



Data Analysis Report on the Accreditation Process by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (2024)

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA), as the institution responsible for quality assurance and maintaining high standards in higher education in Kosovo, conducted a detailed research to evaluate and enhance the quality of its accreditation and external review procedures. This activity was part of KAA's strategic efforts to ensure that its processes and procedures align with international best practices while addressing the specific needs of higher education institutions (HEIs).

Research Purpose and Methodology

The primary aim of the research was to measure the effectiveness and transparency of accreditation procedures, identify weaknesses and areas for improvement, and gather direct recommendations from HEI representatives and key stakeholders involved in the process. KAA distributed a structured questionnaire targeting HEI representatives, including:

- Quality Assurance Coordinators – individuals responsible for implementing and monitoring quality assurance processes within their institutions.
- Professors – academic staff who directly reflect developments in teaching and research.
- HEI Management – responsible for providing administrative and strategic support for accreditation processes.

The questionnaire comprised both open-ended and closed questions addressing various aspects of accreditation procedures, such as the quality of services provided by KAA, the clarity of guidelines and manuals, the transparency of the external evaluation process, and the timeliness of specified deadlines.



The questionnaire was organized into four main categories:

1. Information Dissemination
2. Efficiency of the Accreditation Process
3. Clarity and Relevance of KAA's Accreditation Manual
4. Contribution of the Accreditation Process to Quality Development

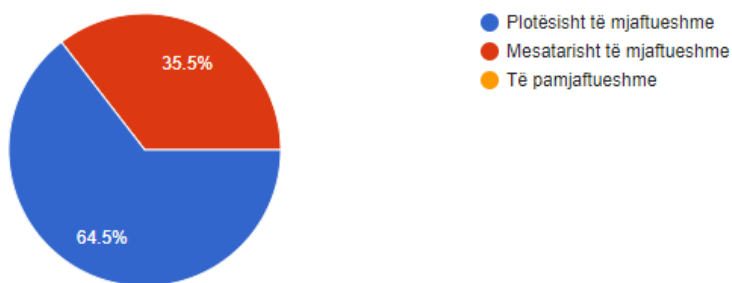
The research involved approximately 31 representatives from higher education institutions who shared their opinions and experiences, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of the accreditation procedures and identifying areas for potential improvement.

1. Information

1.1 How do you evaluate the information provided on KAA's website regarding the accreditation process?

Results:

- 64.5% of respondents rated the information as fully sufficient.
- 35.5% considered it moderately sufficient.





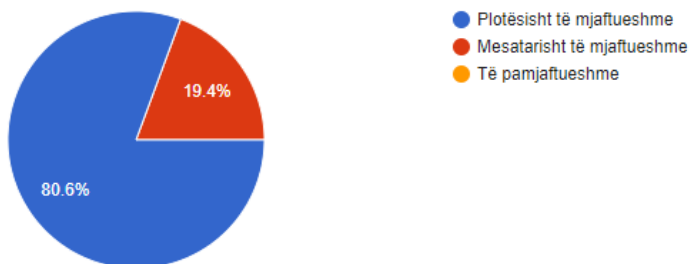
Comments:

- Frequent updates and greater transparency on the website are requested.
- The website's design is viewed as not particularly user-friendly, making navigation less intuitive.

1.2 How do you evaluate the information provided by KAA staff regarding the accreditation process?

Results:

- 80.6% of respondents rated the information as fully sufficient.
- 19.4% considered it moderately sufficient.



Comments:

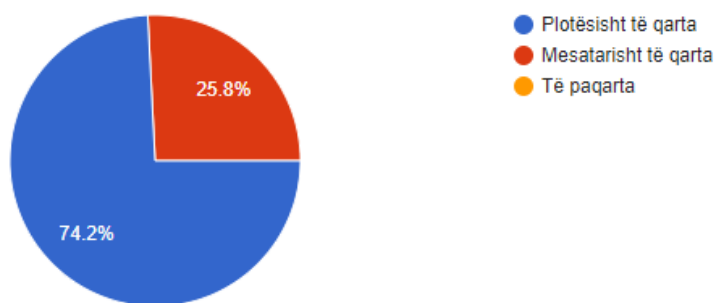
- The staff is perceived as ethical and cooperative, though there is a need for a more proactive approach in their communication.



1.3 How clear were the instructions for the re/accreditation application process?

Results:

- 74.2% of respondents considered the guidelines fully clear.
- 25.8% rated them as moderately clear.
- 0% found them unclear.



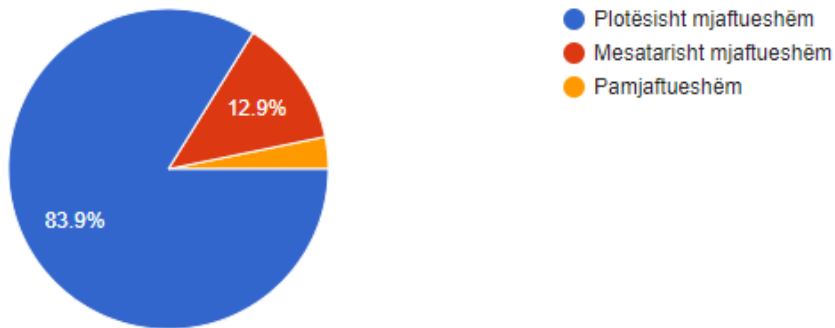
Comments:

- Some respondents highlighted difficulties in understanding the required standards and deadlines.
- Customized guidelines for each application category are requested to improve clarity.

1.4 How would you rate the support provided by KAA staff in preparing your institution's re/accreditation application?

Results:

- 83.9% rated the support as fully sufficient.
- 12.9% considered it moderately sufficient.
- 3.2% found it insufficient.



Comments:

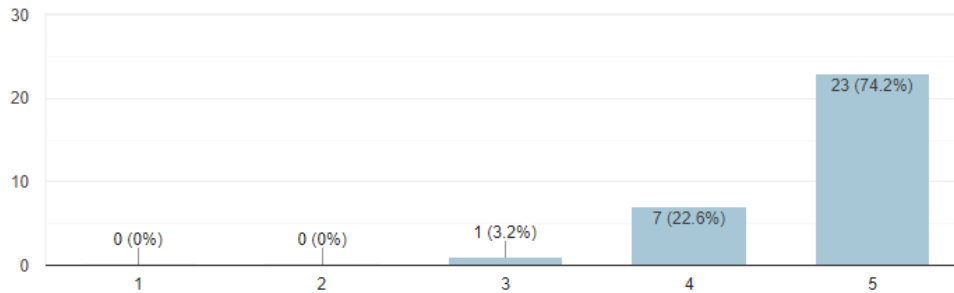
- The support from the staff is positively evaluated.
- In some cases, communication is indirect (e.g., through quality assurance coordinators rather than directly with professors), which can create additional steps in the process.

2. Efficiency of the Accreditation Procedure

2.1 How satisfied are you with the communication between your institution and KAA representatives before the on-site visit?

Results:

- 74.3% are very satisfied.
- 22.6% are satisfied.
- 3.2% are neutral.
- 0% are dissatisfied.
- 0% are very dissatisfied.



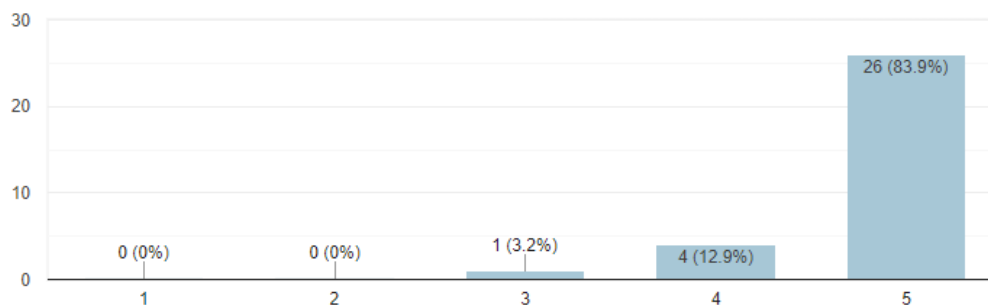
Comments:

- Communication is evaluated as clear and accurate.

2.2 How satisfied are you with the communication between your institution and KAA representatives during the on-site visit?

Results:

- 83.9% are very satisfied.
- 12.9% are satisfied.
- 3.2% are neutral.



Comments:

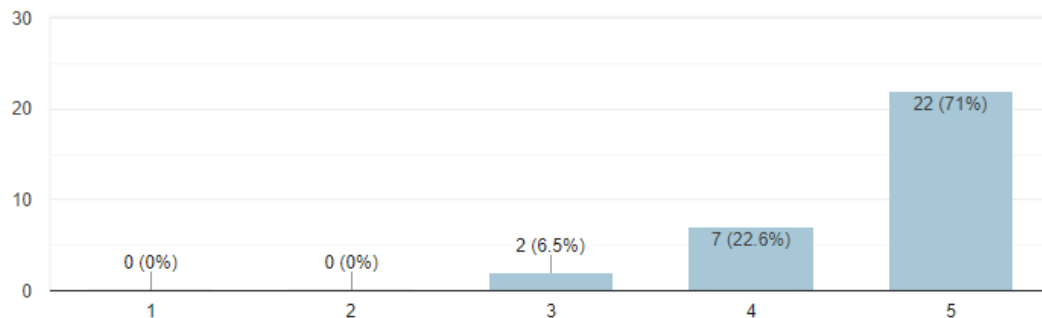
- Communication is regarded as professional and effective.



2.3 How satisfied are you with the communication between your institution and KAA representatives after the on-site visit?

Results:

- 71% are very satisfied.
- 22.6% are satisfied.
- 6.5% are neutral.
- 0% are dissatisfied.
- 0% are very dissatisfied.



Comments:

- Communication is assessed as professional and effective.

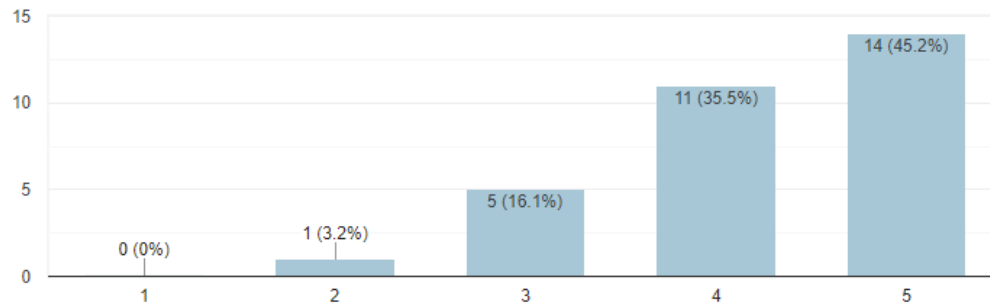
2.4 How do you evaluate the composition of the accreditation expert teams?

Results:

- 45.2% are very satisfied.
- 35.5% are satisfied.
- 16.1% are neutral.
- 3.2% are dissatisfied.



- 0% are very dissatisfied.



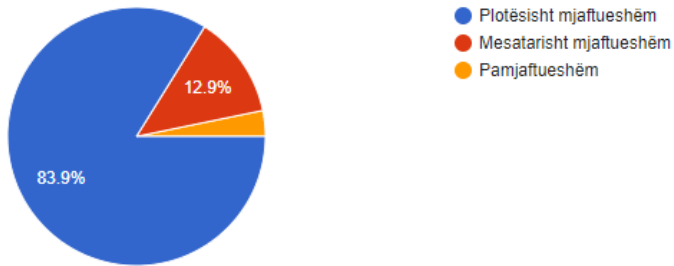
Comments:

- International experts are regarded as highly qualified, though some respondents noted a lack of understanding of the local context.
- Emphasis is placed on ensuring objectivity in evaluations and adherence to consistent standards.

2.5 Were you sufficiently informed by KAA staff about your responsibilities before the on-site visit?

Results:

- 83.9%: Fully sufficient
- 12.9%: Moderately sufficient
- 3.2%: Insufficient



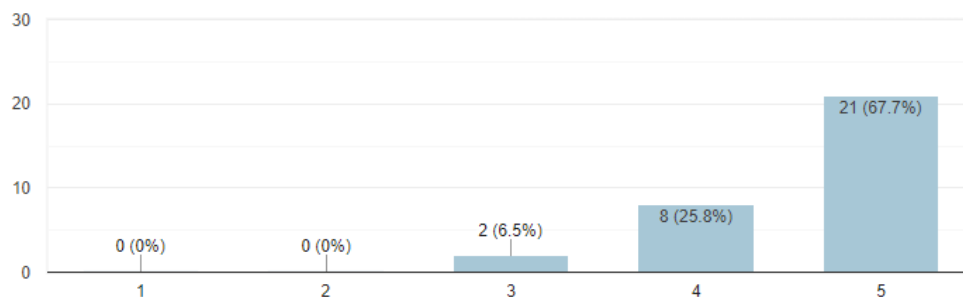
Comments:

No specific comments or recommendations were provided, as the majority of respondents were fully satisfied and considered the information adequate.

2.6 How satisfied are you with the organization of the on-site visit by KAA representatives?

Results:

- 67.7%: Very satisfied
- 25.8%: Satisfied
- 6.5%: Neutral
- 0%: Dissatisfied
- 0%: Very dissatisfied





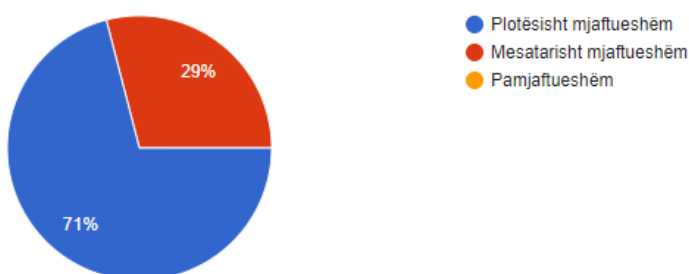
Comments:

Given that the majority of respondents are very satisfied, current practices are deemed effective.

2.7 Did you have enough time to answer all the questions and address all important topics during the on-site visit?

Results:

- 71%: Fully sufficient
- 29%: Moderately sufficient
- 0%: Insufficient



Comments:

- There were instances where experts did not wait for responses to questions due to the limited time allocated for the meeting.
- Regarding completion requests, deadlines should be set according to the type of request and ensure that HEIs are not burdened with tasks on weekends or holidays.
- In the future, it would be beneficial for all parties if experts prepared a preliminary report so that details and ambiguities could be discussed during the meeting.

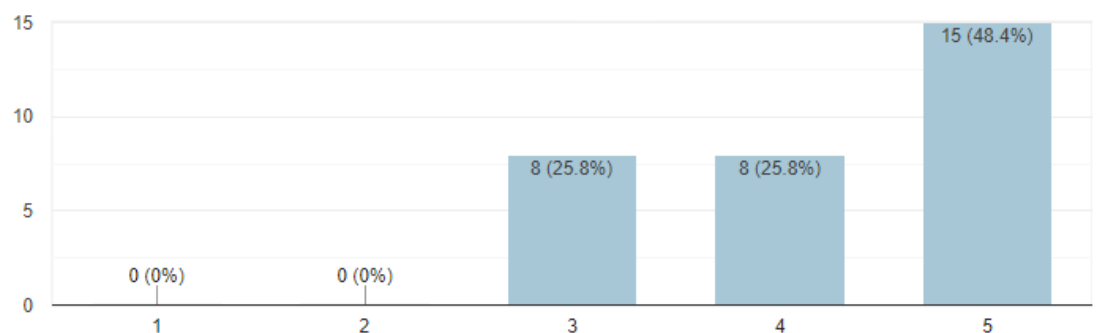


3. Clarity and Relevance of KAA's Accreditation Manual

3.1 How satisfied are you with the content of the KAA Accreditation Manual?

Results:

- 48.4%: Very satisfied
- 25.8%: Satisfied
- 25.8%: Neutral
- 0%: Dissatisfied
- 0%: Very dissatisfied



Comments:

- It is recommended to include information about "Joint" and "Double Degree" programs.

3.2 How satisfied are you with the standards outlined in the KAA Accreditation Manual?

Results:

- 41.9%: Very satisfied
- 38.7%: Satisfied
- 19.4%: Neutral



- 0%: Dissatisfied
- 0%: Very dissatisfied

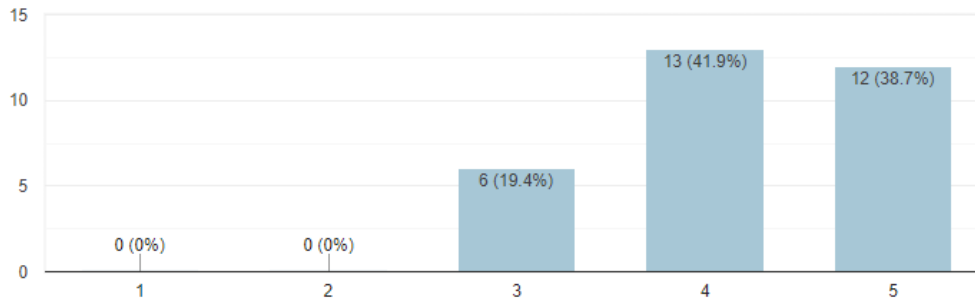
Comments:

- Participants claim that the new standards are much clearer compared to the previous ones.
- It is suggested to conduct a SWOT analysis for all standards collectively, rather than for each standard separately.
- Some performance indicators are repeated across different areas in the manual's standards.
- There is a need for clearer distinctions between:
 - Programs in the accreditation and re-accreditation process.
 - Institutional accreditation and re-accreditation.
 - Institutions focused on teaching versus those focused on research.
 - Professional versus non-professional programs.
- The process should reflect the current state of education after the changes caused by the pandemic.

3.3 How satisfied are you with the performance indicators outlined in the KAA Accreditation Manual?

Results:

- 38.7%: Very satisfied
- 41.9%: Satisfied
- 19.4%: Neutral
- 0%: Dissatisfied
- 0%: Very dissatisfied



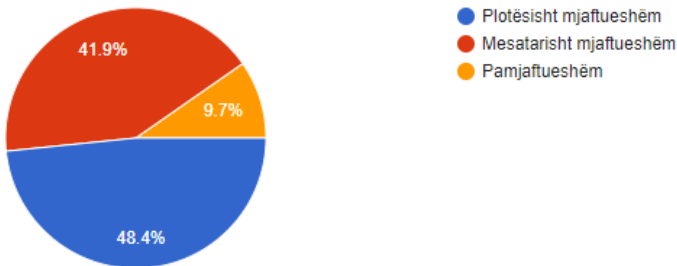
Comments:

- Users have expressed high satisfaction with the indicators, noting that they are detailed enough to assess quality.
- One specific comment mentioned that the evaluation based on standards should be approached cumulatively, with some exceptions for mandatory standards.
- No suggestions for major changes to the current structure were provided.

3.4 Have sufficient training, information, or explanations been provided by the KAA office regarding the KAA Accreditation Manual?

Results:

- 48.4%: Fully sufficient
- 41.9%: Moderately sufficient
- 9.7%: Insufficient



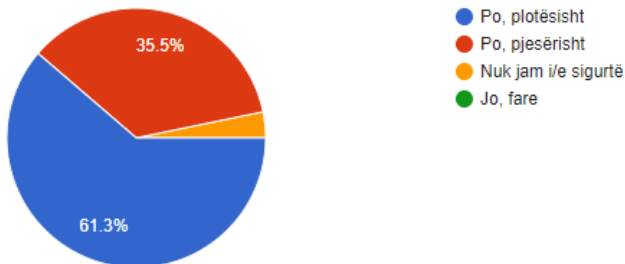
Comments:

- The majority of respondents expressed satisfaction or moderate satisfaction, highlighting the organization of ongoing training sessions.
- Some suggested the need for longer and more content-rich training sessions to cover changes in the new standards.
- The importance of organizing preliminary meetings to familiarize with the changes was emphasized.

3.5 Does the KAA Manual adequately address the internal quality assurance processes at your institution?

Results:

- 61.3%: Yes, fully
- 35.5%: Yes, partially
- 3.2%: Not sure
- 0%: No, not at all



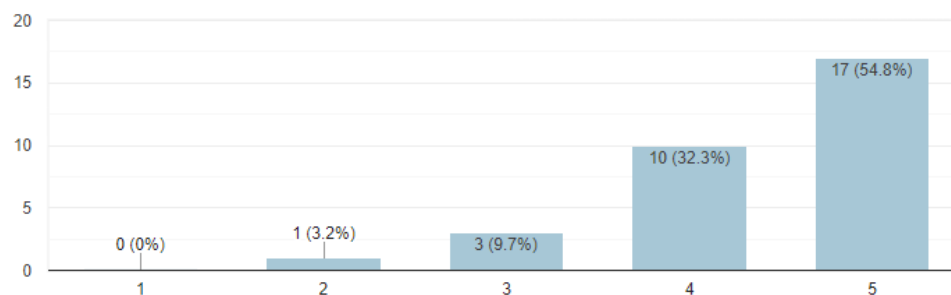
Comments:

- The majority of participants expressed positive feedback, appreciating the manual's approach to internal quality.
- No direct suggestions for improvements were provided.

3.6 How helpful has the template for preparing the self-assessment report been?

Results:

- 54.8%: Very satisfied
- 32.3%: Satisfied
- 9.7%: Neutral
- 3.2%: Not very helpful
- 0%: Not helpful at all





Comments:

- Most users rated the template highly. However, some suggested that the standards and indicators should be more integrated into the template to avoid unnecessary work.
- One comment suggested that the process of drafting the report according to the current template could be made more practical.

4. Contribution of the Accreditation Process to Quality Development

4.1. Please describe some elements that contribute to ensuring quality in your higher education institution.

In response to the above question, participants summarized the following proposals:

1. The Accreditation and Evaluation Process:

- It has positively impacted all aspects of institutional development, mobilizing stakeholders towards the enhancement and development of services focused on quality.
- It has improved institutional operations through the establishment of clear standards for academic planning, administration, and management.
- It ensures alignment with international standards and enhances the competitiveness of programs.

2. Documentation and Awareness of Quality:

- Accreditation has contributed to the completion and accuracy of institutional documentation.
- Awareness of ownership of the quality development process has increased among all stakeholders within the university.



- It has helped cultivate an internal culture of quality and transparency.

3. Stakeholder Participation:

- It has empowered the involvement and active role of students in decision-making and evaluation processes.
- The importance of enhancing collaboration with partners and the labor market has been emphasized.

4. Evaluation Instruments:

- Tools such as student assessments, staff feedback, and infrastructure evaluation have been used for continuous improvement.
- Peer evaluation and the establishment of personal tutors for students have complemented the quality assurance process.

5. Innovation and Scientific Research:

- Research activities and publications on international platforms such as Web of Science and Scopus have been encouraged.
- The importance of continuous improvement in learning outcomes and their alignment with labor market demands has been emphasized.

6. Academic Staff Training:

- Training for academic and administrative staff has been considered essential for meeting standards and enhancing skills.

7. Infrastructure and Technology:



- Improvement of classrooms, laboratories, and technological resources has been valued as an important factor for ensuring quality.
- The use of technology in teaching and administration has increased efficiency and compliance with standards.

8. Role of the Accreditation Agency:

- Trainings organized by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency have contributed to improving staff competencies and developing quality systems.
- Continuous monitoring and support from the agency have helped in meeting standards.

9. Review and Improvement of Programs:

- Programs are regularly reviewed taking into account recommendations from students, staff, and industry partners.
- Improvement of curricula and academic content has been prioritized to align with national and international requirements.

10. Ensuring Teaching Quality:

- Mechanisms for evaluating teaching staff, administrative staff, and managers by students have been developed.
- The implementation of syllabi and measurement of teaching performance are essential for improving outcomes.



4.2. Describe some weaknesses of the accreditation procedure?

In response to the above question, users summarized the following suggestions:

1. **Short Accreditation Periods:** Often, programs are accredited for short periods, such as 3 years, which may be insufficient to meet infrastructure standards or to gather complete data on graduate outcomes.
2. **Administrative Burden:** Institutions face significant demands in preparing self-evaluation reports (SER), translating and reviewing documents in different languages, adding both costs and time to the process.
3. **Support for Evaluation:** External experts sometimes interpret standards in different ways, creating uncertainty and difficulties for institutions in reflecting on the evaluation process.
4. **High Costs:** The accreditation process is often expensive, especially for smaller institutions with limited resources.
5. **Stress on Staff:** Preparations for accreditation can affect the motivation and focus of academic and administrative staff, diverting them from their teaching and research responsibilities.
6. **Lack of Continuous Monitoring:** The accreditation process often focuses on the application period, neglecting continuous monitoring to improve quality throughout the accreditation period.
7. **Inability to Address Infrastructure Challenges on Time:** For academic units in large public institutions, such as the University of Pristina, meeting infrastructure standards within short timeframes is challenging.
8. **Tight Deadlines for Document Submission:** The limited time between the formal approval of the application and the submission of the self-evaluation reports can be problematic for institutions.



5. Summary of the Report

1. Information The first category, Information, aimed to assess the level of awareness and clarity among higher education institution (HEI) representatives regarding the accreditation processes.

Key Results:

- **Institutional Communication:** Most respondents reported that the Accreditation Agency (AKA) ensured continuous communication with HEIs through official announcements and the website. However, some representatives suggested the need for more frequent clarifications and detailed guidance for each step of the process.
- **Data Updates:** The majority of respondents positively assessed the regular updates of information on the AKA website, though some HEIs highlighted delays in the distribution of specific documents.
- **Technical Assistance:** Representatives positively evaluated the AKA staff's immediate responses to technical or procedural inquiries.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen clarity in announcements and guidelines for all phases of the accreditation process.
- Ensure immediate updates for any changes in documentation or criteria.
- Organize periodic training for HEI staff on application procedures and other technical aspects.

2. Efficiency of the Accreditation Process This category aimed to evaluate how efficient and practical the accreditation process is in terms of time, resources, and communication between the AKA and involved institutions.



Key Results:

- **Time for Document Preparation:** Many HEIs expressed concerns that the deadlines were often too tight, creating unnecessary pressure for preparing the required documentation.
- **Administrative Burden:** A significant number of respondents reported that the accreditation process demands considerable time and human resources, forcing academic and administrative staff to dedicate significant time to documentation at the expense of other activities.
- **Communication Efficiency:** Although HEI representatives appreciated AKA's effort to provide quick responses to their inquiries, some suggested improving coordination to avoid potential misunderstandings during the procedures.

Recommendations:

- Adapt deadlines for document preparation, allowing flexibility for HEIs with varying capacities.
- Facilitate administrative procedures by further automating and digitizing the process.
- Increase staff capacity to ensure better coordination with institutions.

3. Clarity and Suitability of the AKA Accreditation Manual This category focused on evaluating the clarity, content, and applicability of the AKA Accreditation Manual, which serves as the main guide for institutions.

Key Results:

- **Clarity of Content:** Most respondents evaluated the manual as detailed and well-structured, including the necessary standards and criteria for accreditation.



- **Suitability to Reality:** Some representatives noted that parts of the manual do not fully reflect the reality of smaller or private institutions, creating unique challenges for these categories.
- **Manual Updates:** HEI representatives emphasized the need for more frequent updates to the manual to reflect changes in international standards and local requirements.

Recommendations:

- During the review phase, adapt the manual to better address the needs of smaller and private institutions.
- Establish a regular process for updating the manual in line with new developments.
- Provide practical examples and illustrated guidelines for implementing accreditation criteria.

4. Contribution of the Accreditation Process to Quality Development This category addressed the direct impact of the accreditation process on improving quality within higher education institutions.

Key Results:

- **Quality Improvement:** Many HEIs reported that the accreditation processes helped raise their standards of teaching, scientific research, and institutional management.
- **Impact on Strategic Plans:** The accreditation process encouraged institutions to develop and implement more comprehensive long-term strategic plans.
- **Feedback from Experts:** Reports and recommendations from external experts greatly helped institutions identify weaknesses and formulate concrete improvement plans.



Recommendations:

- Strengthen the link between the accreditation process and the continuous improvement of quality.
- Organize regular forums to discuss accreditation results and share best practices among HEIs.
- Improve methods for tracking the implementation of recommendations from accreditation processes.

Key Recommendations Based on the research findings, the Accreditation Agency (AKA) can take the following actions to improve its procedures:

1. Create a platform for applying and tracking accreditation progress, along with real-time information updates.
2. Update the manual to include practical examples and simplified guidelines, reflecting challenges faced by HEIs.
3. Propose a SWOT analysis for all standards collectively, rather than individually for each standard.
4. Prepare a document on the Higher Education System in Kosovo for international experts.
5. Continuously offer training to HEI staff to better understand accreditation requirements and prepare the necessary documentation.
6. Review deadlines for document submission and meeting conditions, adjusting them to fit the capacities and sizes of institutions.
7. Further standardize the evaluation process by external experts to ensure consistency across all HEIs.
8. Extend the accreditation period, especially for programs that have performed well in previous evaluation cycles.



-
9. Strengthen the connection between accreditation and quality improvement through regular forums for sharing best practices and effectively tracking the implementation of recommendations.
 10. Propose the development of specific guidelines that distinguish between accreditation and re-accreditation, for institutions focused on teaching or research, as well as between professional and non-professional programs.