AAB College
FACULTY OF MASS COMMUNICATION
MEDIA PRODUCTION (BA) PROGRAM

ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

Zagreb, April 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

The term *media production* covers, by definition, pretty much everything that is being produced today and involves textual, visual, auditory experience, or all of it. Considering that today globally we speak of 6.4 billion people who have the potential to become global publishers, for free and in minutes since they all have smart phones; 8.3 billion mobile phone subscribers, the number which has exceeded five billion according to the UN Telecommunications Agency, and the fact that all these media consumers and amateur producers are hungry for the content, it is no wander that the media production profession is blooming. The reason is simple. Everybody, from media as we used to know it, mainstream, and all other media to big organizations in civil society sector, in the public sector, not to mention the corporate world, and going to a one-man show self-starter agency, everybody must produce content for consumers and customers. Media production is officially defined as the making of a motion picture, television show, video, commercial, Internet video, or other viewable programming provided to viewers via a movie theater or transmitted through broadcast radio wave, cable, satellite, wireless, or Internet. It means a single-medium or multimedia feature film, television show or series, video, commercial, photographic project, interactive computer or video game or other program intended for a national audience and fixed on film, videotape, computer disk, laserdisc or another delivery medium that can be viewed or reproduced and that is exhibited in theaters or by individual television stations or groups of stations, television networks or cable television stations or via other means or licensed for home viewing or use. It also means programs and broadcasts, radio programs and broadcasts, television or radio series, newscasts, documentaries, video productions, video discs, soundtracks, motion picture productions, and any other form of media production that has been, or may in the future be, conceived, developed, or invented, by any process, instrumentation or device now known or hereafter developed. As pointed out – pretty much everything.

So, it is probably no surprise that AAB college which has had a program on media production in the Faculty of Mass Communication as a study program Mass Communication – Journalism already active B.A. program, has decided to apply for accreditation in *Media Production* as a separate program, based on the market needs and forecasts of future needs in Kosovo media production field.

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This ET report is based on Self Evaluation Report (SER) by AAB College, the documentation provided to accompany the SER, the panel discussions held during the virtual site visit with the management, faculty, and stakeholders and the analysis of the document sent subsequently at the ET request. The SER is 42 pages long document, providing data and information requested in KAA report format.

AAB has a very dynamic web page that gives several details on events, achievements and information for students and stakeholders. ET was also given access to a nine minute YouTube video of premises in three locations. It gives a detailed view of what appears to be a very modern and well equipped HE institution covering various aspects of student life, from professional labs and advanced equipment to areas for studying, meetings, consultation, recreation, and social life. As another college in Prishtina, previously reviewed by this expert, the video shows a carefully designed and highly quipped HE institution and, presumably, a substantial investment into premises and equipment at a time. It must have been a huge investment and AAB College makes it clear in many aspects that it is a unique college in the Region. No doubt the AAB College has the capacity as the institution to host a *Media Production* program when it comes the equipment, so the focus of this ET report during the site visit was mainly on the institutional and faculty capacity to roll out a demanding media production program, particularly for its specific orientation on developing a number of various skills for the needs of the media production sector in Kosovo.

Sources of information for the Report:
- Self Evaluation Report
- AAB COLLEGE Video on Yutube
- CVs of academic staff for all three years
- Syllabi for all three years of the program

The additional document requested:
- A document on policy or related practice about addressing students with special needs
- A document about any of the pieces of training in the field of curriculum, teaching methodology, etc.(S 2.2)
- An example of a questionnaire for students addressing their satisfaction with academic staff and academic services
- A document illustrating a training that was organized with international experts based on internal quality assurance (S 2.8)
- A detailed job description of one academic staff in the media production program (3.1)

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- The evaluation questionnaire by the Dean and the corresponding self-evaluation by the academic staff member (3.8)
- An example of a report about a student`s performance in practical work

Additional documents received:
- Work plan 2021-2022 for the Center for Professional Development and Training (CPDI)
- Report of the Quality Assurance Office drafted based on student questionnaires for the evaluation of the administration for the summer semester of 2019
- Sample of a student assessment of the academic staff
- Transaction proof for QA training by a foreign expert (name should have been made unreadable!)
- Sample of the contract with academic staff
- Example of the Dean`s evaluation of the academic staff
- Forms for the evaluation of student internship

(The absence of a document on policy or related practice about addressing students with special needs was elaborated in the cover letter. Also, to the information on training provided was added)

Criteria used for program evaluation:

1. *The core principles of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area:*
2. *Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance;*
3. *Quality assurance responds to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programs and students;*
4. *Quality assurance supports the development of a quality culture.*
5. *Quality assurance considers the needs and expectations of students, all other stakeholders, and society.*

The following principles were used in the program evaluation:

- o *Public accountability: Higher education institutions need to demonstrate the quality of the education to all stakeholders and public at large, through the following:*
  - ▪ *achieving quality levels that respond to the expectations of students and employers;*
  - ▪ *underlining higher education as a public good;*

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- communicating consistent, clear and coherent information to the public at large about the real results obtained and the intentions of improvement.
  o *European reference:* the higher education system and institutions in Kosovo belong to the European Higher Education Area and ensure quality levels in line with and competitive at the European and international level. For this purpose, both the recognized accreditation providers, as well as higher education institutions commit to benchmark their institutional processes against comparable institutions at international level;
  o *Institutional responsibility:* the responsibility for and the management of quality lie with each higher education provider, in accordance to institutional autonomy;
  o *Improving quality:* quality is not an end in itself. Continuous improvement and institutional management of quality is the primary objective of the external evaluations;
  o *Fitness for purpose:* quality assurance process should be defined and designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them;
  o *Institutional diversity:* diversity of institutions, their mission, and goals is respected and encouraged by external quality assurance;
  o *Transparency:* a key concept helping to build mutual trust and better recognition of qualifications, programs, and other provisions. At the systemic level, transparency does not only increase the trust in the quality assurance structures operations but also in the education itself. Institutionally, transparency encourages engagement of the entire academic community and the development a of quality culture.
  o *Focus on results:* learning outcomes and performance in research lie at the core of quality assurance. External quality assurance implies that higher education institutions demonstrate their results and performance in learning and in research as well as their correspondence with the actual reality of the institution, including verification of student activity in relation to the stated standards.
  o *Stakeholder engagement:* internal stakeholders should develop and implement quality assurance policies through appropriate structures and processes while involving external stakeholders.
  o *Quality enhancement:* continuous improvement of quality and institutional management is the primary objective of the external

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evaluation. Every self-evaluation document must present the particularities of quality culture across the higher education institution and ensure the continuous performance improvement

1.2. Site visit schedule

Program Re-accreditation Procedure at AAB College	
Program:	**Mass Communication and Journalism MA (Reaccreditation)** **Media production, Bachelor professional (Accreditation)**
Online site visit on:	**April 8, 2022**
Expert Team:	• Dr. Damir Jugo • Christoph Back • Dr. Majda Tafra
Coordinators of the KAA:	1. Arianit Krasniqi, KAA Officer 2. Ilirjane Ademaj Ahmeti, KAA Officer

Site Visit Program

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:45	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programs are integrated	
09.50 – 10.35	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	
10:40 – 11:40	Meeting with the heads of the study program: *Mass Communication and Journalism MA* (Dr. Damir Jugo and Christoph Back)	1. Resul Sinani 2. Xhevahire Izmaku 3. Bujar Tafa
11:40 – 12:20	Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site)	
12:20 – 13:20	Meeting with the heads of the study program: *Media production, Bachelor professional* (Dr. Majda Tafra)	1. Kushtrim Koliqi 2. Zija Rexhepi 3. Ilir Tafa 4. Valon Jakupaj 5. Fatos Berisha

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13:25 – 14.05	Meeting with teaching staff	
14:15 – 14:55	Meeting with students	
15:00 – 15:40	Meeting with graduates	
15:45 – 16:25	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	
16:25 – 16:30	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
16:30 – 16:40	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation

This unit is in SER extensively developed to give a detailed overview on the institution, while some other parts are relatively shorter and less detailed in comparison. This being accreditation of an „old" but also „new" program probably accounts for that format. What is particularly stated in this overview is that here we are dealing with the largest non-public institution of higher education in the Republic of Kosovo and in the region. It is not precisely explained what the region (small letters) is, it might be assumed that the reference is to some neighboring countries like New Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, B&H, but that is not quite clear. AAB College which was established in 2002, initially with a unique program in Journalism and Mass Communication and continued further with the accreditation of study programs in the field of forensic sciences in cooperation with the Public University of Sarajevo, continued to expand as an institution of higher education by offering study programs in various fields. It currently consists of a total of 14 faculties with study programs at both BA and MA levels. The main campus is in Prishtina, and the two branches, also presented in the mentioned video are in Gjakova and Ferizaj, accredited by KAA and licensed by MEST. AAB is a college that has developed in various directions and is now offering very different

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programs. SER claims it makes it unique in the educational environment of Kosovo, probably particularly among private high education institutions. Reference is made to the fact that in the past couple of years, Webometrix has ranked AAB College among the best institutions of Higher Education in the region. Also, over 97% of AAB's staff is employed full time and their qualification aligns strictly with the requirements of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA)[2]. It should guarantee the required stability rate of academic staff. The number of students has increased significantly in the past couple of years and there has been a full digitalization of the academic and administrative processes, all of which should guarantee an improvement in student services. The Faculty of Mass Communication (FKM) is an academic unit within AAB College. It offers study programs of bachelor level (BA) and master level (MA), respectively level 6 and level 7 according to the NQF. At the BA level, FKM offers a study program: 1). Mass Communication - Journalism, with a duration of 3 years and 180 ECTS, of level 6 NQF. At the MA level, FKM offers two study programs: 1) the two-year Mass Communication and Journalism program, with 120 ECTS, level 7 according to the NQF, and the two-year master program in Media Production with 120 ECTS, level 7 of NQF. The BA and MA programs in Mass Communication were accredited by the Accreditation Agency in 2009 and then re-accredited in 2010, 2013, and 2016 and are now in the process of re-accreditation.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives, and administration

The mission of FKM, as stated in SER is:

     To act as a successful and productive center of academic, research, and professional excellence in media and communications, to prepare professional journalists, media operators, and public communication experts, who contribute to the continuous improvement of a democratic society.

     Strategic objectives developed to support the implementation of the mission as stated in SER, are:

- To provide students with contemporary teaching for advanced and specific interdisciplinary theoretical knowledge related to the field of journalism, media production, and studies in media and communications.
- To provide qualified and specialized academic staff in the field of media and communications;
- To increase scientific knowledge in the field of media and communications

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through publications, conferences and scientific projects;
- To offer students the best conditions to follow professional practices in both AAB media and other media in Kosovo;
- To prepare students for employment and career advancement in local, regional and international media markets;
- To enable students to apply theoretical knowledge and practical skills independently in practicing the profession;
- Create opportunities and involve students to actively attend discussions and scientific conferences and creative products;
- Involve students in discussions on public issues through the organization of discussions with media and social actors;
- To enable student's participation in international activities and projects related to communications and to enable mobility;
- To engage students in local and community projects for the application of academic knowledge and practical skills as a contribution to society.

The main goal is defined in terms of the social responsibility of the high education institutions by preparing journalists and media operators with advanced knowledge and skills, and public communication experts with specific knowledge and skills, and thus when entering the labor market contributing to the social benefit of Kosovo society.

FKM offers programs for the education of the profiles of journalism, communication, and media production and justifies its implementation by a choice of referenced data like domination in the Kosovar media of their alumni as editors-in-chief, managers, and journalists; the almost hundred percent employment of former students; the involvement of journalism students in the last five years for two years in the row in the global Challenging Extremism campaign funded by the US Department of State and their participation in ERASMUS+ program and international conferences and national events and other related information on employability and social needs for relevant highly educated profiles.

Regarding the administration, the Dean's offices oversee staff recruitment, staff advancement, and the management of material and physical resources. Likewise, the transfer procedures of students, the supervision of practical work, the management of quality, the supervision of the teaching processes, and student activities similarly fall within the scope of the responsibilities addressed at the level of the faculty.

The organization consists of The Teaching Council; The Master Study Council; The Dean; The Quality Assurance Coordinator; The Coordinator for Student Activities and Practical Work. The duties and responsibilities of Faculty management are described in the Statute and made public for both staff and students via the AAB website and the internal electronic platform E-student/E-professor. This is an important illustration of the transparency and quality of the college management practices. While the FKM has certain autonomy regarding the

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academic area in the framework of AAB college policies and regulations, the financial budget of AAB College is not decentralized.

Regarding the Standard 1.2 which stipulates that relevant academic and professional advice best considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, according to SER it is in compliance with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

The total number of the academic staff consists of 22 professors, of which 16 are full time and 6 are part-time professors. There are 8 PhDs, 7 of which hold a Ph.D. degree in media communication and studies. The average of students per full-time staff for the study programs at FKM is 1:11. The staff recruitment procedures and academic advancement processes are conformed to institutional policies and regulations. The full-time staff covers more than 50% of the courses within the curriculum in all study programs, media production included. In this part of SER no specific ratio of fully employed in the *Media Production* program has been specified. The administration of AAB is organized at the college level with several administration officials who communicate with students and academic staff. In the administration structure on the college level there are also several Offices (Development Office, Central Administration Office, the Career Office, the Transfer Office, the Return Office). Administration services are digitalized.

SWOT analysis points out a number of strengths regarding mission, objectives and administration and states as a weakness: alleged confusion between strategic objectives and learning outcomes by a part of professional production staff. As discussed during the site visit this is a self-critical objection that is often found in SERs of programs undergoing accreditation/reaccreditation procedures as relating specific outcomes to specific strategic goals might cause confusion and often does. Teaching is a dynamic and creative process and strategies are often guidelines to be considered during the academic year, but over administration is a danger to creativity, particularly in a program that aims to offer skills and competencies in a creative ever-changing industry. That is why this remark, in the opinion of the ET, does not constitute a substantial weakness. The listed risks, however, all point to the circumstances not under the control of the college and need to be taken up separately in the partnership with various stakeholders.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No

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Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	X	
Standard 1.2. Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.	X	
Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.	X	
Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.	X	
Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	X	
Standard 1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *A separate policy on assisting students with special needs should be considered at the level of AAB college, not only for the program under consideration. While the physical difficulties are obviously addressed by internal very developed and sophisticated architectural solutions, there is a whole range of special needs, not necessarily physical, which need to be addressed, not only on the policy level, as a piece of paper, but also as a part of the teacher`s program of developing their capacities.*

2.2. Quality management

Quality management as an integral part of AAB strategy is given a prominent place in SER. It is obvious that the takeaway of the observers should be quality

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management as a developing and constant process integrated in the overall program and not only for the purpose of accreditation or any other external evaluation. It was clear during the site visit that the college management and faculty are very much focused on quality issues, that the quality management mechanism has been developed over years and implemented to involve all stakeholders, therefore, also staff who should participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity according to KAA standards. The relevance of all listed standards is elaborated in detail in the SER. What particularly impresses is an overall substantial organizational structure dealing with Quality not only at the college level but also at the faculty level.

According to SER and the discussion panel with the internal stakeholders, management and faculty, there is a readiness of teaching staff to be involved in the evaluation and quality assurance process which strengthens the legitimacy of the process and ensures limiting of potential resistance. What comes out of the SER and the discussion is that these processes, including planning for improvement, are integrated into regular planning processes, particularly since capacity-building training is delivered to build the internal capacities of the institution to comply with the standards.

The compliance of each of the standards is elaborated in the SER and many of these were discussed during the visit - some dilemmas, like, example, developing job descriptions, criteria for title acquirement, and relation to promotion were related; the details of the process of evaluation of teachers (in addition illustrated by the subsequent documents sent), were clarified.

Regular meetings are held with academic staff to discuss syllabi, learning outcomes, assessment forms, assessment results, and overall student performance. Several examples were given during the visit to illustrate various how quality assurance and improvement processes were integrated into various programs, both in the planning stage and in the delivery stages, are being supported by the resources within the AAB. An extensive list of various quality evaluation tools, from questionnaires and focus groups to regular evaluation meetings, performance discussions, and evaluation & monitoring reports are listed and elaborated in SER. The quality assurance office has a specific role to harmonize all these instruments, make the relevant results available to corresponding internal stakeholders, and, in addition, launch separate quality assurance projects to ensure the sustainability of

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the process. It is obviously a work in progress and activities are added frequently, as was, for example, training with international experts on internal quality assurance that was documented by subsequently sent documents.

All the advantages of this complex quality management structure and processes are mainly listed in the SWOT analysis. Weaknesses listed were Insufficient connections of the faculty with a wider international network in quality assurance issues, Increasing the involvement of students in quality assurance processes, and insufficient interest of students during the electronic evaluation of the academic staff and administration. While the first one is related to the circumstances not fully under the control of the AAB College, although it does deserve focusing on further improvement other two self-assessed weaknesses related to the low interest of students in the electronic evaluation of the academic staff and administration. In the discussion, it was illustrated by recent low participation in the teacher effectiveness survey (app. 15 percent). This could be related to certain fatigue or a lack of transparency regarding the impact of this evaluation on their status. Teachers usually complain about this low response rate, so AAB college is no exception in a practice; the remedy seems to be very honest and open verbal exchange with students before the instrument is implemented, and building up their trust does make a difference.

Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.	X	
Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	X	
Standard 2.4. Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.	X	
Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.	X	

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Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.	X	
Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.	X	
Standard 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.	X	
Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.	X	

Compliance level: **Fully compliant**

ET recommendations:

1. *Consider increasing the interest of students in questionnaires on teacher effectiveness by holding focus groups and structured meetings to discuss potential opportunities for improvements adding the digital evaluation as an instrument used in evaluation based on triangulated methodology.*

2. *Consider empowering students to take an active role in the creation of a non-corrupt democratic society by including civil society experts in program delivery and advocacy in the teaching process. Part of this collaboration could be the secondment of excellent students to community Civils society organizations in need of media products.*

2.3. Academic staff

According to SER, the employment procedures for the academic staff at the Faculty of Mass Communication follow the Law on Labor, the Statute, and the Administrative Instruction on Accreditation of HEIs, and other internal regulations. Employed academic staff, both full-time and part-time are provided with an employment contract. It also contains a job description which was analyzed as it was one of the documents provided. It covers academic work, scientific and research work, administrative work, and the duties of the academic staff

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in relation to students. In addition to the teaching engagements, academic staff is obliged to participate in the planning, preparation, and implementation of projects. They also organize guest lectures, student visits, and other relevant activities. The employment of the academic staff is done in compliance with the Law on Labor, the Statute of AAB College, and the Administrative Instruction on Accreditation of HEIs, so ongoing capacity building of teachers is included. SER states that the teaching load for one member of the academic staff in the FKM program is on average 4-8 teaching hours throughout the program. The teaching load for one member of the academic staff in the FKM program is on average 4-8 teaching hours. Not to overburden the teachers and thus compromise the quality, regular staff members can only be engaged in one other institution.

So as to the coverage of subjects, in the BA program in the FKM the regular staff covers 70% of the subjects within the curriculum which is confirmed by KAA through a verification process. As the *Media Production* program is a three-year study program with 180 ECTS it employs 21 professors, of which 15 are full-time, and the ratio between staff and students is approximately 1:10, which is very good. Most of them are experienced professionals with a master's degree, and, in addition, six doctors of communications are engaged in teaching despite the fact that legally in this program the requirement for teachers is only a Master's degree and five years of proven professional experience. Pieces of training mostly related to teaching methods, scientific research, and trainings regarding quality assurance and curriculum development are provided to academic staff, while young researchers and lecturers are encouraged to pursue their doctoral studies while keeping their teaching responsibilities at AAB College. SER provides an extensive list of pieces of training organized in recent years for the academic staff of the FKM which proves the various areas covered as stated. In addition to internal and external training, since 2021, AAB has the Center for Professional Advancement and Innovation (QAPI) which provides certified training and professional support services for academic and administrative staff not only at AAB but also at other higher education institutions in the country. The center offers courses in didactics of higher education, projects and methodology of scientific research and management of the higher education organizations. A detailed description of academic staff duties and responsibilities pertaining to the teaching process, research, and the engagement of staff with students and community is provided with the contractual agreement. In addition to teaching, academic staff has the duty to participate in the planning, preparation, and implementation of projects in the relevant field of expertise. They also engage in organizing various debates and other awareness-raising activities. Each faculty is obliged to hold

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consultations with students two hours a week (one hour per face-to-face and at least one hour electronically by blog or e-mail.

Students evaluate teacher effectiveness at the end of each semester. electronically and anonymously. The results are generated through a database from the Central Quality Assurance Office, which is then submitted to each staff member individually. The Quality Assurance Office prepares reports for the evaluations of the academic staff which contain areas for improvement by students and relevant recommendations. Additional assessment is made by the dean's office by questionnaire for staff based on six performance factors. The staff member completes the same questionnaire as a self-assessment of the same performance factors. As explained in the site visit, no peer evaluation is taking place and is not planned. Based on recommendations, activities are initiated for improvement, both the process and teacher performance. This part of SER ends with the tabular presentation of the data of academic staff at the FKM, *Media Production*. It shows titles, status at university and academic load. There is a slight discrepancy in this table not fully explained in SER, namely, higher workload of parttime teachers in comparison with full time, or full time very low workload (3 hours) which has been explained as regulated by other duties in the scope of teacher obligations and the limit of age of 65 for official retirement, after which the teachers take the role of a part time teacher. SER announces future individual development plans for teachers within the scope of the Center for Professional Advancement and Innovation, based on evaluation results.

The main weaknesses are, according to SWOT analysis, the lack of external funding for professional specialization and the lack of exchange of experience among professional staff, which, as explained during the site visit, refers to the exchange of experience within the region.

Standard	*Compliance*	
	YES	*NO*
Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.	X	

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Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.	X	
Standard 3.3. Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity	X	
Standard 3.4. At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.	X	
Standard 3.5. For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.	X	
Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	X	
Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.	X	
Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.	X	
Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.	X	
Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

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ET recommendations:

1. *Consider integrating crisis management into overall strategic and operational plans to mitigate potential risk and raise the preparedness of teachers to ensure work continuation in especially difficult circumstances (war-related conditions, , supply chain.*

2. *Consider introducing peer evaluation in a format that contributes to team coherence and helps teachers objectively assess their own performance. It also helps break the silos culture within the organization and contributes to the self-confidence of teachers.*

2.4. Educational process content

In the site visit, the discussion was very much focused on describing skills and competencies students receive in the program and the satisfaction of stakeholders with their capacities as they are entering a very competitive market, many of them actually working already and joining AAB to get the necessary systematic education for various jobs they are working on, or, very often, to be promoted and explore new possibilities. The students gain advanced practical skills and theoretical knowledge in the field of media production, offering modules in television production, camera, audio-video recording, directing, screenwriting, production, post-production, social media management, and brand creation. etc. In addition, students benefit from learning different audio-visual presentation techniques in different channels and broadcasting platforms for broadcasting, both in traditional media and in new media. They acquire general competencies and specific competencies (Basics of production, Practice in audio-video camera, editing in various products and broadcast channels).Students must receive at least 30 ECTS in the first year, to enable the start of the second-year courses. The outcomes specified in the SER concern knowledge, skills, and competencies which cover pretty much everything in the huge area od media production not underestimating the need to be able to implement and participate actively in the community.

According to SER, every course has clearly defined learning outcomes and conditions for the realization of teaching and training activities, as there is a lot of practical work and all this

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needs to be orchestrated in an overall complex activity system. The discussion with teachers all of who have, no doubt, not only necessary educational background but also an impressive work experience and social status related to this should guarantee a high level of professionalism in the teaching process. ET has some ideas from their own experience in teaching that in studies that are very much related to real-world like business, media et, students rarely appreciate teachers which are only professional teachers and have no business or media experience but prefer teachers who come from the real world and are still in touch with it.

Detailed syllabi are prepared for each course with learning outcomes and teaching units for each week and assessment forms. Thus being a very specific area of teaching, it is probably not very likely that all these exist and comes as a ready-made package to teachers as is the case in some HEI in other parts of the world (US, for example),. It is much more likely that teachers have to draft all these by themselves and that is probably requesting a lot of creativity and commitment, particularly, because there is a danger of over administrating at the expense of classroom creativity.

The study program is offered in Albanian language; therefore students are not required to undergo any entry exam in English Language , but, as stated in the site visit, and quite contrary to what us written as a weakness in the SWOT report, Kosovo young generations, students included, have a good knowledge of English and that is not considered a problem. A student-centered learning approach is implemented and student-professor collaboration is promoted. As stated in SER and confirmed in the site visit students are acquainted with the learning outcomes of each course on the first day of the semester. The syllabi are distributed to students through the E-service platform a week before the beginning of the semester so that students manage to read in advance the content of the module. FKM has a consultation system or weekly appointments and discussions with teachers in addition to the platform E-Student.

The study program on *Media Production* is focused on providing contemporary and practice-based teaching. Exercises and internships complement the lectures and are usually taught by the course professors as well as by professional assistants. Continuous student assessment is applied depending on the nature of the subjects (tests, assignments, seminars, presentations, interpretations or creation of a media product, chronicles, advertisements, documentaries, parts of scenarios, etc.). The weight of the final exam is usually 40% of the overall grade, in some cases in the form of the realization of a media product.

Students typically attend 5 (five) courses within one semester, the number of course credits varies from 5 to 7 ECTS and 1 ECTS is equal to 25 hours. Within a semester students undergo five exams. The courses and credits obtained at AAB College can be transferred to regional and international universities.

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Teaching's Office, in cooperation with the Dean of Faculty, analyses and evaluates students' assessments which may result in additional teaching hours, reducing the number of students in groups, providing additional preparation for exams, additional individual consultations, etc. The internship is managed by the Career Office. The main modules such as Production Basics, Screenplay and Directing Basics, Film Editing / TV / Animation, and Television Realization, have an equal or greater workload of practical exercises than theoretical load. Subjects such as Professional Practice in TV, TV Realization, Project-production, Editing and Animation in media, Camera - Practice, Marketing, Social Media, etc., have the biggest workload of professional practice. In other words, about 62 hours of the program are compulsory practical hours and theoretical courses include a smaller fund of hours, about 50 compulsory hours in the faculty. Internships are not counted here for the design of a media product by students, depending on the subjects, which are defined in syllabi. The internship is supervised by the professors and assistants and in the first place is realized in the media of AAB: TV-ATV, RadioATV, Theater "Faruk Begolli of AAB" (with about 500 seats; Cameral Theatre (with about 100 seats), AAB PR Office, AAB web design laboratories, FKM assembly laboratories and halls. In addition, FKM cooperates with the media and various institutions and organizations like the Association of Journalists of Kosovo (AGK), ; with the main TVs in Kosovo such as: RTK, RTV21, ATV, KlanKosova, several other online media and in municipal information offices, civil society sector ad free lancers.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 4.1. The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.	X	
Standard 4.2. The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.	X	

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Standard 4.3. The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.	X	
Standard 4.4. The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.	X	
Standard 4.5. If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.	n.a.	
Standard 4.6. The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.	X	
Standard 4.7. Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.	X	
Standard 4.8. Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.	X	
Standard 4.9. Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.	X	
Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.	X	

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Standard 4.11. If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organizations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.	X	
Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organizations/practical training units.	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Consider discussing with teachers possible adjusting practical courses administration not to overload them at the expense of creativity and related practical skills.*

2. *Consider discussing with teachers, even those with a lot of practical experiences possibilities for further development in the teaching and research field, like supporting them to get Ph.D. degrees in universities in Albania or EU. When specifically asked they said they would be willing to continue development and acquiring doctoral degrees.*

2.5. Students

This being the accreditation of a program considered new as a separate program but which has already existed previously within another program, the site visit did not include any contact with students. SER has very precisely made reference to all requested standards. The admission procedure is described as stipulated in Standard 5.1. This also involved Open days and roadshows in high schools. Regarding Standard 5.2 required documentation is clearly defined and lately, online applications enabled it. Once the students are officially registered, they get an e-mail account, which serves them for internal, formal correspondence and gives them access to the e-service platform, data also being uploaded on the e-platform electronic platform SMIAL at the level of MEST. The numbers of students in a group are in line with an internal document that stipulates high numbers, (80 for lectures and 40 for exercises) but it boils down to 20 students in a group when practical exercises are performed. The evaluative measure described in the part of the report on quality apply here in relation to standard 5.4 about necessary feedback to students, also covered by various

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formats of formative evaluation and formal and informal communication on assessment results and areas for improvement. The scheduling of exams is centralized but request for extension of deadlines are accommodated, Statistical reports on student performance are generated each semester and distributed according to the internal performance evaluation system practiced., including the quality assurance office.

Special attention is paid to the prevention of plagiarism through acquiring „turnitin" and monitoring the implementation of the Code of Ethics. Concerning student papers, AAB has put in place rigorous policies to ensure that students supply original work and avoid plagiarism. Recently, a cooperation agreement with "Turnitin" has been agreed and the software to detect plagiarism and duplicate content in students' work has been purchased. The academic staff has held two pieces of training by Turnitin in which case they have been trained in the use of the software. Regarding the regulations that address the issue of plagiarism, FKM applies the Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethics in Scientific Research which stipulate that the student can be reported to the Ethics Committee for cases of plagiarism. Students' rights and violations of policies and rules are clearly explained to students. The transfer is also regulated at the level of FKM or at the level of MEST and subject to internal policies and regulations implemented. Students are given regular consultations with teachers as previously described in the section on Quality. SWOT analysis specifies low competencies in English, which were denied by teachers during the site visit. Also, Employment during studies and drop out as well as emigration of students without obtaining the formal qualification is listed as a problem that might be related to the fact that many of the students of the Media Production program are actually employed and study and work at the same time.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at an institutional level that the study program respects when organizing students'recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.	X	

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Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high schoolgraduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	X	
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.	X	
Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	X	
Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	X	
Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.	X	
Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.	X	
Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.	X	
Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.	X	
Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.	X	
Standard 5.11. Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

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1. *Consider preventing drop out by some form of cooperation /contract with the current employers of employed students to have students be obliged to graduate by the employer.*

2. *Consider extending assistance (financial/logistical) to students through solidarity schemes, and corporate or public sector donations.*

2.6. Research

Since AAB is a college and not a university, it is not a research-intensive institution by definition, but it sees itself as a teaching institution with well-developed taught degrees, as stated in SER., FMK has made significant progress since the am to advance the scientific dimension In the field of scientific research. Therefore, although mainly a teaching institution, part of the vision is to become a scientific center as well. In line with the vision, a new Regulation for Scientific Research has been formulated, and a new research grant adopted. The publication of scientific research in journals indexed through the recognized databases of Web of Science (Clarivate) and Scopus is promoted and an institutional fund for science and research put in place which grants the ten best multidisciplinary scientific research projects a year that include the participation of at least two MA-level students and diploma theses. Applied research is used to strengthen study programs by keeping their curricula up to date. Integrated teaching, research, and staff development policy are implemented currently by making it obligatory for staff to spend a greater proportion of their time conducting research. At an individual level, scientific research is contractually obligated to the regular staff members and links to the academic advancement as the employment contracts stipulate the obligation of academic staff ted to produce at least one scientific paper within a year and to engage in other scientific projects. This is also liaised to the promotion in academic titles by publishing in journals indexed on SCOPUS or WEB OF SCIENCE platforms. The creation and dissemination of knowledge in order to improve social well-being and development are stimulated. Through Thematic research work of the faculty concluded with the annual scientific conferences with international partners; with Research work developed by Research Centers and Faculties, in collaboration with other partners, and the Individual research work of the academic staff.

Two additional scientific resources are The International Journal *Thesis* with ISSN number obtained in Croatia which can be accessed online. AAB also has its own publishing house which is engaged in the publication of quality research and textbooks. International conferences are also mentioned in the SER as an illustration of commitment to research and internal knowledge exchange. SER particularly points out the work on research with students that is presented in these conferences.

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There is a problem of a national scope that is related to the quantity and quality of research, namely, the lack of research produced by faculty, which also relates to the quality of PhDs being produced in Kosovo.

SWOT mentions as a weakness the status of the institution as a college which presents challenges for networking and obtaining research projects and limited opportunities to pursue postdoctoral specializations. Indeed there was a similar discussion with the faculty during the site visit, but, some faculty, nevertheless expressed an interest to pursue an academic career. This makes sense, particularly for senior academic staff in AAB Media production program who have rich practical experience and are fully on board in following the latest changes in this dynamic profession. As already mentioned in this report, there is not better combination form a college level promoted research than to invest into the development of mid career staff in pursuing academic career as a second career.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	**No**
Standard 6.1. The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.	X	
Standard 6.2. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.	X	
Standard 6.3. Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.	X	
Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.	X	
Standard 6.5. The academic and research staff publish their work in specialty magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.	X	

Standard 6.6. Research is validated through scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.	X	
Standard 6.7. Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.	X	
Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.	X	
Standard 6.8. Academic staff is encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.	X	
Standard 6.9. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures are set out for the commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	X	
Standard 6.10. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

Compliance level: Fully compliant/Substantially compliant/Partially compliant/Non-compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *Consider partnering with other HE institutions to lobby for regulatory means to deal with the problem of regulation related to research, academic staff contracts etc. At level of colleges, if, in fact, there is no high awareness of the value of research based on applied sciences.*
2. *Consider initiating donor awareness-raising on the value of research on current and future needs of graduates and post-graduates for the overall economic and social development of the nation.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

The already mentioned video that was shared with the ET illustrates the accuracy of the claim in SER that AAB College possesses the most modern infrastructure and offers the best study conditions for students. FKM infrastructure meets, and even exceeds, to this ET known European standards for the organization of the academic teaching process and offers unique opportunities in Kosovo and beyond for practical work for students, as well as for scientific work for staff. Particularly relevant for the program under evaluation is the ATV television on the campus with a large space and the most modern media technology. According to SER it has become one of the two most-watched media in the country in just one year of its broadcasting. There is also a radio, editing rooms, directing rooms, several studios, magazines, portals, PR sector, marketing, design, animation, publishing sector, etc., covering the needs of studying for production within the mass communication industry.

AAB College operates on three campuses in Kosovo: the main campus in Prishtina and in the campus of Ferizaj and the campus of Gjakova, covering a total space of more than 60.000m2. The Faculty of Mass Communication operates only in the Prishtina campus and two administrative staff provide administrative services for both the students and academic staff, and other, previously mentioned numerous offices and administrative staff within the college support the teaching process, academic staff, and students. Communication and services are fully digitalized via an electronic platform where students can communicate directly with teachers, academic staff, and high management, and have access to all materials needed for studying. In addition, they have access to the college's internal regulations, grades, and continuous assessments and can generate transcripts of records, upload assignments, and engage in online debates and consultations with the professor. Academic staff also have full access.

Financial resources are provided from various sources apart from tuition fees, which include payments for commercial services, national budget contributions, private donations and grants etc. SER particularly stresses the fact that AAB College is the largest non-public higher education institution in the country and that it generates sufficient revenue through the above sources and ensures the financial sustainability of the study program as stipulated in Standard 7 and that there are never any delays in the payment of personal income for the pedagogical, administrative and technical staff, or in the payment of other obligations for goods and services, for that matter. Another proof of the financial viability of AAB College was also ascertained in the assessment of the independent auditor, audit company from Croatia – BDO, and KCFR

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(Kosovo Financial Reporting Council). It is also important to state that the premises of are an investment and property of the founders, there is no obligation towards third parties, all are owned by AAB and none rented. The premises are sufficient for the needs of students of the BA program in Media Production and the campus onh Prishtina has large space and added recently about 10,000m2 additional spaces available to the teaching process of the FKM which also provides students and all users with conditions for an independent study on the Library premises. The number of seats in reading rooms and the number of seats in group work rooms corresponds to 10% of the total number of students for the communications programs while the teaching materials cover at least half of materials foreseen within the curriculum. Prepaid access to J-STOR is enabling full access to academic journals and electronic resources. Relevant structure for students with special needs is also present.

The employment of students during their studies listed in SWOT as a weakness and rapid development of technologies and the need to adapt to this development listed as risk was discussed during the site visit and do not seem to be the problem, rather a not well-chosen expression of concern with the student engagement. When it comes to media production the epmp, employment of students may interfere with student obligations but if at one point in time, which is to be expected, the already employed graduate and new student generations of non-employed students join the program, different arrangements will be made in addition to existing for their practical knowledge enhancement. So as to rapid development of technologies that are already recognized as an opportunity to becoming a leading institution in digital learning.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources, and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.	X	
Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.	X	

Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years: a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process; b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence; d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.	X	
Standard 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the specialty disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.	X	

		X
Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign specialty literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or specialty courses of recognized publishers, from the last 10 years; d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for; e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.		
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *To consider extended cross-sector and cross-national partnering in media production practical projects of students and academic staff within the region and beyond.*

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

This expert wishes to give credit to AAB faculty and staff for preparing a detailed Self Evaluation Report which clearly indicated compliance with all standards requested by KAA and makes it easy to follow the standards and compliance. This ET is by now understanding more about the vibrant scene of high education in Kosovo, particularly in the area of communication which makes it a rather unique case in this part of Europe. Kosovo is a young nation with a long turbulent history and the speed of the development of the education system,

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particularly high education is impressive. AAB College, as the biggest private institution of that kind in Kosovo obviously has e great role to play in this development based also on digital learning and speedy technological innovations in media productions. So, the staff is to be congratulated for their commitment to facing the challenges of high education in Kosovo which is obviously expanding in range and depth as the nation recovers and develops.

This is not a new project, but in a way, it also is, as this will now be stand-alone academic program that also carries additional responsibilities. The system of AAB college at the disposal of the new program is a great support and guarantee of the success, taking into consideration, at the same time, the need for some caution in making big steps and forecasting needs in the near and more distant future. Communication science has gone a long way and it is still, in a way, a young science. It is brave and based on the needs to take the *Media Production* as a sperate program, and a challenge and an innovative step, particularly in the context of this highly competitive market, which is why smaller steps in a number of new students are recommended.

Standard	Compliance Level
Mission, objectives and administration	Fully compliant
Quality management	Fully compliant
Academic Staff	Fully compliant
Educational Process Content	Fully compliant
Students	Fully compliant
Research	Fully compliant
Infrastructure and resources	Fully Compliant
Overall Compliance	**Fully compliant**

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program Media Production offered by AAB College is *Fully compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation*

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manual and, therefore, recommends *to accredit* the study program for a duration of *3 years* with a number of 50 students to be enrolled in the first year or the program.

Expert Team

Chair

(Signature)	**Majda Tafra-Vlahović**	**20 May 2022**
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

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