Life for each of us is a long journey, full of challenges and achievements. There are many important moments that are decisive in shaping our futures and defining the paths we follow in our lives. One of these moments is the step we take into university education, where the basics of a profession are learnt and, more importantly, preparation for life and its challenges begins. When we enter the doors of a University, we begin a journey of cultural enrichment, and expansion of the boundaries of our knowledge, which continues throughout our lives.

For this reason it is important that you are comfortable with the choices you make and the decisions you take about higher education, because once you have embarked on a particular path, turning back or changing direction may be difficult and costly. The best and most appropriate choices will help define your future professions and areas of interest, as well as leading you towards the University that offers you the best and most complete way of achieving your aspirations.

Bedër “Hëna e Plotë” University is an institution that fully meet the expectations of those who have chosen to make their careers in the area of Social Sciences. The University has a consolidated international profile, both in terms of its academic staff, all of whom are highly qualified teachers, domestic as well as foreign, and of its students, who come from 15 different countries, making Beder a truly multicultural environment.

“Hëna e Plotë” (Bedër) University, through its academic advisory system, enables its students to learn with their own tutors, with whom they meet regularly and can discuss any issues they face in their university careers. Albania’s integration into the European family also makes the learning of foreign languages essential, which is why language learning is an important element in all our programs.

In short, “Hëna e Plotë” (Bedër) University is an institution of higher education which aspires to the highest standards in its teaching, and offers its students an academic and life experience, comparable with the best/any available in the world/region today.
Dear Prospective Student,

Life for each of us is a long journey, full of challenges and achievements. There are many important moments that are decisive in shaping our futures and defining the paths we follow in our lives. One of these moments is the step we take into university education, where the basics of a profession are learnt and, more importantly, preparation for life and its challenges begins. When we enter the doors of a University, we begin a journey of cultural enrichment, and expansion of the boundaries of our knowledge, which continues throughout our lives.

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Beder University is located close to the centre of Tirana, the heart and capital of Albania, which like other European capitals, has a never-ending movement and energy.

Sulejman Pasha Bargjini, a feudal lord from nearby Mullet, established the city in 1614, and his first constructions were a mosque, a bakery and a hamam (Turkish bath). However it was not until February 8, 1920 that Tirana was declared temporary capital of Albania by the Congress of Lushnje, and it became the permanent capital on December 31, 1925.

In the center of Tirana lies the main square, Sheshi Skënderbej, the Mosque of Et'hem Bey (built between 1798 and 1812) and the 35 m high Kulla e Sahatit (the Watch Tower), built in 1822, with a San Marco style cupola. The Palace of Culture housing the Opera and Ballet Theater and National Library are also situated on the main square, and other important cultural institutions such as the National Historical Museum, Archeological Museum, Museum of Natural Sciences and National Gallery of Fine Arts are located nearby. Tirana is also within easy reach of major historical and touristic towns such as Durres and Kruja, the UNESCO heritage centers of Butrint, Gjirokaste, and the Adriatic Sea and Dajti Mountain are both close to the city. The Tirana Great Park with its artificial lake is located in the southern part of the city, close to the site of Beder University's new campus.

In short, Tirana is a beautiful and dynamic city which every year hosts thousands of visitors and students from the Balkans and further afield, and the respect and hospitality shown by Albanians towards their guests is something that will mark your time in Tirana and at Hënë e Plote (Beder) University.
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“Hëna e Plotë” (Bedër) University was opened in April 2011 following a Decision by the Council of Ministers licensing it as an institution of higher education offering study programs in the field of Social Sciences at first and second degree level (Bachelor and Masters programs).

The University has two Faculties - the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Philology and Education - and six Departments - Law, Communications Sciences, and Islamic Studies, Education Sciences, English Language and Literature, and Turkish Language and Literature – offering in total seven Bachelor level and fourteen Master level programs, as well as a professional masters program.

Since its foundation, the University has attracted students from all Albanian speaking parts of the region and the Albanian diaspora, as well as from other European countries. The University currently has students from 18 countries, and aims to expand their numbers in the coming years. Beder's international profile is also reflected in the composition of its academic staff and the collaborative agreements it has signed with universities and enterprises across the world.

MISSION

“Hëna e Plotë” (Bedër) University's Mission is to prepare qualified and responsible individuals through an educational philosophy inspired by universal human values and the highest international standards of education and research, and to help improve ethical, social and professional standards across the region through the commitment of its graduates.

VISION

“Hëna e Plotë” (Bedër) University's Vision is to become a leader amongst elite institutions of higher education in Albania and the region through the quality of its teaching, and opportunities for study, personal development and service, making it the natural choice for education and research for all Albanians within their country and wherever else they may be in the world.

“Hëna e Plotë” University also aims to become a leading education institution offering opportunities for education and research to foreign as well as Albanian students, thereby contributing to the promotion of Tirana as a regional centre of learning and original research, and establishing cooperation with similarly profiled institutions of higher education elsewhere in Europe and the world.
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Studying at “Hëna e Plotë” (Bedër) University means not only receiving a first class academic education, but also benefiting from a rich diversity of student activities. Studying at this university means being part of a multicultural environment, living alongside students from many different nationalities. Studying at Bedër means being in the care of a not-for-profit institution that is focused on the interests of its students. Studying at “Hëna e Plotë” (Bedër) University means benefiting from the opportunities offered by the academic and student life of the University, leading on to a dynamic future and career based on the experiences gained as a student at Beder.
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Bedër “Hëna e Plotë” University Library functions as an integral part of the university. Library services are performed by staff specially chosen by the University and are available only to students and academic staff. The Library is located on the ground floor of the University building and occupies an area of 300 square meters. The aim of the Library is to support the educational and academic activities of both academic staff and students.

The Library contains books and publications covering many social fields, but principally those on which the University's activities are focused, such as: Law, Communication Studies, Philosophy, English Literature, Islamic Studies, Turkish Literature, Psychology and Education Sciences.

The Library’s collection consists of titles specifically purchased for the library or donated by individuals and institutions. Books are chosen in accordance with demand and the needs of students and the administrative and academic staff. The library currently holds 35,000 books. In the near future, it will also provide online access to both books and research publications.
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Department of Law
• Bachelor in Law
• Master of Science in Law/ with a concentration in Criminal Law
• Master of Science in Law/ with a concentration in International Law

Department of Communication Sciences
• Bachelor in Communication Sciences
• Master of Science in Communication Sciences/ with a concentration in Journalism
• Master of Science in Communication Science/ with a concentration in Public Relations

Department of Islamic Sciences
• Bachelor in Islamic Sciences
• Master of Science in Modern Islamic Sciences
• Master of Science in Basic Islamic Sciences
• Master of Science in Spiritual Service Sciences

FACULTY OF PHILOLOGY AND EDUCATION

Department of English Language and Literature
• Bachelor in English Language and Literature
• Master of Science in English Language and Literature
• Master of Science in Translation and Interpretation
• Professional Master in Teaching, English Language for Secondary Education

Department of Educational Science
• Bachelor in Counseling Psychology and Pedagogy
• Bachelor in Pre-school and Primary Education
• Master of Science in Counseling Psychology and Pedagogy
• Master of Science in Educational Management, Planning and Curriculum Development

Department of Turkish Language and Literature
• Bachelor in Turkish Language and Literature
• Master of Science in Turkish Language and Literature
• Professional Master in Teaching, Turkish Language for Secondary Education
Bachelor in:

Law

About the program:

The first degree level program in Law provides an educational training for students wishing to pursue careers in Law, either in the public or private sectors. The program offers students the opportunity to become proficient in giving practical and relevant professional legal advice, defense advocacy and legal decision making, as well as advising on aspects of criminal, civil and public law.

Employment opportunities:

Students graduating in this subject may work as lawyers or legal specialists in the public administration, at central or local levels, or as legal specialists in international institutions and organizations. Private sector companies and enterprises also offer employment opportunities for graduates in law. Graduates can also practice as lawyers or notaries. Academic openings are available for those wishing to continue their careers in this direction.

About the Program:

3 academic years
6 semesters
180 credits
CRIMINAL LAW

The second degree level Master of Science program in Criminal Law provides an educational training for students wishing to make their professional careers in the field of justice, and particularly those seeking to specialize in or intensify their academic and professional knowledge of the criminal law.

INTERNATIONAL LAW

The second degree level Master of Science course in International Law provides an educational training for students wishing to make their careers in the public or private sectors in the international aspects of law. The course enables students to study international law and its application in a wide range of legal areas, including international humanitarian and human rights law.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:
2 Academic years
4 semesters
120 ECTS
Bachelor in:

COMMUNICATION SCIENCES

About the program

The first degree level course in communication studies provides an education for students wishing to make their professional careers, either in the public or private sectors, in the areas of communication and the flow of information through various media, as well as in the field of public relations.

Employment Opportunities

Graduates of this course may find work in public and private media institutions as journalists or reporters in print and electronic media. Students with such training can also work in local and foreign organizations in the field of public service information and communication, and in public relations in the public and private sectors. Graduates may also find employment in the press and media offices of political parties, other public relations offices, and in foreign institutions and organizations.
PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Master of Science in public relations offers advanced studies in the fields of communications, media, image management, and employment relations, is designed to provide graduates with an intellectual background to their specialty, exploring a variety of concepts and perspectives in each of the fields studied.

Master of Science Program in Communication Sciences with a concentration in Journalism is designed to provide students with an intellectual formation, setting out a variety of concepts and perspectives in communication, media journalism and similar fields.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:
2 Academic years
4 Semesters
120 ECTS
MODERN ISLAMIC STUDIES

The Modern Islamic Studies Masters course is designed to provide students with an intellectual framework, incorporating a variety of concepts and perspectives in the field of modern Islamic studies. Students will have an opportunity to deepen their knowledge of modern Islamic studies, and to make their professional careers in this field, both in the public and private sectors.

BASIC ISLAMIC SCIENCES

The Master Program in Basic Islamic Sciences is designed to provide an intellectual formation, incorporating a variety of concepts and perspectives in the field of basic studies of Islam. In this course, students have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of basic Islamic studies, having the chance to build their professional career in this field, in either the public or private sectors.

SPIRITUAL SERVICES SCIENCE

The Master of Science program in spiritual service is designed to provide students with an intellectual background, incorporating a variety of concepts and perspectives in the fields of spiritual service. In this program the students will have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge in the study of spiritual services, also having the chance to build their professional careers in this field, especially in the public.

About the program

The integrated study program for the first degree program in Islamic Sciences provides an education for students wishing to make their professional careers in the public or private sectors in the field of Islamic Theology. The program is designed to provide students with an intellectual background, exploring a variety of concepts and perspectives in the field of Islamic studies.

Employment Opportunities

For students completing the Bachelor’s program in Islamic Studies opportunities for first employment exist in the administration of the Muslim Community of Albania (MCA). Students who complete the first degree course may also be employed as religious leaders, as well as support staff in the above mentioned institutions. Graduates of the course may also be employed as teachers in primary and secondary schools, in particular in the Madrasa Schools.

About the Program:

3 Academic years
6 Semesters
180 ECTS
MODERN ISLAMIC STUDIES
The Modern Islamic Studies Masters course is designed to provide students with an intellectual framework, incorporating a variety of concepts and perspectives in the field of modern Islamic studies. Students will have an opportunity to deepen their knowledge of modern Islamic studies, and to make their professional careers in this field, both in the public and private sectors.

BASIC ISLAMIC SCIENCES
The Master Program in Basic Islamic Sciences is designed to provide an intellectual formation, incorporating a variety of concepts and perspectives in the field of basic studies of Islam. In this course, students have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of basic Islamic studies, having the chance to build their professional career in this field, in either the public or private sectors.

SPIRITUAL SERVICES SCIENCE
The Master of Science program in spiritual service is designed to provide students with an intellectual background, incorporating a variety of concepts and perspectives in the fields of spiritual service. In this program the students will have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge in the study of spiritual services, also having the chance to build their professional careers in this field, especially in the public.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:
2 Academic years
4 Semesters
120 ECTS
Faculty of Philology and Education
Bachelor in:

TURKISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

About the program

The first degree curriculum consists of courses in Turkish language and literature, including study of the historical development of Turkish language and literature, against the background of political, social, cultural and religious developments. These courses cover different periods of Turkish language, such as: Modern Turkish, Turkish of the Ottoman period, old Anatolian Turkish, middle Turkish and old Turkish.

Employment Opportunities

Students who achieve the relevant qualification can work as teachers of Turkish language and literature, in local and foreign institutions specializing in Turkish culture and language, or as researchers in the documentation of the Ottoman language.
The program provides students with a theoretical background in the methodology of language and its application in practice. Students have a choice of a second language, in accordance with the needs of teaching.

### About the Program
- **Bachelor in:** TURKISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
- **2 academic years**
- **4 semesters**
- **90 ECTS**

### Employment Opportunities
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### Master of Science:
TURKISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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### About the Program
- **1.5 academic years**
- **3 semesters**
- **180 ECTS**

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### Professional Master
TEACHING TURKISH LANGUAGE FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION

This second degree level program in Turkish language prepares teachers for work in secondary education. Courses are offered which aim at a wider recognition of this subject specialization, enhancing teaching skills (conception, development and implementation of a curriculum), preparation of appropriate teaching plans on a daily basis, using modern methods of teaching (information technology, study of the psychology of young students, classroom management, etc.).

### About the Program
- **1.5 academic years**
- **3 semesters**
- **90 ECTS**
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

About the program

The program consists of four main parts. The first is competence in the English language, including academic language skills, communication skills, etc., aimed at providing students with advanced skills in writing and speaking English. The second is linguistics, including general linguistics, morphology, syntax, lexicology and sociolinguistics. The third is literature, covering the main subject periods and most important authors in English and American literature, as well as special subjects such as literary criticism, poetry and Shakespeare. The last deals with culture and civilization, British and American, as major representatives of the English-speaking world.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities at the end of this course include work as translators in various government organizations and NGOs, embassies or consulates, tourism, foreign relations, banking, media and publishing. Graduates can also continue their studies as translators and interpreters of English language and literature.
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
The course aims to provide students with an in-depth knowledge of English literature and language and the structure of the literature, folklore, history and culture of the language. The course includes the historical development of language and literature, the relationship between language and thinking as well as the relationship between language and culture. Advanced courses in literature and culture are interwoven with linguistic elements and research. Analysis, literary criticism and artistic creativity are part of the program. Graduates are engaged in professional activities and research, and are also motivated to carry out further research in their relevant fields.

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION
The course aims to provide depth knowledge of translation and interpretation, as well as preparing students to become professional translators and interpreters.

TEACHING, ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION
The course aims to prepare teachers of English for work in secondary education. Students take courses in pedagogy, human development, teaching methodology and educational practice. The program enhances the ability of students to evaluate the scientific studies used in teaching practice.
Bachelor in:

PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

About the program

The purpose of the course is to provide students with a basic knowledge of teaching theory in preschool and primary education, and training for the application of theory in practice. Curriculum design and case study exercises are used to illustrate the process of learning and knowledge acquisition in pre-primary education, in accordance with regional needs and educational realities.

Employment Opportunities

Graduates of this program may be employed in public and private institutions as teachers or educators at primary and pre-school levels. Graduates may also choose to continue an academic career contributing to research in this field.

About the Program:

• 3 Academic years
• 6 Semesters
• 180 ECTS
EDUCATION MANAGEMENT, CURRICULUM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The program’s goal is to help individuals improve their knowledge, skills and perceptions about educational issues and to instruct them in understanding, interpreting and applying theories, models and methods of research in their field of study.

About the program

The purpose of the course is to provide students with a basic knowledge of teaching theory in preschool and primary education, and training for the application of theory in practice. Curriculum design and case study exercises are used to illustrate the process of learning and knowledge acquisition in pre-primary education, in accordance with regional needs and educational realities.

PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

Employment Opportunities

Graduates of this program may be employed in public and private institutions as teachers or educators at primary and pre-school levels. Graduates may also choose to continue an academic career contributing to research in this field.

Bachelor in:

About the Program:

2 academic years
6 semesters
180 ECTS

Master of Science:
Bachelor in:
COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY AND PEDAGOGY

About the program

The Course aims to provide students with a basic knowledge of the theory of psychological counseling and to enable them to apply theory in practice. Curriculum design and individual course exercises are used to illustrate the process of learning and knowledge acquisition in psychological counseling, in accordance with regional needs and current realities.

Employment Opportunities

Graduates of this course can work in public and private institutions as counseling psychologists. They may also be employed by local and foreign organizations working in the field of psychology and education. Other employment opportunities include working as psychological social services workers or as psychologists in pre-school institutions.
The course aims to improve graduates' knowledge, skills and perceptions of psychological counseling issues and help them understand, interpret and apply theories, models and research methods in individual counseling and group counseling environments.

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM:
2 Academic years
4 Semesters
120 ECTS
A University in the center of Tirana

The location of the University’s main building close to the city center enables Beder’s students to have rapid access to Tirana’s main public institutions, centers of art and culture, and health care facilities, as well as all other places of interest in the capital. The building itself provides a modern environment for the pursuit of academic and social activities.
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Social activities are an integral part of student life of the University. Alongside their academic and study obligations, students are able to participate in various social and sports activities. Exhibitions, literary and sporting competitions are just some of the activities organized by the Student Clubs that enrich the lives of students at the University.
PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

Students are the core component in the life of any University, and as such, their voice has to be heard in university decision-making. "Hëna e Plotë" (Bedër) University has consolidated a positive practice of student participation in decision-making, whereby the Student Council, elected by the students, has its representatives on all main governing bodies of the University, such as the Senate, Council of Academic Evaluation and Quality Development, and other bodies.

- Debating Society
- "Turkish Language and Culture"
- "Message of Life"
- Ideas, Art and Culture
- Photography
- ILSA
- "Young Psychologists"
- Diversity Society
- Human Rights Society
- "Beder Law Academy"

STUDENT SOCIETIES

Student Societies aim to develop students' skills in terms of social, cultural, and intellectual development. In general, they are composed of students with skills in a particular field, but any student showing an interest in a particular field is entitled to participate in a Society. The following is a list of interests covered by the Societies currently active at the University:

CAREERS PLANNING OFFICE

The Office of Career Planning develops activities designed to bring institutions in the public and private sectors together with current students and graduates, in turn offering qualified human resources to these institutions. The organization of activities to maintain contact between students and the University after graduation is among the priorities of this Office. In addition, the Office has career advisers in each Department to offer ongoing support and advice to students at any time on their future career choices.

The Office of the Dean of Students is an important unit in the functioning of the University. The Office pays special attention to student welfare, having as its main mission advising on the rights and needs of students and student groups, in accordance with the principle that the "Student is at the Center of the University". The Office of the Dean of Students also assists in the development of activities organized by student societies, internships and work experience programs within the country and abroad, and in career planning activities.
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DOUBLE MAJOR AND MINOR PROGRAMS

Students may attend courses in open programs offered by other Departments starting from their third semester, in accordance with criteria established by the Senate. Students at the end of such courses, in addition to the diploma of the Department in which they are registered, will be issued with a double diploma with a Major or a Minor course certificate.

STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

In its short history, Beder has succeeded in establishing close relationships with other universities in the region and beyond to exchange programs, staff and students, and organize joint conferences, as well as to carry out research etc. Within these agreements, students can apply to spend a semester or an academic year at another university with which the University has a cooperation agreement.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND STUDENT SUPPORT

In order to encourage the selection and admission of students with high level qualifications, the University has a policy of offering scholarships to selected students. For this purpose, scholarships are awarded to students with high scores in state examinations, students who achieve high scores in secondary schools, and students who are winners of national and international Olympiads.

Professional Work Experience is an important element in the CV of any graduate student, which is why “Hëna e Plotë” (Bedër) University sees internships and work experience as a valuable opportunity for its students to learn about the world of work and build a network of contacts and assessments which will help them in their future careers. To assist students in this regard, a network has been created between the University and public institutions and business contacts in Albania and abroad, through the signing of cooperation agreements.
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CONFERENCES
ACADEMIC RESEARCH

- Five International Conferences per year
- Nearly 300 participants
- Over 250 scientific papers presented
- Participants from 23 countries worldwide
- 2 National Conferences
- 2 Academic Journals
Visitors of the University

In the three years since its foundation, “Hëna e Plotë” (Bedër) University has had the pleasure of welcoming many prominent figures from a variety of fields. Visits by personalities from the academic world, including university rectors and leaders from Albania and other countries, figures from public life, journalists, commentators and representatives of the diplomatic corps have all become a part of the University’s recent history.
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Visitors of the University:

- H.E. Mr. Eugen Wollfarth, Ambassador of OSCE to Albania
- Sami Yusuf, Musician
- H.E. Mr. Hasan S. Asan, Former Ambassador of Turkey to Albania
- Erjon Veliaj, Minister for Social Welfare & Youth
- Pandeli Majko, Former prime minister of Albania
- Prof. Dr. Artan Puga, Lutfi Dervishi
- Sokol Balla, Journalist, columnist
- Bashkim Dedja, Head of the Constitutional Court of Albania
- Adi Krasta, Journalist
- H.E. Mr. Bunyan Saptomo, Ambassador of Indonesia
- Former Ambassador of Turkey to Albania
- Sokol Balla, Journalist, columnist
- Former prime minister of Albania
The Media and Communications Center provides an excellent opportunity for students of Communication Sciences, as well as others, to put into practice their theoretical knowledge of communications. The Center is designed as a grouping of several media units, including an online newspaper, magazine, a television studio, and a television studio with duplication facilities for broadcasting on the Internet. Currently the University is in the first stages of creating the Centre, starting with the magazine "Objektiv", online informative portal (www.objektiv.al), to be followed by the TV studio, web TV and news website.
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A new university campus is currently under construction on an open site of about 15000 m² in area to the south of the city close to the Tirana artificial lake. The new campus will include ample areas for social activities, classrooms and auditoria, as well as staff offices, meeting rooms and technical facilities. The new campus is designed to incorporate the most modern technology and facilities and offer many additional advantages to students in their teaching and social activities.
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Selection of candidates for admission to first and second degree level studies at “Hëna e Plotë” (Bedër) University is carried out by a Committee, composed of the following:

- Director of the Student Selection and Admission Office
- Head of the Department to which the prospective student has applied
- Dean of Students
- Chancellor

**ADMISSION CRITERIA AT FIRST DEGREE LEVEL**

*Bachelor Candidates must meet the following conditions:*

- Cumulative GPA must be higher than 8
- Admission examination for prospective students who do not meet ‘average’ criteria;
- Motivation Letter (short essay on the theme of the course of study that the student has selected);
- Interview by the Committees set up by the relevant departments.

**Documentation required for registration:**

All applicants must submit the necessary documentation in order to be registered at Beder “Hëna e Plotë” University.

For Albanian Students:
- Original high school diploma;
- Original high school transcript;
- Copy of passport or identity card;
- Medical Report;
- 4 photos;
- Bank payment invoice for course fee.

For Foreign Students:
- Original diploma with “Apostile” seal, notarized and translated into Albanian;
- Original transcript with “Apostile” seal, notarized and translated into Albanian;
- Medical report with “Apostile” seal, notarized and translated into Albanian;
- Notarized copy of passport (first, second and last pages);
- Notarized copy of residence permit for Albania;
- 4 photos;
- Bank payment invoice for course fee.

**Admission Criteria at Second Degree Level:**

Graduate students (Albanian and foreign) applying for enrollment in Master of Science and Professional Master Courses must fulfill the following conditions:

- Certify with official documents the completion of first degree level studies, with a Bachelor degree in Albania or abroad (or equivalent according to criteria set by the Ministry of Education and Science);
- Fulfill other conditions of acceptance specified in the internal regulations of Beder “Hëna e Plotë” University;
- Agree to pay a monthly or yearly course fee.

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You can directly apply to enroll in a program of study by completing the form on the university website.
http://www.beder.edu.al/sh/content/default/online-aplication-12/6/155
Hëna e Plotë "Bedër" University’s first commencement ceremony