Institutional Review of
Higher Education Institutions in Albania

Report of Polis University
July 2017

Review Team:

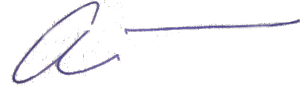| 1 | Kevin Kendall | Lead Reviewer |
| 2 | Janthia Taylor | Reviewer |
| 3 | Gjergj Thomai | Reviewer |

Date: 3 to 4 June 2017

Contents

About this review

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

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

The Albanian State Quality Standards have been grouped under five headings, the Evaluation Areas: 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 APAAL's Accreditation Council. This overall judgement is one of four levels:

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

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

The context of this review

Polis University is a private higher education institution located on the outskirts of Tirana which was originally established in central Tirana in 2006. It was founded by a group of Albanian professionals and academics with the aim of facilitating the movement of Albania and the region to align with European and international trends. Its mission is to create, transmit, develop and protect knowledge through teaching and scientific research and innovation activity in the fields of art and design, architecture, construction, territorial planning, environmental management and entrepreneurship. It aims to enable lifelong education practices, to promote economic development at regional, national and local level, and to contribute to raising the standards of democracy and civilisation of society and prepare the young generation to face its dynamics.

Polis University received institutional accreditation in 2009 and was accredited to offer higher education programmes in 2010. The first programmes were in applied art and design and environmental studies. In 2012 the Ministry of Education and Sport in Albania accredited Polis as a University which meant that it was able to offer PhD programmes. It offers a focused range of programmes in subjects such as art and design, architecture, urban planning and management, urban design and landscaping, restoration and conservation heritage, housing and social issues, environmental studies, structural engineering, energy efficiency, entrepreneurship and leadership.

The University comprises the Faculties of: Architecture and Design, Planning, Environment and Urban Management, and Research and Development. It offers four bachelor's programmes, eight master's programmes and one PhD programme. They are all full-time programmes except for two part-time professional master's programmes. The bachelor's and master's programmes are taught in Albanian and the PhD programme is taught in English. There are 318 students studying bachelor programmes, 503 studying master's programmes and 35 students on the PhD programme. Most of these students have Albanian citizenship but there are 130 from Kosovo, 19 from Italy, 10 from Macedonia, seven from Montenegro, five from Serbia and single numbers from a range of five other countries. In recent years the student number has been growing at a rate of approximately 200 students per year.

A total of 66 full-time and 36 part-time academic staff are employed at the University with 21 of these having foreign citizenship. In addition, the university employs 27 administrative and support staff who all have Albanian citizenship.

The University is subject to assessment and accreditation by a number of outside bodies, for example in the accreditation of its PhD programme by the University of Ferrara in Italy, the recognition of the master's programme in Urban Planning and Management by the Association of European Schools of Planning and has achieved the management standard ISO 9001. The University of Ferrara issues a double degree for the PhD programme in both Italy and Albania.

Summary report

A self-evaluation report was developed by a team at the University which included the Head of the Internal Quality Assessment Unit, the Dean of the Faculty for Research and Development, an external expert and representation from research, administration, academic staff and students. The process was initiated and the final report approved by the Academic Senate.

The Self-Evaluation Report Development Team divided the work between them, met monthly for discussions and then compiled the final draft report. Drafts were circulated to a wider audience within the departments of the University before being finalised and approved by the Academic Senate. The University cooperated fully in the evaluation process, the documentation was provided in English and additional documentation provided on request.

The visit took place over two days. The review team was made up of two senior higher education reviewers from the UK and one experienced higher education member of staff from an Albanian institution. The review team was supported by a Review Manager and note-taker provided by APAAL, the agency responsible for reviews of higher education in Albania. The review team was provided with a self-evaluation report and a portfolio of supporting evidence eight weeks in advance of the review visit, and supplemented by additional documentation requested. In all some 140 documents were considered, and enabled the team to familiarise themselves with the structure, policies, management procedures and the nature of teaching and research activity undertaken by the University. Evidence considered included the Statute of the University, General Regulations, Annual Reports, cooperation agreements, minutes of meetings, admission and orientation procedures and examples of programme information and evidence from deliberative meetings.

A series of meetings took place during the two days of the review visit, which allowed the review team to gain a clearer understanding of responsibilities, procedures and the views of staff and students. The review team met the Rector, senior staff including deans and heads of departments, students, academic staff, administrative and support staff, and a range of employers, partners and alumni. Notes were taken at all meetings. As part of a tour of the campus the review team viewed the library, teaching spaces, IT facilities, workrooms, laboratories and a gallery for exhibitions. Having reviewed all evidence available, the team reached the conclusions set out below.

The University meets the standards fully for the Organisation and its Management. It complies with its statute and regulations and is organised in such a way as to ensure efficiency in management. It encourages constructive debate and respects the limits of its autonomy. It has a development strategy which outlines its mission and purpose and its plans for the future. The review team identified one feature of good practice which is the effective development strategy. This enables the University to have a positive impact on design and planning in the Tirana region. The review team did not identify any weaknesses, recommendations or affirmations.

The University meets the standards fully for Resourcing. It meets all the standards in this area in relation to human resources, financial management, information system management, infrastructure, facilities and record keeping. The review team identified two features of good practice. The first one is the high level of involvement by staff and students in public events which enable widespread engagement with topical issues in architecture and design in events such as Tirana Architecture Week and Tirana Design Week. The second one is how the University promotes social dialogue through its contribution to society in important reforms such as territory reform, higher education reform and planning

reform. The review team did not identify any weaknesses, recommendations or affirmations in this evaluation area.

The University meets the standards fully for the Curriculum. It meets all the standards for the range of study programmes in relation to its mission and capabilities and the organisation of their delivery. The review team identified three features of good practice, firstly for the role of joint degrees to support student mobility, develop research and promote high academic standards. Secondly for the delivery in English of the PhD and the professional master's study programmes enabling students to draw on literature in English and to engage in study or employment abroad. Thirdly for the University's clear strategic focus on industry partnerships that ensure students receive appropriate placements and that industry partners have input into the shaping of the curriculum. The review team did not identify any weaknesses, recommendations or affirmations.

The University meets the standards fully for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research. It meets all the standards in relation to the delivery of programmes, methods of continuous improvement and the organisation and outputs of research. The review team identified three features of good practice. Firstly, the University's participatory approach to the development of the research strategy facilitating the prioritisation of research areas and interdisciplinary research. Secondly for the availability of a PhD programme offered in partnership with another European university which supports the University's research strategy and enables newly-appointed members of staff to integrate with the University's scientific research community; and thirdly the systematic and regular evaluation of staff research based on metrics which highlight the quality of published outputs. The review team did not identify any weaknesses, recommendations or affirmations.

The University meets the standards fully for Students and their Support. It meets all the standards in relation to student admission and induction, communication, mentoring, support, available literature, participation in cultural and sporting life and assistance in getting employment. The review identified one feature of good practice which is the work of the Alumni Association in facilitating the employment of graduates. The review team did not identify any weaknesses, recommendations or affirmations.

Summary of findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the effective development strategy which enables the University to have a positive impact on design and planning in the Tirana region (paragraph 1.5; ***Chapter III Standard I.5***)
- the high level of involvement by staff and students in public events which enable widespread engagement with topical issues in architecture and design in events such as Tirana Architecture Week and Tirana Design Week (paragraph 2.2; ***Chapter III Standard IV.2***)
- the University promotes social dialogue through its contribution to society in important reforms such as territory reform, higher education reform and planning reform (paragraph 2.4; ***Chapter III Standard IV.4***)
- the role of joint degrees to support student mobility, develop research and promote high academic standards (paragraph 3.11; ***Chapter I Standard I.10***)
- the delivery in English of the PhD and the professional master's study programmes enabling students to draw on literature in English and to engage in study or employment abroad (paragraph 3.12; ***Chapter I Standard I.10***)
- the University's clear strategic focus on industry partnerships that ensure students receive appropriate placements and that industry partners have input into the shaping of the curriculum (paragraph 3.14; ***Chapter I Standard I.12***)
- the University's participatory approach to the development of the research strategy facilitating the prioritisation of research areas and interdisciplinary research (paragraph 4.8; ***Chapter II Standard I.4***)
- the availability of a PhD programme offered in partnership with another European university which supports the University's research strategy and enables newly-appointed members of staff to integrate with the University's scientific research community (paragraph 4.9; ***Chapter II Standard I.4***)
- the systematic and regular evaluation of staff research based on metrics which highlight the quality of published outputs (paragraph 4.11; ***Chapter II Standard I.8***)
- the work of the Alumni Association in facilitating the employment of graduates (paragraph 5.9; ***Chapter I Standard III.9***).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

Recommendations

The review team did not identify any recommendations.

Affirmation of action being taken

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

Summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area

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

Summary judgement

The reviewers recommend to the Accreditation Council that at Polis University the State Quality Standards are **fully met**.

Detailed report

Evaluation Area 1: The Organisation and its Management

1.1   The University Academic Senate approved the current Statute **[A15]** in June 2016 and it was approved by the Ministry in September 2016. The University Regulations **[A17]** are being adapted to be consistent with the new Statute. The Statute defines the mission of the University, its organisation and management, its teaching and scientific activities, procedures relating to the admission and graduation of students plus their rights, obligations and responsibilities. It is described as a private institute of higher education offering programmes at levels 5 to 8 under the Albanian Qualification Framework. The University was successful in periodic institutional accreditation in 2016 **[A11]**. The University and its structures work in accordance with its Statute. **[A3, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7]** *[Chapter III Standard I.1]*

1.2   The University is organised to ensure efficiency in management and in accordance with the Statute **[A15]** and Regulations **[A17]**. It can be seen in the organisation chart **[A18]** that the University comprises Faculties, Departments, the Interdisciplinary Centre for Research and Innovation and the administrative support units. There is a 'bottom-up' approach to management **[M1, M3, M6, M7]** where proposals are initiated at department level, along with the proposed budget and these are taken into account when the annual budget is prepared before being approved by the Academic Senate and finally by the Administrative Board **[M7]**. The flow of information from staff, through departments to the Academic Senate and the promulgation of decisions made by it to staff and students is effective **[M1, M2, M3, M4, M6, M7]**. The management and administration of the University and the decision-making processes work appropriately and are understood by staff at all levels **[M2, M3, M6, M7]**. This is also facilitated through University committee structures, for example the Council of Professors, the Ethics Board and the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. **[A18, M7]** *[Chapter III Standard I.2]*

1.3   The Academic Senate and the Administrative Board meet periodically **[B2, B3, B4]** and staff are informed about decisions either through staff representation, the website and intranet, or by email. Staff have access to a password protected portal for confidential information **[M6]**. The roles and responsibilities of key staff in the University, for example the Deans and Heads of Department are defined in the Statute **[A15]** and Regulations **[A17]**. Staff met by the review team **[M1, M2, M3, M6, M7]** confirmed that they are informed and involved in decision making, particularly the 'bottom-up' approach. The management structure is working effectively and efficiently encouraging constructive debate. *[Chapter III Standard I.3]*

1.4   The University ensures that the limits of autonomy are respected and that it operates within the law and the regulations. Financial auditing is carried out both internally and externally **[M7]**. The Internal Quality Assessment Unit **[A20]** verifies the administration of the University and its activities [http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/?q=en/node/2026]. It provides an annual report **[A22]** to the Rector and the Academic Senate and can propose modifications of the Regulations. The University has an Office for International Relations and Projects **[A2, M7]** to ensure that they are able to benefit from funding available from European programmes (see also paragraph 4.7) *[Chapter III Standard I.4]*

1.5   The University has a Development Strategy (2014-2020) **[A21,** http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/?q=en/node/1112**]** which states its mission to create, transmit, develop and protect knowledge through teaching and scientific research and innovation activity in fields of art and design, architecture, construction, territorial planning,

environmental management, and entrepreneurship sciences. It aims to enable lifelong educational practices; promote economic development at regional, national and local level; and to contribute to raising the standards of democracy and civilisation of society and to prepare young generation to face its dynamics. It is clear to the review team that the University is fulfilling its mission through the transfer and application of knowledge through links with strategic partners, its leadership of annual events such as the Tirana Architecture and Design Weeks and its links to key players in the region **[A3, M1, M3, M5]**. For example, it has links with Co-Plan and Metropolis who are commercial architects and planners in the region. The review team considers the effective development strategy which enables the University to have a positive impact on design and planning in the Tirana region to be **good practice**. *[Chapter III Standard I.5]*

1.6   The University prepares an Annual Report **[A22]** on its academic, research and administrative activity. It is an annual review of the activities of the University, against the Development Strategy and contains contributions from each of the units in the organisation. The report is approved by the Academic Senate before being sent to the Ministry in September each year **[A3]**. Reports are accessible to staff and students through the Registrar's Office. **[M7, A3]** *[Chapter III Standard I.6]*

1.7   The University has full autonomy and academic freedom in teaching and academic research according to Article 4 of the Statute **[A15]**. This includes freedom to select its own staff, offer study programmes, establish partnerships with other universities and organisations, admit students and to manage resources legally owned by the University, in accordance with its mission and act of foundation. The University structure is organised into didactic and research units who are supported by administrative bodies **[A3, M7]**. The University also has a dedicated Study Centre for Interdisciplinary Research and Innovation **[A3, A18]** which facilitates the achievement of its mission and purpose. The first, second and third cycle study programmes offered by the University are managed through the relevant departments and faculties **[M1, M2, M3, M6]** and are published through the website [http://universitetipolis.edu.a] which is available in both Albanian and English. *[Chapter III Standard II.1]*

1.8   The University consults key stakeholders as part of its market research, for example C-Plan and Metropolis **[M5, tour]** regarding the skills needs in the region and has identified and developed training in important areas such as energy audit **[tour, M6]**. The University has a specialist profile and concentrates on areas within its areas of expertise, gathering information from nationally available statistics **[A23]** and feedback from graduates through the Alumni Association **[A96, A98]**. Transfer and application of knowledge and direct input into projects is a University objective which informs teaching and research **[A2]**. Of the 720 full-time and 101 part-time students, approximately 170 are from neighbouring countries and the rest from Albania **[A2]**. This means that the University potentially has a significant influence on the design and architecture in the Balkan region when these students return to working in their home locations. The Student Support and Career Counselling Office keeps in contact with all the graduates from the University since its inception and they report that 93 per cent of all graduates are in employment related to the programme studied. **[M7]** *[Chapter III Standard III.1]*

1.9   The University has an Internationalisation Strategy **[A29]** which details the objectives regarding staff and students, curricular, research and quality standards. In relation to this it has participated in a number of international projects during the current academic year. These include Tempus, Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 projects **[A31]**. It also has a large number of varied partners both in Albania and abroad **[A30]**. The University organises a Joint Doctorate programme with Ferrara University, Italy and also has cooperation agreements with Erasmus University in Rotterdam and the IPAG Business School in Paris

[A24, A25, A26, A27, A28]. It also organises an exchange programme with the University of Detroit in the USA. **[M6]** *[Chapter III Standard III.2; Chapter III Standard III.3]*

1.10   In line with its Development and International Strategies **[A21, A29]**, the University sees internationalisation as a priority. Approximately 63 per cent of academic staff have worked abroad in the last five years **[PS]**. The Student Survey indicates that currently only approximately 13 per cent of students have studied abroad but the review team consider that this is likely to increase in view of the current activity by the University. All PhD students travel abroad as part of their studies, as do many students studying master's programmes, this is less so for the early years of bachelor's programmes **[M6]**. Of the 102 academic staff, 21 have foreign citizenship and the rest being Albanian. However, it was evident from meetings held with the review team **[M1, M2, M3, M6, M7]** that the level of English speaking among staff is excellent. Of the 821 students on degree programme **[A2]**, 176 have non-Albanian citizenship. The bachelor programmes are generally taught in Albanian with some Masters programmes and all the PhD programmes taught in English. The students who met the review team spoke in excellent English and it is clear that the University pursues a positive policy for the mobility of academic staff and students internationally. *[Chapter III Standard III.4]*

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- the effective development strategy which enables the University to have a positive impact on design and planning in the Tirana region (paragraph 1.5; *Chapter III Standard I.5*).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

Recommendations

The review team did not identify any recommendations.

Affirmation of action being taken

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

Judgement

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

Evaluation Area 2: Resourcing

2.1   The University pursues clear and open human resource policies covering the recruitment and employment of staff which meet regulatory requirements. Policy and procedures support a competitive process for the recruitment of qualified full and part-time staff to meet the University's academic and administration requirements. There is a clear organisational structure that is published on the University website [http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/]. Academic staff are recruited as required to meet teaching workloads within the departments with priority being given to suitably qualified applicants with relevant degrees from Western European universities. The Human Resources Department advertises vacant posts on the website. Employment criteria are also made available to interested parties through the University website. The employment procedure for administrative staff is the same as for academic staff and is based on the Labour Code. Academic staff are from Albania, Italy and other European countries and the USA. The University stated that all the new academic staff carry out PhD studies through Ferrara University in Italy. The technical and support staff are also given appropriate training. **[A3 p.12, A15, A17, A18, A32, A33, A34, A35, M2, M7]** *[Chapter III Standard IV.1]*

2.2   The University is committed to the integration of academic and administrative staff through formal and informal means. The integration occurs through representation of each group in decision making bodies, presentation of new personnel and training from the established teachers and professors through dedicated workshop for this purpose. The University has social events and sports competitions that help to ensure that they are integrated fully into the community. These events use dedicated spaces in the city such as Googoats bar and Archhouse. The review team considers the high level of involvement by staff and students in public events which enable widespread engagement with topical issues in architecture and design in events such as Tirana Architecture Week and Tirana Design Week to be **good practice**. In addition other events are organised such as a football championship and alumni meetings. **[A3 p12, A33, A29, M3, M6]** *[Chapter III Standard IV.2]*

2.3   The University has appropriate procedures for assessing the effectiveness of its academic staff. At the beginning of each year all the members of the academic staff sign an individual work plan which is approved by the dean of the faculty. Staff performance in teaching and research is periodically assessed using evaluation instruments managed by the Internal Quality Assessment Unit (IQAU). The assessment takes into account students evaluation, peer evaluation and self-evaluation, and is checked and added to by the line manager. The University uses other methods to assess staff performance including evaluation by the Rectorate and the Dean's office, annual meetings to analyse academic and research work and annual reports on academic and research performance at department level. Students complete annual evaluations of programme delivery and lecturer performance after the completion of teaching but before the examinations. **[A3 p.12-13, A29, A34, A35, A36, B9, C7, M2, M3, M4, M6]** *[Chapter III Standard IV.3]*

2.4   The University promotes social dialogue through its contribution to society in important reforms such as territory reform, higher education reform and planning reform and the review team consider this to be **good practice**. They do this, for example, through the preparation of law on territory planning, the preparation of norms and standards in urban planning in Albania, the participation in high education reform in Albania, and also through the organization and participation in conferences and workshops including Tirana Architecture Week and Tirana Design Week. Students are engaged in activities of a social value such as raising awareness on environmental issues through events like Earth Day

(tree planting) or the plastic bottles bus station, which received the Act Now Award from the USA Embassy in Tirana. Additionally, staff and students get involved in cooperation projects with public organisations such as municipalities for the preparation of development plans, for example Zagori, Krume and Dropull, where they obtain practical skills and become acquainted with planning practices while providing a contribution to the development of the area. **[A3 p.13, www.tiranadesignweek.com, www.tiranaarchitectureweek.com, A101, A102, M2, M3, M4, M6]** *[Chapter III Standard IV.4]*

2.5   The University employs academic staff with relevant qualifications and but also has regard for age and gender during the selection process, as well as academic qualifications. It has put in place measures that create an enabling environment for its human resources and ensure their effective management. This is based on the development strategy, on the human resource strategy and procedures as shown during the visit. **[A3 p.13, A32, M3, M6, M7]** *[Chapter III Standard II.2]*

2.6   There is an effective system of financial management and the preparation of the annual budget in compliance with the law for higher education and University regulations. As the University is a non-public higher education institution it operates with a mid-term, three-year budget and an annual budget. This is discussed and approved by the Administrative Board. Academic department budgets, based on student recruitment figures agreed with the Ministry, are submitted for approval by the Administrator before being considered by the Board. The Finance Office oversees the implementation of the approved budget. Finance operations are subject to internal and external auditing. Also the finance processes meet the requirements of the ISO 9001 standard. **[A3 p.13, A37, A37, A38, C9, M1, M3, M6]** *[Chapter III Standard VI.1]*

2.7   The sustainability of the University relies on optimal financial management capacities and structures. The University has stable financial resources coming from the founders' own contributions, tuition fees, revenue from research projects and consultancies, third parties in-kind contributions, and donations. Through a dedicated financial department, the university ensures that the institutional activity and projects implementation alike are performed in an accurate, transparent, and compliant way. Considering its lifespan of only 10 years and being a totally private funded institution, the University has been successful in its intention to diversify its financial resources and source alternative financial income such as grants for joint projects rather than relying solely on tuition fees. **[A3 p.13, A37, M7]** *[Chapter III Standard VI.2; Chapter III Standard VI.3]*

2.8   The University has an integrated information system. The main source of information is the official website which provides information to students, academic and administrative staff and to the public. It also uses a range of social media platforms. It also has a fully operational digital information system capable of providing management information (OSIRIS, EMIS provided by MC Networking). The two systems are coordinated and interrelated and are used by both academic staff and students. **[A3 p.14, A39, www.universitetipolis.edu.al; http://46.183.121.39/polis.mcn.al/platforma/form1.wgx, M3, M4, M6,M7]** *[Chapter III Standard VII.1]*

2.9   An appropriate information technology infrastructure exists which meets the needs of staff and students. Internet and Wi-Fi are widely available throughout the University. There are a variety of practice laboratories which are equipped with modern specialist equipment to support student learning. In addition, lecture rooms are equipped with modern electronic teaching aids and there is an adequate number of computer stations in teaching rooms to meet students' learning needs. There are also two dedicated computer rooms with both Windows and Apple operating systems using ACAD and advanced modelling software. **[A3 p.14, M3, M4, M6, M7, Campus Tour]** *[Chapter III Standard VII.2]*

2.10   There is an Estate Management Policy that sets out clearly the management roles and responsibilities in relation to University real estate. The University is housed in a new building that occupies four floors. The campus fulfils all the physical requirements for the teaching and research processes carried out by the University. **[A3 p.14-15, A40, A41, A42, A43, A44, A45, A46, A47, A48, C14, C15, C16, M7]** *[Chapter III Standard VII.3]*

2.11   Although the University is only 10 years old, it has fully developed its academic and scientific heritage and culture. It ensures the development of its culture by preserving syllabi and relevant literature for all study programmes, publications and textbooks written by full-time academic staff in the library in accordance with Albanian law. It has established an electronic and a hardcopy archive. It has also established the Services and Maintenance Office, which is responsible for the management and maintenance of its assets. **[A3 p.15, http://46.183.121.39/polis.mcn.al/biblioteka/, A82, C13, M1, M2, M3, M4, M6, M7, Campus Tour]** *[Chapter III Standard VII.4]*

2.12   The existing infrastructure, experienced and qualified academic staff, laboratories equipped with modern equipment, and appropriate connections to the labour market, help to ensure that all University activities are undertaken effectively. The University, through the Services and Maintenance Office, undertakes an inventory and daily monitoring of the auditoriums, laboratories and the rest of the facilities. Feedback is also gathered from students, through surveys and questionnaires, on their level of satisfaction with these services. This feedback is then used to improve performance. **[A3 p.15, A40, A41, A42, A43, A44, A45, A46, A47, A48, C13, C14, C15, C16, Campus Tour]** *[Chapter III Standard VII.5; Chapter III Standard VII.6]*

2.13   The University owns its own campus and buildings which are all located in same area of Tirana. Responsibilities for the management of resources and facilities are clearly set out in the University Statute and Regulations. Academic Senate, Founders and the Rector are responsible for estates. The University states that it has appropriate facilities to meet statutory requirements and satisfy learning and teaching requirements. The University has developed other facilities including a central library and comprehensive accessibility for students with physical disabilities. **[A3 p.15-16, A42, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, Campus Tour]** *[Chapter III Standard V.1]*

2.14   All official documents are registered and preserved in accordance with legal requirements. The Didactic Academic Secretary, Protocol and Legal Office, and other offices hold individual responsibility for the preservation of relevant documentation in hard copy and electronically. The University's integrated information management system is used to collect and store material electronically. **[A3 p.16, A22, A84, M7, http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/?q=en/node/171]** *[Chapter III Standard V.2]*

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the high level of involvement by staff and students in public events which enable widespread engagement with topical issues in architecture and design in events such as Tirana Architecture Week and Tirana Design Week (paragraph 2.2; *Chapter III Standard IV.2*)
- the University promotes social dialogue through its contribution to society in important reforms such as territory reform, higher education reform and planning reform (paragraph 2,4; *Chapter III Standard IV.4*).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

Recommendations

The review team did not identify any recommendations.

Affirmation of action being taken

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

Judgement

The Standards for Resourcing are fully met.

Evaluation Area 3: The Curriculum

3.1   The University offers one vocational diploma, three bachelor's degrees, three integrated master's, three scientific master's degrees, three professional master's and one PhD. Programmes reflect the University's specialist focus on the interrelated areas of design, architecture, planning, construction and entrepreneurial business **[A21]**. Programme details are clearly set out on the website including entry requirements [http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/?q=en/node/89; **A72]**. Students confirmed that pre-entry information was accurate **[Student Survey, Q4; M4]**. The Admissions Policy is set out in the Statute **[A3 p.24; A15 sections 38, 40, 42, 44, 45.5-6]** and is implemented by the Marketing Office and Office of Student Support and Career Counselling **[A3 p.24; M7]**. The University promotes its courses through high school visits, open days and individual meetings and through the media. **[A34; A73; M7]** *[Chapter I Standard I.1]*

3.2   The University's offer of diploma, bachelor's, master's and PhD programmes ensures opportunities for student progression. Professional continuing education includes a series of industry-focused training programmes for example Energy Efficiency Audit developed through EU Tempus funding **[A3 p.17; Tour; M4; M5; M6; M7]**. Students have the opportunity to take extra-curricular training **[B11; B12]** For example the MATRA programme **[C4, C5, C6; M2]**. The University recognises the needs of those taking a professional master's programme and organises part-time programmes at weekends. *[Chapter I Standard I.2]*

3.3   In accordance with regulations **[A3 p.17-18; A17 sections 62-64]**, programme specifications include learning outcomes, curriculum, admissions and thesis requirements **[A49-A53]**; and module descriptions cover content, learning hours, assessment and recommended reading **[A55-A59]**. Students advised that they received this information during Orientation Week and that it was clear. **[M4]** *[Chapter I Standard I.6]*

3.4   Assessment policy is clearly specified **[A17 sections 79, 84-87; A55-A59]**. Student learning is tested through differentiated forms of assessment for example projects, thesis, and examinations. Students receive feedback to improve performance **[M4; M6]**. Students confirmed that they received formative feedback from peers, visiting professors and industry specialists to support improvement **[M4]**. Requirements for the diploma thesis and defence are clearly set out **[A17 sections 43-44, 48, 51, 54, 56, 57.5; A49-A53; M4]**. The graduation diploma includes a supplement documenting modules studied **[A67]**; students who complete joint degrees receive a diploma from both institutions. **[A3 p.17; A62; A64-A66]** *[Chapter I Standard I.1; Chapter I Standard I.2; Chapter I Standard I.3; Chapter I Standard I.4]*

3.5   The University's Development Strategy objectives give coherence to its offer, highlighting priorities to advance research and professional practice relevant to national needs, including benchmarking programmes with similar programmes abroad **[A3 p.17; A21 p.9; M1]**. The University is responsive to national policies for example internationalisation through the delivery of a double PhD with the University of Ferrara **[A3 p17; M1; M3; M4]**; and the development of interdisciplinary studies. **[A18]** *[Chapter I Standard I.3; Chapter I Standard I.4]*

3.6   The annual cycle of programme review ensures there is sustained investment in resources study **[A3 p.17; M3; M7]**. For example, the 2015-16 Annual Report recommends improvements to electronic management systems, academic administration and laboratories **[A22 p.70; M7]**. Staff confirmed a plan to establish a central Tirana hub **[M1; M3; M5]** although students were not yet aware of this **[M4]**. Heads of department agree academic staff annual workloads which typically might be: 40 per cent teaching, 20 per cent administration, and 40 per cent research **[M6]**. Part-time staff complement full-time staff

specialisations and industry practice **[A3 p.17; M5]**. Staff confirmed that administrative support was good. **[Staff Survey, Q7.x]** *[Chapter I Standard I.5]*

3.7   The Office of Student Support coordinates Orientation Week **[A3 p.18, p.25; M4; M6; M7]**. In addition to providing students with programme details, it also organises a buddy-system led by year two students who are well-placed to cover queries **[M6]**. At departmental level new students are introduced to specialist resources for example laboratories and participate in group work activities **[M4]**. Tutors introduce module syllabi, clarifying assessment **[M6]**. Students confirmed that their study programmes are clearly set out. **[M4]** *[Chapter I Standard I.6]*

3.8   First cycle programmes cover basic knowledge, general scientific methods, principles and professional skills **[A17 section 40; A49-A53]**. This focus enables students to progress directly to cognate masters programmes or to achieve eligibility to practice professionally. **[A3 p.18; A49-A53]** *[Chapter I Standard I.7]*

3.9   Students receive support and guidance during their studies according to need. Those with difficulties studying in English have access to English language classes and a tutor resolves translation difficulties **[A3 p.18; M6]**. Academic referencing and plagiarism are addressed regularly in assignment briefings **[M4; M6]**. Physical disability support is available through ramps and lifts **[A3 p.25; Tour; M6; Student Survey, Q15.ii]**. The University has a doctor in attendance **[M6]** and the University has recently established the Office of Student Support to oversee student support. Additionally, the library has a service for translating articles into Albanian **[M3]**. If student feedback recommends additional teaching hours the Dean can authorise this. **[M6]** *[Chapter I Standard I.8]*

3.10   Second cycle programmes build on parallel first cycle programmes, covering theory and practice in depth; and focusing on developing research and professional skills for future careers **[A3 p.18; A17 section 45]**. Academic staff are normally required to be engaged in scientific research **[A15 section 57; A17 section 27.1]**. Teaching staff on joint degrees include research-active academics from partner universities ensuring that teaching is delivered by experienced research staff. In the case of the professional masters, practicing professionals contribute to teaching to ensure currency **[A3 p.12, p.17; A15 section 60; M4]** and internships facilitate the development of professional skills and real-world context for the diploma project **[A30 p.2-3; M5]**. A detailed research development plan sets the research agenda which determines diploma thesis topics are in line with priorities **[A33 Annex 1]**. Staff and students confirmed that students engage in staff-led applied research projects **[A3 p.22-23; A33; M4; M6]**, for example an architectural project run through the University's commercial sister-organisation, Co-PLAN **[A101 p.48]**. The Alumni Association tracks student employment outcomes with 96 per cent of second cycle graduates from 2010-16 employed or in further study. **[A3 p.18; A54 p.5; M6]** *[Chapter I Standard I.9]*

3.11   As set out in the Internationalisation Strategy, student mobility is a strategic priority **[A29 p.6; M3; M7]**, with 20 per cent of students registered in 2016-17 from abroad (including 17.7 per cent from other Balkan countries and 2.3 per cent from the EU) **[A1 p.6]**. Student mobility is enabled by the University's delivery of a joint PhD and three professional master's programmes run in conjunction with partner institutions in Italy, France and the Netherlands **[A29 p.9-10; M1]** and taken up by 21 per cent of the University's students. Students on these programmes study under academics from the partner institution. In the case of the PhD, students are required to spend a proportion of their studies at the University of Ferrara **[A3 p.11; M3; M4]** and those on professional master's programmes are made aware from the outset of opportunities to study at the partner institution, for example, five MBA students elected to study for three months in France **[M4]**. The joint PhD results in a qualification from both the University and the European partner institution, University of Ferrara, and gives students opportunities to study under internationally established academics and to

participate in internships abroad, thereby raising and maintaining high academic standards and affording graduates international currency in the employment market. As noted in paragraphs 4.8 and 4.9, PhD projects contribute significantly to the University's research agenda, including supporting the development of younger academics. Bologna Process compliance ensures international students understand the University's offer **[A15 section 39.2]** including adhering to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation system (ECTS), and accepting student credit transfers to and from the University **[A15 section 48-49]**. The role of joint degrees to support student mobility, develop research and promote high academic standards is regarded as **good practice** by the review team.

3.12   Student mobility is further enhanced through the University's commitment to teaching in English. An entry requirement for all programmes is the passing of an English Test **[M4; M6]** and the PhD and professional master's study programmes are delivered in English. Students were highly supportive of classes being conducted in English and of the opportunity to present their written and oral work in English, enhancing their employability **[M4]**; they also appreciated the support available from English-speaking Albanian tutors **[M4]** and, if needed, access to foreign literature (especially in English and Italian) through a University translation service **[M3]**. The team considered the delivery in English of the PhD and professional master's study programmes enabling students to draw on literature in English and to engage in study or employment abroad as **good practice**. **[A31 p.19]** *[Chapter I Standard I.7; Chapter I Standard I.10; Chapter I Standard I.11]*

3.13   Students and alumni confirmed that the design of University study programmes enables them to develop practice, through project-based learning and internships **[M4; M5]**. The diploma thesis is normally based on a practical project often involving industry collaboration **[A3 p.19; M4; M5]**. Students can participate in cultural and educational seminars and conferences run by the University for example a student conference on urban planning. **[M3; C10]** *[Chapter I Standard I.11]*

3.14   In line with the Development Strategy, study programmes are strongly focused on preparing students for employment **[A21 p.9]**. The University's programme portfolio covers disciplines significantly in demand in Albania and the Balkan region that is civil engineering, architecture, design, urban planning and environmental protection **[A3 p.13]**. The process of new programme development is underpinned by systematic market research and consultation with the industry professionals who also offer advice about updating and improving existing programmes through the University's systematic annual review process **[A3 p.9; B14 p.62; M1; M5; M6]**, for example, resulting in MBA curriculum delivery changes **[M5]**. Students progressively engage in professional practice through Theory-Studio, English and Academic Writing, Entrepreneurship and internship modules **[A3 p.19; B11; B12; M4]**, ensuring that they are ready for employment on graduation **[A3 p.19]**. Highly regarded by students and alumni alike, was the final year Internship module **[M4; M5]**. The quality of industry engagement students experienced was possible through the University's extensive industry partnership programme which includes an impressive range of private and public organisations **[A30]** and draws substantial support from its Alumni Association **[A54; A97; M1; M5; M6]** and its commercial sister-organisations, Co-PLAN and Metro_POLIS **[A3 p.10; M1]**, all of which have significant industry links. The team considered as **good practice** the University's clear strategic focus on industry partnerships that ensure students receive appropriate placements and that industry partners have input into the shaping of the curriculum. The overall student employment rate of 93 per cent **[A3 p.26]** confirms the effectiveness of the University's industry focus. *[Chapter I Standard I.12]*

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the role of joint degrees to support student mobility, develop research and promote high academic standards (paragraph 3.11; *Chapter I Standard I.10*)
- the delivery in English of the PhD and professional master's study programmes enabling students to draw on literature in English and to engage in study or employment abroad (paragraph 3.12; *Chapter I Standard I.10*)
- the University's clear strategic focus on industry partnerships that ensure students receive appropriate placements and that industry partners have input into the shaping of the curriculum (paragraph 3.14; *Chapter I Standard I.12*).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

Recommendations

The review team did not identify any recommendations.

Affirmation of action being taken

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

Judgement

The Standards for the Curriculum are fully met.

Evaluation Area 4: Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research

4.1   The University has effective, legally compliant mechanisms in place to ensure efficient organisation and documentation of study programmes **[A17 section 39; A81 section 2]** for example resource dependence between courses (A17, Ch.7). Faculties are responsible for the management of programmes and production of documentation (for example syllabi, timetables) **[A17 section 59]** which is carried out at department level **[A3 p.20; M2]**. The University has a range of good quality laboratories, workshops and studios and reviews them annually **[A81 section 11; M1; M2; M4; M5; Tour]**. Using these facilities, students gradually engage in professional practice, in preparation for final year thesis projects and internships supported through the University's extensive partnership network **[A17; M1; M4; M5]**. Students have sufficient access to learning resources through the library including hard copy **[Student Survey, Q13.v-vii]** and electronic collections **[Student Survey, Q13.iv & viii; Q14.x]**. The librarian seeks annual update recommendations from departments and encourages donations **[A81 section 92.6; M3; M4]**. Students said library organisation and provision was improving in response to student feedback **[M4]** for example weekend opening. **[M3; M7; Tour]** *[Chapter I Standard II.1]*

4.2   Approved by Academic Senate, University final examination regulations are clearly set out in the General Regulation and in detail in the Didactic Regulation and programme regulations **[A17 section 64; A81, A49-A53]**. Previous Diploma theses are available on the website [http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/?q=en/node/1386]. Students confirmed they understood final assessment requirements **[M4]**. The Ethics Committee receives appeals if informal approaches prove ineffective **[M4; M6]**. For security reasons the diploma is issued once only with no duplicate, following registration with the Ministry and confirmation by the Rector and Dean **[A3 p.20; A15 §50]**. A Diploma supplement accompanies each diploma, documenting the student's performance on programme modules. **[A67]** *[Chapter I Standard II.2]*

4.3   Study programmes undergo periodic review annually which prompts continuous improvement of academic quality. Using questionnaires administered and analysed by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU), students evaluate the performance of lecturers at the end of every module **[A36; B9]**; this is triangulated with parallel academic staff peer, manager and self-evaluation **[A3 p.21; M2; M3]**, resulting, for example, in poor teaching being addressed **[M4]**. Students also respond annually to a University services questionnaire **[A41; B10]** which has led to increased wireless access **[B13; M7]**, improved attendance monitoring **[B2]** and additional recreational areas, including a plan for new sports facilities **[A3 p.27; M1; M4; M7]**. Additionally, students offer in-year feedback through tutorial groups and the Student Council **[M4; M6]** bringing about, for example, extended library hours **[M4]**. Informed by student feedback, staff contribute to annual review through an all-staff workshop focused on improvement and future planning **[A3 p.9; M1; M6; M7]**. The University also seeks the views of international partners **[M3]**, alumni **[M3; M5]** and employers **[M1; M3; M5]**, a process which has resulted in the development of an Energy Efficiency Audit Tool, the basis of the University's EU-funded Tempus project **[M5; M6]**. Additionally, programmes review employment outcomes **[A3 p.20; M3; M7]**. Findings are considered initially at departmental level **[A3 p.9; M1; M6]**; recommendations for improvements are sent to Faculty Board and then Academic Senate which they oversees implementation plans. **[A81 section 11; B2; M2; M3; M4]** *[Chapter I Standard II.3]*

4.4   The Internal Quality Assurance Unit has overall responsibility for the improvement of teaching quality **[A17; B8; A20 section 6]**. As noted in paragraph 4.3, the process for this includes systematic student feedback on study modules and support services followed by

clear responses. Other outcomes include changes to the MBA programme delivery based on industry advice **[M5]**, increased library hours **[M7]**, improved workshop access **[B13]** and the rescheduling of a bus service to ensure timely student arrival for early lectures **[M4]**. Articulating a University strategic objective relating to the use of innovative teaching methodologies **[A21 p.9]**, staff training in pedagogy supports teaching improvement **[A3 p.21; M3]**, for example, through EU funded projects such as Consus and QAinAL staff are exposed to alternative pedagogies. **[A3 p.21; A31; M3]** *[Chapter I Standard II.4]*

4.5   Each department is a discrete teaching-research unit in the University and promotes and manages research relevant to the discipline **[A15 section 8; A17 section 9; M3]** and oversees the departmental budget **[A3 p.13; M3; M7]**. There are nine departments organised within three faculties including research departments plus the Innovation Factory a cross-cutting Study Centre for Interdisciplinary Research and Innovation, which links departments through interdisciplinary projects **[A17 section 6, section 9; A18]**. The department plays an essential role in the annual two-day review and planning workshop informing University research priorities **[A33]**. Workshop outcomes determine departmental budget priorities. **[A3 p.13; M3]** *[Chapter II Standard I.1]*

4.6   A key strategic aim is the development of scientific research reflecting study programme disciplines **[A21 p.9]**. This drives the University's research agenda which is intended to build reputation **[A33]** and an wide-ranging partnership programme, including business, government and professional organisations for research collaborations and international institutions for joint degrees and research **[A3 p.21; A30; M1; M3; M4; M6; M7; http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/?q=en/node/105]**. Collaborative funding bids have been increasingly successful, including Tempus, Erasmus and Horizon 2020 projects **[A3 p.21-22; A31; M1; M2; M5; M6; M7]**. An indication of success in this domain is achieving Tempus programme funding, where the University was the only Albanian institution to be a lead institution. **[A3 p.24; M1; M5; M7] [Chapter II Standard I.2]**

4.7   The University achieves scientific research internationalisation through exchanges for example Erasmus **[A33, Annex 2]**; partnerships which have facilitated collaborative research fund bids, for example with University of Minho, Portugal, and Riga Building College, Latvia **[A30; A33, Annex 2; M1; M3]**; delivering joint degrees with partner universities from abroad (see paragraph 1.9); by hosting international conferences such as the 'Geo-Environment and Construction' European Conference in 2015 **[A3 p.22; http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/?q=en/node/III4; M3; M6]**; and by allocating budget for attendance at international conferences in Australia and South Korea. **[A69 p.15; M3]** *[Chapter II Standard I.3]*

4.8   Aligned with University Strategy, the annual two-day workshop enables departments to review research priorities, currently established as smart design, innovation, and sustainability **[A21; A33]**. Commencing with departmental presentations and debate, the research community identifies priorities and determines how to organise and align emerging research themes with the Development Strategy **[A3 p.22; M3; M6; M7]**. Research themes for the joint PhD are a major focus in conjunction with partner university staff **[A33, Annex 1]**. The workshop concludes with a draft Research Agenda, available for comment **[A33]** and a basis for identifying interdisciplinary research themes to be developed by the Innovation Factory **[M3]**. The team regarded as **good practice** the University's participatory approach to the development of the research strategy facilitating the prioritisation of research areas and interdisciplinary research. Appointing academic staff with scientific research qualifications ensures future research capacity. **[A3 p.12; A32 p.3; A33 p.3]** *[Chapter II Standard I.4]*

4.9   The University's Development Strategy aims to develop world-class scientific research **[A21 p.9]**. The Research Agenda identifies detailed outcomes for example

international collaboration; developing methods of disseminating research outcomes to stakeholders **[A33 p.3]**. Staff considered internationalisation **[M3]** and collaborative EU funding bids **[M1; M7]** as key to research capacity-building. Increasingly staff study abroad through Erasmus **[M1; M6; M7]** and through funded research projects **[A33, Annex 2]**. The University's joint masters and PhD degrees are run in collaboration with European universities in Italy, France or the Netherlands and require established international researchers to contribute teaching and research, providing Albanian lecturers with models of good practice and opportunities for reciprocal visits **[A3 p.17; M2; M3]**. The PhD requires study at the University of Ferrara, produces important research outputs and integrates younger researchers and academic staff into scientific research groups **[A33 Annex 1]**. The review team consider as **good practice** the availability of a PhD programme offered in partnership with another European university which supports the University's research strategy and enables newly-appointed members of staff to integrate with the University's scientific research community. The University supports staff conference attendance and publications **[M3]**; it also collaborates with national scientific bodies for example Academy of Sciences **[A30]** and has had major impact on energy audit in the Balkans through its Tempus project. **[A3 p.24; M1; M3; M5; M7]** *[Chapter II Standard I.6]*

4.10   The University regards publications as indicators of impact internationally and plans departmental and individual research outputs annually based on a SWOT analysis of the previous year's output **[A3 p.23; A68; A69]**. This contributes to the building of a research culture at regional, national and international level. For example, in collaboration with specialist partners for example the Albanian Geotechnical Society **[**http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/?q=en/node/1528**]**, the University hosts seminars and conferences which address national issues in an international context **[A3 p.23;** http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/?q=en/node/1114**]** with resulting publications. **[A69, p.18-26]** *[Chapter II Standard I.7]*

4.11   The University has established a process of evaluating the scientific research of individual staff using an internally developed benchmarking system based on the assessment methods of EU funding calls **[A71]**. The process scores each staff member's patents, project leadership, publications (whether published nationally or internationally) and thesis supervision. The review team considers as **good practice** the systematic and regular evaluation of staff research based on metrics which highlight the quality of published outputs. The University encourages staff to publish in international refereed journals and to protect intellectual property for example patents **[A3 p.23; M1]**. The University's partnerships with two on-site businesses, Co-Plan and Metro_Research **[A3 p.10, p.27; A30; M1; M5;** https://issuu.com/aidaciro/docs/annual_report_eng**]** enhances partnership building at national and international level. The University supports research dissemination through its own publications: Forum A+P; MAD and Habitat **[A70; M1]** and through monographs on social and economic issues for example Albania 2030 Manifesto. **[A70 p.7]** *[Chapter II Standard I.8]*

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following areas of good practice:

- the University's participatory approach to the development of the research strategy facilitating the prioritisation of research areas and interdisciplinary research (paragraph 4.8; *Chapter II Standard I.4*)
- the availability of a PhD programme offered in partnership with another European university which supports the University's research strategy and enables newly-appointed members of staff to integrate with the University's scientific research community (paragraph 4.9; *Chapter II Standard I.4*)
- the systematic and regular evaluation of staff research based on metrics which highlight the quality of published outputs (paragraph 4.11; *Chapter II Standard I.8*).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

Recommendations

The review team did not identify any recommendations.

Affirmation of action being taken

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

Judgement

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

Evaluation Area 5: Students and their Support

5.1   The University has a clear set of procedures and responsibilities for the admission of new students. Admission of students to programmes is in accordance with the regulations and entry requirements and information about the programmes is available for prospective students and other stakeholders on the website [http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/]. The admissions process is managed by the Information and Students' Support Office which coordinates all marketing and communications, the students guide, tours and onsite meetings. The Office also cooperates with the Regional Education Directorates and Education Offices. The University also uses the media and social media to communicate with candidates who are interested in bachelor and masters programmes. The Marketing Office together with the Students Support and Career Consulting Office ensure that students receive full information and guidance prior to and upon registration. The University is an English speaking institution and therefore is open to students of all nationalities as well. **[A3 p.24-25, A15, A72, A73, A74, A75, A76, M3, M4, M6, M7]** *[Chapter I Standard III.1]*

5.2   The University has an effective informing and communication policy and uses a software package to manage internal student and staff information including the admissions process. In addition, student and staff email systems are fully integrated with the system. Users are able to access the information to which they are entitled using personal passwords in line with the Internet Policy. The personal data of students is stored in the core register. Communication with students is through the intranet where staff and students have a personal account, for example name_surname@universitetipolis.edu.al. The University demonstrated that other announcements are made on the official website as well as other social media [https://sq-al.facebook.com/polisuniversity/]. Outside communication assured by the Office of Protocol. **[A3 p.25, M3, M4, M6, M7, Campus Tour]** *[Chapter I Standard III.2]*

5.3   Through the Information and Student Support Office, the University has a structure for provision of information and counselling for students. This Office provides information on acceptance criteria and also makes students aware of the departmental offices and other sources of support. Students are provided with a comprehensive student handbook and students told the review team that they had received detailed information about the syllabi and before enrolling were very clear about their financial obligations. The regulations make clear arrangements for student transfers and this is communicated in the student handbook. Students wishing to change their study programmes are informed by the curricula managers about the implications of such decision. The procedure then is carried out and documented by the Committee of Credit Equivalence according to the Didactic Regulation. Students are informed about the process verbally, electronically and through printed materials. **[A3 p.25, A39, A74, A75, A76, A77, A81, M3, M4, M6, M7]** *[Chapter I Standard III.3]*

5.4   The University has a clear and inclusive policy of supporting students from identified groups through the frameworks set out in the Statute and in the Regulations for Disabled Students. The facilities are accessible to students with physical disabilities and supporting them through scholarships. Some specific groups such as Roma students, or children of policemen who have lost their lives on duty, have received scholarships for different study programmes **[A3 p.25,** http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/?q=en/node/1110**, M3, M6, M7]** *[Chapter I Standard III.4]*

5.5   The library and has an identified budget to support it and keeps approximately 10,000 titles, growing in quantity by about 500 per year. The efforts to enrich and increase further the capacity of the library are supported by partners, programmes and projects in which the University is participating. The library also grows through an active policy of receiving book donations by partners such as IAUV Venezia, Co-PLAN or by the University

community itself (students and staff). Many lecturers have published their own textbooks (more than 20) and many others are engaged in a process of translating the best international textbooks in their respective fields (four translated textbooks published and three in process). The library is open each week day from 8.30 till 18.00 for both staff and students and the University is able to record usage through personal library files that record activity. The library also provides a number of electronic materials, for example journals. Moreover, the students of the joint programs such as the PhD have access to the library of their partner institutions. **[A3 p.25-26, A41, A82, C13, M3, M6, M7, Campus Tour]** *[Chapter I Standard III.5]*

5.6   A good level of support is provided to students. Procedures for tutoring and academic counselling is set out in the regulations. Students are provided with a student handbook containing relevant information that they need. Allocated time each week is available for students to meet with their tutor and students find this to be beneficial. Access is provided to learning resources through lecture notes and course materials. The students confirm that they always have good guidance and assistance from staff. Some of the courses, especially the studios that require specific skills, have provided extra hours to help the students that have difficulty and are under performing. Tutorials also provide clear indications regarding the appropriate literature for each subject and details are provided on both mandatory and supplementary sources to be used. The library has a number of copies of each recommended title. **[A3 p.26, A55, A56, A57, A58, A59, A83, A84, M3, M6, M7]** *[Chapter I Standard III.6]*

5.7   The Student Council is composed of student representatives elected annually by their peers and provides feedback to the Student Careers Office on behalf of the student body. Their representatives serve on Academic Senate, the Board of Ethics, the Internal Quality Assurance Unit and meetings with managing bodies of University. The student representative on the Self-Evaluation Team was nominated by Student Council members. The Student Council meets weekly to discuss any issues or arrange social events. Students and staff spoke of joint social events, such as a football championship that had taken place. The Student Council has access to its own financial resources provided by the University. **[A3 p.26, A86, A87, A88, A89, M2, M6, M7]** *[Chapter I Standard III.7]*

5.8   Students have access to a number of sporting and social activities including a football championship and social events. They also engage in a number of curriculum related opportunities such as 'Walking the City' and 'Biking the City'. They are also involved in the organisation of national events such as Tirana Architecture Week and Tirana Design Week. The University also cooperates with several partners that offer opportunities to attend cultural events such as Marubi Multimedia Film Academy, Human Rights Film Festival, 48-Hours Film Festival, and Tirana International Contemporary Art Biennale. As regards medical health service, a doctor is employed as part of the staff to assist staff and students as required. **[A3 p.26, A91, A92, A93, A94, A95, M2, M3, M6, M7]** *[Chapter I Standard III.8]*

5.9   The University has a clear mission to provide programmes that meet the needs of employers and the economy and aligned with the labour market. The Alumni Association is an important bridge between University and employers and the percentage employment of graduates is high. The Association has been organising events yearly such as ArchTalks, Tirana Design Week and Tirana Architecture Week, participation in International Workshops, attendance of open forum that also help the graduates obtain a better understanding of professional life and employability. The Association keeps detailed records of graduates' employment and the distribution of graduates since establishment of the University across the labour market is as follows: 23 per cent employed in the public sector; 51 per cent in the private sector; 12.5 per cent freelance and 13.5 per cent pursue further studies. The Alumni Association **[http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/?q=en/node/1118]** also cooperates with the

Student Support and Career Consulting Office to facilitate their contact with the business community. Also, the University has introduced evaluation forms to get the views of the students and graduates about the work of the Association. The review team consider that the work of the Alumni Association in facilitating the employment of graduates to be **good practice**. The University also has a policy of employing its own graduates when required. The strategic partners Co-PLAN and Metro_POLIS **[**http://www.universitetipolis.edu.al/?q=en/node/1113 **- Appendixes 49-50]** have also adopted this policy. Currently there are about 20 graduates employed by these three entities. **[A3 p.26-27, A96, A97, A98, A101, A102, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7]** *[Chapter I Standard III.9]*

Findings

Good practice

The review team identified the following feature of good practice:

- the work of the Alumni Association in facilitating the employment of graduates (paragraph 5.9; *Chapter I Standard III.9*).

Weaknesses

The review team did not identify any weaknesses.

Recommendations

The review team did not identify any recommendations.

Affirmation of action being taken

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

Judgement

The Standards for Students and their Support are fully met.

Evidence list

A. Self-Evaluation Phase.

A1 Shkrese Nr 359-17, date 05.05.2017.pdf
A2 General Information Data POLIS 2017.pdf
A3 SER_POLIS_Universtiy_05.05.2017.pdf
A4 Appendix. 1, Decision of Establishment _NAMES.pdf
A5 Appendix. 1, Decision of Establishment of SET.pdf
A6 Appendix 2, Decision of Academic Senate, approval of report.pdf
A7 Appendix 3. CMD No. 698, date 11.10.2006 on the licencing of POLIS.pdf
A8 Appendix 3. CMD No. 746, date 24.10.2012 on giving the status of University.pdf
A9 Appendix 3. Legal Act Court No. 35386.pdf
A10 Appendix 3. ORDER of the MES No. 227, date 22.7.2009 for institutional and programs accreditation.pdf
A11 Appendix 3. ORDER of the MES No. 267, date 20.05.2016 for periodic institutional accreditation.pdf
A12 Appendix 4. International accreditaPhD - Accreditation by Ministry of Education Italy, 2013.pdf
A13 Appendix 4. International accreditaPhD - Accreditation by Ministry of Education Italy, 2014.PDF
A14 Appendix 4. International accreditation, AESOP, Certificate of Quality.pdf
A15 Appendix 5. Current Statute of POLIS.pdf
A16 Appendix 5. Previous Statute of POLIS.pdf
A17 Appendix 6. General Regulations.pdf
A18 Appendix 7. Organization Structure_en.pdf
A19 Appendix 8. IF Brochure.pdf
A20 Appendix 9. Regulation of Internal Unit of the Quality Assurance_en.pdf
A21 Appendix 10. Development Strategy.pdf
A22 Appendix 11. Annual Report_2015-2016.pdf
A23 Appendix 12. Documents for market research.pdf
A24 Appendix 13. Cooperation Agreement Joint Prog - IHS Erasmus.pdf
A25 Appendix 13. Cooperation Agreement, leter support Joint Prog - IHS Erasmus.pdf
A26 Appendix 13. Cooperation Agreement Joint Prog - Ipag.pdf
A27 Appendix 13. Cooperation Agreement Joint Prog - UNIFE.pdf
A28 Appendix 13. Cooperation Agreement Joint Prog - UNIFE-POLIS.pdf
A29 Appendix 14. Internationalization Strategy.pdf
A30 Appendix 15. List of partner institutions.pdf
A31 Appendix 16. List of International projects_POLIS.pdf
A32 Appendix 17. HR Strategy.pdf
A33 Appendix 18. Research Agenda.pdf
A34 Appendix 19. Academic Staf Contract.pdf
A35 Appendix 19. Annex_contract_2016-2017_.pdf
A36 Appendix 20. Teaching Evaluation Form.pdf
A37 Appendix 21. POLIS_Financial Policy.pdf
A38 Appendix 22. External Audit.pdf
A39 Appendix 23. POLIS@Glance.pdf
A40 Appendix 24. Evacuation Plan.pdf
A41 Appendix 25. Evaluation form for the administrative services.pdf
A42 Appendix 26. Polis facilites.pdf
A43 Appendix 26. Floor 0.pdf
A44 Appendix 26. Floor 1.pdf
A45 Appendix 26. Floor 2.pdf

A46 Appendix 26. Floor 3.pdf
A47 Appendix 26. Mexanine.pdf
A48 Appendix 26. Areas.pdf
A49 Appendix 27. Architecture and Urban Design_Regulation.pdf
A50 Appendix 27. Art & Design_Regulation.pdf
A51 Appendix 27. MBA_Regulation.pdf
A52 Appendix 27. PHD_Regulation.pdf
A53 Appendix 27. Urban Planing_Regulation.pdf
A54 Appendix 28. Annual Report Alumni 2010-2016.pdf
A55 Appendix 29. Architecture and Urban Design_Syllabus.pdf
A56 Appendix 29. Art and Design_Syllabus.pdf
A57 Appendix 29. MBA_Syllabus.pdf
A58 Appendix 29. PhD.pdf
A59 Appendix 29. Planning and Urban Management_Syllabus.pdf
A60 Appendix 30. Architecture and Design.pdf
A61 Appendix 30. Art and Design.pdf
A62 Appendix 30. PhD_Dilploma.pdf
A63 Appendix 30. Planning and Urban Management.pdf
A64 Appendix 30. mba - marketing dhe strategji.pdf
A65 Appendix 30. mba - pasurite e paluajtshme.pdf
A66 Appendix 30. mba - sipermarrje inovacion.pdf
A67 Appendix 30. MBA-Suplement Diplome.pdf
A68 Appendix 31. Annual Research Report 2012-2015.pdf
A69 Appendix 31. Annual Research Report 2015-2016.pdf
A70 Appendix 32. POLIS_Press.pdf
A71 Appendix 33. Benchmark system_en_al.pdf
A72 Appendix 34. Admission-Criteria-Procedures.pdf
A73 Appendix 34. Universiteti POLIS - Marketing - 2017-1.pdf
A74 Appendix 35. student guide 2016-2017_en.pdf
A75 Appendix 36. Broshura POLIS @ Glance 2014.pdf
A76 Appendix 36. Broshura Universitare U_POLIS.pdf
A77 Appendix 36. Master of Science.pdf
A78 Appendix 36. Master Profesional ne U_POLIS.pdf
A79 Appendix 36. MBA @ U_POLIS.pdf
A80 Appendix 37. Startup Innovation.pdf
A81 Appendix 38. Didactic Regulation_en.pdf
A82 Appendix 39. Library_POLIS_Guide_2016-2017.pdf
A83 Appendix 40. MBA Master_welcome presentation_2016.pdf
A84 Appendix 40. Presentation by Didactic Secretary.pdf
A85 Appendix 40. Professional Master 2016.pdf
A86 Appendix 41. Members of Senate_POLIS_en.pdf
A87 Appendix 42. Regulation of the Students` Senate_al.pdf
A88 Appendix 43. Members of Student Council_POLIS_en.pdf
A89 Appendix 44. Student Clubs_POLIS_en_al.pdf
A90 Appendix 45. Announcements -Social Activities.pdf
A91 Appendix 45. Student Conference.pdf
A92 Appendix 46. POLIS - IMK.pdf
A93 Appendix 46. POLIS - Academia Belle Arti Catania.pdf
A94 Appendix 46. POLIS - AHF.pdf
A95 Appendix 46. POLIS - Consorcium.pdf
A96 Appendix 47. Alumni Brochure.pdf
A97 Appendix 47. Formular Kontakti POLIS ALUMNI.pdf
A98 Appendix 47. Alumni Statute.pdf
A99 Appendix 48. ISO 9001_2008.pdf
A100 Appendix 48. ISO 9001_2015.PDF

A101 Appendix 49. Co-PLAN Annual Report.pdf
A102 Appendix 50. Metro_POLIS PORTOFOLIO.pdf
A103 Raporti i Vleresimit te Brendshem, Universiteti POLIS, 2017.pdf
A104 Vetedeklarim_Universiteti_POLIS.pdf

B. Desk-based evaluation phase

B1 Polis University - Additional Evidence.pdf
B2 Appendix 50. Minutes of Academic Senate, 2008.pdf
B3 Appendix 50. Minutes of Academic Senate, 2015.pdf
B4 Appendix 51. Minutes of Administration Board.pdf
B5 Appendix 52. Minutes MBA Program.pdf
B6 Appendix 53. Minutes of Council Ethics.pdf
B7 Appendix 54. Minutes of Council of Professors.pdf
B8 Appendix 55. Decision, Minutes of IQAU.pdf
B9 Appendix 56. Completed staff performance evaluation.pdf
B10 Appendix 57. Form filled by students electronically.pdf
B11 Appendix 58. Architecture and Urban Design.pdf
B12 Appendix 58. Urban Planning and Management.pdf
B13 Appendix 59. Examples of assessment feedback to students.pdf
B14 ANNUAL REPORT_15_16_EN.pdf

C. Review Visit.

C1 Agenda of the site visit, Polis University.pdf
C2 Additional evidence for QAA accreditation, 03.07.2017.pdf
C3 Appendix 60. Action Plan of SER.pdf
C4 Appendix 61. MATRA Programme.pdf
C5 Appendix 62. MATRA Programme, Decision of Academic Senate.pdf
C6 Appendix 63. MATRA Programme Certificate Example.pdf
C7 Appendix 64. Student Lecturer evaluation form (teaching process).pdf
C8 Appendix 65. Benchmark system.pdf
C9 Appendix 66. Department and faculty request for the budget.pdf
C10 Appendix 67. Proceeding of Students Conference.pdf
C11 Appendix 68. CONSUS Project.pdf
C12 Appendix 69. Opening of the MBA program.pdf
C13 Appendix 70. Capacities and infrastructures of POLIS.pdf
C14 Appendix 71. Technical fire protection act of POLIS.pdf
C15 Appendix 72. Staff fire safety training.pdf
C16 Appendix 73. Sanitary hygiene permit.pdf
C17 Appendix 74. POLIS – IPAG Agreement.pdf
C18 Appendix 75. MBA Board Meeting September 2015.pdf
C19 Appendix 76. Example of the application of the benchmark system.pdf
C20 Additional evidence for QAA accreditation, 03.07.2017.pdf
C21 List of documents provided by Polis University.docx

Meetings

M1   Rector
M2   Self Evaluation Team
M3   Senior Staff
M4   Students
M5   Employers, Alumni and Partners.
M6   Academic Staff
M7   Support Staff

Tour   Campus Tour