AAB COLLAGE
BRANCH IN GJAKOVA

Bachelor (BA) of Programming

PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

March 20th, 2023 Eger, Warsaw

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: March 8ᵗʰ, 2023

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Prof. Dr. Miklós Hoffmann*
- *Damian Michalik, Msc*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Ilirjana Ademaj Agmeti, SO for Evaluation and Monitoring*
- *Arianit Krasniqi, SO for Evaluation and Monitoring*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Faculty of Computer Sciences Programming – BA. Self Evaluation Report 202*
- *Syllabuses*
- *CVs*
- *Kosovo Accreditation Agency Accreditation Manual 2022*
- *The Manual for External Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions, KAA 2021*
- *Interviews with stakeholders (site visit)*
- *AAB Collage Statues*
- *AAB College Strategic Plan*
- *AAB College website*

Additional documentation:

- *Expert reports of Prishtina and Prizren programming programmes*
- *Templates and generic results of recent QA questionnaires*
- *Development plan on the Gjakova branch*
- *Presented learning outcomes mapped on NQF*

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Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of Kosovo Accreditation Agency, 2022*

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1.2. Site visit schedule

Site Visit Programme

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:30 – 10:20	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Shemsedin Vehapi, Vice Rector Jusuf Qarkaxhija, Dean of the Faculty Rifat Haxhija, Director of the campus
10.25 – 11.05	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Furtuna Mehmeti, Head of the QAO Ersan Hamdiu, QA Coordinator Albulena Ramadani, Head of the Administration
11:15 – 12:15	Meeting with the heads of the study programme	Ridvan Bunjaku Elissa Mollakuqe Vlora Rexhaj Edona Krasniqi Arbër Parduzi
12:15 – 13.15	Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site)	
13:15 – 13:45	Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure	
13:45 – 14:35	Meeting with teaching staff	Lauresha Ramadani Samir Jakupi Florijeta Hulaj Shkëlqim Miftari Leron Berisha
14:40 – 15:25	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Fatos Stavileci – Ati Kos Mentor Hoxhaj – Cybersecurity and Privacy

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		Durim Këpuska –ROMB Florin Buza-FourByte Labinot Rudi - Telkos
15:25 – 15:35	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
15:35 – 15:45	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	Shemsedin Vehapi, Vice Rector Jusuf Qarkaxhija, Dean of the Faculty Rifat Haxhija, Director of the campus

1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

The Faculty of Computer Science (FCS) is an organisational unit of ABB Collage (AAB) which is a private higher education institute. FCS has already delivered programming study programmes at Pristina and Prizren branches, and as a next step implements this curriculum, which is the objective of this evaluation report, at the Gjakova branch. The study programme awards a professional bachelor (three-year studies) degree directed on acquiring practical skills by students.

FCS is an inter branch entity, governed by the Dean and supported by the Vice-Dean and administration. From the point of this study programme, the computer science departments are responsible for organising the whole academic process. Improvement of the study programme involves all stakeholders, the Industrial Board (members are industry representatives) and it is supervised and improved by the Central Quality Assurance Office.

According to the information obtained during the site visit, the desire of study programme creators is to fulfil all 125 available spots at Gjakova branch. The curriculum among others aims to expand up-to-date knowledge about theoretical and practical programming.

The programme aims to the achievement of required standards of studies in accordance with the model of studies based on the Bologna Treaty, with the structure of 6 semesters. It consists of courses and internships which are focused on practical skills demanded by the IT industry.

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2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

Before this initial review of programming implementation in the Gjakova branch of AAB College, this study programme was successfully introduced in Prizren and Prishtina branches. Therefore, same as in the previous cases, the concept of the curriculum on Bachelor level is well aligned to the institution mission which states that the college organises diversified and qualitative education with students at the centre. Undoubtedly delivering the modern study programme of programming in Gjakova is very helpful for a lot of young people who do not want to leave their hometown and limit leave-related expenses. The programme content is also adequately adjusted to European standards and international demands. The curriculum content was designed on the basis of many good universities, i.a. University of Zagreb, University of Ljubljana or University of East Anglia. The designed study programme is in accordance with Kosovo Qualification Framework, and according to SER it aims to equip students with knowledge about applications in software development, basics of programming, programming languages, desktop, web and mobile platforms, methodologies and databases. According to the site visit discussions and SER, the design and improvement of the programme was also made by industry representatives. However, after discussion with industry representatives, ET has learned that they would like to be more formally engaged in the study programme, even in the teaching process (see section 2.2). This is the case for other study programmes at AAB College, thus further deepening of cooperation might have mutual benefits.

On the one hand, the methodology of this study programme is satisfying with the modern didactic concept and emphasis on practical aspects. On the other hand, even if research activity is determined by contract and also rewarded, there is no evidence of an overarching research concept in computer science. Therefore, ET recommends creating a guiding concept on a more general level, defining a core area of scientific competence and their development into the future.

The Dean of FCS is responsible for implementing internal policies and overseeing academic performance. It is also supported by the Vice-Dean and administration staff assigned to the Faculty. Although for drafting the new study programme was in charge a committee combined from academic teachers. The aforementioned bodies meet regularly, although, not all policies, regulations and terms of reference and statements are reviewed at least once every two years according to revised documentation. ET understands that not all documents

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demand updates as frequently, nevertheless, it is a good practice to decide which of them should be aligned to the current trends.

During the site visit, ET has not noticed any ethical issues or inaccuracies, and because the study programme is not implemented yet, it is strongly recommended to closely monitor this topic and take measures to prevent fraudulent behaviour. In the upcoming years, ET would recommend to determine factors related to the study programme and implement appropriate policies or guidelines to mitigate the risk.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
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, and assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	X	

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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: partially compliant
ET recommendations:

1. *Strengthening and systematization of the collaboration with industry representatives on study programme content and providing courses/*
2. *Within the developed study programme, an aligned research concept should be also designed to meet efficient students and teaching staff cooperation.*
3. *Implementation of rules on review all policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements related to the study programme at least once every two years*
4. *Consideration of implementation of prophylactic antiplagiarism guidelines/standards.*

2.2. Quality Management

The quality management framework of the AAB College is a strong point of the organizational structure of the institution. The principles of the quality assurance and monitoring system are fully in line with the European standards.

The quality management of this specific study programme follows the regular framework of the institution. The hierarchy of decision making bodies, the roles and responsibilities of these bodies are all clearly defined in the documents, and it was well explained in the site visit as well. One minor shortcoming is that there is no clear on-person leadership of the organisation of the study programme. The team introduced as "heads" of the study programme is very committed, but every programme needs one single person who can make fast and effective decisions in certain circumstances. During the site visit one member of this group was declared as informal head of the programme, but this must be defined also in a written document.

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The curriculum of the study programme went through this process, and it is well evidenced that the adjustment and further improvement of the curriculum is planned on a yearly or even more frequent basis. This is of great importance in the computer science field, due to the fast development and adjustment of methods and techniques.

Feedback about the study programmes are regularly collected from all key stakeholders in the institution through a well managed process. Although this study programme currently has no active students, the general framework of collecting and managing feedback from students, a crucial part of the quality assurance system, works very well in other study programmes of the institution, therefore it is well assured that it will work with the same effectiveness here as well. More importantly, it is reported that staff members are well informed about the outcome of this feedback, and consequences are also well defined.

As a potential further improvement, beyond the internal quality assurance system, a regular external view, for example through the regular involvement of an advisory board, could further support the quality management. During the site visit the external stakeholders and potential employers of the students expressed their willingness to support the study programme in this regard as well.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.	x	
Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.	x	

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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	
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

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ET recommendations:

1. *An advisory board of external stakeholders must regularly be involved in the quality assurance and monitoring process to provide an external, independent view.*
2. *The roles and responsibilities of the head of the study programme must be dedicated to one single person, even if a small team will support his/her work.*

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2.3. Academic Staff

The academic staff of the branch consists of a sufficient number of full time employees, and some part time colleagues. Their employment conditions and requirements are clearly defined in the official documents of the AAB College.

It was clear from the conversations during the onsite visit, that the young staff is overall very committed to the success of the new study programme. Some of them also have very solid industrial experience, which can certainly help to provide relevant knowledge in this practice oriented programme. Staff members are fully aware of their responsibilities, and also the need for their own professional development and advancement.

However, one critical issue is that full time workers are almost exclusively at the level of assistant professor, that is the academic staff of this study programme practically lacks full time senior academic researchers and leaders, who would be able to effectively support young colleagues in their academic path. This situation restricts the opportunity of the young members for effective and fast professional development. This problem can be resolved only by hiring 1-2 professors, and during the onsite visit the leaders of the branch expressed their willingness in this regard.

Another problematic point is that very few members of the academic staff are doing their job exclusively in this branch. Most of them are so-called "travelling professors", having lectures and labs in 1-2 other campuses and institutions as well. This fact evidently restricts the time spending in the Gjakova branch, and also restricts their availability in supporting students in their everyday work. During the visit it was declared that the staff has a very precise schedule for consulting hours, which is a positive sign. Having that said, students or administrative staff may have questions and problems throughout the week where personal conversations are needed, therefore it would be an asset to gradually increase the time of permanent presence in Gjakova, and the number of staff members working exclusively in this branch.

The educational and scientific achievements of the academic staff are evaluated regularly, and the staff receives detailed feedback about it. This is clearly positive. The level of scientific research of the current staff is rather limited, this must be strengthened by financial and scientific support in order to realistically open the path of the staff members for higher level positions.

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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	
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	

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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 occurs 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

ET recommendations:
1. *Increase the number of senior academic staff members by the recruitment of some associate or full professors.*
2. *Increase the number of staff members who are exclusively engaged in the work of this branch.*
3. *Further efforts must be made in order to increase the level of scientific achievements of the staff.*

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2.4. Educational Process Content

The study programme content is highly focused on practical skills needed by programming-related companies and current trends in the IT sector. Heads of the study programme under development were inspired by many universities (i.a. University of Zagreb, University of Ljubljana or University of East Anglia), and these experiences have been successfully implemented in the curriculum. ET is convinced that the study programme beneficially serves a local society in advancing proficient programming capacity. The study programme is suitable for receiving students who are native Albanian speakers.

The curriculum and the study programme is fully in line with legal requirements, the National Qualification Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area as well.

The study programme is very much practice oriented, but it also covers the necessary theoretical background. Regarding the aim of focusing on practice, the usual 2+2 distribution of lectures and labs is not always well-thought-out. It is noteworthy that the project-based approach is an inherent part of the programme, including the ECTS recognition of these phases, and this is also well supported by local companies and stakeholders, as it was clarified during the onsite visit. The academic staff members also have a solid background from industrial experience to effectively support this project-based approach. It is very advantageous, that advice of the external stakeholders are taken into account in the development of the curriculum. Moreover, based on the feedback coming from the industrial partners, further soft skills, such as project management and language competences, are getting to be in the forefront of the study programme, which is a definite plus. However, only very few written, strategic agreements have been reported with these companies. During the site visits these partners expressed their willingness for further cooperation, but this must be assured by long-term strategic cooperation agreements.

The curriculum is well-thought-out and logically structured. It contains the necessary courses on the basis of which students can acquire the planned skills and competences. These skills will enable the graduates to stand their ground in companies and industrial partners. The teaching methodologies fit well for the courses and the expected outcomes. Student

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achievements are planned to be assessed by applying standard methods of the field, and further processes are also in line with the standards of the European Higher Education Area.

Since teaching computer science is a hardware and software intensive field even at this practical level, the institution should assure that these conditions are provided for each course.

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	
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 list at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.	x	

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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	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	

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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	
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 organisations 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/organisations/practical training units.		x

Compliance level: fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *During the site visits industrial partners expressed their willingness for further cooperation, but this must be assured by long-term strategic cooperation agreements and regular involvement of them in the curriculum development.*
2. *The institution should assure that software and hardware conditions are provided for each course.*
3. *In some practice oriented courses, the 2+2 distribution of lectures and labs should be adjusted to 1+3 or even to 0+4.*

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2.5. Students

Admission procedures at the Gjakova branch are regulated by the Statute of AAB Collage. The call for student enrolment in the new academic year will have 125 slots, after acceptance of the study programme. Candidates are informed through the call about requirements aligned with MEST, necessary documents and application procedure. The registration may be made remotely through the AAB Collage website. Prospective students of the programme have to complete high school and pass the matura test. Candidates are going to be treated equally throughout the admission process.

Academic courses provided by FCM are adequately dimensioned in the case of student numbers. At the Faculty a certain limitations of student groups sizes are introduced, i.e. the maximum number of students per lecture and seminar is 80, per laboratory or numerical exercises 40 students (Art. 56 p. 4 of Statute). Declared numbers favours an effective and interactive teaching and learning process. According to the site-visit, teaching staff use different teaching methods, customised to the labour market and students needs, like case studies, project-based tasks and teamwork exercises. Online didactical tools introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic were recognized as highly supportive so are still in use within the learning process.

According to SER, after each assessment, periodic or final, students are well notified about their results, in accordance with the regulation for BA studies, no later than 7 days in case of an exam. As the programming programme might be implemented in the next academic year, it is important to keep up with exams or colloquiums in agreed terms with students.

Students with disabilities can count on flexible support, in particular different deadlines and adjusted forms of assessment. The entire AAB Collage aims to help achieve educational goals for students with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, persistent illness or short-term illness. With all available support all students should have equal chances in achieving learning outcomes although ET recommends to publish more information with relevant regulations on the website.

According to SER, AAB Collage collects and analyzes the pass rate and grades on the basis of exam reports in the e-student platform. Student progression data at the FCM is an important indicator of the entire quality system and it is a part of the document on

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performance indicators, drafted and approved in 2022. All relevant students' records are kept in the institute database but in the internal regulations are not mentioned details on archiving coloquims, exams and other student works.

On the basis of available documentation and conducted discussions, ET understood that the available system on preventing unethical acts is mainly the responsibility of teachers, in particular in such a specific study programme. Albeit at AAB College students are obliged to sign original-proof documents and it is implemented antyplagarism checker - Turnitin (which do not support albanian language), both solutions do not fully mitigate all risks. Therefore, ET would suggest rethinking how the faculty can prevent and penalise non original works.

The students' rights and obligations are publicly articulated in the Statute and regulations of bachelor studies. Important complaint procedures are in place with 2 level instances. Aforementioned documents also contain detailed information on transfer of students.

Teaching staff is obliged to provide additional consultation for students, at least 2 hours per week. However, considering the number of predicted students, ET is concerned about step-like massification of the study program which could impact availability of staff. Even though AAB Collage resources are feasible to deliver curricula, the programme on 3 branches will contain 375 students from the next academic year which gives around 10 student-to-teacher ratio (counting for teaching staff of faculty), solely for programming programmes in 3 different places. Therefore it is noteworthy to prepare adequate standards or recruit additional staff to maintain a good quality of assistance.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising 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 school graduation 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	

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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:
1. *Publish information on the AAB Collage website about support available for students with disabilities.*
2. *Extend regulations or guidelines on antiplagiarism and student work archivization at the faculty level.*
3. *Maintain good quality of assistance by monitoring availability/support level of teachers for students.*

2.6. Research

As it has been very clearly articulated in the proposal and during the site visit, this specific study programme is not research oriented, but very much about applications and practice. This is in line with the needs and expectations of future employers and students as well. In this regard the pure research aspect of the programme is not substantial. Regarding the application of computer science in real life problems, the active involvement of companies and governmental bodies in the development of the curriculum is a definite plus. The understanding of the importance and nature of applications is very well supported by the project based approach of the study programme. This is a strong point of the curriculum.

At the same time, the level of research activity of the academic staff shows great variety. Some members of the staff are very active in publishing new scientific research results, but the publication list of several colleagues is very brief. For some staff members the active research is not an everyday practice. Quantitative indicators related to publications are well defined in the academic advancement requirements, and it is a positive sign, also from the

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point of quality assurance framework. It is also clear from the onsite visit, that staff members are well informed about these expectations. The recognition of successful research activities and publications is also present.

But the fact that most of the staff members are in the assistant professor level, clearly shows that the publication activity is insufficient. In addition to the financial recognition of publications, further incentives at the university level must be introduced in order to significantly improve this situation.

AAB College publishes a scholarly journal with general scope. This is currently not indexed/abstracted in any relevant scientific database, but the management is very committed to improving this situation. The publication of computer science related results of the staff in this journal could be the first step towards a regular research activity in the department. Visit or even local organization of scientific conferences could also be an opportunity in this regard.

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	

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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 speciality 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.(1) Academic staff are 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	

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Standard 6.9. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	x	
Standard 6.10. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.	x	

Compliance level: substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *AAB College must encourage and effectively support regular research activity of as many staff members as possible.*
2. *The lack of regular publication in scientific journal must have consequences and this must be a critical minimum (e.g. 1/year) requirement in the quality evaluation framework.*
3. *On a long term basis, the journal of the AAB College should be included in relevant scientific repositories, such as Scopus and Web of Science.*
4. *Staff must be encouraged and financially supported to regularly visit scientific conferences.*
5. *An organisation of a scientific conference in the (sub)field of computer science must be planned.*

2.7. Infrastructure and Resources

The current infrastructure of the Gjakova branch of AAB College consists of a modern, well equipped building with classroom, lecturers' rooms, various student services and community places. However, this is only partially suitable for starting this specific study programme. The main reason is that, according to the expectations, a total of 360 students would study in

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the three cohorts, which would place a heavy burden on the current infrastructure, the public and community places and the available classrooms.

A fundamental condition for successful education in this study programme is the fulfilment of hardware and software requirements. While the necessary software background is fully assured, at the time of the site visit only one single computer room with approximately 30 computers was ready to use for educational purposes, which has already been in use in other study programmes. Very intensive hardware development is necessary here, including at least 2-3 computer labs of the same size.

It has been declared during the site visit that AAB College has a solid financial background, plan and willingness to make the necessary steps toward a better equipped infrastructure on a relatively short term basis, which is an asset in this regard. Having that said, the current equipment provides a necessary background for a maximum of 70 students (two groups) per cohort.

The same holds for the library and research facilities. Acknowledging that this is not a research oriented study programme, access to basic literature and recent findings of the field is a must. The branch has its own little library and has full access to the library of the main campus, which is a definite plus. But at the time of site visit the number of books in the core topic of computer science is limited, and the access of online scientific and technical repositories is also somewhat restricted. There is a need for further improvement in this regard as well, also to better support the scientific achievements of staff members.

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	x	

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resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.		
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 speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.	x	

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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 speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, **out of which at least 50% should represent book titles** or speciality courses of recognised 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.	x	
Standard 7.6. **The infrastructure and facilities** dedicated to the implementation of the program is **adapted to students with special needs.**	x	

Compliance level: substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *AAB College still has to invest in student hardware facilities, creating more fully equipped computer labs.*
2. *The library resources, printed and online, must be further improved to practical and research level as well. Online repositories must be available throughout the campus.*
3. *The function and size of the building's public and communal spaces must be reconsidered and adapted to the increased number of incoming students.*

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3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The experts would like to thank all the participants of the site visit, and the staff members who prepared the SER for their valuable help and support throughout the accreditation process. Considering the documentation provided and the findings of the site visit, the Accreditation Panel recommends the following:

1. Mission, objectives and administration: partially compliant
2. Quality management: fully compliant
3. Academic Staff: fully compliant
4. Educational Process Content: fully compliant
5. Students: fully compliant
6. Research: substantially compliant
7. Infrastructure and resources: substantially compliant

Overall compliance level: substantially compliant
Student quota recommended/Three or Five Years: 70 students/ Three years*

The department will need 3 years from now to settle in the new building

Expert Team

Member

(Signature)	**Mikós Hoffmann**	**March 20th, 2023**
	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

Damian Michalik	**Damian Michalik**	**March 20th, 2023**
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

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