.5; Chapter III, Standard V.1*)

2.9 PUT has a strong academic and cultural heritage and it archives publications by academic staff and doctoral and diploma theses produced by students, are stored in the Scientific Library. Effective coordinated management systems are in place to ensure the care and preservation of all documentation and information, including student data held by Teaching Secretaries. [SER pp35&36; Ref.1.03_EN; Ref.1.04_EN; Meetings 6,7&11] The review team found that storage and archiving facilities within libraries and electronically met sector expectations. [Learning resource tour] (*Chapter III, Standard VII.4; Chapter III, Standard V.2*)

2.10 Teaching and scientific research activities and services of common interest with external third parties. [SER p37; Ref.2.23; Meetings 3-7,11 &12] Laboratories within academic units offer services to external institutions and directly to relevant labor market organizations with arrangements taking account of institutional regulations. [Ref.2.23_EN] Market research on student internships has informed engagement with external partners. [Ref.5.18_EN]. External partners and alumni confirmed that PUT maintains contact with external third parties for the purpose of teaching and scientific research activities and services of common interest. [Meeting 12] (*Chapter III, Standard VII.6*)

Findings

Good practice

The review team did not identify any features of good practice in this Evaluation Area.

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in this Evaluation Area.

Recommendations

The review team made the following recommendations:

- PUT monitors all faculty-based websites regularly at institutional level to ensure the information provided is consistent, clear, current and accurate. (**Chapter III, Standard VII.1**)

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team noted affirmation of the following action being taken:

- The action proposed by PUT to ensure that all students, and people with disabilities in particular, are able to have full and unrestricted access to areas of the institution. (**Chapter III, Standard VII.3; Chapter III, Standard VII.5; Chapter III, Standard V.1**)

Judgement

The standards for Resourcing are fully met.

Evaluation Area 3: The Curriculum

3.1 PUT offers study programmes in accordance with its mission and capacities. There are 74 programmes across three study levels of bachelor, masters and Doctorate. Subjects are offered by the faculties in special engineering fields. [SER pp5&42-61; Ref.1.12_EN; Ref.3.14_EN; Ref.3.15_EN; Ref.3.16_EN; Ref.3.17_EN; Ref.3.18_EN; Ref.3.19_EN; Meetings 3-7,11&12] PUT ensures that curricula are designed to aid student learning progression throughout their programme. Curricula design ensures that first-year students gain general knowledge relevant to their programme and support with academic and creative writing while second and third-year students obtain a deepened knowledge of their specific areas of study. [Ref.2.10_EN, [Ref.2.25_EN, Meeting 3, 4, 5, 7&10] Details of each programme, for example aims, objectives, course structure and credit values are available on the faculty websites which are accessible through the main website. [www.upt.a] Students confirmed that the information on the website helped them to choose their programme of study. [Meetings 3-5] Study programmes across all three cycles contain technical sciences which meet the requirements of the labour market and provide students with the necessary competencies to prepare them for employment. [SER pp42-61; Ref.3.14_EN; Ref.3.15_EN; Ref.3.16_EN; Ref.3.17_EN; Ref.3.18_EN; Ref.3.19_EN; Meetings 3-7,11&12] The admission process is clearly defined, published in brochures and on the website, understood by students and all applicants are treated fairly and judged on merit, including previous education, state exams and tests organised by academic units. [SER p44; Ref.1.12_EN; Ref.3.05_EN; Ref.3.06_EN; Ref.3.08_EN; Meetings 3-7] (*Chapter 1, Standard 1.1; Chapter 1, Standard 1.3; Chapter 1, Standard 1.6*)

3.2 PUT delivers continuing education opportunities which have been approved to take account of labour market requirements, for example, Real Estate Appraisal and Energy Audit - Processes and Buildings. All first-cycle study programmes enable progression to continuing studies in a second-cycle scientific or professional programme. Progression to Doctorate-level study is also possible. [SER pp47&48; Ref.3.21_EN; Meetings 3-7] (*Chapter 1, Standard 1.2*)

3.3 Study programmes are designed in accordance with the Bologna process in respect of structure, level and credit. [SER p49; Ref.3.14_EN; Ref.3.15_EN; Ref.3.16_EN; Ref.3.17_EN; Ref.3.18_EN; Ref.3.19_EN; Meetings 3-7,11&12] Study programmes take full account of relevant national policies in that programme content provides mobility opportunities for students and staff. [SER p49; Ref.2.08_EN; Ref.3.32_EN; Ref.5.03_EN; Meetings 3-7,11&12] Students and staff confirmed that international mobility opportunities are available and that financial assistance is available in some cases. [Meetings 3-7&11] PUT regulations enable the award of a double or multiple degree. [SER p48; Ref.1.01_EN; Ref.1.20_EN; Meetings 6,7&11] (*Chapter 1, Standard 1.4*)

3.4 PUT considers its capacity in terms of infrastructure, staffing and finance as part of the process to design new programmes. Each department plans its teaching on an annual basis, according to current bylaws, and reports back at the end of the year on performance against the plan. [SER p50; Ref.3.12_EN; Ref.3.24_EN; Meetings 6,7&11] Any additional teaching by full or part-time staff is funded completely by the University. [SER p50] Academic staff have annual

agreements setting out the time spent on teaching, research and other duties. [SER p50; Meetings 6,7&11] Some academic staff have administrative duties and their individual teaching commitments are reduced accordingly. [SER p50; Meetings 6,7&11] (*Chapter I, Standard I.5*)

3.5 All first-cycle programmes allow progression to second-cycle scientific or professional programmes. [SER pp52&53; Ref.1.01_EN; Ref.3.14_EN] First and second-cycle students confirmed that first-cycle programmes provide levels of basic knowledge, general scientific methods and principles to enable them to successfully complete a first-cycle programme and progress to further study. [Meetings 1&2] The inclusion of professional internships within first-cycle programmes provides students with valuable work experience and future employment possibilities. External partners confirmed that students successfully completing an internship generally progress to full employment on completion of their programme. [Meeting 12] PUT's statute and regulations enable students to transfer between programmes and from other higher education institutions. [SER p53; Ref.1.01_EN] (*Chapter I, Standard I.7*)

3.6 First-cycle students have access to a progressive orientation process which starts before their high school graduation through information provided on the PUT website and recruitment fairs and campaigns. [SER pp53&54; Ref.3.06_En; www.upt.al] On students' first day at PUT they receive a welcome presentation from Deans of faculty covering the structure of the faculty and the general rules and regulations of the institution and a more programme-focused presentation from their programme tutors. Teaching Secretaries provide orientation information on libraries and other facilities. [SER pp53&54; Meetings 3-5] First-cycle programmes contain a variety of teaching methods dependent on the programme structure including laboratory work, placements, projects and, during 2020, an increased use of virtual online learning. [SER pp53&54; Meetings 3-7&12] PUT regulations set out the qualification requirements for academic staff with the minimum level of qualification being a Master of Science degree. [SER pp53&54; Ref.1.01_EN; Meetings 6&7] Approximately 75 per cent of full-time staff are committed to teaching first-cycle students. [SER p54; Ref.3.12_EN] (*Chapter I, Standard I.8*)

3.7 Academic staff teaching on second-cycle programmes are required to hold a minimum qualification at Doctorate-level. [SER p54; Ref.1.12_EN; Ref.6.04_EN] While academic staff priority is teaching and research, they are involved in a variety of other activities including drafting study programmes, developing self-assessment reports, committee work, professional practice and liaison with external partners. [SER pp54-56; Ref.3.12_EN; Meetings 4,5&12] Master of Science programmes and some Professional Masters programmes include a thesis as the final examination to test students' professional skills and competence in the relevant engineering field. Where relevant, external practice providers participate in the examination process. [SER p55; Ref.2.19_EN; Meetings 4-7&12] (*Chapter I, Standard I.9*)

3.8 PUT ensures that all programmes of study are compiled and developed according to the Bologna process and are evaluated in credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), credits earned at PUT and abroad are recognised in the Regulations. [SER pp56-58; Ref.1.12_EN; Ref.1.15_EN; Meetings 6&11] As such, study programmes facilitate student and staff mobility and cooperation with partners nationally and internationally. [SER pp56-58; Ref.2.08_EN; Ref.3.32_EN; Ref.5.03_EN; Meetings 6&11]

Successful first and second-cycle students are given a diploma and diploma supplement in Albanian and English. [SER p57; Ref.3.14-EN; Ref.3.15-EN; Ref.3.16-EN; Ref.3.17-EN; Ref.3.18-EN]. Programmes must include a foreign language element and students may choose from either English, French, German, Italian or Spanish. [SER p57; Ref.1.01_EN; Meetings 3-5] (*Chapter I, Standard I.10*)

3.9 Professional and internship opportunities are included within first and second-cycle study programmes. Where relevant, programme design and content prepare students for professional and internship opportunities. [SER p58; Ref.2.24_EN; Meetings 1,2,6&12] The integration of practical application and theoretical knowledge within study programmes is achieved through case studies, laboratory work, practical assignments and projects, professional practice and the final thesis or research project. Students commended academic staff for the support provided throughout their studies. [Meetings 3-5] PUT supports social initiatives and events organized by various student clubs. For example, the Student Sports Association coordinates annual sporting events institutions and which require support [SER p58; Ref.2.11_EN; Ref.3.34_EN] (*Chapter I, Standard I.11*)

3.10 First and second-cycle programmes contain modules that relate directly to employment and the development of Professional Masters programmes are a direct attempt at providing the labour market with graduates with interdisciplinary knowledge and understanding. [SER p59; Meetings 6&11] Students indicated that internships are an important way for students to gain both application of theory to practice and also employment skills. [Meetings 3-5] The learning resources tour identified within the Faculty of Civil Engineering laboratories and equipment designed specifically to assist students' practical training. [Learning resources tour] External partners are involved in providing internships, assessing students, advising on course content and developing new programmes. [Meeting 12] (*Chapter I, Standard I.12*)

Findings

Good practice

The review team did not identify any features of good practice in this Evaluation Area.

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in this Evaluation Area.

Recommendations

The review team did not make any recommendations in this Evaluation Area.

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team did not note any affirmation of action being taken in this Evaluation Area.

Judgement

The standards for the Curriculum are fully met.

Evaluation Area 4: Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research

4.1 PUT has a well-developed and clearly defined process for programme design and review. **[SER pp61-63; Ref.1.01_EN]** Academic Senate reviews and approves at the beginning of each academic year the teaching plans for each study programme, based on Basic Units' proposals. **[SER pp61-63; Ref.1.01_EN; Ref.1.18_EN; Ref.4.02_EN; Ref.4.03; Meetings 6,7,11&13]** At the end of each academic year, departments review their programmes and identify areas for further improvements, including the reading lists for each course module. The study programme review process is completed by department academic staff as defined in regulations. **[SER pp61-63; Meetings 6,7,11&13]** Each of the faculties is responsible for planning staff teaching hours and the exact work plan for the academic year. **[SER pp61-63; Ref.1.01_EN; Meetings 6,7,11&13]** The tour of learning resources demonstrated that the institution offers sufficient capacity for its students. In addition to the central University Library at the main campus, there are libraries at each faculty. Respective departments assure access and accuracy of the information provided for students. **[SER pp61-63; Ref.4.02_EN; Ref.4.05_EN; Meeting 6&11 Learning resources tour]**. PUT is able to carry out the teaching process largely on its own premises. The employer-network developed by PUT and individual faculties ensures partnership agreements are in place to enable students to undertake practical work-based learning. **[SER pp61-63; Meetings 3-4,6&12] (Chapter I Standard II.1)**

4.2 Rules and requirements regarding the final diploma examination are set out in the Statute and examination regulations. **[SER pp63&64; Ref.1.01_EN; Ref.3.14-3.19_EN; Meeting 6]** PUT ensures that the criteria and procedures relating to relevant diploma are implemented in accordance with the appropriate regulations. Diploma information is posted on faculty announcement boards and is published online on the official PUT website. **[SER pp63&64; Meetings 3-5,6,7&11]**. Complaints or appeals relating to examination results are reviewed by a commission which is established in compliance with relevant regulations. **[SER pp63&64; Ref.1.01_EN; Ref.3.14_EN-3.19_EN; Meetings 3-5&6]** Students confirmed that they are able to consult faculty websites for a calendar of exams, graduation requirements, guidance for assessment procedures and any other assessment related information, including their personal exam results, through a username and password on PUT's online system. **[SER pp63&64; Ref.4.08_EN; Ref.4.09_EN; Meetings 3-5]** Rules, assessment criteria and exams specifications, are defined in the syllabus of each module. **[SER pp63&64; Ref.3.14-3.19_EN; Meetings 3-5] (Chapter I Standard II.2)**

4.3 PUT has established a Council of Study Programmes at department-level for each study programme. **[SER pp64&65; Ref.3.13_EN; Meeting 6]** Lectures are assessed regularly by department and faculty structures as part of the study programme review process and students confirmed that their views are taken into account. **[SER pp64&65; Ref.1.13_EN; Ref.2.13_EN; Meetings 3-5,7&8]** The improvement of teaching quality is also maintained through staff mobility, academic staff recruitment, staff promotion, sabbaticals and engaging academic staff in research projects. PUT also organises scientific research groups as a means of encouraging recruitment of academic staff with academic titles gained through research activities. **[SER pp65&66; Ref.1.13_EN; Ref.2.04_EN; Ref.2.08_EN; Meetings 7&8]** Academic Senate has defined

recruiting standards for academic staff while departments set criteria depending on the recruiting specification. **[SER pp65&66; Ref.1.01_EN; Meetings 6&11]** The Self-evaluation Report noted that in addition to department-level review processes, the Internal Quality Assurance Directorate periodically organises questionnaires and undertakes statistical evaluation of study programmes to supplement the review process. **[SER p65; Meetings 3-5,7&13]** In acknowledging that PUT has worked towards improving its internal quality systems, the review team found that the Internal Quality Assurance Directorate is not yet established fully at faculty-level and noted this as a **weakness** under **Chapter III, Standard I.4. (Chapter I Standard II.3; Chapter I Standard II.4)**

4.4 Priority areas for scientific research are determined in the *Strategic Plan, 2019-2024* which addresses in full the recommendation made following the September 2016 accreditation visit to adopt a strategic institutional approach to scientific work which supports academic staff in scientific research work. **[SER pp11,12&69-73; Ref.1.12_EN]** Departments, as the fundamental units, set their own research priorities, in line with PUT's Strategic Plan. **[SER pp66-68&70-71; Ref.1.01_EN; Meetings 6&11]** PUT encourages staff to engage with and participate in national and international conferences. Academic staff confirmed that PUT supports their attendance at international events. **[Meetings 6&11]** Departments submit proposals for research priorities, including financial aspects, which are subsequently approved by the Rectorate. **[SER p66; Ref.1.01_EN; Ref.1.11_EN; Ref.1.14_EN; Ref.4.10_EN, Meetings 6&11]** PUT works in cooperation with public and private research institutions, as a means of enabling continuous improvement in the quality of teaching process and scientific research. **[SER pp68&69; Ref.1.12_EN; Ref.4.18_EN; Meetings 6&11]** Annually, departments compile a list of their scientific activities and publications and PUT ensures that sufficient and appropriate laboratories, libraries and other facilities are available to support the implementation of scientific research activities. Staff are required to present annually their work to at least one internal scientific conference or to publish a scientific article in a journal. **[SER pp69-73; Ref.1.14_EN; Ref.4.15_EN; Ref.4.20_EN; Meetings 6&11]** **(Chapter II Standard I.1; Chapter II Standard I.2; Chapter II Standard I.4; Chapter II Standard I.5)**

4.5 Research internationalisation continues to be an institutional priority. **[SER p70; Ref.1.12_EN; Meeting 11]** PUT has established a number of international agreements and participates in scientific research with different partners. **[SER pp68-69; Meetings 3-5&6]** Through the Erasmus framework, PUT cooperates with public and private universities in Albania and Europe and has established networks of partners on topics relating to central and local government, business and law and the national economy. **[SER pp68-69; Meetings 3-5&6]** Students and staff provided examples of participation in conferences and research activity. **[Meetings 3-5&6]** The Self-evaluation Report claimed considerable success in attracting external funding for international projects, laboratory and computer equipment. **[SER p69]** **(Chapter II Standard I.3)**

4.6 Continuity in the field of scientific research is ensured at PUT as scientific research is a central institutional objective. **[SER pp71&72; Ref.1.01_EN, Ref.1.12_EN; Meetings 6&11]** PUT is engaged in the compilation and implementation of regional and national scientific policies which are published on the institution's official website. **[www.upt.al]** Students and staff confirmed that

PUT encourages international mobility opportunities and frequently invites foreign academic staff to contribute by providing open lectures or by being engaged as part-time lecturers. [SER pp71&72; Ref.1.01_EN; Ref.1.12_EN; Ref.2.08_EN; Ref.4.12_EN; Ref.4.13_EN; Meetings 3-5&6] (*Chapter II, Standard I.6*)

4.7 Scientific research is managed by the Directorate of Scientific Research and Projects with three sub-sections, Academic and Scientific Promotion, Publications, and Scientific and Professional Projects. Departments are responsible for monitoring and assessing the progress of its scientific research and the results are disseminated and made available to the scientific community using a variety of medium including conferences, presentations and publication in scientific journals. [SER pp71&72; Meetings 5&6] Students confirmed that PUT supports young researchers in their individual scientific research initiatives and projects. Similarly, first and second cycle students indicated that they are encouraged to participate in international activities organised by the institution. [Meetings 3-5] In addition to publishing its *Bulletin of Technical Sciences*, staff are encouraged to submit scientific research outcomes for publication nationally and internationally. [SER pp71&72; Ref.2.09_EN; Ref.4.13_EN; <http://upt.al/botime>; Meetings 1,6&11] (*Chapter II Standard I.7; Chapter II Standard I.8*)

Findings

Good practice

The review team did not identify any features of good practice in this Evaluation Area.

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in this Evaluation Area.

Recommendations

The review team did not make any recommendations in this Evaluation Area.

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team did not note any affirmation of action being taken in this Evaluation Area.

Judgement

The standards for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are fully met.

Evaluation Area 5: Students and their Support

5.1 PUT has clear student admission criteria. [SER pp76&77; Ref.2.19_EN; www.upt.al] Admission policies are based on admission quotas, which take account of infrastructure and staffing capacities. Scholarships are available for first-year students based on indicators such as grades achieved or social groupings in accordance with Council of Ministers expectations. Students confirmed that information on study programmes, training objectives and admission criteria is available from the Career Counselling Office, published on the official website and made available at recruitment fairs and open days. [SER pp76&77; Ref.2.19_EN; www.upt.al; Meetings 3-5,6&7] On the first day of their programme, students are welcomed by lecturers and introduced to their programme. Faculty Teaching Secretaries are responsible for providing student orientation information regarding libraries, laboratories and other facilities. [SER pp76&77; Ref.2.10_EN; Ref.2.19_EN; Ref.3.08_EN; Ref.3.09_EN; Meetings 3-5] (*Chapter I, Standard III.1*)

5.2 PUT has established a Career Counselling Office which is the central support structure for students and has a close relationship with business communities. [SER p77; Meetings 3-5&12] However, as noted earlier in this report, the office is staffed by one individual. In addition, career counselling representatives at faculty-level have the additional role for internal quality assurance. [Meetings 3-5,7&10] In acknowledging that PUT has worked towards improving its central support structure for students and has a close relationship with business communities, the review team found that the Career Counselling Office is not yet established fully at faculty-level and noted this as a **weakness** under *Chapter III, Standard III.1 and Chapter III, Standard III.2*. Faculty Teaching Secretaries hold individual student personal files which are updated throughout the study period, including, for example, detail on professional practice and the diploma thesis. PUT's online system enables communication between students and academic and administrative staff both as individuals and as groups. Students confirmed that the internal communication system is effective. [SER p77; Ref.2.10_EN; Ref.2.25_EN; Ref.5.02_EN; Meeting 3-5,7&10] (*Chapter I, Standard III.2; Chapter I, Standard III.3*)

5.3 PUT pursues actively a policy to ensure that the institutional infrastructure remains suitable for all students and implements a supporting policy for specific student social categories through subsidising tuition fees for students or their parents with disabilities and students with families supported by social economic assistance. [SER pp78&79; Ref.2.40_EN; Ref.3.09_EN; Ref.5.04_EN; Meetings 6,7,11&13] (*Chapter I, Standard III.4*)

5.4 The library network consists of the Central Scientific Library and seven libraries located in the Main Units. Students confirmed that the provision of learning material is comprehensive and is responsive to their needs. [SER pp12&13,79&80; Meetings 3-5] Based on acquisitions lists, the library fund has enriched its resources with new textbook editions periodically in order to respond to the needs of study programmes. This is supplemented by electronic materials and literature to help meet the requirements and needs of all programmes and scientific research. [SER pp12&13,79&80; <https://ulibrary.rash.al/>; <https://plus.al.cobiss.net/opac7/libraries>]. In addition to the Central Scientific Library and the Main Unit libraries, every department has a

literature corner or subject specific mini library. [SER p79; Ref.2.36_EN; Ref.2.37_EN; Ref.5.05_EN; Meetings 3-5; Learning resources tour] The development of the online library and the increased access to books and digital scientific journals addresses in full the recommendation made following the first visit to improve the quality of literature in the library. **(Chapter I, Standard III.5)**

5.5 Students confirmed that PUT provides a wide range of support mechanisms for first-cycle students throughout their study programme. [SER pp80&81; Meetings 3-6] This includes support from lecturers to access specific literature and support from Faculty Teaching Secretaries through the online portal. Specific mentoring is provided for the third year of first-cycle students to support them during their thesis selection and development and to advise on future employment opportunities. In addition, all first-cycle students are assigned an individual tutor who offers one-to-one support and guidance throughout the programme through formal timetabled meetings. The provision of individual tutors for first-cycle students is a feature of **good practice** in the support offered to first-cycle students by PUT to facilitate their progress through their programme. [SER pp80&81; Ref.4.09_EN; Ref.5.06_EN; Meeting 3-6; <https://bitalbania.com/>] **(Chapter I, Standard III.6)**

5.6 The Self-evaluation Report states that student participation in the institutional life at PUT is important and this view was confirmed by students. [SER p81; Meetings 3-5] Student representatives who are elected by their fellow students attend a variety of boards and committees including Academic Senate which has four student members. [SER p81; Meetings 3-5] Students have the right to express their opinions and concerns on issues related to the progress of the learning process, including examination schedules. Students commented that they are content that their views are sought, taken seriously and acted upon effectively where reasonably practical or appropriate. [SER p81; Ref.1.01_EN; Ref.5.09_EN; Ref.5.10_EN; Meetings 3-5&11] **(Chapter I, Standard III.7)**

5.7 Social and cultural activities, including sport, form an important part of the student experience at PUT. [SER pp81&82; Meetings 3-7&11] A student card enables students to access a variety of private and public services locally. [SER p81] Opportunities are provided for student social interaction through development of leadership skills and various entertainment activities and community services. [SER p81] Students have access to the PUT Student Sports Association which enables students to participate in the annual National Student Championship in four disciplines (women's volleyball, men's mini soccer, men's basketball and men's football). The Student Sports Association is one of the founding members of the Albanian University Sports Federation. [SER pp81&82; Ref.3.34_EN; Meetings 3-5] **(Chapter I, Standard III.8)**

5.8 PUT provides support and assistance to enable students to gain employment on completion of their programmes through organising workshops, job fairs and professional practice opportunities to introduce students to the labour market. [SER pp82&83; Meetings 3-6,10&12] As noted earlier in this report, PUT has data on the employment of its students, with whom it maintains constant contacts and an Alumni Association for its graduates has been established to monitor centrally graduate employment destinations and outcomes. At the time of the visit over

200 graduates had expressed interest in being part of the Alumni Association. [SER pp82&83; Ref.1.18_EN; Ref.1.19_EN; Ref.2.10_EN; Meetings 10&12] (*Chapter I, Standard III.9*)

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the provision of individual tutors for first-cycle students to facilitate their progress through their programme. (*Chapter I, Standard III.6*)

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in this Evaluation Area.

Recommendations

The review team did not make any recommendations in this Evaluation Area.

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team did not note any affirmation of action being taken in this Evaluation Area.

Judgement

The standards for Students and their Support are fully met.

Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- the provision of individual tutors for first-cycle students to facilitate their progress through their programme. (*Chapter I, Standard III.6*).

Weaknesses

The review team identified the following weaknesses:

- the Internal Quality Assurance Unit is not fully established as some faculty-level appointments remain unfilled (*Chapter III, Standard I.4*)
- the Career and Alumni Office is not fully established as a number of appointments remain unfilled (*Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2*).

Recommendations

The review team made the following recommendations:

- PUT addresses as a matter of the highest priority the full establishment and staffing levels required to support a fully functional Internal Quality Assurance Unit institution wide. (*Chapter III, Standard I.4*)
- PUT addresses as a matter of the highest priority the full establishment and staffing levels required to support a fully functional Career and Alumni Office institution wide. (*Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2*)
- PUT continues to develop its internationalisation strategy to ensure that mobility opportunities for staff and students and the integration of foreign students and staff can be realised effectively. (*Chapter III, Standard III.4*)
- PUT ensures that all faculty-based websites are monitored regularly at institutional level to ensure the information provided is consistent, clear, current and accurate. (*Chapter III, Standard VII.1*).

Affirmation of action being taken

The review team noted affirmation of the following action being taken:

- to promote further short-term vocational training in cooperation with the network of external partners. (*Chapter III, Standard III.1; Chapter III, Standard III.2*)
- the action proposed by PUT to ensure that all students, and people with disabilities in particular, are able to have full and unrestricted access to areas of the institution. (*Chapter III, Standard VII.3; Chapter III, Standard VII.5; Chapter III, Standard V.1*).

Judgement

Summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area

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

Summary Judgement

The reviewers recommend to the Accreditation Council that at the Polytechnic University of Tirana the State Quality Standards are fully met.

Evidence List

List 1

The documents in this list were submitted by the institution to accompany the self-evaluation report and appear on the ASCAL management system under the self-evaluation phase of the process. These documents are referred to in the report as **Ref.1.01_EN**, **Ref.1.02_EN**, etc.

- 1.01_EN Statute of PUT.
- 1.02_EN Organization chart of PUT.
- 1.03_EN Regulation of the commission for the promotion of Academic Staff at the PUT.
- 1.04_EN Regulation of the Permanent Commission of PUT for awarding the "Doctor" Scientific Degree.
- 1.05_EN Regulation on the functioning of the Board of Administration of PUT.
- 1.06_EN Code of Ethics of PUT.
- 1.07_EN Regulation for getting the Academic Titles at PUT.
- 1.08_EN Doctoral studies regulation of PUT.
- 1.09_EN Regulation for the organization of elections for leading bodies and authorities 2020-2024.
- 1.10_EN Example Regulation Main Unit.
- 1.11_EN Example Regulation base Unit.
- 1.12_EN Strategic Plan 2019-2024 of PUT.
- 1.13_EN Report of teaching activity (at university and unit level).
- 1.14_EN Report of scientific research activity (at university and unit level).
- 1.15_EN Strategic plan of the main and base unit.
- 1.16_EN Base units in PUT.
- 1.17_EN Qualification of academic staff in base units.
- 1.18_EN Institutional Agreements.
- 1.19_EN Agreements with industry and institutions.
- 1.20_EN Agreements for dual degrees or common programs.
- 1.21_EN Foreign invited Academic Staff.
- 1.22_EN Action Plan for fulfilling the recommendations of the Accreditation Board.
- 1.23_EN Action Plan on the problems identified in the Student Surveys.
- 1.24_EN Quality Assurance Office staff training.
- 1.25_EN Decision to close study programs.
- 1.26_EN Labor market and companies surveys.
- 1.27_EN Literature exchanges 2017-2020.

- 2.01_EN Approval of PUT Structure.
- 2.02_EN List of full-time staff in PUT.
- 2.03_EN Data on academic staff, academic support staff and administrative staff.
- 2.04_EN Employment procedures in PUT.
- 2.05_EN Employment practice in PUT.
- 2.06_EN Employment of full-time academic staff 2017-2020.
- 2.07_EN Evidence on staff training at PUT.
- 2.08_EN Mobilities 2017-2020.
- 2.09_EN Research activities and projects in the main and base units.
- 2.10_EN Activities organized by the Career Office.
- 2.11_EN Social Events.
- 2.12_EN Example of teaching load forecast.
- 2.13_EN Student Survey - Questionnaire and Report.

- 2.14_EN Regulation Technical Sciences Bulletin.
- 2.15_EN Evidence on the contribution to social and national development.
- 2.16_EN List of services offered to third parties.
- 2.17_EN Completed services for third parties.
- 2.18_EN Sanitary and fire safety certification.
- 2.19_EN Regulation of Curricular Development and Teaching of PUT.
- 2.20_EN Medium Term Budget 2020-2022.
- 2.21_EN Evidence on Budget drafting at the main / base unit level.
- 2.22_EN Table of income and investment 2017-2020.
- 2.23_EN Regulation on Discipline of the Service System in UPT.
- 2.24_EN Practice card.
- 2.25_EN Informing students through online platforms.
- 2.26_EN Evaluation and maintenance of student performance documentation.
- 2.27_EN Procurement Procedure for equipment (Scientific Library).
- 2.28_EN Physical Infrastructure in PUT.
- 2.29_EN Perils insurance policy.
- 2.30_EN IGEWE Stations Network.
- 2.31_EN Information on buildings.
- 2.32_EN Financing for reconstruction and new building.
- 2.33_EN Regulation of the Scientific Library.
- 2.34_EN Enrichment of the Scientific Archive 2017-2020.
- 2.35_EN Data on degrees and titles awarded at UPT in the period 2017-2020.
- 2.36_EN Enrichment of the collection of the Scientific Library 2017-2020.
- 2.37_EN Information on Libraries at PUT.
- 2.38_EN New spaces available to faculties.
- 2.39_EN Laboratories at PUT.
- 2.40_EN Action Plan for the inclusion and accessibility of people with disabilities.
- 2.41_EN Number of active students 2019-2020.
- 2.42_EN Information on the Statistics Office.
- 2.43_EN Register Model.

- 3.01_EN Base units and study programs they offer.
- 3.02_EN Number of study programs by main units.
- 3.03_EN Active study programs 2020 – 2021.
- 3.04_EN Practice for reorganizing and reviewing Study Programs.
- 3.05_EN Information booklet, student guide.
- 3.06_EN Information activities on study programs.
- 3.07_EN Regulation of admissions to FAU.
- 3.08_EN Approval of admission criteria in PUT.
- 3.09_EN Admission quotas 2020-2021.
- 3.10_EN Report on hosting capacities in PUT.
- 3.11_EN Investments in laboratory equipment 2017-2020.
- 3.12_EN Documentation of teaching loads.
- 3.13_EN Approval practice for new study program.
- 3.14_EN Complete documentation of a study program (First cycle).
- 3.15_EN Complete documentation of a study program (Second cycle PM 60 ECTS).
- 3.16_EN Complete documentation of a study program (Second cycle PM 120 ECTS).
- 3.17_EN Complete documentation of a study program (Second cycle MSC 120 ECTS).
- 3.18_EN Complete documentation of a study program (Second cycle MSC 300 ECTS).
- 3.19_EN Complete documentation of a study program (Third cycle).
- 3.20_EN Study Program Councils and Coordinators.

- 3.21_EN Full documentation of a continuous learning program.
- 3.22_EN Questionnaire on the organization of a continuous learning program.
- 3.23_EN Senate decision on foreign language level.
- 3.24_EN Procedure of calculation teaching workload.
- 3.25_EN Study Transfer Practice.
- 3.26_EN Overview of the realization of the teaching load.
- 3.27_EN Student teaching practice at PUT.
- 3.28_EN Guide to thesis topics.
- 3.29_EN Examples of regulations on the graduation process.
- 3.30_EN Questionnaire and Alumni Database.
- 3.31_EN Study Program Guide.
- 3.32_EN Mobility procedure for students.
- 3.33_EN Student activities at PUT.
- 3.34_EN Student's sport activities.

- 4.01_EN Qualification of FEI academic support staff.
- 4.02_EN Annual structure of the teaching process at PUT.
- 4.03_EN Web publication of the academic schedule.
- 4.04_EN Other forms of teaching (Design Studio).
- 4.05_EN Laboratory work evidence.
- 4.06_EN Example of group work for a project.
- 4.07_EN Guide and manual for the development of online learning.
- 4.08_EN Exam and thesis evaluation commissions.
- 4.09_EN Online secretary access by students.
- 4.10_EN Approved research areas in PUT.
- 4.11_EN Budget planning at the Department level.
- 4.12_EN Annual plan of research activity in base and main units.
- 4.13_EN Scientific research activity at PUT.
- 4.14_EN Evidence for the financing of Scientific Research.
- 4.15_EN Research projects of departments funded by UPT.
- 4.16_EN Funding for participation in research activities 2017-2020.
- 4.17_EN Research activity IGEWE.
- 4.18_EN Research projects in PUT.
- 4.19_EN Involvement of students in research activities.
- 4.20_EN Funds from International Projects.
- 4.21_EN Decision on reorganization of Third Cycle programs.
- 4.22_EN IGEWE cooperation with the departments.
- 4.23_EN Purchase of laboratory equipment for main units.
- 4.24_EN Agreement with the Academy of Sciences.
- 4.25_EN Antiplagiarism Control.

- 5.01_EN Data on the number of foreign students.
- 5.02_EN Example of student's file.
- 5.03_EN Procedures for Erasmus+ Mobility.
- 5.04_EN Data on financially treated students.
- 5.05_EN Registration card in the Scientific Library.
- 5.06_EN Group tutors.
- 5.07_EN Decision to waive payment for services to students.
- 5.08_EN The results of the elections for the Academic Senate.
- 5.09_EN Student Council (Activities).
- 5.10_EN Student Council Regulation.

- 5.11_EN Financing of student activities at UPT.
- 5.12_EN Student card.

List 2

The documents in this list were submitted by the institution following a request from the review team for clarification of the original supporting documents and appear on the APAAL management site under the desk-based evaluation phase of the process. These documents are referred to in the report as **6.01**, **6.02**, etc.

- 6.01 Minutes of meeting from the meetings of the Academic Senate and Board of Administration.
- 6.02 Examples of daily activity Quality Assurance Office.
- 6.03 Quality Assurance Office staff training.
- 6.04 Report on the analysis of teaching activity, scientific research activity and financial activity.
- 6.05 Report on the tracking and employment of graduate students as PUT.
- 6.06 Report of internal audit PUT.

Meetings held during the visit

Meetings are referred to throughout the report using the abbreviation **Meeting 1**, **Meeting 2**, etc:

Day 1 : Thursday 1 April 2021

- 09:00 -09:15 Meeting 1: Review team meet with the Institutional Coordinator.
- 09:15 - 09:45 Meeting 2: Review team meet with the Rector.
- 10:00 - 11:00 Meeting 3: Review team meet with a sample of first-cycle students.
- 11:15 - 12:15 Meeting 4: Review team meet with a sample of second-cycle students.
- 12:30 - 13:15 Meeting 5: Review team meet with a sample of third-cycle students.
- 14:30 - 15:30 Meeting 6: Review team meet with a sample of teaching staff.
- 16:00 – 17:00 Meeting 7: Review team meet with a sample of support staff.
- 17:15 – 17:45 Meeting 8: Review team meet with the Internal Quality Assurance Unit.

Day 2 : Friday 2 April 2021

- 09:00 – 09:15 Meeting 9: Review team meet with the Institutional Coordinator.
- 09:15 – 10:15 Meeting 10: Review team meet with representatives from the Career and Alumni Office.
- 10:30 – 11:30 Meeting 11: Review team meet with senior managers.
- 11:45 – 12:15 Meeting 12: external partners and alumni.
- 12:30 _ 13:30 Review team meet with the Self-evaluation team.
- 13:45 – 14:00 Meeting 13: Review team meet with the Institutional Coordinator.
- 14:00 – 14:15 Meeting 14: Review team meet with Rector.