UNIVERSITY OF PRISTINA, FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

SOCIAL WORK (BA)

RE-ACCREDITATION

FINAL REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

April 12, 2021

1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

2

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

2

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: March 11, 2021

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Prof. Milan Pol, Masaryk University*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Naim Gashi, Executive Director of KAA*
- *Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*
- *Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation*
- *Leona Kovaci, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*
- *Ilirjane Ademaj, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation Report (SER) and other documentation submitted by University of Pristina*
- *Interviews*
- *Webpage of the University of Pristina*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *KAA Accreditation Manual*

3

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

3

1.2. Site visit schedule

Programme ⟍ Time	Political Science/ BA International Relations and Diplomacy/ MA	Philosophy /MA (Reaccreditation)	Social Work/BA
09.00 – 09.40	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated		
09.45 – 10:45	Meeting with the heads of the study programme: Political Science/ BA	Meeting with the heads of the study programme: Philosophy /MA	Meeting with the heads of the study programme: Social Work/BA
10:50 – 11:50	Meeting with the heads of the study programme: International Relations and Diplomacy/ MA		
11:50 – 12.30	Lunch break		
12:30 – 13:10	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff		
13:15 – 13:55	Meeting with teaching staff		
14:00 – 14:40		Meeting with students	
14:45 – 15:25		Meeting with graduates	
15:30 – 16:10	Meeting with employers of graduates		
16:10 – 16:20	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts		
16:20 – 16:30	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program		

4

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

4

Nr.	Study programs	Experts	Responsible persons of study programs		
1	Political Science/ BA: a) International Relations and Diplomacy b) Public Administration (Accreditation)	Prof. Dr. Vlatko Cvrtila Mr. Artur Tventarnii	Adem Beha	Bardhok Bashota	Ardian Kastrati Zenun Halili
2	International Relations and Diplomacy/ MA (Accreditation)	Prof. Dr. Vlatko Cvrtila Mr. Artur Tventarnii	Bekim Baliqi	Anton Vukpalaj	
3	Philosophy /MA (Reaccreditation)	Prof. Dr. Sonja Kacar Mr. Juraj Bogat	Hasnije Ilazi	Kristë Shtufi	
4	Social Work/BA (Reaccreditation)	Prof. Dr. Milan Pol	Lulzim Dragidella	Vjollca Krasniqi	Njomza Llullaku

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

The Faculty of Philosophy, University of Pristina was founded in 1960 as the first academic unit in Kosovo. Currently it has seven departments and the program under the evaluation, Social Work, is located at the Department of Social Work. The Faculty with its departments is operating within the university campus. The program Social Work was first accredited in 2012. Currently, 50 students are enrolled per academic year into the program. The competing applicants´ ratio is 5:1 for a study place in the program.

5

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

5

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The mission of the University of Pristina is hard to find on the English version of the webpage, the SER informs, however, about the mission of its Faculty of Philosophy where the program under the evaluation belongs. The mission is formulated as follows: "…through enhancement and strengthening of academic capacities, enriching the academic tradition with advanced European and international experience and practices, through expanding cooperation, increasing professionalism, intensifying scientific research, and digitizing administration and services to students, to become an academic institution of the prestigious international universities, with emphasis on the European Union, and to be a serious competitor in the academic market not only in the region but also beyond." (SER, p. 3).

The mission of the program Social Work is "…to offer quality studies on Social Work, to raise flexibility for theory and practice and to advance research on social issues in Kosovo… the organization of a study programme based on international and local practices, which are strengthening for students and serve as a function for academic and institutional advancement…" (SER, p. 25).

It is also worth mentioning the program Social Work declares its ambition to connect the mission "with international social issues, social justice and human rights through student centred approaches to develop capacity of students for application of knowledge in social work practice and research." (SER, p. 25).

Overall, it can be said the study program´s mission is in compliance with the mission statement of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Pristina. The mission of the program explicitly emphasises teaching and also research, the third role (community reach) is somewhat implicit, although the very focus of the program (social work) naturally leads to the community. But in a broader sense of the third role there is a potential for development in the mission statement.

The program under the evaluation has developed acceptably formulated learning outcomes, and the program is in agreement with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

6

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

6

As for the didactic concept, the study program declares student-centred approach, the study combining theory, some methodology and practice, emphasising co-operation with social work institutions in Kosovo. This was proven through analysis of study program documentation and during the interviews with the staff, students and alumni namely. Also, employer representatives confirmed a lively co-operation with the study program. Research concept is not strongly profiled in this bachelor program, although there is a qualitative research as a obligatory subject, and also the diploma thesis as an explicit requirement in the curriculum.

Formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues are in place, and they seem to be publicly available to the staff and students, within the Electronic System for Student Management (SEMS). The SER declares the rules and procedures are accessible on the university webpage which is not the case of the English version of the university´s website.

The University of Pristina has developed the Code of Ethics (available only in Albanian) and the Study Committee at the faculty level, and the Ethics Committee at the university level deal with possible problematic issues. During the interviews, students could not remember a single case of such a nature.

The institution has a set of regulations that are related to the management and delivery of the program, and these are reviewed as it goes along.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *Consider emphasising the third role of the university in the mission statement of the study program.*
2. *Consider making English version of the University of Pristina´s webpage more informative. (This recommendation relates to the level of the university.)*

2.2. Quality management

7

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

7

There are relevant evaluation activities within the study program. These are mainly based on student feedback on the teaching performance, and on the evaluation of the staff. Data from these evaluations serve as a basis for possible improvement actions. This can also be said that evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes. The manual of the Office for Quality Assurance sems to be playing the role of a methodical guide, especially in cases of syllabi updates.

The quality assurance processes thoroughly deal not only with core activities and processes of the program, but also with services and resources provided by other parts of the institution – data are collected mainly through questionnaires from students, teaching staff, and administration staff. During the interviews, it was proven that effectivity of some of the feedback collection mechanisms is not so high – for instance, the very information gained from students was found to be relatively poor. Also, the information going back to the students (what is done with their feedback) is not provided to them systematically which probably does no encourage students to get more involved in providing the feedback. Also, there is no systematic mechanism within this feedback collecting procedure that would enable teaching staff to react to possibly unbalanced feedback from the students, to respond to the students.

The above-mentioned situation is despite the quality evaluation is focused on overall program as well as its different components considering pedagogical approaches, attendance, literature, class interaction as well a group work, and learning outcomes, as well as inter-departmental co-operation and the work with social work practitioners.

Yet this can be assumed the quality assurance processes ensure in significant extent both that required standards are met, and there is an effort/tendency for continuing improvement.

Results based on the evaluation data from students, graduates and employers are in some extent made publicly available in internal SEMS platform, and they serve as a basis for further discussions about possible future steps. This concerns further development of the study program, too.

The Department of Social Work periodically prepares reports on overall quality of the program, using SWOT analysis instrument in the effort to indicate strong points as well as weaknesses.

8

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

8

It is not clear how thoroughly are quality assurance mechanisms and arrangements for the program regularly evaluated and improved, although the SER as well as some participants of the interviews indicated there is an on-going communication between the department, Office for QA, and management of the faculty.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *Consider changes in ways of collection the data, namely from students, to increase effectivity of this feedback.*
2. *Consider systematic possibilities to inform students about what is happening with the collected data.*
3. *Make sure teaching staff have a fair possibility to respond to any feedback to the student(s).*
4. *Make sure the QA arrangements for the program are themselves sufficiently and regularly evaluated and improved.*

2.3. Academic staff

This can be said the staff (and also potential candidates for employment) are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. The information about the staff (full- as well as part-time) is presented in a tabular form in the SER. It appears (and it is also emphasised in the SER on the p. 33), the Department of Social Work is very small in full-time staff numbers, and consequently the program is covered with a small number of full-timers and some part-timers. Undoubtedly, such a situation involves significant limitations for many aspects of the study program-related work and development.

At the same time, the teaching staff complies with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on accreditation. There are three full-time staff members holding PhD degree, one in Social Work, one in Social Sciences, and one in Psychology/Education.

9

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

9

According to the documents available, the 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. The available documentation also indicates almost 90% of the academic staff are full-time employers and cover in vast majority the study program classes. The program also meets criteria related to the staff members with PhD (three people) for 180 ECTS.

It has been confirmed by the educational staff that they are provided some opportunities for further professional development, mainly in teaching skills (through the Centre for Excellence in teaching), and some other areas. There is no formal prerequisite (training) for those who take up the role of supervisors of students´ diploma thesis, and since a number of the teaching staff is low, there is a relatively high number of thesis supervised by each academic every year.

This was proven during the interviews and confirmed in the documentation available, the teaching staff´s responsibilities include engagement in academic community as well as availability for consultations with students. Community service does not seem to be explicitly a part of it, but staff members are involved in community engaged projects.

Evaluation of the staff is conducted regularly through self-evaluation, student evaluation and evaluation by supervisors. The results are not always made publicly available.

It can be confirmed the strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials, as well as emphasis on the students´ group work, and some other aspects.

According to the law, the teachers retire at the age of 65 and lose status of full-timers, in cases of need they stay and work as part-time teaching staff members. The Department of Social Work did not encounter such instances yet.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *Make sure the number of full-time staff involved in the Department of Social Work and the program Social Work is increased.*

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

10

2. *Make sure the staff taking up the role of supervisors of students writing diploma thesis are sufficiently trained for the task of supervision.*
3. *Consider a possibility to make staff evaluation results publicly available.*

2.4. Educational process content

This can be said the study program under evaluation is developed/modelled on the qualification objectives. The curriculum contains disciplines of social work as well as those of interdisciplinary nature, and consequently it has the potential to lead to the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological, and generic skills. The curriculum refers to academic and professional competences and the graduates are prepared to acquire adequate employment and contribute to the civil society. The program has the potential to develop student personality.

The study program complies with the National Qualifications Standard and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. Individual parts of the program are interlinked logically and this suits to the specific objectives of the program. The program is realised in adequate forms of teaching and learning, namely lectures, exercises, internship, and individual work (supervised) within the diploma thesis development.

The program is built logically, and as the whole is has an internal gradation. There is an assumption, general as well as specific competencies can be achieved by following the curriculum. First year offers only obligatory subjects and it is focused on disciplines with core topics of the program/theme; second year is already focused on some more specific disciplines (social work policies, ethics, and research methods, and more); and the third year offers again more specific courses (child wellbeing, gender and diversity, professional development, and more). Most of the program contains of obligatory subjects, a relatively limited number of electives is offered in three semesters (3.-5.). At the end of studies, 15-week practicum (supervised) and diploma thesis are the main activities. There is a sufficient number of learning outcomes for the study program under the evaluation.

Syllabi of the program disciplines are well elaborated, they comprise objectives, content, learning outcomes, forms and methods of teaching/learning, information about the student assessment, bibliography, and some more information. In some cases, even the basic literature contains literature in English which raises the question of viability. Teaching staff and students

11

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

11

claimed they find ways of overcoming this difficulty, but on the bachelor level such a situation is hard to view as acceptable. At the same time, the SER admits as aa weakness "lack of access to electronic databases for scientific articles" (SER, p. 140) This also needs to be addressed.

Student mobilities are not very much developed and would deserve greater support and encouragement in the program under evaluation. There are no incoming students from abroad, since there is no study program-related offer for them.

The Department of Social Work declares they strive for student-centred approach. Teaching strategies are described in syllabi and they seem to be appropriate. Students and graduates were in principle positive about them, sometime recommending little more interaction in some subjects, perhaps more practice in the whole program, and inclusion of the course in English into the curriculum.

This appeared especially during the interviews with the teaching staff, students and graduates the relation between teachers and students is of a good quality, based on communication about main aspects of the program, teaching and learning, incl. learning outcomes.

Student assessment mechanisms seem to be conducted fairly and objectively. The are described in each syllabus and seem to be appropriate for different forms of learning. Also, the assessment methods seem to be consistent over time, and in some extent comparable in courses offered within the program (few voices of some interviewed respondents suggested a bit more demanding approach in some courses). Overall, in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions the assessment of the students can be viewed as comparable.

There are possible actions to be taken to address situations where student achievement standards are insufficient or are accessed inconsistently. The program includes continuous assessment practice, regular exams (three exam terms available during the year), and weekly consultations, if needed.

The program includes 15-week practice at the third year of study. Newly, there is a mentor/supervisor on the side of organization enabling the student his/her internship, and also on the side of the HEI, and these two are expected to communicate with the student and develop the working plan as well as be involved in the assessment of the internship. The ECTS are allocated to the practice appropriately. Cooperation agreements between the HEI and the

12

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

12

organisations hosting students for their practice are a part of the reality, some of them were stated in the SER and confirmed during the interviews with employers and alumni.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Make sure obligatory study literature is available in Albanian language.*
2. *Make sure students have good access to e-databases of relevant scientific literature.*
3. *Encourage and support effectively mobilities of the students.*
4. *Consider possibilities to attract incoming international students.*

2.5. Students

As for admission procedures, they are clear and in line with Regulation of Bachelor Studies of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Pristina. A total of 50 students are enrolled, about 10 students come from specific categories of population (war-related, non-majority ethnic communities, and from neighbouring regions of Kosovo). All students enrolled in this bachelor program have a high school diploma.

Since a number of students enrolled every year is not very high, the arrangement for the seminars/group work is possible to be made in the program under evaluation, the program leaders declare the groups have about 25 students. At the same time the program providers admit the material conditions for the group work are limited, which is a shortcoming of the program.

As already mentioned in other parts of the report, communication with the students is typically well organized and looked after, and students get information about their results in time and thoroughly. There are mechanisms to assist students, if needed, among them tutorial system, consultation hours, and the like in the program. Also, the system of peer support among senior and junior students is developed.

The regulations and standards of the University of Pristina and its Faculty of Philosophy require the results obtained by the students during their study are certified by the academic record.

13

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

13

The Department of Social Work declares they stand for flexible treatment of students in special situations, and this was confirmed by students and graduates during the interviews.

The program providers record and store the data on student completion rates in the SEMS platform for all courses and as a part of quality indicators.

The Statute of the University of Pristine, and the Code of Conduct seem to be containing parts that deal with rights and responsibilities of the students when submitting their work as original.

Students seem to be informed about their rights and responsibilities, incl. right for academic appeals.

Students transfer between HEIs, faculties and programs is regulated, namely by the Study Committee on the level of the Faculty.

Teaching staff is having two hours a week as consultation hours for the students. There is also a system of tutorial support offered to the students of the program under the evaluation.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *None.*

2.6. Research

The Department of Social Work refers to the Strategic Plan of the Faculty of Philosophy (2018-2023) where research and plan of its development are very briefly and generally mentioned. The research objectives specific for the study program have not been defined.

At the same time, research activity and its results are included in the evaluation of the staff performance. They are also a part of the staff promotion criteria which relate to the whole University of Pristina.

14

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

14

Research activity is a subject of internationally used standards and of ethical considerations which relate to all phases of the research conduction, incl. publishing the research results. The academic staff´s research results thematically relate to what they are teaching.

The publication results are rather scarce, though, and need to be improved. At the same time, there seem to be some constrains that can be viewed as a part of the reason, among them a very small number of full-time staff, overload with teaching and other duties, limited support to research, fragmentation of research focus. Recently introduced financial incentives for publications in indexed journals and other platforms do not solve the problem of funding the very conduction of research.

Research is validated through research publications. Based on the information provided by the SER and CVs where the list of publications is submitted, it needs to be concluded the publication results do not meet the standard of having at least one scientific/applied research publication per year for the past three years, and this relates to most of the full-time academic staff.

Existing publications of the academic staff seem to be published under the name of the University of Pristina.

Although the teaching staff claims they include information about their research and scholarly activities into the teaching, since such activity is very low, this can hardly be found satisfactory. Syllabi contain information about existing research in the field, though.

As for the ownership of intellectual property, the Kosovo law is followed.

The SER claims the students are involved in research projects, but since these are very few, again, this can hardly be found satisfactory. Again, this may have in some extent something to do with a relatively very low number of the full-time staff related to the program. Moreover, their research interests differ, there is not one or two research teams that would be more strongly focused on some relevant thematic field in a longer period of time, building a research school of a certain kind.

15

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

15

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Develop the research plan of the study program-related Department of Social Work, and the research objectives for the study program Social Work.*
2. *Make sure research activity and publication results of the full-time staff improve.*
3. *Make sure student involvement in research projects improves.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

The study program is realised in the premises of the Faculty of Philosophy which seem to provide a relatively solid infrastructure. The technological equipment for the teaching is a part of this provision. In the SER, it is pointed out among the weaknesses also a lack of computers in the classrooms and a lack of intranet and online library catalogue. At the same time, the study program leaders point out the need to have more suitable provisions for the group work.

The financial plans are not managed on the level of study program, financial issues are regulated centrally on the university level, and in some extent on the level of the faculty. This can be assumed the largest public university is a guarantee of the program financial sustainability, but the financial plans were not part of the documentation provided. On the other hand, since the department cannot manage for instance staffing, the problem remains.

The Department of Social Work uses two teaching rooms for the program (these rooms are exclusively at their disposal), shares one more room with another department, and then it also uses social lab of the faculty. The access to e-databases and to social work-related literature is ensured via library services.

The two teaching rooms have 50 seats each which seems to be satisfactory for the program needs. As already mentioned, the chairs and tables are immobile, therefore not suitable for the group work, and therefore other rooms need to be used for such purpose.
The IT lab of the faculty with adequate equipment is accessible for the students of the program, too.

16

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

16

The Department of Social Work has its own small library (about 500 titles hard copies), and also uses the resources of the faculty's library. As already mentioned earlier, in some courses a lack of the literature in Albanian language is still felt.

The Department of Social Work´s facilities seem to be accessible for the SEN people, the above-mentioned problems of flexibility of the facilities indicate, however, potential problems in this respect, too.

During the interviews, some respondents suggested more student-friendly out-of-class spaces within the Faculty would be welcome and helpful for building the Faculty as a community place.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *Make sure there is sufficient IT equipment for the teaching and learning in the program-related premises.*
2. *Make sure intranet and online library catalogues are well accessible.*
3. *Make sure the infrastructural arrangement enables the group work.*
4. *Make sure financial backing of the program is sufficient and will enable staffing enlargement.*
5. *Make sure study program-related facilities are well accessible for SEN students.*

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program Social Work (bachelor level) offered by University of Pristina, Faculty of Philosophy is *Substantially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation Manual* and, therefore, recommends *accrediting* the study program for a duration of *3 years* with a number of 50 students to be enrolled in the program.

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

Expert Team

Chair

Milan Pol

_____

(Signature)   (Print Name)   (Date)

Member

18

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

18

_____

(Signature)   (Print Name)   (Date)

Member

_____

(Signature)   (Print Name)   (Date)

Member

_____

(Signature)   (Print Name)   (Date)

Member

_____

(Signature)   (Print Name)   (Date)

Member

_____

(Signature)   (Print Name)   (Date)

19

AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, kati 2-të, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Tel. +381 38 213722 | Fax +381 38 213087 | www.akreditimi-ks.org

19