

Integration and mainstreaming of human rights in public higher education institutions in Kosovo



Acronyms

HEI	Higher Education Institution
HERAS Plus	Higher Education, Research and Applied Science Plus
HERAS	Higher Education, Research and Applied Science
Higher Kos	Promoting Institutional Development in Higher Education and Research in Kosovo
HRBA	Human Right-Based Approach
KAA	Kosovo Accreditation Agency
MESTI	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
UASF	University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj
UFAGJ	University “Fehmi Agani” in Gjakova
UHZ	University “Haxhi Zeka” in Peja
UKZ	University “Kadri Zeka” in Gjilan
UP	University of Pristina “Hasan Prishtina”
UUHP	University “Ukshin Hoti” in Prizren

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“Human rights can only be achieved through an informed and continued demand by people for their protection. Human rights education promotes values, beliefs and attitudes that encourage all individuals to uphold their own rights and those of others. It develops an understanding of everyone's common responsibility to make human rights a reality in each community. Human rights education constitutes an essential contribution to the long-term prevention of human rights abuses and represents an important investment in the endeavour to achieve a just society in which all human rights of all persons are valued and respected.” (OHCHR)

Executive summary

This is the fourth consecutive report, focusing on the implementation of a human rights-based approach (HRBA) in higher education in Kosovo, realized through projects funded by the Austrian Development Agency to support Higher Education, Research, and Innovation in Kosovo.¹ In fact, the Social Dimension of the Bologna Process and the human rights-based approach (HRBA) in higher education have been among the key components of these projects.

The current study focuses on the promotion of a *human rights-based approach in teaching and learning, research, and in various mechanisms set up by the public higher education institutions in Kosovo*. Another key task of this research was the identification of good practices in the field of HRBA in the respective institutions.

The research applies a desk research and several empirical methods and instruments, including a survey with university teaching staff, interviews with management and focus groups with students from several universities. Key documents and regulations were analysed and over one hundred respondents participated in various forms of the research. In addition, this research was also informed by the findings from six baseline studies which were carried out by HERAS Plus to assess the overall university development, including strategic and action planning, with an additional reflection on specific aspects such as gender and human rights dimensions.²

The research on integration and mainstreaming of human rights in public higher education institutions in Kosovo found that progress has been made in the application of a human rights-based approach in Kosovo's higher education institutions in teaching, learning and in research. The research also showed, however, that there are differing views on the extent of progress in the field of HRBA in teaching, learning and in research. Further research carried out for the purpose of verification of data indicated that there is a need for strengthening the implementation and for monitoring instruments to be put in place to allow for measuring of progress made in the field of HRBA. Therefore, a more coherent and systematic approach is still needed to promote human rights both in curricular contexts and in the everyday academic and human interactions within the institutions.

There is an overall impression that the HRBA is in its first phases of a more systematic approach, since most of the sustained progress is reported in the segment of new policies and regulations. This change of pattern appears to have happened to a large extent as a result of the new accreditation policies approved in 2019 and implemented in the subsequent institutional and program accreditation processes.

In summary, there are clear indications of sustained progress made in the field of a human rights-based approach in higher education but more remains to be done for Kosovo HEIs to not only allow for more human rights-based policies and practices in their day-to-day operations, but also to enhance the third mission of universities and the important role of human rights in the society.

¹ HigherKos (2011-2015), HERAS (2017-2020), and HERAS Plus (2020 – ongoing).

² HERAS+, Baseline Assessment for Institutional Capacity Development, University Gjakova, 2021.

HERAS+, Baseline Assessment for Institutional Capacity Development, University Gjilan, 2021.

HERAS+, Baseline Assessment for Institutional Capacity Development, University of Mitrovica, 2021.

HERAS+, Baseline Assessment for Institutional Capacity Development, University Prizren, 2021.

HERAS+, Baseline Assessment for Institutional Capacity Development, University of Peja, 2021.

HERAS+, Baseline Assessment for Institutional Capacity Development, University of Applied Science Ferizaj, 2021.

1. Introduction

This study explores the status and good practices regarding the integration of human rights in the public higher education institutions in Kosovo, aiming to provide an overview about the inclusion of human rights in study programs (teaching and learning practices), research activities and their protection and promotion by university mechanisms. During the last two decades, human rights-based approaches have been present in Kosovo's higher education institutions, albeit in a piecemeal and incoherent manner. For illustration, a Center of Human Rights at the University of Pristina has been active since 2004 providing the backbone for promotion and protection of human rights at the UP. On the other hand, there has been a number of study programmes containing human rights courses or modules that are implemented in Kosovo's public universities. More recently, a Center for human rights has been set up at the University "Haxhi Zeka" in Peja. Studies by HERAS, HigherKos and HERAS Plus have identified individual teacher and student initiatives in support of human rights and students coming from vulnerable groups.

The project HERAS provided small grants to ten non-governmental and student organizations in support of their initiatives in the field of human rights. The same project has provided scholarships to groups of researchers engaging in researching topics related to human rights.

The current study builds on previous efforts in HigherKos and HERAS, funded by the Austrian Development Agency in support of Kosovo's higher education and research. Initially, a study was conducted in 2014-2015 by the then HigherKos³ project, which focused on the level of implementation of the principles of the Social Dimension of the Bologna Process. This study identified significant efforts and a number of good practices by Kosovo's education authorities and higher education institutions. However, it underlined that there is a need for a more systematic and coherent approach in Kosovo's higher education system to better meet the needs of underrepresented groups, including by developing a strategic plan to foster the implementation of the Social Dimension of Higher Education of the Bologna system in Kosovo (HigherKos, 2015). In 2018, another study was supported by the project which looked into the integration of human rights dimensions and principles inherent to a human rights-based approach in the curricula and study programmes of the University of Pristina "Hasan Pristina" (HERAS, 2018). The report found that human rights were not adequately addressed in most of the study fields as they appear to be present only in some study programs offered by the academic units of the University of Prishtina (Loxha, 2015). For instance, the Faculty of Law offers courses on human rights law, whereas courses delivered by the Faculty of

³ For more information see <https://www.wus-austria.org/19/projects/95/higher-kos--promoting-institutional-development-in-higher-education-and-research-in-kosov>.

Philosophy and the Faculty of Education of the University of Pristina contain some aspects of human rights, namely advocacy, prevention of human rights abuses and awareness raising.

In 2019, a desk research was conducted, which involved an in-depth analysis of the key documents of the legal framework regulating the higher education system in Kosovo aiming to assess the extent to which a human rights-based approach is present in those documents. The study also looked into the regulatory framework and documents of individual public higher education institutions in Kosovo. The research concluded that the reviewed documents contain a relatively restricted approach where certain human rights principles and dimensions are being addressed. However, the legal framework did not foresee and apply a genuine, systematic and coherent human rights-based approach in Kosovo's higher education either at system or institutional level. This becomes in particular visible when addressing specific needs of vulnerable groups. In practice, human rights appear to be restricted to some aspects rather than providing a systematic and comprehensive framework reflected and applied coherently throughout the Law. In this context, it highlights that there is a need for the application of a more systematic human rights-based approach (Rexhaj, 2019).

The current study builds on the process started in the previous studies by exploring the way human rights are anchored in the policies, at the teaching, learning and research practices and in the institutional setting of Kosovo's public universities.

Consequently, the current study is carried out around four main themes:

- The *learning environment* in public higher education institutions.
- The *teaching processes and tools* of public universities - looking at inclusiveness of teaching practices and individual initiatives taken in this area.
- *Research activities* that have been carried in the universities - assessing the extent to which research has been conducted in the field of human rights, but also looking at research processes and mechanisms such as: research ethics councils / committees, research ethics in approval of research with human subjects and handling of human rights violations in the research process.
- And finally, *promotion and protection of human rights by the existing mechanisms* operating within universities.

These cross-cutting themes are taken through the filters of (i) a desk research of the legal framework that governs public universities, university internal legal acts and university strategies, (ii) interviews with managements, teaching staff and students and (iii) focus groups with student representatives.

1.1. The overall purpose of the study

This research explores good practices regarding the integration of human rights in the public higher education institutions in Kosovo, aiming to provide an overview about the presence and application of human rights-based approaches in teaching and learning process, in research activities and protection and promotion of human rights by university mechanisms.

Further, the research aims to identify and provide an *overview of good practices* in the application and promotion of a human rights-based approach in teaching and research in Kosovo higher education institutions. Another task of the study is to provide an informed set of recommendations that will serve as a roadmap for future systematic interventions in the field of HRBA in Kosovo's higher education system and institutions.

1.2. Specific objectives of the study

This research builds on previous research carried out by the HigherKos and HERAS projects in the fields of the Social Dimension and a human rights-based approach in higher education. To further the work carried out by these studies and guided by the stated overall purpose, the research will focus on the following key actions:

- Analysis of the legal framework and policy documents to identify presence and application of a human rights-based approach in Kosovo's higher education institutions (desk research).
- Assessment of the presence of a HRBA in the teaching and learning environment and in research activities (empirical research).
- Identification of good practice examples related to the application of human rights, in teaching, learning, and research activities.
- Analysis of university mechanisms dedicated to the promotion of a HRBA in higher education institutions, including mechanisms established for the purpose of handling appeals and allegations involving the breach of the Codes of Ethics.

1.3. Research questions

To achieve the stated goals and objectives the following research questions served to guide the research and collection of data:

To what extent are the principles and practices of a human rights-based approach present in the institutional setting and processes in higher education institutions in Kosovo?

1. To what extent is a human rights-based approach embedded in the teaching, learning and research processes in public higher education institutions in Kosovo?
2. What university mechanisms are in place to protect and promote human rights in the Kosovo's public higher education institutions?
3. What are good practice examples in the field of HRBA that could serve as a model to be multiplied in other higher education institutions?

These research questions guided the work of the research team during the desk research part, the designing and administration of research instruments, and in interactions with the groups of respondents.

2. Methodology

The methodology applied for this research consists of two main components: (a) a desk research, and (b) empirical research.

2.1. Desk research

Given the nature of the issues examined, the desk research included a combined systematic desk review of several study programs and relevant legal and policy documents at university level (printed and online).

For the purpose of the review of the university governing documents the following documents have been reviewed:

- University Statutes
- University strategies
- Study programmes of several faculties
- University Codes of Ethics
- Internal regulations establishing disciplinary and Ethics commissions.

The desk research addressed the main dimensions of a human rights-based approach in Kosovo's HE institutions: the societal dimension and the institutional dimension. The curricular documents were analysed, with a view on the societal dimension, to determine (i) the way human rights concepts are included and understood, (ii) the relevance curricula attach to the protection and promotion of human rights in general in the society, and (iii) the implementation of a human rights-based approach promulgated by the curricula. On the other hand, the legal documents and regulations were analysed to assess the (institutional dimension of) the application and respect of human rights in day-to-day operations in the targeted institutions. For instance, Codes of Ethics were reviewed to ascertain the extent to which they foresee protection of female staff against sexual abuse in the workplace, the right to appeals or equal opportunities to employment.

2.2. Empirical research

The empirical research served to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. For this purpose, the current study employed three main instruments: a survey research (that is explained in more detail below), focus group discussions with students and interviews with the managerial staff in the targeted universities. The three instruments of empirical research were used in order to allow for triangulated verification of data.

2.2.1. The survey research

This method was employed to collect quantitative data from the university staff on issues related to policies, teaching, learning and research practices. Two different versions of the survey were designed - the first one specifically targeting managerial staff, the second one targeting academic staff. Both surveys can be found in the annex to this report.

The survey designed for the managerial staff contained 14 binary questions and 6 open-ended questions. The survey designed for the teaching staff contained 8 binary questions and 18 open-ended questions. The set of questions were designed to best fit the professional roles and responsibilities of the target group. Thematically, questions for the target group “Managerial Staff” addressed the policy and regulatory level, whereas questions directed to the “Academic/teaching” staff focused on the everyday implementation in the theatres and in interactions with staff and students.

The survey questionnaire for rectors and vice-rectors started with general questions such as “*Do you consider/address inclusive education in the learning environment (such as group work, project-based learning, discussions, feedback)?*” and then respondents were asked to describe their perceptions of their expertise. Additional questions were also used to deeply explore conditions, practice, and other factors that surround an effective teaching and learning environment. For instance, “do you consider/address student’s agency in the process of assessment – i.e. feedback on assignments and grading?” Also, they were asked if they consider/address learning disorders (such as information processing and writing and speech production disorders) in the process of teaching and assessment. In addition, a question was asked to reveal if respondents consider/address factors such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status and gender in the process of teaching and assessment.

Sample: The sample was of convenient type sample. Surveys were distributed to a selected number of persons in every public university: vice-rectors, three deans and seven professors in every university with the goal to get a fuller picture on the implementation of human rights related aspects in Kosovo’s public universities. The anonymous character of the surveys was clearly stated and the requirement for a consensual participation in the study. No personal information was stored during the data collection process, only categorical identification information (such as courses they teach). The reached sample consisted of 14 managerial level staff (level of rector, vice-rector and dean); and 56 Academic/Teaching staff. The sample distribution over the targeted institutions is not identified in order to maintain respondents’ anonymity.

Survey analysis: The type of questions designed allows for a descriptive analysis using answer distributions in percentages (binary questions with limited options: Yes, No, not applicable) and qualitative content analysis of data collected through open-ended question. Thematic analysis was

also used to merge the results obtained from both groups in order to give a comprehensive view on the respective matter. This thematic analysis presents percentage distribution of answers followed by qualitative analysis to extract and identify the key categories and practices employed in the three main fields: teaching, learning and research. Practices have been emphasized and stressed. A comparative quantitative analysis could not be performed due to the uneven sample sizes in the two groups.

2.2.2. Interviews

The study applied also interviews which were carried out with a selected number of members of management. The main purpose of interviews was to serve for a triangulated verification of data collected through the desk research, survey and focus group discussions, as well as to provide deeper insights into the presence or lack of practices and examples illustrating the application of a human-rights based approach at these universities.

2.2.3. Focus group discussions

In addition, five focus group discussions were conducted with a total of 32 students from different universities: 6 students from the University “Haxhi Zeka” in Peja (tourism and business studies), 7 students from the University of Pristina (journalism, oriental studies), 6 students from the University “Fehmi Agani” in Gjakova (education), 7 students from the University “Ukshin Hoti” in Prizren (members of non-majority communities). The focus group served to obtain additional in-depth information on the three key topics. Namely, the focus group discussion served to find out if students understand the importance of human rights as well as the obligation of public authorities to safeguard human rights. Moreover, it aimed at exploring if the students are familiar with basic human rights standards, in particular with the standards that refer to discrimination, protection of privacy rights, freedom of expression, and minority rights (both ethnic and religious). It is important to note that the focus group discussions included also students from minority communities in Kosovo to obtain their views on the target issues. The focus group interviews were conducted online. Apart from information obtained directly from the set of questions included in the interview protocol, even more information came out as a result of the discussion that evolved from the interaction between students. It should be highlighted that an informed consent was obtained from all the participants (students) and they were ensured of the anonymity of their responses and that the audio files will be removed after use.

3. Results and main findings of the study

In this section the key findings from the research is presented. This is being done separately for the desk research and for the empirical research as it appeared to be more appropriate for a clear presentation of results. However, there are frequent cross-references between these two groups of results due to the nature of the research and the cross-cutting themes addressed throughout (teaching, learning, research and good practices).

3.1. Key findings from the desk research

Dozens of relevant documents have been reviewed for the purpose of this assessment: University Statutes, strategies, codes of ethics and regulations:

3.1.1. The Statutes

The Statute is the University's principal governing document. It sets out the information on the rules and practical framework within which the University operates. Moreover, it provides an overarching statement of the University's founding purpose and constitution, highlights the right and obligations of the University's governing bodies such as University Governing Boards, Senates, rectors and vice-rectors, heads of administration and students' unions.

The University cannot alter, amend or replace any part of the Statutes without the consent of the Kosovo Assembly. The other governing documents such as regulations require approval by the university governing boards.

The Statute of the University of Pristina continues to serve as role model to all new public universities. In December 2020, the Assembly of Kosovo (Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, 2020) enacted new Statutes for four new universities, namely for University “Kadri Zeka” in Gjiilan, University “Isa Boletini” in Mitrovica, University “Fehmi Agani” in Gjakova and University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj, as all were operating for several years under the provisional statutes.

The previous assessment conducted by the HERAS project (Rexhaj, 2019) provides an in-depth analysis of the University Hasan Pristina in Pristina Statute⁴ highlighting that it applies a solid human rights approach as it includes three specific articles (7, 8, and 9) related to human rights issues and approaches.

Yet it has been noted that the given principles enshrined in the introductory part of the document are not consistently followed throughout the remaining document, in particular in the part that refers to the functioning of the university. However, as this report focuses on analysing the existing frameworks that promote teaching, learning and research practices in public universities, it will only

⁴ Available at: <https://uni-pr.edu/inc/doc/statuti1.pdf> browsed in June 2021

focus on the provisions that address enhancement of quality of teaching, learning and research practices through various means. Moreover, it will look at the rights of students enshrined in these documents. All of this is being examined through the lenses of human rights standards.

3.1.2. Codes of ethics

Another set of documents analysed in this study are the Code of Ethics. Generally speaking, all public universities have Codes of Ethics, which serve as guidelines to help the academic community to resolve ethical issues in an increasingly complex academic environment and that also serves as a proclamation of Universities' commitment to the highest standards of integrity.

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) requires in its accreditation standards (Kosovo Accreditation Agency, 2019) that every "institution has a code of ethics and academic integrity through which it defends the values of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and ethical integrity."

The presence of ethical codes in all higher education institutions in Kosovo have therefore come as a direct result of the explicit requirements in accreditation standards. The fact that only few⁵ of the HEIs in Kosovo had such a Code prior to 2019, proves the importance and impact of positive national policies that require the meeting of certain norms and standards by higher education institutions in Kosovo.

Universities have adopted their codes of ethics that determine a.) what is understood by ethical and unethical conduct in the respective higher education institution, b.) foresee measures for unethical behaviour and c.) set procedures and mechanisms for monitoring and treating cases of unethical behaviour.

All codes are designed to anticipate and prevent certain types of behaviour. It has been noted that some Codes of Ethics in some universities are brief, while some are lengthy and detailed. Some universities have introduced two Codes of Ethics - one for academic staff and students and another one for administration. All focus on the "*do-s and don't-s*" rather than on an affirmative approach. A study on sexual harassment carried out by the non-governmental organization ARTPOLIS on the issue of sexual harassment calls on public universities and education authorities to design respective policies against sexual harassment and to make sure mechanisms and procedures are in place for monitoring, case referral and careful treatment of cases of sexual harassment in public universities. (Mustafa, 2017)

⁵ Only University of Prishtina "Hasan Pristina", University "Ukshin Hoti" in Prizren and University "Kadri Zeka" in Gjiilan had adopted a Code of Ethics prior to the new policy of KAA.

The Ethics Code of University of Pristina “Hasan Prishtina” (University of Pristina "Hasan Prishtina", 2013) served as a model for other universities. It regulates relations between staff and students and staff and the institution and society in the fields of teaching and research. The Code also provides against harassment and discrimination based on gender, origin, ethnic affiliation, social and economic status and so forth. It also foresees a mechanism for its implementation in the form of an Ethical Council (not established or operational at the time when the Code was adopted). In summary, one can conclude that for the time when it was adopted, it may have met the needs of the UP for a similar document. However, there is a need to consider more strongly issues such as ethics in research, equity for underrepresented groups, human rights in general, technology advances and monitoring of the implementation of its provisions. Therefore, it is worthwhile for the University of Pristina to consider its review and amendment.

Recently, University “Haxhi Zeka” in Peja has adopted new Codes of Ethics (University "Haxhi Zeka" in Peja, 2020), one for academic staff and students and another one for administrative staff. The specific nature of these two documents indicates a serious approach by this university related to the issue of a code of academic conduct by all staff and students. At the same time, this Code appears to be a Code of a new generation, in particular when compared to the respective Code of the University of Pristina. The Code of the University “Haxhi Zeka” regulates in depth different areas such as plagiarism, conflict of interest, sexual harassment, ethical behaviour in research and publications, collection and use of data and electronic communication. A separate Chapter in this Code is dedicated to equal opportunities and non-discrimination, which are key to human rights. The Code of Ethics of the UHZ also provides for a mechanism to monitor and implement the provisions of the Code in that it foresees the Council of Ethics as the watchdog and guardian of the Code of Ethics at this University. This Code and the Code of Ethics for administrative staff could well serve as a role model for other higher education institutions in Kosovo.

The recently approved Regulation on prevention and protection from sexual harassment and harassment (University of Pristina "Hasan Prishtina", 2021) at the University of Pristina provides clear mechanisms for the protection of all staff categories from any instances of sexual abuse and harassment at this University. The Regulation determines that the Council of Ethics is responsible for the implementation of its provisions. At the very outset, article 3 of the Regulation provides that cases of sexual harassment and discrimination present cases of severe disciplinary violations and will be treated according to the sanctions set in the same regulation, which include also the termination of working contracts (for staff) or studies (for students). In article 5, University of Pristina lists concrete activities and duties aiming at the protection from sexual harassment and discrimination in the

workplace including an action plan containing activities to implement the regulation, dissemination of information and education and training of staff and students on the provisions of the Regulation. This Regulation further describes in detail the referral and processing of cases of harassment, but also goes one step further in providing for an Officer for Protection against Harassment. To sum up, this Regulation provides an important step in ensuring full protection and equality among staff and students in the day-to-day operations of the University of Pristina. It could serve as a good role model for other higher education institutions.

3.1.3. Strategic plans

The strategic plans address the measures and instruments that universities should undertake for academic development within a certain period of time.

University “Isa Boletini” in Mitrovica (Universiteti i Mitrovices "Isa Boletini", 2018)

University “Fehmi Agani” in Gjakova (University "Fehmi Agani" Gjakova, 2020)

University “Haxhi Zeka” in Peja (University Haxhi Zeka in Peja, January 2020)

University of Pristina “Hasan Prishtina” (Universiteti i Prishtines "Hasan Prishtina", 2020)

University “Ukshin Hoti” in Prizren (Universiteti "Ukshin Hoti" Prizren, 2018)

University “Kadri Zeka” in Gjiilan (Universiteti "Kadri Zeka" Gjiilan, 2017)

University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (Universiteti i Shkencave te Aplikuara Ferizaj, 2018)

They offer guidelines for the future development of universities and contain detailed implementation plans for the different organisational units within the respective universities. Each plan states the commitment of the university to enhance knowledge by introducing new methods of teaching and research, fostering student enthusiasm, and promoting academic integrity. To this extent all universities’ strategic plans focus on addressing issues related to management and administration, teaching and learning, quality assurance, research, international and inter-institutional cooperation, students, as well as the universities’ infrastructure.

However, strategic plans integrate equality and human rights (EHR) into its structures, objectives, and actions only to a limited extent and do not outline concrete measures and plans for mainstreaming EHR in the near future. For sustainable protection and promotion of human rights, it is paramount for every academic unit to take responsibility for mainstreaming EHR within its curricula and procedures. When analysing the strategic plans, it appears that the universities were careful to respond to the requirements laid out by the standards and guidelines of KAA. However, as will be seen below, these standards only tangentially tackle the issue of inclusion, equity, and human rights in its provisions. Therefore, it may be important for KAA to raise awareness on the relevance of a human rights-based approach in higher education as a tool for ensuring quality, equal and sustainable development in higher education.

3.1.4. Quality assurance and accreditation policies and guidelines

Since 2018, higher education in Kosovo has been regulated by new Accreditation Guidelines containing new standards for quality assurance in higher education. KAA has introduced a set of new standards (KAA Standards), namely the new Accreditation Manual (Kosovo Accreditation Agency, 2019), which provide a more detailed framework for evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes. The new Accreditation Manual, apart from including a large number of standards, foresees a new format of drafting Self-Evaluation Reports. To this extent, each university must fulfil the regulatory requirements in quality assurance and focus on improving quality through the consolidation of quality assurance mechanisms and processes within the University.

The new Accreditation Manual (Kosovo Accreditation Agency, 2019) does not specifically mention human rights or a human rights-based approach in higher education as a requirement for accreditation. The standards incorporated therein do address however several aspects that relate to human rights such as codes of ethics, student rights, and gender equality⁶. The standards also provide for transparency, monitoring, implementation mechanisms and regular mandatory updating of policies. In general though, the approach to human rights in the accreditation manual and guidelines is mainly directed to academic performance and does not provide for a systematic human rights-based approach. For instance, standard 4.2 on the Code of Ethics determines that “The code of ethics requires that all internal stakeholders act consistently with high standards of ethical conduct and avoidance of plagiarism in research, teaching, performance evaluation, and in the conduct of administrative duties, and avoid conflicts of interest.” One would expect though that issues such as equal opportunities, mitigation of sexual harassment and gender equality could represent important dimensions of an academic code of ethics. It remains to be seen whether it is modified in the future amendments of the Manual when the new Accreditation Law is passed in the Kosovo Assembly.

There are exceptions to this rule though in the accreditation manual, such as Performance indicator 1.5, which provides that “The concepts of gender justice and the promotion of equal opportunities for students in special situations such as, for example, students with health-related impairments, students with children, foreign students, students with an immigrant background and/or students from

⁶ Standards 4.1 through 4.5 in the group of standards on Institutional Accreditation, as well as 5.9, 9.3 and 9.6 of the Accreditation manual.

educationally disadvantaged families are put into practice at the level of the study program.” Standard 5.9 of the Accreditation Manual states that “Students’ rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.

The elements related to quality assurance are specifically addressed in the strategic plan given the number of activities to be undertaken in this area. Subsequently, a review of regulations has been undertaken, training of staff on quality assurance issues has been conducted, as well as making assessment mechanisms and instruments functional.⁷

In this context, University of Prishtina enacted the Regulations on quality assurance and evaluation (University of Prishtina Hasan Prishtina, 2016) whose evaluation activities include the following areas: a) Evaluating the quality of teaching, b) Evaluating student affairs services, c) Evaluation of scientific activities and doctoral studies, d) Evaluation of administrative services, e) Evaluating international cooperation, and f) Evaluating teaching resources. A similar wording appears in the Regulations enacted in other universities as well (University Haxhi Zeka in Peja, 2020). In addition, some universities have enacted Guidelines for Quality Assurance as well as a Manual for evaluation of academic staff (University Haxhi Zeka in Peja, 2020).

3.1.5. Regulation of data protection

The universities collect and use data about individuals, for example academic staff, students, applicants, visitors, and people taking part in research activities. In this regard, maintaining the security and privacy of their personal data is essential.

This requires the University to collect and use data fairly, to store them safely and not to disclose the same to any other person unlawfully. The University must process personal data according to the Law (06/L-082) on Protection of Data (Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, 2019).

While some universities have enacted their own regulations that regulate protection of personal and privacy data (Universiteti Ukshin Hoti in Prizren, 2020), there are some that set out the requirements for the protection of personal data within the university on the Codes of Ethics.

⁷ Interview with the Director of the Quality Assurance Office, University “Haxhi Zeka” in Peja (April 2021).

3.1.6. Good practices resulting from the desk research

New accreditation standards and guidelines

A key development in the field of policy making and regulations in HEIs in Kosovo are the new accreditation standards and guidelines. As a result of these standards, new codes of ethics have been approved in all HEIs, there is a more inclusive and interactive approach in teaching and learning, and students are empowered through a more active role in academic life. All HEIs have reviewed their policies and internal regulations as a result of the new accreditation standards.

At least three public Universities, University “Haxhi Zeka” in Peja, University “Isa Boletini” in Mitrovica and University “Ukshin Hoti” in Prizren had to review and redo all their regulations after having provisionally lost their institutional accreditation in 2019.⁸ University “Fehmi Agani” in Gjakova also reviewed its regulations and approved new ones in preparations for institutional accreditation. In summary, the process of accreditation⁹ in higher education has become one of the most important factors of change in the Kosovo higher education.

Apart from these and as described above in this report, *Statutes of four public universities have been approved in the Kosovo Assembly during 2021*, bringing a new and legally more stable and predictable situation for the operation of these institutions. This is also important when referring to human rights, since the Statutes are the main legal documents regulating relations and interaction between actors in the HEIs.

Regulation on the prevention and protection against sexual harassment and harassments at University of Pristina

More recently, University of Pristina adopted a Regulation on the prevention and protection against sexual harassment and harassments at the University of Pristina. Being the first of this kind among the public HEI-s¹⁰ it provides for a serious treatment of cases of harassment in general and of sexual harassment in particular. Considering that other HEIs in Kosovo closely follow developments and trends at University of Pristina, this can serve as an important role model also for the other universities.

⁸ They regained their institutional accreditation in 2020.

⁹ Austrian support in higher education have provided significant support to the Kosovo Accreditation Agency since 2009.

¹⁰ In other institutions, sexual harassment is included as a set of provisions in their Codes of Ethics.

3.2 Key findings from the empirical research

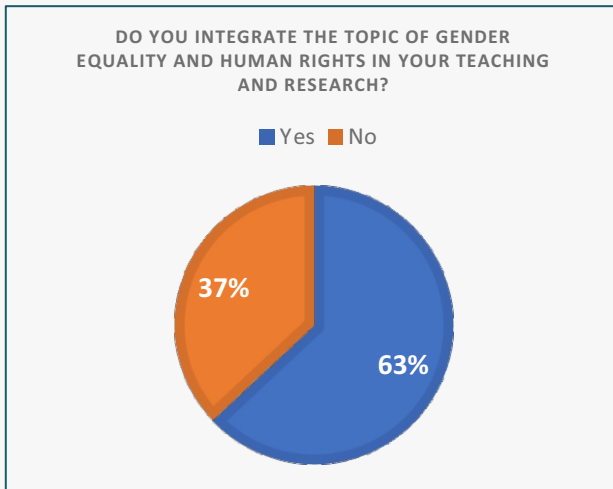
In this section the key findings from the empirical research are presented, namely from the surveys and interviews with teaching and managerial staff in the six public universities in Kosovo.

3.1.7. Teaching and learning environment: Human rights education

Currently, there are six public universities in Kosovo, offering a range of different study programs. All study programs are organised according to the Bologna system. Universities offer a variety of study programs based on contemporary teaching methods, applying a student-centred approach. Respondents to the survey organized for this study, as well as interviewed management staff, were unison in their assessment that they organize instruction with students in smaller groups, apply interactive teaching methods, involve students in the teaching process by engaging them in research and project-based activities, apply transparent assessment methods and other more recent principles and strategies of teaching and learning at the public universities.

Pursuant to their statutes, the public universities focus on introducing an adequate learning environment that meets the minimum requirements of comfort, easy access, health, safety and security. Apart from that, the interviewed staff from *university management* states that universities are in constant search for an effective learning environment that supports the varied demands of teaching and learning and enables an academic unit to achieve its objectives. The last years, according to them, have seen significant improvements in the context of improving the legal framework and organisational structures, including also the areas that cover teaching, learning and research.

The interviewed *teaching staff*, on the other hand, claims that despite numerous internal regulations designed to introduce various novelties, including in the field of human rights, it is ultimately the *teachers who bear the main responsibility* for their implementation on top of multiple curricular and assessment reforms that focus on improving student learning. When asked if they integrate topics of gender equality and human rights in their teaching and research, 63% of the teaching staff responded with *Yes* and only 37% with *no*.



Graph 1: Gender Equality and Human Rights

However, when triangulated against other instruments and questions, these statements could not be confirmed to be at a level of almost two-thirds of inclusion of human rights related aspects in teaching and learning.

The integration of human rights in university curricula have been addressed in previous HERAS assessments (Loxha, 2015) (Rexhaj, 2019). It has been concluded that human rights issues are only partially introduced. As such, only some faculties include human rights courses or contents in their curricula. Human rights are included in the curricula of the faculties of law, education, and social studies programmes.¹²

The universities are in constant search of introducing new programs that apply the best teaching and research methods. For instance, the Law faculty of the University of Peja has revised its bachelor study programme and has introduced two new courses, Business Law and Human Rights and Human Rights Clinic that offers practical education on human rights. At the same time, all faculties of law in Kosovo public universities have benefited from the Demand for Justice Programme (D4J Program) which has established criminal law and civil law clinics within these faculties. The program is implemented by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) and supported by the US Department of State. The aim is to set up *legal clinics at to the law faculties and departments*. This has provided numerous advantages to the students, most importantly by providing them with the opportunity to gain relevant practical learning experiences.

¹² Further research is needed to explore the content of the curricula. For instance, it has been observed in a few instances that curricula of constitutional law do not include human rights provisions.

Recently, all law faculties of the public universities have joined the *Erasmus+ project Enhancing Employability of Law Students through Practical Education (ENEMLOS)*. This project aims to help universities establish legal clinics that will give students the chance to practice law during their studies and to improve their lawyering skills through simulated processes and theoretical studies. In addition, it aims at strengthening the cooperation between faculties and judiciary, bar associations and governmental and nongovernmental organisations.¹³

Recent evidence has demonstrated the continuing need for education through legal clinics and for universities to continue to take a serious and proactive stance to this form of pedagogic instruction. Clinical legal education has been seen as providing students with an understanding of the legal environment which awaits them upon graduation and to instil professional values and a sensitivity to the concept of justice. This in turn, is a contribution to students' right to experience-based and quality learning, which is one of the key dimensions of university studies.

Moreover, in 2020 a new master programme - *LLM in International Law and European Law* - was launched by the Law Faculty in Peja which offers several courses involving human rights, namely Human Rights in the EU context, Human Rights before EU Courts, and Migration Law that touches upon basic rights involving refuge and migrant workers.¹⁴ In addition, it introduced a course on European Labour Law that addresses social and economic rights of workers, a course on International Responsibility that offers students an overview about the state responsibility for rights violations, as well as a course on EU Courts, providing students with insights regarding EU jurisprudence.

University of Prishtina, namely the Law Faculty, continues to implement their already established study programs in the field of human rights where human rights law is taught both at the bachelor and the master level.¹⁵ The same practice continues being applied in other law faculties, where students can acquire knowledge about human rights and human rights law within the following courses: The International Law on the Protection of Human Rights, International Organizations, with focus on UN legal and EU legal framework, Public International Law (covering all treaties and conventions of human rights), as well as International Humanitarian Law that covers the law applicable to armed conflicts.

The *focus group discussions* with students tried to explore if students understand the importance of human rights as well as the obligation of public authorities to safeguard fundamental and human

¹³ More about ENEMLOS can be found under: <https://www.enemlos.ucg.ac.me/> (Last accessed 05.05 2021)

¹⁴ See study programme LLM in International and European Law see, <http://unhz.eu/course/law-faculty/>

¹⁵ Bachelor in Law, LLM in Constitutional Law and LLM in International Law.

rights. Moreover, it aimed at exploring if students are familiar with basic human rights standards, and in particular with standards that refer to discrimination, protection of privacy rights, freedom of expression, minority rights (both ethnic and religious).

During the focus group discussion, it was observed that respondents from law faculties showed basic knowledge about human rights whereas the rest of students lacked even basic knowledge. For instance, students of the Faculty of Education were not aware of basic human rights and human rights standards.

Students that pursue education studies and who will be schoolteachers of tomorrow should be equipped with optimum knowledge in the field of human rights, human rights law and gender issues to be able to apply it during their teaching and thus prevent future generations from being exposed to abuses and prejudices related to gender, ethnicity, religion and other aspects. More so, students of journalism lacked basic knowledge of standards that refer to freedom of expression, right to privacy, transparency, and accountability of public institutions. Again, a certain familiarity with these standards seems paramount for journalists of tomorrow.

Establishing a culture for learning to encourage student engagement in the classroom

The survey conducted with the *focus groups* that involved in total 32 students from different universities described the existing culture for learning in the classroom. The majority stated that the professors are applying some sort of interactive teaching style by encouraging student participation, yet a small number of them do not use questions that stimulate response, discussion, and a hands-on experience.

Although all public universities tend to move to student-centred learning, student responses reveal that this method is still not fully implemented as students are not included in planning and implementation of instruction or in any form of peer assessment. Academic staff is still not comfortable with changing their leadership style from directive to consultative -- from "Do as I say" to "Based on your needs". Students involved in the focus group stated that "Respondents claim that all what they can get from their professors is 5 to 10 minutes at the end of lectures to raise a question."

Answers obtained from most of the *teacher respondents* of the survey with university staff show that achievement of the set learning outcomes are typically measured through summative final tests, periodical tests (colloquia), homework assignments and open debates. In Kosovo there is a shared understanding about learning outcomes as *important indicators that shows what students*

will know, be able to do or be able to demonstrate when they complete their studies. (Kennedy, 2007) The fact that the teaching staff almost unanimously states that they apply the same approach and methods for student assessment is an indication of the (uniform) application of the accreditation requirements and standards (2019, pp. 31-32). As good as an assessment model may be, any uniform approach in student assessment will result in a petrified interaction between students and staff concerning student assessments. Students in general agreed about the stated model of student assessment as presented by the teaching staff. At the same time, a brief analysis of syllabi, carried out with the purpose of verification of the student assessment models, only proved that there is a relatively well developed and uniform model of student assessment in place across the higher education institutions in Kosovo.

This model though is a relatively narrow form of student assessment that is not in line neither with the diversity of student personalities and learning styles nor with the modern theories of teaching and learning, such as the multiple intelligences theory. (Gardner, 1993) This is important from the standpoint of a human rights-based approach since some students may not be able to show their knowledge and skills to the fullest taking a uniform approach. The prevailing model of student assessment in Kosovo HEIs favours memorization, reproduction of knowledge, individual work, and does leave much room for the full spectrum of student talents and learning preferences to be given merit.

On the other hand, both the teacher survey and student focus group discussions have shown that students are not engaged in a meaningful way in *research activities* during the academic year. When responding to questions about student research activities, the teaching staff, without exception, observed that "research activities are undertaken during the master or PhD studies." On the other hand, students claimed that research "*is explained in the research methodology courses and real research comes for diploma thesis or for master's degree.*" Therefore, it is of utmost importance to design specific strategies that will encourage an active engagement in learning and to empower students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Inclusion of students in the teaching and learning process

Teaching is one of the main components of education and as such a key factor in conducting educational provision. There is a growing pressure on the academic institutions of higher education and research in Kosovo to find and affirm their new role (Blerim Saqipi, 2020) in the national education system.

Being subjected to accreditation on a regular basis has resulted in an improvement of academic quality and public accountability. This continuing quality control process occurs usually every three to five years.

As a result, the universities are obliged to design study programs that offer *contemporary teaching methods*, applying a student-centred approach: To organise students in smaller groups, to apply interactive teaching methods, to involve students in the teaching process through various assessments and to apply transparent assessment methods.

The majority of managerial staff (89 %) responded very briefly, confirming that *inclusive education* is addressed in the learning environment, whereas 11 % of the respondents stated the opposite. Similar responses were obtained also by the teaching staff. In this regard, it remains unclear to understand the type of approaches that professors apply in order to consider the diverse needs and backgrounds of all students to create a learning environment where all students feel valued and most importantly where all students have equal access and opportunities to learn.

On the other side, students claim that there is no supportive relationship professor-student. Accordingly, just a small number of professors have developed supportive relationship with students. The absence of such a relationship makes students less progressive and less empowered learners. To sum up, the universities continue to face challenges when it comes to the teaching process and standards applied at public universities in Kosovo. As has been accounted in a separate assessment of the application of HRBA at the University of Gjakova, the biggest challenge appears to be the disproportion between the number of students with the number of academic staff.¹⁶ The number of students continue to be higher comparing to the number of academic staff.

The *teaching methods* are still a challenge. It has been observed that in almost all universities the teaching methods appear to look alike. Traditional methods of teaching continue to be applied by a number of professors whereby a small number are applying methods that develop critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making skills.¹⁷ In this regard, a step forward has been undertaken by the Law Faculty in Peja which introduced a course on Critical Thinking which provides students with basic critical thinking skills, which means developing in them the ability to “think like a lawyer.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Baseline Assessment for Institutional Capacity Development of the University of Gjakova “Fehmi Agani”, available at: <https://www.heraskosovo.org>

¹⁷ Observed during the focus groups interviews conducted with students from public universities.

¹⁸ See study program BA in Law of the University “Haxhi Zeka” in Peja, available at: <http://unhz.eu/course/law-faculty/>

In addition, the University has established a Debate Club which helps students develop negotiation and debating skills and learn about careers in the field of law.

It should be highlighted that *Covid 19 pandemic* has brought a new set of challenges. Nobody was really prepared for such radical changes at such a short notice. The COVID-19 pandemic required universities to find new ways to maintain the process of teaching and learning ongoing. This process had to be quick and in most of the higher education institutions led to application of online and distance learning. But higher education institutions also realized the immense potential inherent to digital education and training.

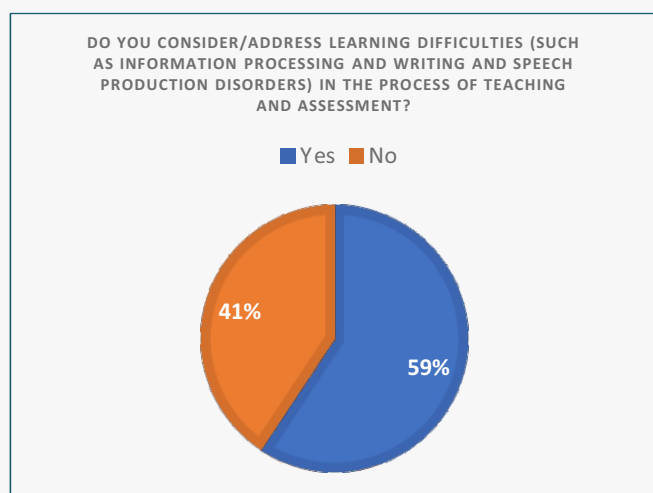
Looking at the presence of a HRBA in the *learning environment*, the research assessed how inclusive regulations, teaching instructions/methods and student assessment are from the management and teaching staff perspective. According to 92% of the managerial staff who responded to the survey, inclusive education is addressed in the process of teaching. This is similar to the 93% of the teaching staff who stated that they consider that there are inclusive practices in learning and assessment. The instructional method employed by 61% of academic staff surveyed is a combination of student and teacher centred approach, followed by 35% using student-centred approaches. These figures combined show that inclusive education concepts are to a large extent translated into in-class practice.

Besides, 62% of managerial staff declared that *written guidelines about mainstreaming of inclusive education in teaching and student assessment* are applied in their institution. But what about the prevalence of cases of students with learning disorders? Only 26% of teaching staff declared that they have had students with any type of learning disorders (including attention deficit disorders). The same teaching staff reported that they employ the following practices in working with these students: didactical intervention “stimulation of attention, repetition, additional examples/work provided, open ended questions; interactive (hands-on) activities; as well as personalization of teaching instruction by adjusting teaching methods to their needs”. The answers by the teaching staff show a combination of traditional didactical interventions and new approaches to teaching (such as differentiated learning).

Assessment is a crucial process where many aspects of HRBA align, including dimensions of inclusive education. At an institutional level, the regulation of assessment policies is declared as established by 100% of respondents (managerial staff), followed by 100% of teaching staff surveyed who declared that active participation of students in the process of assessment and evaluation is

ensured through transparent rules and procedures of assessment and grading, employing a range of assessment methods, including self and peer assessments, technology in assessment to practice a bank of questions cases, and discussing with students about their proficiency and expectations, assessment options for optimal results.

Referring to considering/addressing learning difficulties (such as information processing, writing and speech production disorders) in assessments, 59% of respondents answered affirmatively, whilst 41% of teaching staff declared that they do not address such issues in assessment. The latter is a very high percentage of those that do not take in consideration student learning difficulties in assessment. The public institutions need to focus more on dealing with this aspect in the process of instruction since learning difficulties may reach a high percentage of student population. According to data made available by the US Education Department,¹⁹ around 19 % of students in post-secondary education reported learning disabilities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Assuming that there is a similar situation among Kosovo student population, it is important for Kosovo higher education institutions to make sure that instructional needs of approximately 20 % of student population (with educational needs) are adequately met by their staff.

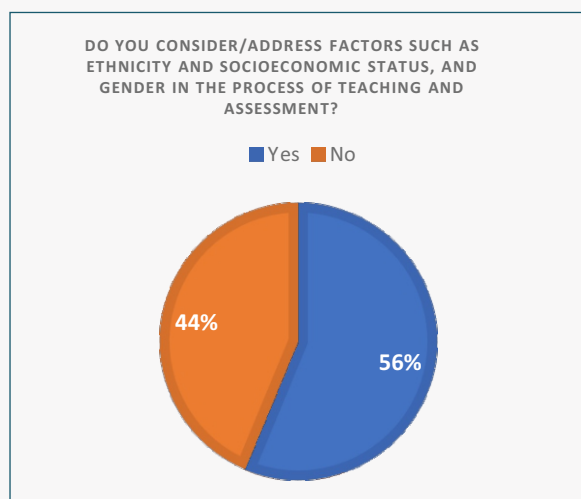


Graph 2: Learning difficulties

On the other hand, of those that do pay attention to student learning difficulties, the methods they employ in addressing the same include: consultations (35%), personalizing teaching and assessment to address their needs (the best-known practice in handling such cases (26%)), almost the same percentage (25%) only assigns extra work, and 14% address cases to the management or respective NGOs for support. The strategies for dealing with student learning disabilities among the teaching staff do not indicate a systematic approach, but responses remain diverse and largely dependent on individual teacher's reaction to the identified student needs.

¹⁹ Such data are not made available by the Kosovo HEIs.

Referring to gender and social equity, respectively, respondents were asked if they consider/address factors such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status and gender in teaching and assessment: 56% responded affirmatively, whilst 44% responded that they do not account for/address such aspects.



Graph 3: HRBA factors.

The almost half (44 %) of the teaching staff who opted for a uniform purely academic approach – as opposed to an inclusive and human rights-based approach - in their teaching practice are a source of concern for the management of higher education institutions in Kosovo. Only one respondent explained his answer later and referred to meritocracy as the reason why he/she does not account for such factors. Teaching staff respondents (56 %) who answered affirmatively, elaborated the practices they employ to do so, mainly using: Formative (passive) – affirmative: no discrimination policy-approach; Affirmative (active) approach: promoting social equality, modelling examples in teaching; Reflecting on a case-by-case basis; Considering mobility issues in attendance scores; Considering financial issues in demands for supplies/activities; Accommodating language differences for non-native speakers in assessment and teaching (offering materials or teaching partially in their native language); and addressing cases to the management and respective NGOs for additional support.

When asked about the strategies used to mitigate *gender stereotypes*, 70% of teaching staff responded with some form of active-affirmative, whilst 30% with passive-affirmative. Among active-affirmative the following strategies were mentioned: analysing textbooks for discriminatory language, avoiding using such language or pointing them out so students are aware; using/illustrating examples of successful women; lecturing modelling inspiring roles; encouraging critical thinking; discussions on these topics; encouraging independent opinions; and using research work projects on these topics.

Another sensitive issue reflecting human rights is the publication of identities when publishing exam results. When asked how they publish exam results the following answers were provided: 68% SMU (a university electronic system with individual accounts – meaning that exams are submitted to students individually – privately); 21% Bulletin Board (the classical method used – but respondents did not mention if they reveal student identities); and 11% by email. Using the SMU system protects the privacy of students and avoids shaming and peer-pressure from being identified publicly with their exam performance.

3.1.7.1. Good practices in teaching and learning:

Awareness on need for interactive and participatory learning

Awareness on the need to organize interactive and participatory classes is present at large among teaching staff in the public universities in Kosovo. Despite differing and often conflicting views on the level and quality of integration of these approaches (between students and teaching staff) in teaching, there is a clear positive move in that direction. This research has found that there is more transparency and student participation in teaching and student assessment both in policies and in everyday practices. A paradigm shift appears to have taken place regarding the role and position of students in the processes of teaching and assessment. The work done by student organizations, NGOs active in the higher education sector, and new policies brought by institutions and by KAA have brought up a new context in the field of teaching and learning.

Still, it will take more time before teaching and learning are fully characterised by inclusiveness and equality. Despite clear progress made, it appears that more is needed for the university staff to realize that a human rights-based approach means also better provision and quality education.

3.1.8. Research culture

Moving from a “teaching university” to a university with a research orientation is still a challenge. While teaching and research are fundamental to the ideal-type university, the existing universities in Kosovo are not principally geared towards research. Most universities are primarily teaching institutions. The ideal of a combined teaching and research university is even less common. Although a few research projects have been undertaken in the field of human rights and related fields, this remains an area of great challenge for the universities. Currently, there are several institutions directly dealing with human rights in two of the public universities in Kosovo, namely, the University “Hasan Prishtina” and at the University “Haxhi Zeka” in Peja.

University Centres and Institutes promoting and conducting research on human rights related topics

University of Prishtina has four institutions that conduct research, the Human Rights Centre, the Centre for Gender Studies and the Institute for Research and Legal Studies. In addition, in 2018, the Transitional Justice Recourse Centre (TJRC) has been established that aims to enhance the role of education in the area of transitional justice processes, providing education programs, academic resources, scientific research, and awareness raising activities. The Centre promotes the participation of youth in peacebuilding, human rights and social cohesion²⁰.

The *Human Rights Centre of the University of Pristina* is operating since 2002 and has undertaken several human rights research projects and in addition has implemented numerous human rights activities and services. In this regard, it has been engaged in designing and publishing materials, publications, and research results in the field of human rights, peace building and transitional justice. Besides, various events in the field of human rights and transitional justice have been continuously organised.

The Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Prishtina has established the *Institute for Social Studies and Humanities (ISSH)* whose primary aim is to conduct research in the fields of social sciences and humanities. It has launched the *University Program for Gender Studies and Research* which offers space for interdisciplinary academic and gender-based research, teaching, and social involvement. The mission of the University Program for Gender Studies and Research is to create academic and research programs that inform and sustain global collaborative engagements between students, researchers, and Kosovo's diverse and interconnected public and private spheres.²¹

The *Institute for Rule of Law and Human Rights Studies (IRLHRS)* was established in 2017 at the University "Haxhi Zeka" in Peja. The IRLHRS is a research pathfinder in the region that critically engages in contemporary discourses on theory and jurisprudence of human rights, rule of law and peace studies. The Institute focuses on the following key areas: analysing theory and practice of rule of law principles, exploring the intersection between human rights scholarship and practice, analysing transitional justice dimensions, and exploring peace-building strategies. The institute appears to focus

²⁰Launch of the Transitional Justice Resource Centre in University of Pristina, 11 May 2018, UN woman, available at: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/events/2018/05/event-launch-of-the-transitional-justice-resource-centre-in-university-of-pristina>

²¹ The Institute for Social Studies and Humanities, [www. genderstudies.uni-pr.edu](http://www.genderstudies.uni-pr.edu)

on an educational and research role related to human rights, rule of law and transitional justice.²² It is still in its initial phase of establishment and so far has conducted one research activity that involve the issue of missing persons. Namely, the research attempts to examine the impact on women of enforced disappearances committed during Kosovo's war, focusing on the effects on wives of the missing or disappeared. It addresses the specific legal issues that Kosovar women (widows) of disappeared persons face. They include, among others, the dissolution of marriages, the division of common property, inheritance, as well as the transfer of titles.

Since the end of the war Kosovo has attracted numerous scholars, both national and international, to conduct various research activities and as such have contributed a lot towards reshaping the scholarship in the area of human rights protection, humanitarian law, and peace building studies. It is considered that with more adequate support from the University and Kosovo's education authorities, the existing research institutions could play an even more important role in advancing human rights not only within Kosovo but also beyond (Rexhaj, 2019).

Academic staff was asked if and *how they are supported by the University to fund research*, to which they responded as follows: 67% declared that their university supports them with publication costs only, 28% declared that they don't get any type of support, and 5% declared that they get their research funding from projects/grants. When asked if they involve students in research, 83% of them responded affirmatively, but when seen in the light of the previous question and considering that the academic staff need funds to get students engaged in research, one concludes that students are either not engaged in research to the extent claimed by academic staff or that they engage in research using their private funds.

Research ethics and institutional mechanisms are crucial components of student and teacher research. Therefore, managerial level respondents were asked if they have a *research ethics committee* at their Institution. 85% of them responded affirmatively. However, when asked to elaborate the mandate of the committee, they refer to an Ethics Council (which deals with issues of academic integrity only) with a four-year mandate, established by the senates of the universities. Only one answer makes the distinction between ethics committee and research ethics committee and adds that the Regulation on Research Ethics will be developed, and the respective committee will be derived from it accordingly. When asked if any form of approval is required for students to undertake research with human subjects, 69% responded affirmatively and 31% responded that they do not. Academic staff, on the

²² The Institute for Rule of Law and Human Rights Studies (IRLHRS), See, <http://www.unhz.eu/inst/>

other hand, seems to require less filtering through ethical approvals for research with human subjects since 62% responded that they needed approval and 38% stated that they did not need an approval. When asked about the mechanism in place for reviewing/approving research with human subjects, 50% of them referred (again) to the code of ethics and 50% of them referred to research and science committee.

Respondents were also asked if their Institution has guidelines on research ethics (with human subjects), to which 62% responded affirmatively and 38% negatively. This response was in full collision with the answers to previous questions on research ethics mechanisms (pointing to a research ethics committee). Whilst 39% answered affirmatively to the question whether their university offers students training in research ethics with human subjects and almost the same distribution, 38% went for the opposite view (for 23% this question was not applicable in case of their institution).

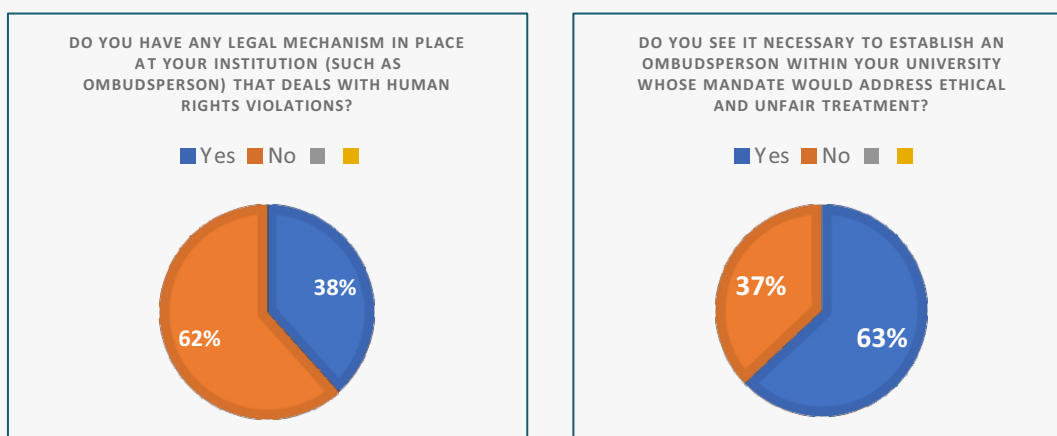
Another important aspect of research ethics was part of the survey construct: *research data management*. Respondents were asked if their Institution has regulations in place for research data management and safety to which 38% responded with yes, 31% with *no* and the same percentage (31%) answered that this is not applicable to their institution. When asked how research data is handled and who is responsible for its safety, another picture comes to view: 78% responded that it's under the responsibility of the researcher her/himself to manage and ensure the safety of the research data – which points to the fact that there are no regulations or mechanisms in place for research data management. The same pattern appears in the follow-up question about the existence of regulations/practices in place for dealing with appeals of research participants (for research ethics breach) to which 77% responded affirmatively, and only 23% no. Anyhow, if research ethics committees are not in place and there are no regulations/mechanisms for ensuring research data management, it remains questionable as to by whom and how these appeals of research participants are handled.

3.1.8.1. Protecting human rights through university mechanisms in research

This section provides an overview of the current situation of both students' rights (and obligations) and academic staff protection and aims to investigate the mechanism of system guarantee, institution guarantee and operation safeguard as one.

When asked if there are legal mechanisms in place at their Institution (such as an ombudsperson) that deals with human rights violations, 62% responded with yes compared to 38% that responded with no. Almost the same distribution though is for the question of if they see it necessary to establish an

ombudsperson, who's mandate would be to address unethical and unfair treatment: 63% answered with yes, and 37% answered with no.



Graphs 4 and 5: legal mechanisms in higher education institutions.

Although most of universities might not have legal mechanisms such as an ombudsperson (with the exception of the University in Gjakova), other supporting mechanisms appear to be in place, and when asked if such mechanisms for coaching, mentoring, offering support services for underrepresented groups of students (minorities, students with special needs) exist, 54% responded that they do have such mechanisms of support, whilst there was an equal divide of 23% of respondents who said that they don't and 23% considering the question not applicable for their institution.

The University Statutes offer a range of rights and obligations to both students and academic staff. In addition, Code of Ethics and some specific regulations establish a legal protection mechanism to protect students' rights and to build a legal and harmonious academic environment.

Ethics Councils

The Ethics Council is a body that promotes and reviews issues related to ethics involving the teaching and research process as well as some other institutional activities. For the purpose of this assessment, the proceedings before two Ethics Councils have been analysed. The Ethics Committee of University "Hasan Prishtina" has mainly dealt with issues that involves academic dishonesty. A case has been initiated by the Organization for Increasing Quality of Education (ORCA) against a professor who allegedly was accused of academic dishonesty. The Ethics Council found that the professor had acted in breach of the Code of Ethics and as such issued a written warning (Ethics Council, University of Pristina, 2019). Another case has been initiated involving eight professors which also were accused by ORCA for academic dishonesty, however the case was dismissed as the Ethic Council did not find itself competent to review the case and as such suggested to the University Senate to establish an independent committee to conduct a review for the given allegations (Ethics Council, 2019).

During the interview conducted with the representative of ORCA, he expressed his disappointment with the last decision, stating that the measures issued by the Ethics Council are soft.²³ Moreover a peaceful protest has been organised by activists of ORCA and the Transitional Justice, Education, Peace-building organisation (ADMOVERE) who gathered in front of the Rectorate building, requesting the dismissal of the Ethics Committee as according to them it has failed to act pursuant to its mandate.²⁴ The Ethics Council of the University “Haxhi Zeka” also dealt with some cases that involved the breach of Code of Ethics and its findings resulted in written warnings.

The Ethics Councils do not have the final authority to review the complaints, it may only issue recommendations to the Senate who has the final authority. For an Ethics Council to issue an effective and trustworthy ethical review, it needs a strong institutional backing to function effectively.

Maintaining high research standards is the responsibility of higher education institutions, researchers, and funding agencies. Institutions that conduct research have the primary responsibility for the prevention, detection, investigation of complaints involving the conduct of that research. So far, according to the interviewee from ORCA²⁵, ethical issues related to research have been dealt by the Ethics Council based on the Code of Ethics, which does not provide sufficient grounds to deal with the issues that cover research ethics and academic dishonesty. Besides, only two articles (9 and 10) of the Code of Ethics of the University of Pristina provide very general provisions about research ethics (University of Pristina "Hasan Prishtina", 2013).

The absence of an Ethics Code for research brings into the questions the protection of basic rights and safety of the research participants from potential forms of abuse. As already stressed, higher education institutions are required to manage concerns or complaints and investigate potential breaches of the Ethics Code related to research for which they are responsible.²⁶

In this regard, the enactment of a Code of Ethics for Research and establishing an accountability mechanism for implementing the Code is of an utmost importance. This will promote a culture that fosters and values responsible conduct of research, that addresses complaints sensitively and with care and that provides an independent review and the effectiveness of the processes.

²³ Interview conducted with representative of ORCA, dt. 01.04.2021, Prishtina

²⁴ <https://literal.media/ORCA-dhe-Admovere-hedhin-balte-mbi-Rektoratin-per-mos-zbatimin-e-Kodit-te-Etikes-nga-Keshilli/38131>, browsed on 14 June 2021.

²⁵ Interview conducted with representative of ORCA, dt. 01.04.2021, Prishtina

²⁶ One of the survey question was: Does your institution offer training on research ethics for students?

As to the protection of both students' and academic staff rights, the current university settings lack adequate protection mechanisms that will provide an effective way to protect academic and students' rights. During the discussions with students from different universities, the issue of human rights protection within university was stressed several times and it was highlighted by students that there are no adequate mechanisms within the university to address human rights abuses.

There are, however, also very positive developments in this respect: As already outlined above, University "Hasan Prishtina" has recently enacted a new regulation that addresses issues related to sexual harassment.

Another very positive step in this regard has been undertaken by University "Fehmi Agani". Recently, an Ombudsperson has been established who has been given the mandate to protect the rights, interests and freedoms of members of the academic community, students and any other individuals affiliated with university.

3.1.8.2. Good practices in the application of a HRBA in research

The survey results emphasise the importance of engaging all stakeholders²⁷ in an improvement plan. When all stakeholders are involved into the process, it will maximize teacher effectiveness and student learning opportunities. The assessment has documented that universities are in constant search towards improving their performance. Some of those steps are small, others larger, but each university was able to identify concrete actions to which they need to commit. With regard to strategic plans, it can be noted that all institutions have well-developed plans and some of them are in the process of revision. Overall, these plans include specific, targeted goals, clearly defined action steps, and responsible authorities for implementing and monitoring progress.

Good practice - Thematic research related to human rights

The University of Prishtina has established a solid foundation to conduct research in human rights and gender issues, humanities as well as on issues related to transitional justice. This is done through the above presented Institutes and Centers at UP. Several research projects in the field of human rights have been supported through international projects, including also the HERAS project.

In addition, also the IRLHRS at University "Haxhi Zeka" in Peja is engaged in human rights related research, critically engaging in contemporary discourses on theory and jurisprudence of human rights, rule of law and peace studies.

²⁷ University management, teaching staff, administration and students.

Good practice – Ombudsperson at University of Gjakova

As outlined above, an Ombudsperson institution has been established at University “Fehmi Agani” in Gjakova with the mandate to promote and protect human rights of the academic community, students, and administrative personnel. It is also expected to contribute to the promotion of the right to equality in education, of a safe learning environment and ethics education.

The establishment of an Ombudsperson institution could also serve as an important role model for other universities. In an interview with Prof. Dr. Bajram Nuraj, the Ombudsperson in this University, he stated that online learning that came as a result of Covid-19 negatively affected functioning of his office, which was set up in December 2020. However, he added that a few cases were addressed, and a cooperation agreement was signed with the Institution of Ombudsperson of the Republic of Kosovo. He also referred to the regulation providing for his function, saying that it should be reviewed to be made more specific and tailor made to the needs of the University. He welcomes any cooperation with other universities and development partners and welcomes support provided to his Office.

Notwithstanding successes, the field of research remains an immense potential for more progress in promoting a HRBA. This primarily means more inter-institutional cooperation, more community-based research, more thematic research in the field of human rights and research targeting the improvement of teaching and learning practices.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Kosovo's academic community has been going through a very dynamic and trying environment during the last two years, not only because of the Covid 19 pandemic. The pandemic among other things imposed full application of online learning for longer periods, even though institutions did not have the technological base for the same and staff did not have the necessary skills needed for its implementation. In 2019, KAA introduced new accreditation standards that brought about a completely new context in terms of quality assurance at all aspects and levels of higher education.

Against and despite this background, the teaching and learning process has gained in its human rights-based approach during the last two years, which coincides with the time between the current HERAS+ and the last HERAS reports (2019-2021) on HRBA application in Kosovo's higher education. For various reasons, the processes of instruction and student assessment have become more student friendly, more transparent and more inclusive. The research has encountered frequent accounts of deeper understanding and application of participative and interactive teaching and learning methods in the process of instruction, albeit there is still disagreement between interviewed students and teaching staff on the availability and inclusiveness of teaching at Kosovo's HEIs. Student assessments are now more standardised (regularly provided in the syllabi), more diverse (at least three or more assessment methods are accounted for in syllabi and in practice), and more transparent (students are well informed about the content, time and method of assessment).

One could attribute this also to the new accreditation guidelines and standards (Kosovo Accreditation Agency, 2019) which provide for more active student participation in all academic processes. The new quality assurance system embedded in the accreditation standards provides for much more inclusive approaches in the teaching process, including student assessment of the teaching staff, increased student participation in decision-making and in the design and revision of curricula. It is important to note that universities have actively responded to the new standards by revising their key policies and by changing routines in all academic processes. This may serve as a good basis for meaningful implementation of new policies in the day-to-day operation of institutions and in the student-professor interactions.

It is worth noting that there have been significant developments also in the field of policy making and setting up mechanisms for promoting human rights at Kosovo's HEIs since the last HERAS HRBA report (January 2020). For illustration, there is an *Ombudsperson in place at the University of Gjakova*, tasked with the mission of protecting and promoting human rights of the staff and students at this University. *University of Pristina has adopted its Regulation for prevention and protection against sexual harassment and harassment*, which provides for tools and mechanisms to mitigate harassment at this institution. *University "Haxhi Zeka" in Peja* has approved specific and well elaborated *Codes of Ethics for academic staff, students and administrative staff* that could also serve as good practice for the other institutions. Several good practices are listed in the findings of this research as well as in the table attached to the Report as Annex 1.

With some exceptions, the six new universities (Mitrovica, Peja, Gjakova, Prizren, Ferizaj and Gjilan) still have a tendency to use and replicate the policies and practices of the oldest public University of Pristina. At the policy level, this occurs by copying University of Pristina policies and regulations. At the more practical level, this often happens due to the fact that a significant number of teaching staff of the younger universities come from University of Pristina and have brought with them their teaching and research behaviour patterns. This is important in many ways, but most notably could be used to introduce new policies, practices and routines throughout higher education institutions in Kosovo. Namely, education authorities and other partners could work to *pilot new policies at the University of Pristina before rolling them out to other higher education institutions*. One can with certainty assume that the same would apply for the private higher education institutions, too.

As mentioned above, an important lesson learnt during the research for this study was that *KAA guidelines and standards can serve as a primary and most efficient channel for introducing new practices*, but also for consolidating existing ones. For illustration, *all universities adopted or reviewed their Codes of Ethics* after this was made an explicit requirement by the accreditation standards. Notwithstanding that there may be a long way between their adoption and their meaningful implementation, it still appears to be a very efficient tool to introduce new policies and practices. There appears to be a need for regulations in the field of inclusion and social dimension in higher education. These regulations could address equity issues and needs of the community students (more specifically Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities), students with disabilities, girls (in particular girls from rural areas) and so on. Apart from providing equal treatment, support of this kind would serve to improve student performance and completion rates.

Responses of the management staff, teaching staff and students in various instruments administered during this research reflect the new situation in the newly introduced policies and practices. However, the triangulated verification of data (comparison of data collected through the various research instruments) and follow up research (focus group discussions and interviews) have shown that there is still way to go before human rights are genuinely mainstreamed and integrated into teaching, learning and research routines in Kosovo's higher education institutions – both among staff and students. For instance, according to student respondents, research remains tied to diploma theses for the three levels of study, despite teachers' claims that research is regularly integrated in the process of instruction.

To sum up, human rights principles should not be seen as a part of [legal] studies only because they can often be found and are also relevant in other areas such as pedagogical education, peace education, conflict resolution, religious studies, political science, public administration, sociology, anthropology, international relations, history, business, computer science, medicine or philosophy courses. Human rights and democratic citizenship education is the duty of every teacher on every educational level (Kasa, 2021). And as outlined already at the very beginning of this document - "Human rights can only be achieved through an informed and continued demand by people for their protection. Human rights education (at all levels) thus constitutes an essential contribution to the long-term prevention of human rights abuses and represents an important investment in the endeavour to achieve a just society in which all human rights of all persons are valued and respected." (OHCHR)

4.1. Recommendations

Understanding human rights-based education and practices in the academic process will help students to participate in the society, feel equal with others, actively participate, and integrate in creating values.

Universities must identify a need for adjustment to their existing practice and know why that change makes sense, for all those involved, within their context. Universities should strengthen their mechanisms dealing with periodic review and monitoring of their programmes. Moreover, teachers should further improve their mode of teaching and assessment.

The recommendations presented below are organized in (i) more general recommendations referring to the creation of a conducive environment for promoting an HRBA in HE and (ii) specific suggestions for strengthening an HRBA at HEIs in Kosovo.

4.1.1. General recommendations:

Firstly, institutes and centres operating within the regional universities should consider *collaborating with University of Prishtina research institutes to discuss “best-practice” models and principles and detect their own good practices*. The University of Prishtina should take a leading role in *establishing a research network* within the country and as such initiate collaboration which will cover a number of critical, neglected areas in the field of human rights law, gender and humanitarian law. This will facilitate cross-disciplinary research that allows for the interchange of knowledge and experience and as such can give responses to complex research challenges. One possible entry point could be the development of joint research proposals, possibly to be submitted to international donors or schemes such as Erasmus+ or Horizon Europe. The public (but also private) higher education institutions could set up a *joint cooperation group* that would be tasked with designing and implementing initiatives in the field of HRBA. One such initiative could also be a consortium to apply for public and European funds in higher education (such as Erasmus Plus). The HERAS plus project may explore possibilities to provide initial support to such a cooperation group.

Secondly, it is important for the higher education authorities, development partners and NGOs to work with KAA to *strengthen HRBA dimensions and aspects in the accreditation standards*. Increased inclusion and student participation positively affect student performance and quality assurance.

Thirdly, it appears of critical importance to establish *mechanisms that serve for the protection of human rights and their sustained promotion in teaching, learning and research*. In this respect, HEIs

may consider establishing an Ombudsperson institution as it was recently introduced at University “Fehmi Agani” in Gjakova and to safeguard the functional independence of such an institution.

Currently, the MESTI has undertaken developing its Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) for 2022-2027. It is critical for higher education authorities, civil society organizations and development partners to pay focused attention to provide for a more human rights-based approach in Kosovo higher education, also drawing from the example of treating human rights in the pre-university sections of the KESP 2017-2021. The planning should take in consideration the needs and specific nature of higher education and research.

Kosovo higher education authorities and development partners could focus their efforts in supporting the University “Ukshin Hoti” in Prizren to serve as a communities’ education promotion hub (CEH). The ethnic composition and tolerance in the Municipality of Prizren are reflected also in the internal organization and compositions of the student population of this University. This is seen as a suitable hub to pilot new initiatives in the field of human rights and interethnic cooperation. One possible initiative within the University would be to promote the Third Mission of the UUH in Prizren towards all communities in the region. *[The Third Mission] has been defined as social, enterprising, innovation activities that universities carry out alongside their teaching and research activities whereby additional benefits are created for society* (Patricio Montesinos, 2008). These initiatives could then be multiplied in other regions by the other public universities.

The University of Pristina could result with an improved human rights portfolio, but also improved academic performance from a better embedded human-rights based approach in the provisions of the University Statute. Improved information and transparency, tailoring testing conditions to the individual student needs, foreseeing timely and accurate feedback from student assessment, providing linguistic and technology support to student, regulating the conditions of the physical infrastructure, setting clearer provisions on filing and treating student complaints, and other similar provisions, could serve to improve not only for equal and non-discriminatory treatment of students, but also their academic performance, which is in the very mission of any university.

The universities should develop and approve one or more regulations that will provide for a more comprehensive human rights-based approach in all functions and operations of the universities. Such a regulation could provide the principles of a HRBA in their institution, categories to be supported, main support activities, respective quotas (whenever applicable), and so on. These could be then applied even during the application of the provisions of the past and future regulations and procedures.

4.1.2. Specific recommendations:

- For Higher education authorities and institutions to develop and approve administrative instructions determining a HRB approach in implementation of any provisions of the current bylaws regulating higher education.
- Strengthen the capacities and resources of human rights centres and institutes that promote and conduct research on human rights, in order for them to be able to function as resource and thematic centres of excellence at the respective universities.
- Review the Existing Codes of Ethics and provide support for Ethics Councils to ensure the full application of the provisions.
- Develop and approve Codes of Research Ethics at all HEIs and make sure that human rights and equality requirements are evident in their provisions, as well as to develop and offer training on research ethics skills.
- Approve the regulation on data protection.
- Ensure that universities' programmes include a focus on Human rights and equality across disciplines, where and as relevant and to provide student information, training and counselling on the same issues.
- Provide support for students with special needs and for minorities (including mentoring and counselling).
- Whenever applicable, consider introducing an introductory course on human rights in curricular fields that are not currently providing such courses (such as medicine, veterinary studies, agriculture, arts, and so on) and
- Introduce cross-cultural training to classes in which there are multi-ethnic students.

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Annexes:

Annex 1: Catalogue of good practices of HRBA in Kosovo public universities²⁸

The following catalogue of good practices was drafted based on this research, previous HRBA reports from HERAS and the baseline assessments of public universities supported by HERAS+. The aim is to update the catalogue on a regular basis in cooperation with Kosovo's public universities.

University	Good practice	HERAS PLUS recommendations	Level of priority	Key assumptions
University "Hasan Pristina"	Human Rights Centre at the Faculty of Law	Support its operation and initiatives	Medium	UP is committed to further develop and support operations of the HRC
	Regulation on prevention and protection from sexual harassment and harassment	Support dissemination of info and training of staff on Regulation implementation	Medium	
University of Peja	Centre for Human Rights (IRLHRS)	Support to serve as HRBA resource center	Medium	There is full support for the Centre
	Equal employment opportunities policy	Disseminate /roll-out Support implementation	Low to Medium	Management is supportive of the initiative
University of Gjakova	Ombudsperson	Support and roll-out and develop capacities as needed	High	Ombudsperson office is active and serves as a model There is readiness among HEIs to potentially replicate this model.
University of Gjilan	/	/	/	/
University of Mitrovica	Review of language in documents	Roll-out	High	Other universities are ready to review stereotypes in language used in documents
UAS Ferizaj	/	/	/	/
University of Prizren	Study programmes in community languages	Support	Medium	...
All public universities				
	Codes of Conduct	Review to include HRBA	High	There is readiness among HEIs
		Support follow up mechanisms and procedures	High	University management agrees to mainstream a HRBA in Code of Conducts
	Strategic Plans	Support review action plans with an eye on HRBA	High	There is readiness for cooperation and improvement of the HRBA related indicators
	Codes of Research Ethics	Review or support adoption of	Medium	Universities are committed to enhance research ethics policies.
	KAA	Mainstream HRBA dimension among accreditation standards	Medium	KAA is committed to adequately address human rights dimensions

²⁸ This catalogue was drafted using information from the current Report and from the findings of the Baseline Studies organized by the HERAS Plus project.

Annex 2: Survey questionnaires

Section for Professors
Learning environment-; Teaching, learning, and assessment processes and tools.
1.What do you teach? (course) Required
2.How many students do you usually have in your class? Optional
3. What teaching methods do you prefer? Teacher-centered methods/Student centre method/You combine both. Can you please explain? Required
4.Do you have students with attention deficiency/learning disabilities and if so, how do you handle such cases? Required
5.Do you consider/address inclusive education in assessment and evaluation? (Yes-No) Required
6. If Yes, please explain the practices you employ (open question) Optional
7. What strategy do you use to counteract the maintenance of gender stereotypes in your teaching? Required
8.How are you evaluated? Peer review/students/Dean. Required
9. How do you publish/display exam results of your students? (for instance colloquium) Required
10.What is your ratio of teaching to research? Optional
11. How do you obtain research funding? Are you supported by your university? Optional
12. Do you involve /engage your students in research? Required
13. Did you receive a guidance in such matters as the exercise of your responsibilities as professors, your responsibilities to students and colleagues, and when undertaking scientific research?, If yes, please explain. Required
14. How do you handle research data.(Who is responsible for its safety?) Required

15. Do you integrate topic of gender equality and human rights in your teaching? Optional
16. Who is responsible to protect your rights in case of any violation? Did you ever challenge the existing mechanisms of your university? If so, what is your experience? Required
17. Do you see it necessary of establishing an Ombudsperson within your university whose mandate would be to address ethical and unfair treatment? Required

For Vice Rectors and Deans
Learning environment-; Teaching, learning, and assessment processes and tools.
1.Do you consider/address inclusive education in the learning environment (such as group work, project-based learning, discussions, feedback)? (Y es-No) Required
2.If Yes, please explain the practices you employ (open question) Optional
3. Do you consider/address inclusive education in teaching instructions? (Y es-No) *
4. If Yes, please explain the practices you employ (open question) Optional
5. Do you consider/address student's agency in the process of assessment – feedback on assignments and grading? (Y es-No) Required Agency in assessment-grading: students having control or having a say in the process. This can be provided in many ways, mainly through transparency – transparent rules and scoring; preparing student ahead of the exams about the type of questions (open, closed, with open books-without etc) and all the assistance in disposal before the student enters the exam. Follow up questions: Do you prepare students for the examinations, evaluations? Do you make the grading rules and scoring transparent? Do you tell them what is required to succeed?
6.If Yes, please explain the practices you employ (open question) Optional
7.Do you have official guidelines/proceedings for students' appeals regarding grading or handling assessment and evaluation? (Y es-No) Required

8. Do you have written guidelines or any other form of awareness-raising for the academic staff about mainstreaming Inclusion in the process of teaching, learning, and assessment? (Yes-No) Required
9. Do you consider/address learning disorders (such as information processing and writing and speech production disorders) in the process of teaching and assessment? (Yes-No) Required
10. If Yes, please explain the practices you employ! (open question) Optional
11. Do you consider/address factors such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status and gender in the process of teaching and assessment? (Yes-No) Required
12. If Yes, please explain the practices you employ (open question) Optional
Section 4 Research
1. Who is responsible to develop, monitor and review the University's strategic plans for postgraduate research?
1. Do you have <i>Research Ethics Committee</i> in your Institution? (Yes-No) Required
2. If Yes (Ref. Question nr.2), what is the mandate of this committee? (Open Question) Required
3. If No, is research ethics (or any other form) of approval required in place at your Institution <i>for students</i> to carry out research with human subjects? (Yes-No) Required
4. If Yes, what is the mechanism in place which reviews and approves the research proposal with human subjects? (Open Question) Required
5. If No (ref. To question nr.3), is research ethics (or any other form) of approval required/in place at your Institution for <i>academic staff</i> to carry out research with human subjects?
6. Does your Institution have any guidance for research ethics (with human subjects)? (Yes-No) Required
7. Does your institution offer training on research ethics for students? (Yes-No) Required
8. Does your Institution have regulations in place about the management and safety of the research data (data collected for research purpose)? (Yes-No) Required

9.If No, how does your Institution regulates/ensures the safety of the research data? (Open Question) Required
10.Does your Institution have regulations/practices in place to handle potential appeals of research participants for research ethic breaches? (Yes-No) Required
11.If No, how does your Institution handle potential appeals of research participants for research ethic breaches? (Open Question) Required
12. Do you have any legal mechanism in place at your Institution (such as Ombudsperson) that deals with human rights violations? Required
13. Do you have in place any Institute or center that deals specifically with human rights or/and gender equality, in research and teaching? If so, please explain the mandate and main activities. Required
14.Do you have any supporting mechanism for under-represent groups of students in place such as coaching, mentoring, advisory services or similar (e.g., students from minorities, persons with special needs, etc). Required
15. What are the capacities needed in the future? Do you have any suggestion? Optional
16. Which are the thematic areas with more needs for support? Do you have any suggestion? Optional

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