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To
 Evaluation Board
 Agency for Quality in the Higher Education

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

BASIC DATA	
Name of the institution	INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF STRUGA FACULTY OF ECONOMIC SCIENCES
Location	ST.EZERSKI LOZJA NO. 6330 STRUGA, REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA
Members of the expert committee (name and surname, official contact information)	1. Svetlana Ristovska Antic 2. Armand Faganel 3. Wilfrid Flanda
Period of the visit to the higher education institution	5.-6.11.2025
Grounds for the External Assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X Annual plan <input type="checkbox"/> Request of the higher education institution <input type="checkbox"/> Request of the National Council for Higher Education and Scientific Research <input type="checkbox"/> Request of the Minister responsible for higher education
Decision on the establishment of the expert committee (decision number and date)	No.09-197/5, 25.02.2025 No. 09-197/20, 20.10.2025

Evaluation on standards and indicators completion

STANDARD 1: INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE				
INDICATOR	COMPLETELY FULFILLS	PARTIALLY FULFILLS	DOES NOT FULLFILL	EXPLANATION
The institution has a quality assurance policy that is published and publicly available.		X		The university possesses a formal quality-assurance regulation (dated 28 Sept 2023) together with a 2024-2029 strategy and a 2024-2027 action plan, yet none of these core documents are publicly posted. At the same time the only rulebook available to outsiders covers only first- and second-cycle study regulations and an ethical code for academic staff, offering a limited view of the institution's broader QA framework.
The institution has an efficient and logical system for ensuring the quality of education. It uses various tools for assessing and improving the quality of education and regularly conducts an evaluation that covers the subjects, teaching staff, the work of support/student services and the general level of satisfaction during the studies. The activities are carried out on the basis of a determined calendar of activities.			X	The Faculty's current quality-assurance system is largely reactive and fragmented. While student surveys and periodic self-evaluation reports provide a statistical snapshot, they lack depth, discussion, and actionable follow-through. Moreover, key stakeholders such as alumni, employers, and focus groups are absent from the evidence base. Coupled with an under-performing Quality Council, no clear linkage between teaching observations and staff development, and the absence of annual appraisals or structured pedagogical research, the institution fails to establish a continuous improvement cycle. A robust, data-driven framework that integrates multi-source feedback, formal analysis, and regular appraisal-linked professional development is urgently needed to transform teaching quality into a sustainable, measurable outcome.
The management of the institution is committed to the development and improvement of the quality of education. There is a culture of coordination and cooperation between the parties concerned in the process. The institution encourages and ensures the involvement of students, employers and other relevant institutions/organizations in the process.			X	Although the faculty has introduced field-visit programmes and Google Classroom to support learning, the evidence for genuine stakeholder engagement remains weak. No documented proof shows that students, employers or other external parties are meaningfully involved in curriculum development or quality assurance, and the advisory board's input is not formally integrated into the annual review cycle. Moreover, the ADRI process (Approach Deployment Results Improvement) has not been demonstrably implemented, and the results of student surveys or classroom visits have not been reported to the panel, leaving the translation of feedback into systematic action unclear.
A separate body responsible for the development and implementation of the quality assurance policy operates within the institution.		X		The newly-established Quality Council, set up in late 2023, convenes at the start of each term and records its discussions, yet the available documentation shows only minimal activity and a lack of substantive analysis of prior quality-assurance outcomes. Consequently, there is insufficient evidence that the council is currently contributing effectively to the systematic development, implementation, or monitoring of the faculty's quality-assurance processes.
The institution regularly analyzes the information arising from the quality assurance system, including statistical information, and takes measures to improve the study programs based on that information. The self-evaluation report is published on the institution's			X	The Faculty's current quality assurance cycle – tri-annual self-evaluations posted on the website and an annual report largely limited to raw student survey graphs, fails to provide a timely, stakeholder-driven, evidence-based picture of institutional performance. Critical gaps include the absence of workload analytics, industry, employer and graduate feedback, and a coherent strategic plan that translates the

website.			identified SWOT insights into actionable, measurable improvements. To meet accreditation expectations, the Faculty should adopt a standardized report format (mirroring the self-evaluation template), integrate regular multi-stakeholder data collection, and develop a clear, staged plan that demonstrates how the evidence will drive curriculum, delivery, and administrative reforms.
Quality assurance in the institution is a continuous process that does not end with the External Assessment Report or with the further monitoring of the institution. The recommendations from the previous external assessment have been implemented. The progress achieved since the last external assessment has been clearly demonstrated ¹	X		The Faculty of Economic Sciences at IUST has yet to receive an external evaluation. Its assessment activities are limited to internally produced self-evaluation reports (IAS 2009-2012, 2013-2016, 2016-2019, cumulative 2019-2022, and recent rector reports). However, none of these documents are available in English, thereby restricting the ability of broader stakeholders to review and influence the institution's performance.
FINDING: The higher education institution DOES NOT MEET the above Standard.			

STANDARD 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF RPROGRAMMES				
INDICATOR	COMPLETELY FULFILLS	PARTIALLY FULFILLS	DOES NOT FULLFILL	EXPLANATION
The institution has adopted an act/s or rules regulating the procedure for the development and approval of study programs for the first, second and third cycle of studies (if applicable).			X	The institution publicly shares its accreditation forms and claims routine five-year reviews of all study programmes, yet evidence indicates it has no formal internal policy governing programme development and approval. Coupled with the absence of a documented strategic plan to turn self-evaluation findings into concrete actions, and the fact that only a single curricular addition (digital marketing) has been adopted since 2007, the institution's stated commitment to quality appears largely procedural rather than substantive, highlighting a gap between compliance on paper and ongoing improvement in practice.
The content of the study programs offered at the institution is well designed and described. It is relevant to the purpose of the program and the achievement of learning outcomes. The objectives of the subjects are defined and aligned with the outcome of the educational process (learning outcome). The study programs are designed with the aim of uninterrupted student development and enable students to acquire academic knowledge and skills, including those that can be transferred, which means that they can influence their personal development and can be applied in the development of their future professions.		X		The Faculty of Economics and Management offers four accredited study programmes – Marketing and Finance as 3 + 2 year programmes (currently mis-translated on the website as "Economic Sciences"), and Business and Economics as 4 + 1 year programmes. The curricula of all programmes are vertically and horizontally coherent, align with the intended learning outcomes, and are comparable to similar offerings abroad, enabling students to attain the stated competencies. Locally the institution enjoys a strong reputation and a well-established network, with high satisfaction among students, graduates and staff; however, there is currently insufficient evidence that the programmes are regularly updated with new subjects or that formal review mechanisms are in place.

¹ This indicator will be subject to assessment after the completion of the first External Assessment, i.e. during the next External Assessment of the institution.

<p>The study programs respond to the development needs of society and the economy.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The board's approval of accreditation demonstrates a baseline compliance, yet the evidence shows a static approach that ignores evolving societal demands and the strategic interests of employers. While the institution enjoys a respected local reputation, it lacks systematic, verifiable data on graduate outcomes and a demonstrable, ongoing network of employers providing placements and post-graduate employment. To strengthen the quality and relevance of its study programs, the institution should establish a continuous curriculum review cycle informed by stakeholder feedback, systematically collect and publish graduate destination metrics, and formalise partnerships with employers that offer consistent placement and employment opportunities.</p>
<p>The study programs are developed/ revised in cooperation with students and other relevant stakeholders (business community, state authorities and other organizations). The information collected is analyzed, and the program is adjusted to avoid its obsolescence. The process creates an efficient learning environment and supports students.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Curriculum reviews involve a broad stakeholder base—including business unions, teaching councils, university staff, and, to a limited extent, students—but evidence of robust, transparent, and frequent engagement remains sparse. While the institution cites board minutes and a few additions such as Digital Marketing since 2007 as proof of stakeholder involvement, it lacks systematic documentation and communication of self-evaluation findings, leaving many students unaware of the review process and its outcomes. Thus, the current practice appears to rely on limited formal evidence and sporadic stakeholder consultation rather than a fully integrated, evidence-based curriculum development cycle.</p>
<p>The study programs use external expertise and references. The program is aligned with the best foreign practices and experiences.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The self-evaluation lists a large number of international partners and cites the use of artificial intelligence, yet it offers no substantive details on the scope, duration, or outcomes of these collaborations. Without concrete examples or documentation of AI integration, the claims remain unverified, and the report lacks clarity on how these linkages support learning and employability. Additionally, the absence of employer participation limits the relevance of the programmes to current industry needs. Strengthening the report with specific case studies, measurable impact indicators, and active employer involvement would provide a clearer, evidence-based view of the institution's internationalisation and curriculum development.</p>
<p>The study programs clearly define the overall expected work engagement of the student and include well-structured external activities (trainings, practical work and other activities that do not take place in the institution, but allow the student to gain experience in the field of his studies). The workload allows the student to participate in external activities during the studies. Practical teaching is appropriately valued in the workload and its implementation is regularly monitored.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The study programmes clearly map out the full student workload and embed a range of experiential learning opportunities – externally delivered training, practicums and fieldwork, designed to give students tangible, industry-relevant experience. They are fully compatible with the Bologna framework and the ECTS, with curricula detailing every element of the workload (lectures, labs, seminars, internships, independent study, examinations, and other assessments). A formal procedure for practical training has been institutionalised for both undergraduate and graduate levels, guaranteeing consistency and quality across programmes. Furthermore, the presence of a dedicated Career Center provides a supportive bridge between academic preparation and professional development.</p>
<p>The information about the study program published on the institution's website corresponds to the official records. The information is also published in the language in which the program is conducted.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The IUST website provides multilingual information that appears to reflect the institution's official records. However, the English translation of the two study programmes is inconsistent with the content in other languages, and the posted timetables are incomplete and outdated. As a result, stakeholders using the English version risk misunderstanding both the programme titles and the scheduling details.</p>

Higher education institutions monitor and periodically revise their study programs in order to achieve the set goals and meet the needs of students and the social community. The revision is aimed at continuous improvement of the study programs. All affected participants should be informed about the activities planned or undertaken based on the audit.	X	A robust curriculum governance model should embed a cyclical review cycle that draws on diverse data: semester-end student surveys, faculty feedback, and input from industry partners, to continuously refine teaching and content. This cycle must be formally linked to accreditation deadlines and include regular self-evaluations, ensuring that changes such as the introduction of new disciplines (e.g., digital marketing) are introduced systematically and aligned with sector expectations. By institutionalizing these monitoring mechanisms, the programme can sustain quality, adapt swiftly to evolving needs, and demonstrate clear, evidence-based improvement to stakeholders.
Statistical data (number of courses taught, number of students, grades, number and reasons for dropping out, etc.) are regularly monitored and systematically analyzed.	X	Recent monitoring of student flows indicates a clear downward trajectory in both first and second-cycle enrollment, with an average of 73 new entrants over the last five years and only 27 graduates in 2023/24. This pattern is driven by demographic decline, restrictive migration policies, and a shift in student preferences from social to technical disciplines. Moreover, the institution lacks a systematic analysis linking these trends to concrete strategic actions. Senior leadership has not yet implemented targeted interventions beyond generic statements. Without a data-driven SWOT assessment and proactive measures, such as aligning curricula with evolving labor markets, strengthening retention support, and expanding outreach to under-represented groups, the university risks further attrition and will struggle to retain talent in an increasingly competitive regional landscape.

FINDING: The higher education institution DOES NOT MEET meet the above Standard. The study program DOES NOT MEET the above Standard (all study programs are assessed).

STANDARD 3: STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

INDICATOR	COMPLETELY FULFILLS	PARTIALLY FULFILLS	DOES NOT FULLFILL	EXPLANATION
The institution has developed a mechanism that ensures that programs are delivered in a way that motivates students to take an active part in creating the learning process and that student assessment reflects this process.		X		IJUST has adopted the Guide on unified rules for undergraduate studies, a new framework that brings the curriculum under one umbrella. Interactive methods: seminar papers, panel discussions, formal debates, case studies. With simulation methods, research projects, and discussion circles getting special attention. Students report high levels of satisfaction, they enjoy the hands-on approach. Employers say internships help, assessment types fit, and the experience feels worthwhile. Yet employers are not invited as guest speakers, not in programme review activities. Faculty point out the absence of a staff handbook, which limits clarity, leaving expectations a bit fuzzy.
The institution respects the diversity of students and their needs, and provides flexible learning approaches use different models of teaching implementation where possible as well as a variety of pedagogical methods.	X			Accreditation Reports for each study programme do a thorough job outlining comprehensive teaching and learning strategies, plus flexibility factor. Students can disclose special needs in the application, staff gets the info before the term starts. Yet the exact procedures to ensure proper adjustments and academic parity is a bit unclear. Oral exams are an option alongside written ones. It's unclear how the marking criteria correlate.

The institution consistently updates its teaching methods to ensure they remain effective. Teaching is centered around interactive and student-oriented learning, focusing on the development of students' skills and competencies. The approach is interdisciplinary, utilizing case studies tailored to specific contexts. Additionally, the study program incorporates project-based learning to further engage students in real-world applications.	X		Faculty are using digital tools, slides, spreadsheets, videos, Google Forms. Lectures are paired with hands-on sessions led by teaching assistants, who coordinate closely with professors. The institution does not mandate formal teaching qualifications. Training occurs mostly through internal arrangements, with no structured programmes for pedagogical development. In addition, a variety of interactive activities, fieldwork, projects, homework, guest speakers from industry and academia, on-site visits, case studies, and specialised courses. These approaches contribute to active learning, sharpen critical thinking, and help students apply theory to real-world business problems. Practical assignments and company visits are especially useful, especially when students solve actual case studies.
All individuals involved in the assessment of students (teachers, associates, etc.) are well-versed in the established testing and examination methods and are provided with support to enhance their skills in this area. The assessment process incorporates a variety of formal evaluation tools, including laboratory exercises, assignments, projects, and other methods.		X	Final grades are pieced together from attendance, partial exams, final tests, and seminar papers. Yet, experts reviewed only the final tests. That narrow view leaves a gap, especially with no formal training for educators in assessment practice.
The criteria and methods of evaluating and assessing students are published and known in advance.	X		Each study programme details assessment mechanisms and tools. Criteria and approaches listed ahead, so learners know what to expect.
Assessment provides students with the opportunity to showcase the level of their achieved learning outcomes. Students receive feedback that, when necessary, includes guidance for further learning. Assessments are conducted consistently and fairly for all students, in alignment with established procedures. The results correspond to the expected learning outcomes, and the assessment methods are tailored to the objectives of the courses. When applicable, assessments are carried out by multiple examiners to ensure fairness and objectivity.		X	Dissertation moderation is the only place where internal checks happen. Across other assessments, no evidence of such checks or second marking. This leaves doubt about consistency and fairness. Assessment methods, meanwhile, are diverse and suited to show students' achievement. Information is supplied early - curricula outline each subject's assessment clearly. Still, no objective tools enforce impartial grading. Only at master-thesis defence do multiple examiners assess competence. In short, while theory sounds good, practice shows gaps. X
The institution has a formal complaint procedure, including reporting of corruption by students in all types of studies. The system is functional and efficient.	X		Clear procedures for filing complaints exist, with mechanisms for reporting corruption. An authorised person receives reports, his e-mail publicly available. Personal data protection secured. Regulation on work and remuneration for the officer is in place.

FINDING: The higher education institution MEETS meet the above Standard. The study program MEETS the above Standard (all study programs are assessed).

STANDARD 4: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND ASSESSMENT				
INDICATOR	COMPLETELY FULFILLS	PARTIALLY FULFILLS	DOES NOT FULLFILL	EXPLANATION
The higher education institution appropriately implements the previously	X			FE IUST applies accepted Regulation on conditions, criteria, rules and procedures for enrolment and study. First-cycle and

established and published regulations covering all stages of study, i.e. enrolment, progress during studies, diploma and certificates. The regulations are publicly available.			second-cycle programmes alike follow the same set of guidelines. All stages are covered by published rules. The regulations are posted online.
The institution has developed a functional procedure and/or tools for collecting and monitoring student progress and acts on the basis of the information received.	X		IUST keeps a register of enrolled students and a main register of graduates. Each student has a file, containing all academic activity. The files are governed by the Regulation on the Form and Manner of Keeping. Effective procedures are in place to collect progress data. Monitoring continuous. The institution demonstrates appropriate response to the information gathered. All personal and academic details recorded.
The higher education institution has developed a procedure for the recognition of periods of study and prior learning, which includes the recognition of non-formal and formal learning, of students during their studies, including during student mobility.	X		The institution's Rulebook for first- and second-cycle programmes contains a clear framework for recognising periods of study and prior learning, covering examinations and other educational activities completed elsewhere. In practice, the university has established a procedure for recognising concurrent learning, which is effectively applied to support student mobility and progression. The current policy does not impose a requirement to record non-formal learning. This could help capture the breadth of students' prior knowledge and experience.
Upon completion of their studies, students receive Documentation that clarifies the acquired qualification, competences and learning outcomes, the level, content and status of the successfully completed studies. Documentation is clear, understandable and comprehensive.	X		After graduation, students are issued a clear and comprehensive document that details the qualification awarded, the competencies gained, the learning outcomes achieved, and the level and content of the programme successfully completed.
FINDING: The higher education institution MEETS the above Standard.			

STANDARD 5: TEACHING STAFF ²				
INDICATOR	COMPLETELY FULFILLS	PARTIALLY FULFILLS	DOES NOT FULLY FULFILL	EXPLANATION
The higher education institution provides competent teaching staff for the implementation of study programs. The qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programs are appropriate to the profile and concept of the studies as well as the planned teaching subjects.		X		The institution generally assembles a teaching staff whose qualifications meet the overall demands of its study programmes. Nevertheless, the evidence shows that a number of appointments do not align closely with the specific subjects they are assigned to teach. In several cases, faculty members whose habilitation and publication record are situated in fields such as econometrics or other disciplines are responsible for courses in marketing or unrelated areas, where they have no documented scholarly output. This misalignment raises doubts about the extent to which teaching assignments reflect the required expertise for each programme component.
The published works of the teaching staff in reference scientific publications in the last 5 years are relevant and contribute to the development of quality studies, i.e. the scientific field.		X		The faculty's research output over the past five years remains modest in both volume and impact. Only a limited number of publications have appeared in high-ranking indexed journals (SSCI/SCI/AHCI), and the overall quantity of articles is low. Consequently, the contribution of staff research to the

² It refers to persons elected to teaching-scientific, teaching-professional, scientific, teaching and associate positions, who perform higher education activities.

			advancement of the scientific field and to the enrichment of study programmes is restricted.
The teaching workload is balanced. The teaching staff is engaged in accordance with legal provisions. The number of teaching hours per year is adequate for the implementation of quality teaching.		X	The teaching workload complies with the Higher Education Law: no professor teaches more than 4 subjects in a semester, and weekly loads of 6 hours for compulsory and 4 hours for elective courses are in line with the prescribed norms. The institution's full-time teaching staff is 7, which doesn't satisfy the statutory minimum of 10 positions. The current staffing level constrains the distribution of responsibilities and the capacity to deliver consistently high-quality instruction across all programmes.
The higher education institution has clear, transparent and fair recruitment processes, through working conditions that recognize the importance of teaching work. The process is based on academic qualifications and merit and offers equal opportunities for all candidates. The institution's practice corresponds to the established criteria.	X		The institution's employment procedures are fully codified in a publicly available rulebook that governs the recruitment of teaching, scientific, professional and associate positions. All selection processes are anchored in academic merit and objective qualifications, with no recorded grievances or appeals in recent cycles. Working conditions explicitly highlight the value of teaching duties, ensuring fair recognition for academic staff. Consequently, the practice aligns with the established criteria for transparent and equitable employment.
The institution has developed a procedure for ensuring appropriate working conditions for the teaching staff. The staff has appropriate IT equipment, access to relevant electronic databases in the field/study program, appropriate spatial conditions, as well as other resources relevant to their work.		X	The university has suitable working conditions for its teaching staff. The physical environment varies considerably across the campus. While the main building houses well-equipped lecture halls, a significant number of secondary rooms suffer from poor furnishings and damaged equipment, and several classrooms lack basic IT infrastructure such as projectors or adequate display surfaces, forcing instructors to project slides directly onto bare walls. The library and two computer labs provide a number of desktop computers and software, and staff and students have access. The library's operating hours are generous. Nonetheless, critical academic journals and up-to-date textbooks prescribed by the curricula are missing.
The institution offers opportunities for professional development of the teaching staff and constantly motivates them; regularly organizes trainings for the teaching staff in order to develop proactive and innovative teaching methods, for their pedagogical and technical skills The institution regularly monitors the technical skills of the teaching staff.		X	The institution does not appear to have a structured program for teaching staff development. No regular internal trainings are documented, and there is no systematic monitoring of pedagogical or technical skills. 7 staff members participated in abroad exchanges during the accreditation period, indicating that professional development is limited to individual initiatives rather than an institutional effort.
The institution engages visiting teachers, renowned scientists, artists and experts from practice from the country and abroad within the framework of the implementation of the study program. Their profile is relevant to the study program and brings added value.		X	The university has listed 10 visiting scholars who delivered lectures and facilitated networking across the institution, yet this inventory is not faculty-specific but rather at the University level. There is no documented evidence that the Faculty of Economics has engaged external experts whose expertise directly aligns with its curricula or demonstrably enhances the study programmes. Consequently, the claim that visiting teachers and practitioners add value to the faculty's offerings remains unsubstantiated.
Scientific work is encouraged in order to strengthen the connection between teaching and science. The system functions well and is efficient.		X	The Erasmus+ mobility initiative shows that administrative coordination is in place, yet faculty engagement in research is virtually absent. No documented evidence of ongoing scientific activity or a structured support system for scholars

			is evident, which weakens the intended link between teaching and scholarship.
The higher education institution encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.		X	There is a noticeable absence of structured support for pedagogical innovation at the institution. No formal training programmes are in place, and new faculty are left to self-direct their development without guidance from senior staff. Teachers show limited familiarity with contemporary instructional approaches including AI, design-thinking, or flipped classroom.
The institution has an established system of academic integrity and prevention of plagiarism.		X	The institution has instituted a mechanism for safeguarding academic integrity, primarily through the use of the Ministry's plagiarism platform for Master theses. However, undergraduate dissertations and seminar papers are not subjected to any systematic checks, leaving a notable gap in comprehensive plagiarism prevention across all programmes. Consequently, while a foundational system exists, it remains unevenly applied and does not yet constitute a fully established, institution-wide safeguard.
The institution has a policy/document/act for scientific research work. Indicators for scientific research work are established and regularly monitored.		X	The institution has a written policy on scientific research and an internal reporting system, but the documents appear to be formalities rather than instruments of actual development. The policy is not effectively operationalized and no verifiable research output can be demonstrated.
Scientific research work corresponds to local, regional and/or national development goals as well as the socio-economic and cultural context. The effect of scientific research work on local, regional and/or national development goals is regularly monitored, on the basis of which appropriate improvements are made.		X	The review shows that there is no research reported linking its agenda to local, regional, or national development priorities. There is also no evidence of systematic monitoring of its impact. Engagement with stakeholders was minimal, and when opportunities for applied projects were suggested by experts, management declined to participate.

FINDING: The higher education institution DOES NOT MEET meet the above Standard. The study program DOES NOT MEET the above Standard (all study programs are assessed).

STANDARD 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

INDICATOR	COMPLETELY FULFILLS	PARTIALLY FULFILLS	DOES NOT FULLFILL	EXPLANATION
The institution provides adequate funding for learning and teaching activities and thus provides appropriate and easily accessible resources for learning and support for students. The system for financing the institution, i.e. study programs, is efficient and based on the needs of students. The institution has a comprehensive and efficient system for financing scientific and research activities.		X		The institution's budget is dominated by student tuition, with additional support from Erasmus Plus, and employment-agency projects. These resources cover basic teaching activities, but they are not sufficient to upgrade deteriorating learning spaces or to meet the full spectrum of student needs. Scholarships are available for vulnerable students and talented youth, but the overall funding base remains narrow and unevenly distributed.

<p>The technical resources of the institution (libraries, laboratories, work rooms, IT equipment, etc.) are adequate for the implementation of the study program. Students and teaching staff, including people with special needs, have access to all resources. The institution has an appropriate infrastructure for distance learning. Technical resources are subject to regular monitoring in the institution.</p>		X	<p>The visit reveals that the institution's technical resources are below the standard required for the study programmes. The library is largely outdated, lacks a dedicated quiet study area, and its current collection does not align with contemporary curriculum needs. Classroom equipment is often non-operational: projectors are missing or damaged, computers are scarce or non-functional, and chairs have torn covers or broken wheels. Furniture in administrative spaces is cramped and unsuited to the purpose of the rooms. In addition, safety hazards such as exposed electrical cables, a semi-working lift, and unsecured archives have been noted.</p>
<p>The work of the support/administrative services is appropriately organized and serves the function of internal quality assurance. In their work, the services take into account flexible ways of learning and teaching as well as the needs of the different student population (for example, students older than 25 years, part-time and employed students, students from abroad and students with special needs). The number of employees in the support/administrative services and their profile is appropriate for the number of students in all types of studies. Support and administrative staff have the opportunity to develop their own competencies.</p>		X	<p>The structure accommodates flexible learning modes and addresses the specific needs of mature, part-time, international and special-needs students. Staffing of 13 full-time employees distributed across library, student affairs, technical, financial, legal and information systems is proportionate to the student body and appropriately skilled. However, the current approach to staff development is ad-hoc. A systematic, individualized competency-building programme is missing, potentially limiting continuous improvement.</p>
<p>The institution encourages the involvement of students in scientific research projects in all cycles of studies.</p>		X	<p>The institution presently lacks any structured scientific research initiatives and does not provide students with systematic or meaningful participation opportunities.</p>
<p>Students have at their disposal specific forms of support including: an academic development advisor who monitors their development, provides support for career planning and other academic challenges and/or a functional Career Center, mentoring sessions, psychological support, etc.</p>		X	<p>The existence of a career centers is a positive structural foundation for student employability. In addition a range of activities was organized for students including conferences, guests, visits... However, the employers focus group reported that a significant part of the interns had only limited motivation. The employers experienced discomfort in delivering critical appraisal, which hampers the development of realistic professional expectations.</p>
<p>The institution has a functional system for monitoring the members of the Alumni community. The Alumni community is included in the development plans of the institution. The institution organizes regular events and/or initiatives through which contact with graduated students is maintained.</p>		X	<p>The institution's alumni infrastructure appears to be in place but remains largely symbolic. A club and a registration form exist, yet there is no documented roster or record of meetings, workshops, or outreach events. Sporadic conferences and invited talks with current students are organised. Yet these interactions are ad-hoc and do not feed into curriculum assessment or strategic planning.</p>
<p>Students actively participate in the management of the institution. A student assembly and a student ombudsman or his deputy operate within the institution. The institution supports the social, cultural and sports activities of students. It provides them with premises, support, and an annual budget.</p>		X	<p>The faculty has instituted a student assembly, but the election process for representatives is not transparent, limiting the legitimacy of the body. Students do report being present in some institutional bodies, yet they retain no autonomous control over their budget - all spending must be approved by the faculty's management. The faculty does allocate discretionary funds for activities such as printing, office supplies and sporting apparel. Consequently, student engagement appears largely symbolic, with no evidence of sustained or meaningful influence on institutional governance</p>

Students are familiar with the services and opportunities available to them.	X		Students are satisfied with their familiarity with services and opportunities.
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FINDING: The higher education institution DOES NOT MEET meet the above Standard. The study program DOES NOT MEET the above Standard (all study programs are assessed).

STANDARD 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

INDICATOR	COMPLETELY FULFILLS	PARTIALLY FULFILLS	DOES NOT FULLFILL	EXPLANATION
The higher education institution regularly collects, analyses and uses information that is important for the successful implementation of study programmes and other activities. Through an efficient process of collecting and analysing data on study programmes and other activities, the data is entered into the internal quality assurance system.			X	During the evaluation the panel noted that the institutional system designed to collect and analyse programme data was unavailable due to a security breach. Consequently, the experts could not confirm that data on study programmes and related student activities are being gathered systematically, analysed comprehensively, or incorporated into the internal quality assurance framework. Moreover, the self-evaluation report speaks about data being collected by "the University of Sofia", which raises additional doubts about the existence of the system.
The information collected is relevant to the profile of the institution or study programmes and includes: key performance indicators; the profile of the student population; student progress, success and dropout rates; the degree to which students meet the expectations of the study programmes; the learning resources and support available to students, data on the employment of graduates and their careers, etc. Students and staff are involved in the processes of providing and analysing data as well as in the planning of activities arising from them.		X		Annual student surveys are conducted and self-evaluation reports are produced, but neither source includes the critical data on progression, completion, or dropout. Graduate outcomes are not formally tracked, and staff are neither surveyed nor engaged with the findings. Consequently, the institution has no robust evidence base to inform programme improvement or to align student expectations with employment realities.
The institution keeps a register of significant events, activities and processes. The data is collected, analysed and used to meet the needs of the strategic management of the institution.		X		The claim that the institution maintains a register is not substantiated by the materials provided.
The security of information (in printed and electronic form) especially information related to student data, exam results, discussion on digital platforms, etc. is protected. The institution adequately protects the personal data of all stakeholders.		X		The institution has adopted a formal data-protection plan, but the measures are not fully implemented. Paper records are stored in unlocked folders on the floor of an open archive room, making personal data visible to any person who enters. Electronic information is held on a server, however the claims of recent cyber attacks points to lack of appropriate safety mechanisms.

FINDING: The higher education institution DOES NOT MEET the above Standard.

STANDARD 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION

INDICATOR	COMPLETELY FULFILLS	PARTIALLY FULFILLS	DOES NOT FULLFILL	EXPLANATION
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<p>The higher education institution regularly publishes data on its activities and study programmes. The information published on the website and other media (print, social media) of the institution is accurate, clear, precise, objective, up-to-date and easily accessible. The institution regularly participates in or organizes fairs at which it presents its activities and study programmes. Information relating to the activities of higher education institutions is useful for potential and current students, as well as for former students, other persons and the public.</p>		X	<p>The university's web pages and printed materials present several inconsistencies in programme listings, with outdated titles that mislead prospective students. In addition, all published content is available only in Macedonian, which limits accessibility for international applicants and other external stakeholders.</p>
<p>The higher education institution has published data on its activities, including information on the study programmes it implements, the admission criteria, the intended learning objectives, the qualifications that the student acquires as a result of the learning, the procedures applied in teaching, learning and assessment, the pass rates and the learning conditions available to students, information on the potential employment of graduates as well as the documents provided for in Article 21 paragraph 3 of the Law on Higher Education.</p>		X	<p>The institution's website lists its study programmes and the admission criteria, but this information is presented exclusively in Macedonian. While the admission criteria are accessible, details concerning learning objectives, qualification outcomes, teaching and assessment procedures, pass rates, learning conditions, and graduate employment prospects are not disclosed online. Consequently, the data lack transparency for the broad student body, many of whom are non-Macedonian speakers.</p>
<p>Key learning outcomes and research work are published on the institution's website. For example, before the defense of the doctoral dissertation, it is mandatory to publish it on the website of the higher education institution where the third cycle of studies is conducted (if applicable).</p>		X	<p>The institution does not provide key learning outcomes or research outputs on its web portal. No doctoral dissertations, research activities, or related documentation are accessible online.</p>

FINDING: The higher education institution DOES NOT MEET the above Standard.

STANDARD 9: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

INDICATOR	COMPLETELY FULFILLS	PARTIALLY FULFILLS	DOES NOT FULLY FULFILL	EXPLANATION
<p>Students actively use student mobility opportunities. Mobility is appropriately valued and recognized.</p>		X		<p>The available information shows that students are kept informed about mobility options through the university's international relations portal. However, the actual participation remains extremely low, with only 3 students having taken part in the past 3 academic years. This figure signals a clear weakness in how mobility is promoted and integrated into the student experience.</p>

<p>The institution has developed a policy for international cooperation and internationalization. It has established Indicators for fulfilling the priorities of international cooperation and internationalization. These Indicators are regularly monitored. A special body responsible for international cooperation and internationalization within the institution has been designated.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The institution has formally established a body for international cooperation. The self-evaluation cites a list of indicators yet fails to provide direct links or supporting documents, and the text closely mirrors material from the Faculty of Law, suggesting a lack of originality. Mobility reports are limited to a few short visits by teachers. This isolated activity does not reveal a coherent, sustained policy for internationalisation.</p>
<p>The institution has appropriate financial resources at its disposal for the implementation of international cooperation. For the needs of international cooperation, the institution allocates financial resources from its own revenues, but also uses funds from the national budget, foreign donors and programs, local government, etc.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The institution's financial framework for international cooperation has the majority of resources obtained through Erasmus+ project grants.</p>
<p>The institution cooperates with other institutions in the country and abroad in order to implement study programs. It implements joint projects with foreign universities (conferences, mobility and other collaborations), and the results of those projects are relevant to the study programs. The institution implements joint programs with foreign universities.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The institution maintains a sizeable network of Erasmus+ bilateral agreements, yet a closer audit shows that IUST doesn't show up in the partners' lists. Several affiliations (law faculties) are misaligned with the Faculty of Economics. A few faculty members have participated in exchanges, the added value for curricula and research remains unclear. There is only one international project - Erasmus+ ROAMING. The institution lacks mechanisms to evaluate the impact of its domestic and international collaborations.</p>
<p>The institution has established a system for attracting teachers and students from abroad. Foreign professors are regularly involved in teaching, are engaged as mentors or members of committees for evaluating master's and doctoral theses, etc. The number of foreign students is increasing.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The university attracts a moderate number of international academics totalling 35 visiting professors in the past 5 years, although the number of them visiting the Faculty of Economics is not specified. It hosts a yearly international conference which draws foreign researchers. While these activities indicate some level of global engagement, they do not, by themselves, demonstrate a fully organised system for recruiting foreign faculty or students, nor do they confirm regular teaching or supervisory roles for those visiting scholars.</p>

FINDING: The higher education institution DOES NOT MEET the above Standard.

SWOT Analysis of the institution

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>ample physical space</p> <p>engagement in conferences and academic events</p> <p>employee loyalty</p> <p>staff and student mobility</p> <p>student representation structure</p> <p>high student satisfaction</p>	<p>lack of academic staff</p> <p>lack of active research</p> <p>information on the website is contradictory and limited</p> <p>mandatory textbooks are outdated</p> <p>innovative teaching methods are not implemented</p> <p>narrow funding based almost exclusively on tuition</p> <p>feedback mechanisms for students, faculty, alumni and partners are absent or underutilized</p> <p>inadequate infrastructure, obsolete hardware and limited IT support</p> <p>potential risks to student and institutional data are not addressed</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>strengthen ties with local enterprises</p> <p>modernise learning</p> <p>kick-start active research</p> <p>boost participation in student mobility</p> <p>joint programmes and research partnerships with peer institutions</p> <p>comprehensive internal quality-assurance culture</p>	<p>shrinking of the available pool of prospective students</p> <p>competition from both domestic and international institutions</p> <p>risk of losing accreditation</p> <p>erosion of the institution's reputation</p> <p>vulnerability to cybersecurity breaches</p> <p>limited capacity to adopt new educational technologies and pedagogies</p>

Recommendations for improvement of the institution

RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Expand self-evaluation data gathering to include all stakeholder groups and produce distinct reports for each faculty, ensuring the content reflects genuine analysis rather than regulatory compliance.</p> <p>Formalise programme review processes with clear timelines, responsibilities, and documentation that links changes to evidence such as stakeholder feedback, labour-market data, and curricular benchmarks.</p> <p>Institutionalise continuous programme enhancement by embedding mechanisms that routinely incorporate student surveys, external expert input, and evolving academic standards.</p> <p>Strengthen employer engagement through structured mechanisms (guest lecturers, placement contracts, and co-development of curriculum) to align learning outcomes with industry needs and improve graduate employability.</p> <p>Deploy a comprehensive and systematic professional-development framework that prioritises pedagogical training, assessment consistency, and alignment between research interests and teaching portfolios.</p> <p>Enhance research capacity by adopting a formal research policy, creating thematic groups or clusters, and allocating resources for database access, conference participation, and publication support.</p> <p>Improve student experience through dedicated internship coordination, clear learning-outcome linkage, feedback loops with employers, and active participation of student representatives in quality-assurance processes.</p> <p>Upgrade physical and digital infrastructure: modernise laboratories, classrooms, and library resources, maintain an updated, bilingual website, and ensure secure, backed-up data management systems.</p> <p>Diversify funding streams beyond tuition by pursuing international partnerships, market-driven projects, and revenue from short courses or workshops targeted at external stakeholders.</p> <p>Increase transparency by publishing regular, bilingual reports on programme outcomes, research outputs, and financial allocations, and by making mobility opportunities and international collaborations prominently visible.</p>

Proposal from the external evaluation report

PROPOSAL

Based on the evaluation conducted, we propose WITHDRAWAL of the accreditation of the higher education institution.

In addition, we propose WITHDRAWAL of the accreditation of the following study programs::

1. Economics and Business - first cycle of academic studies - undergraduate studies (180 ECTS)
2. Economics and Business - second cycle of academic studies - postgraduate studies (120 ECTS)
3. Finance and Marketing - first cycle of academic studies - undergraduate studies (180 ECTS)
4. Finance and Marketing - second cycle of academic studies - postgraduate studies (120 ECTS)
5. Economics and Business - first cycle of academic studies - undergraduate studies (240 ECTS)
6. Economics and Business - second cycle of academic studies - postgraduate studies (60 ECTS)

Voted in favor of this proposal: Svetlana Ristovska Antic, dr.Armand Faganel, dr.Wilfrid Flanda

Voted against this proposal:

Abstained:

SEPARATE OPINION

ПРЕДСЕДАТЕЛ НА КОМИСИЈА

С.Антиќ