

QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGY

2024–2029



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1. INTRODUCTION

"Barleti" University (UniBa) was licensed by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 571, dated 12.08.2005, *"On granting permission to open the private non-public university high school named 'Marin Barleti' University"*, and exercises its activity in accordance with legal and sub-legal acts applicable in the field of higher education in the Republic of Albania. Prior to its opening, several months of preparatory work were conducted to formulate plans, curricula, and select academic staff.

UniBa offers study programs across all three study cycles, as well as professional study programs in academic disciplines and sub-disciplines such as social sciences, health sciences, applied and computer sciences, engineering sciences, and sports sciences.

UniBa's activity is supported by its academic and administrative structures according to well-defined duties and responsibilities set out in its internal regulatory acts. UniBa attaches special importance to quality assurance across both components of this process—internal quality assurance and external quality assurance. UniBa builds its quality assurance activities based on its Quality Assurance Strategy.

1.1. PURPOSE AND LEGAL BASIS

The Quality Assurance Strategy represents a reference document for the internal quality assurance system and UniBa's relations with external quality assurance institutions and stakeholders. The Quality Assurance Strategy describes the policies, structures, and elements that guarantee quality at UniBa. The primary objective of this strategy is to achieve the highest quality in higher education provision and its integration in accordance with European higher education standards.

In this context, the priorities of the quality assurance strategy are:

- Improving the quality of study curricula based on labor market requirements and student needs;
- Improving the teaching and learning process;
- Enhancing scientific and applied research, while encouraging and promoting academic staff.

The Quality Assurance Strategy is based on:

- Law No. 80/2015 *"On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania"*, Articles 103, 104, 106, and 46;
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), as well as other international higher education acts;
- Code of Quality in Higher Education, approved by DCM No. 824, dated 24.12.2021;



- Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 621, dated 22.10.2021 *"On the Approval of the National Strategy for Education 2021–2026 and its Implementation Action Plan"*;
- The ASCAL Manual on procedures and deadlines for quality evaluation within the framework of accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and study programs;
- Statute of "Barleti" University, Article 10, point 2;
- Regulation of "Barleti" University, Article 14;
- Regulation of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (NJZHKC);
- Quality Manual;
- ISO 9001:2015 Standards.

1.2. VISION AND MISSION OF THE INSTITUTION

Vision of the Institution

"Barleti" University aims to provide research- and innovation-driven education comparable to European higher education standards, bringing together staff, students, alumni, faculties, departments, and research units operating as part of the European Education Initiative. UniBa's vision is to establish a high-quality higher education institution that delivers genuine values of professionalism and citizenship by combining education with the entrepreneurial spirit, realized through a seamless integration of online services and face-to-face delivery on its campuses. Within this vision, UniBa strives to become an innovative, leading, digital, applied, practical, interactive, and community-oriented institution aligned with the labor market, placing the student at the center while developing regional and international partnerships.

Mission

UniBa's mission is to offer quality education by training innovative, creative, and entrepreneurial professionals equipped for present and future challenges, as well as engaged citizens in an ever-changing and evolving world. In fulfilling this mission, UniBa structures its operations around five main pillars: the academic pillar, the student-centered pillar, the applied research and innovation pillar, the corporate and administrative pillar, and the entrepreneurial pillar, while aiming over this decade to fully transform into a digital institution.

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

The Quality Assurance Policy represents the set of goals, principles, and rules to which UniBa adheres for decision-making and planning quality assurance activities in fulfillment of its vision and mission.



2.1. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Through the Quality Assurance Strategy, UniBa aims to:

- Promote a quality culture in which every member of the UniBa community regards quality assurance and improvement as both an individual and collective responsibility;
- Develop policies, procedures, and processes that support an effective cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of activities aligned with the Institution's vision and mission;
- Establish a clear and realistic assessment of quality at any given time based on two approaches: "*quality as fitness for mission/purpose*", meaning quality as the fulfillment of the institution's mission, study program goals, set objectives, and expected outcomes; and "*quality based on standards*", meaning quality as compliance with state quality standards that enable comparability;
- Optimally adopt quality assurance standards and best practices, particularly those aligned with European Higher Education Area trends;
- Ensure inclusivity and stakeholder contribution through transparent communication, publication of information, and decision-making.

2.2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

"Barleti" University builds its quality management framework on the ISO 9001:2015 principles, focusing on the effective development, implementation, and monitoring of quality policies and procedures.

- **Principle 1: Student-Centred Approach.** Engaging students through proactive student-staff relationships, active learning methodologies, and transparent, accountable student support mechanisms. Students must feel that their voices are heard, that they contribute to the learning process, share their experiences, and feel an integral part of the institution. Applying this principle is essential to the long-term success of the Institution.
- **Principle 2: Leadership.** Steering institutional activity according to a unified vision, mission, and development objectives facilitates the quality assurance process and requires the quality management system to be designed accordingly.
- **Principle 3: Inclusivity / Engagement of People.** Involving all members of the UniBa community in quality assurance with mutual respect, enabling everyone to contribute to quality while demonstrating individual and collective accountability.
- **Principle 4: Process Approach.** Interlinking all UniBa activities into a unified institutional system optimizes processes and ensures consistent, well-defined outcomes.



- **Principle 5: Improvement.** In an era of rapid change, success relies on continuous improvement. Continuous improvement enables the Institution to maintain its performance levels, respond to changes, and create new development opportunities to achieve high performance.
- **Principle 6: Evidence-Based Decision-Making.** Utilizing facts, empirical evidence, and data analysis ensures objectivity in decision-making to achieve targeted results.
- **Principle 7: Relationship Management.** Stakeholders impact institutional performance. Sustainable success is attained when the Institution effectively manages relationships with stakeholders to optimize their positive impact on performance.

2.3. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDARDS

UniBa adheres to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), adopted at the Ministerial Conference (May 2015):

1. **Standard 1: Policy for quality assurance** — The institution has a publicly available policy for quality assurance that forms part of its strategic management. Internal and external stakeholders participate in developing and implementing this policy through appropriate structures and processes.
2. **Standard 2: Design and approval of programmes** — The institution establishes processes for designing and approving study programs. Programs are structured to fulfill set objectives and learning outcomes. Qualifications awarded correspond to the appropriate level of national and European qualification frameworks.
3. **Standard 3: Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment** — The institution ensures that programs encourage students to play an active role in creating the learning process and that assessments reflect this approach.
4. **Standard 4: Student admission, progression, recognition and certification** — The institution consistently applies predefined, published rules covering all stages of the "student life cycle", including admission, academic progression, credit recognition, and graduation.
5. **Standard 5: Teaching staff** — The institution guarantees the competence of its academic staff through transparent recruitment and professional development procedures.
6. **Standard 6: Learning resources and student support** — The institution secures adequate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensures readily available learning resources and student support services.



7. **Standard 7: Information management** — The institution systematically collects, analyzes, and utilizes relevant information for the effective management of programs and institutional activities.
8. **Standard 8: Public information** — The institution regularly publishes clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date, and easily accessible information regarding its activities and study programs.
9. **Standard 9: On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes** — The institution continuously monitors and periodically evaluates its programs to ensure they meet set objectives as well as student and societal needs. Reviews lead to continuous program improvement, with resulting actions communicated to stakeholders.
10. **Standard 10: Cyclical external quality assurance** — The institution undergoes external quality assurance on a cyclical basis in accordance with national and European standards and guidelines.

3. QUALITY ASSURANCE STRUCTURES

UniBa has defined functional responsibilities for bodies and authorities responsible for internal quality assurance at all levels. They possess the autonomy and authority to identify issues, initiate action plans, formulate recommendations, and present solutions for quality-related matters.

Through collaborative interaction, quality assurance structures at UniBa aim to:

1. Provide opportunities for concerns, feedback, and recommendations from the UniBa community, partners, and external authorities to be voiced;
2. Ensure timely and effective notification of all UniBa community members regarding decisions made by governing bodies;
3. Provide space and opportunities for staff and students to actively participate in quality assurance processes.

Internal quality assurance principles, goals, and objectives are detailed in a dedicated institutional document. External quality assurance is carried out in accordance with applicable legal frameworks through periodic reporting, external evaluation, and accreditation processes.

3.1. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Internal Quality Assurance represents the guarantee of quality during the execution of academic, research, cultural, and social activities of academic staff and students, as well as administrative and financial operations at UniBa. UniBa formulates internal quality assurance policies and procedures in compliance with governing legal acts, the quality code, and contemporary best practices.

Quality assurance at UniBa is organized around core processes that support full academic execution, curriculum development, program re/accreditation, and institutional assessment, grounded in the higher education law, sub-legal acts, leadership directives, and European quality standards.

The internal system consists of bodies, authorities, and structures at the institutional and main unit (faculty) levels focused on quality control, accountability, and continuous improvement. Every member of UniBa is required to fulfill their internal evaluation responsibilities across institutional, main unit, and basic unit levels.

Rights and responsibilities of evaluated individuals:

- Every staff member must define their annual activity goals and objectives at the beginning of each academic year;
- Every staff member must be provided with a summary of their evaluation results;
- Every staff member has the right to discuss and appeal their evaluation report prior to its final archiving.

3.2. ACCREDITATION AND EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Structures responsible for external quality assurance include:

- **Governmental authorities:**
 - Ministry of Education and Sports (MAS)
 - Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASCAL)
 - Accreditation Board (BA)
- **European quality assurance agencies** registered with the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA);
- **Independent auditing authorities;**
- **External expert panels and external reviewers.**

Accreditation

Accreditation is the process through which a governmental, non-governmental, or private body evaluates the quality of a higher education institution or study program to grant official recognition of compliance with quality standards. ASCAL is the primary governmental evaluation body in Albania, while the Accreditation Board holds authority for formal accreditation recognition and approval under Law 80/2015.

Internal ad-hoc evaluation teams (GVB) operate under official guidelines (e.g., *ASCAL Manual on procedures and deadlines for evaluation in higher education*). Upon completing the internal

evaluation process, the Self-Evaluation Dossier (DVV) is submitted in electronic and hard-copy formats, containing:

- Internal Evaluation Report (RVB);
- Supporting evidence files.

External evaluation is conducted by external expert groups (GVJ) selected by the respective agency, resulting in an External Evaluation Report (RVJ) provided to the university.

External Quality Assurance Activities

UniBa participates in ongoing external quality assurance initiatives, including:

- Annual periodic evaluations reported to MAS, subject to external oversight according to MAS procedures;
- Evidence-based periodic activity reports submitted under official MAS directives;
- Faculty-level forums and discussions for study program quality enhancement;
- Engagement of external experts for consultations, decision-making bodies, and quality monitoring.

4. ASSESSMENT AREAS AND APPROACHES WITHIN QUALITY ASSURANCE

UniBa adopts Deming's continuous improvement cycle—**Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA)**—as a systematic methodology for maintaining and elevating quality standards.

Internal Evaluation Areas:

- Study programs and teaching quality
- Student performance and academic achievements
- Staff qualifications and performance
- Scientific and applied research
- Student services and welfare
- Institutional management and administration

Assessment Approaches:

- **Study programs, research, and student services:** Evaluated using the **standards-based approach**.
- **Student achievements:** Evaluated based on **intended learning outcomes**.
- **Staff performance:** Evaluated against **performance indicators and standards**.

- **Institutional performance:** Evaluated using both **mission-based** and **standards-based** approaches.

5. MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

UniBa executes structured operational activities to ensure quality:

- **Monitoring Activities:**
 - Systematic monitoring of compliance with legal, regulatory, curricular, credit, and financial criteria;
 - Systematic tracking of academic staff quality metrics;
 - Systematic monitoring of student quality indicators;
 - Systematic evaluation of campus infrastructure indicators.
- **Evaluation Activities:**
 - Assessment of learning outcome achievements;
 - Evaluation of benefits derived from institutional cooperation agreements;
 - Review and evaluation of course syllabi;
 - Focus group assessments on student life quality.
- **Improvement Activities:**
 - Planning and continuous follow-up action plans addressing findings from monitoring, evaluation, and accreditation reports.

6. USE OF RESULTS

Data and insights gathered from monitoring and evaluation processes are utilized for:

- UniBa strategic planning;
- Preparing internal evaluation reports and accreditation dossiers;
- Enhancing study programs, teaching methodologies, research output, services, and management efficiency;
- Annual institutional activity planning;
- Staff performance development plans.

All documentation and evaluation reports are archived in standardized physical and digital formats using structured naming and coding conventions.

7. COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

"Barleti" University and its quality assurance structures are responsible for publishing and communicating monitoring, evaluation, and accreditation findings in formats approved by the Rectorate and Academic Senate. UniBa guarantees that published information is clear, accurate, accessible, reliable, up-to-date, and presented in understandable language for all stakeholders. The Quality Standards Assurance Commission (KSSC) oversees this process at the institutional level.

8. DRAFTING AND AMENDING THE QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGY

The Quality Assurance Strategy document is drafted by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (NJZHKC) Office in collaboration with the KSSC and approved by the Academic Senate of "Barleti" University. The process of drafting and amending the Quality Assurance Strategy is inclusive, open, and transparent.

Approved by Decision No. 10, dated 11.02.2025, of the Academic Senate of "Barleti" University.

CHAIRPERSON OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

Prof. Dr. Suzana GUXHOLLI

