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UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA
Master “Fitness and Nutrition”

ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM



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INTRODUCTION

Context

Expert Team

- Dr. Chris Richter, Sports Surgery Clinic, Dublin, Ireland
- Domagoj Vugić, Student Expert

Coordinators of 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 "Master Fitness and Nutrition" dated to January 2021
- CV of Academic Staff
- Annex documents
 - Fitness equipment in the gym.docx
 - List of academic staff 2020-2021.docx
 - List of equipment, tools and props in the gym.docx
 - List of staff publications.docx
- Syllabuses Fitness and Nutrition
 - Coaching Practice and Internship.doc
 - Designing a Training Program.doc
 - Fitness Testing and Exercise Prescription.doc
 - Fundamentals of Nutrition in Sport.doc
 - Human Anatomy.doc



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- o Information Technology in Sport.doc
- o Nutrition for specific purposes.doc
- o Physical Preparation.doc
- o Psychology of Sport Motivation.doc
- o Research Methodology in Sport.doc
- KAA Accreditation Manual 11.07.2018

Requested documents

- Update about all the tables in chapter 3 (Staff), especially the duration of contracts
- the university referred within the SER
- Two examples of each: evaluation report students, staff and labour market
- 5 year financial plan
- Evidence of changes made / discussions had after an evaluation - minutes of the meeting would be best
- Research plan / research concept
- Draft of the code of ethics
- Plan for the down syndrome program
- Translation of figure 1 in SER
- Regulation on Quality Assurance and evaluation
- Quality Assurance manual
- Students Rights and Obligations
- Research recognition Policies

Received documents

- File: <Add Docs Faculty of Physical Culture and Sports 21.pdf> containing a brief info about:
 - o Info concerning the ranking of the AAB College
 - o Plan for the down syndrome program
 - o Student rights and obligations
 - o provided Annex



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- Annex 1: Example of evaluations with students, staff and labour market
- Annex 2: 5-year financial plan
- Annex 3: Evidence of changes made / discussions had after an evaluation - minutes of the meeting
- Annex 4: Research plan/ research concept
- Annex 5: Code of Ethics
- Annex 6: Figure 1 in SER translated in English Language
- Annex 7: Regulation on Quality Assurance and Evaluation
- Annex 8: Research recognition policies

Site visit schedule (Online)

28th April 2021

09:00 – 09:40	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated (no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion)
09:45 – 10:45	Meeting with the heads of the study programme
10:50 – 11.30	Meeting with teaching staff
11:30 – 12:10	Lunch break
12:15 – 12:55	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff
13:00 – 13:40	Meeting with employers of graduates
13:40 – 13:50	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts
13:50 – 14:00	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program



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A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation

The SER stated that AAB College is the largest non-public institution of higher education in the Republic of Kosovo and was founded in 2002 with a unique program in Journalism and Mass Communication.

AAB has expanded its services continually by offering study programs from other fields, seeking to become an impactful academic centre in the country and region. The college currently has 14 faculties that offer study programs at BA and MA levels on its campus in Prishtina, which is spread over two branches.

The vision of AAB is to become “a leading university institution in the region in applying innovative approaches in the field of higher education, science and technology. AAB sets new trends in the field of higher education in Kosovo and the region and is part of the most relevant networks of higher education institutions in Europe and beyond. AAB is a leader in the European integration processes of the country and promoter of social and economic development”.

The AAB College is currently trying to expand its offering within the area of sports and wellness and plans to launch a MA in Sports and Nutrition. This program is evaluated in this report.

Mission of the Study Programme

The one-year MA Fitness and Nutrition is designed to provide professional development for individuals that seek to work in the field of PE, well-being and health. The program is a full time programme and is spread over two semesters (60 ECTS). Each semester has 30 ECTS and consists of mandatory and elective courses. The students complete the degree when finishing all the examinations and having successfully defended a Master theses.



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The developed program aims to educate the students in well-being and health, promote a modern approach in studying sports and to bring students closer to the labour market - to provide them with direct employment.

The programme is dedicated to students who have successfully completed as BA / BS and who want to deepen their knowledge in Sports. The study program is organized in in-house lectures and exercises and promotes internships to gain practical experiences in industry to provide the student with theoretical but also practical knowledge. The mission is: "to promote a modern approach in studying sports not as it has been previously oriented only on physical education but as a health and professional sports culture that proved as an indispensable approach in many European countries."

Learning outcomes are described as follow (based on Self Evaluation Report):

Overall competencies:

- Teamwork and good communication skills
- Flexible use of knowledge in practice
- Knowledge of psychological development
- Overall organizational skills.
- Knowledge of ethics and codex of professional scope.
- Knowledge of communication in a foreign language (English).
- Knowledge of first aid.

Specific competences:

- Knowledge of health aspects of sports.
- Knowledge of foundation of anatomic aspects of exercises
- Ability to analyse and plan and implement training programs
- Knowledge about the basic principles about nutrition
- Skills on planning, organizing, implementing and manage sports training
- Train to work with modern technology in sports and exercises.

Structure of the Programme



As outlined in the Self Evaluation Report (SER), the courses of the study programme include credits, which correspond to 25 hours learning per 1 ECTS. In a year, 60 ECTS will be earned, which is approximately 1500-1800 hours / year. The ECTS workload is calculated based on a 40-hour week spend within: weekly classes (lectures + exercises), individual work (assignments, presentations, research/internship, continuous studies, and exam preparation), tests and exams (participation in tests, participation in the final exam), consultations (with professors and assistants). During an academic year, one student should accumulate 60 ECTS in order to complete his study year.

The first semester has 4 compulsory and 1 elective subject (table 1). The second semester has 3 compulsory and 1 elective as well as an applied research project (master thesis; table 1). Students attend compulsory and elective courses. In electives courses, each semester the students choose one of two courses, depending on their profiling and choice. A detailed description of compulsory and elective subjects is illustrated in table 1 and 2.

Table 1: Program Schedule Semester 1

Year I						
Semester I				Hour/ week		ECTS
Nr.	O/E	Subject	Professor	L	E	
1.	O	Human Anatomy	Dr. Luan Jaha	2	2	6
2.	O	Designing a Training Program	Dr. Mimoza Shkodra	2	2	6
3.	O	Fitness Testing and Exercise Prescription	Dr. Ftamir Pireva	2	3	7
4.	O	Fundamentals of Nutrition in Sport	PhD. Can. Gezim Murseli	2	2	6
5.	E	Elective Subject				
Student chooses one elective subject						
1.	E	Physical Preparation	Dr. Fadil Rexhepi	2	1	5
2.	E	Information Technology in Sports (ICT)	Dr. Blerta Brevalla	2	1	5
Total ECTS:						30 ECTS



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Table 2: Program Schedule Semester 2

Year I						
Semester II				Hour/week		ECTS
Nr.	O/Z	Subject	Professor	L	E	
1.	O	Research Methodology in Sport	Dr. Shemsedin Vehapi	2	1	5
2.	O	Coaching Practice and Internship	Dr. Nazim Myrtaj	2	1	5
3	E	Elective Subject		2	1	
Student chooses one elective subject						
1.	E	Psychology of sport motivation	Dr. Naim Telaku	2	1	5
2.	E	Nutrition for specific purposes	PhD. Can. Gezim Murseli	2	1	5
Master Thesis (Applied research project)						15
					Total ECTS:	30 ECTS



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PROGRAM EVALUATION

Mission, objectives and administration

As stated in the SER the mission of the program is to provide a diversified higher education program to meet the labour market in Kosovo and other countries. Based on the evaluation of the study program, this aim can be considered as met in respect to the Albanian speaking market. Further, the aim of the mission is to advance and disseminate knowledge to improve the well-being and health of the population, as well as to provide an environment that results in social mobility. While the first aim is addressed well within the MA program the impact on social mobility cannot be estimated (can not be examined without additional sensitive personal data).

Based on the SER and the conducted interview, the program was developed in cooperation with industry stakeholders, universal collaborations and by studying the programs of many high impact international recognized institutions within the field of Fitness and Nutrition that issue professional certifications.

In terms of the didactic concept, the program utilizes standard methods like theoretical lectures, practical exercises, research projects, smaller group work, case studies and practical work outside the institution and can be considered state-of-the-art. The research concept however is limited as little focus is placed on research – which is ok considering the aim of delivering a practical master (statement made during the interviews).

The faculty is well organized in respect to available formal policies, guidelines and regulations that deal with frequent procedural and academic issues. An ethical conduct of research exists and is set forth and sanctioned under the Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct, Academic Conduct Policy and the Disciplinary Procedure and is accessible to student and staff through electronic platforms

Regular reviews of policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are conducted to identify and solve deficits in the program – examples stated during the interview were for example changes based on student request and even industrial questionnaires to assess the needs of the labour market.



<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
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: Substantially Compliant

ET recommendations:

- Even if the program is supposed to be a practical program, lay out a clear research plan for the program. This should state possible fields of research for staff members and already started projects. Stating possible fields of research will give guidance and keep the research in light of the program. It could also lay out papers with much higher impact than self-driven staff research papers / uncoordinated research efforts. For started projects clear milestones should be defined.



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- The program would benefit if certification would lead to ETCS or for automatic accreditation of a certificate of the internationally recognized institutions on which the study program is based. Such a route should be explored.
- The faculty should start to define strategies to encourage staff members to participate proactively in english language upskilling - this will help research output. An idea here could be to award a staff member a bonus for completed english certifications.



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Quality management

During online visit and according to Self-evaluation report, expert team concludes that:

Faculty has a number of regulations dealing with the quality assurance such as Quality Assurance Regulation, Quality Assurance Guideline and Strategic Development Plan.

Assessments are conducted with:

- Academic staff
- Students
- Employers
- Graduates
- Administrative staff

All of the processes are carried out regularly and at least once a year. Furthermore, we found that all the processes related to Quality assurance are integrated into normal planning and are supported by the Institution in terms of finances and materials. They take in all the aspects of the program and provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components found within it.

The Faculty of Physical Culture and Sport has employed a vice dean for quality assurance who is actively cooperating with the central independent office of quality assurance that aims to ensure quality level of teaching, learning, existing programs, research and administration. Additionally students are also involved in all aspects of quality assurance.



Finally, we note that all the processes related to quality assurance are evaluated and reviewed regularly and that the Faculty has developed a framework of performance evaluation to monitor quality implementation.

	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
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	
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 (e.g., 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: Substantially compliant



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ET recommendations:

- Publication of evaluation results from every survey. Summary of these results for the public.
- Make sure that Research is also monitored through Quality assurance processes



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Academic staff

It is evident from the online discussion as well as formal staff profiles submitted prior to the review that academic staff at the Faculty Physical Culture and Sport is able to deliver student level learning experience through inclusive, relevant programmes and curricula while being professional and collaborative. This in turn fosters students' ability to advance their competences in order to develop individual careers in the field of sports and nutrition.

As outlined in the SER, the faculty has 20 full time and 3 part time members. The distribution between full time (FT) and part time (PT) staff for both study programmes (BA; MA) is 87% vs 13% in favour of full-time academic staff. Based on the SER the majority of staff members are employed solely in AAB College. Thirteen staff members hold a PhD degree, 4 are enrolled in PhD programs, 3 hold a MSc. and 3 hold a BA. In respect to the responsibilities of the academic staff, members receive a description of their duties and responsibilities with signing their employment contract and are required to participate in the planning, preparation and implementation of projects in their respective fields. Based on the SER, staff members are also actively engaged in organizing various debates and activities aimed at raising the awareness of students and society related to PE, sport, and wellness.

Based on the SER and the conducted interviews, staff members are part of seminars and are provided additional training programs – e.g., English classes within the university or academic writing seminars. In respect to staff evaluation, after the end of each semester the academic staff is evaluated by students via a questionnaire, which is mandatory for the student. This evaluation is organised through quality assurance in combination with AAB's IT system and stores data anonymously in a central database. Reports are generated by the quality assurance office and shared with staff members. Actions in place for negative feedback are training programs that can include the following: critical thinking in higher education, blended learning, student assessment context, feedback and evaluation, learning outcomes and methodology, principles of adult learning and so on.



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	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	
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	



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Standard 3.10. Teachers who retire at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	x	
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Compliance level: Substantially Compliant

ET recommendations:

- Continue evaluating and improving the standards of quality of teaching and learning by addressing staff key performance indicators.
- Actively involve academic staff in research activities but also consulting activities in terms of delivery planning and quality enhancement at the Faculty level.
- Nominate staff who can take lead on developing manuals / teaching resources for blended learning models in the light of current challenges and transition to online learning.
- Keep / increase rotation staff with other institutions to have an active knowledge transfer and to establish collaborations.



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Educational process content

The developed study program is organized based on clear guidelines and combines in its nature two fundamentally important fields within sport and health science. The skills to be taught should lead to the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies that are needed to contribute to the civil society and of developing the students' personality. The program is orientated to an in-depth study of problems and practical aspects in order to develop a skill set that will give the student the ability to work within the field of sports, PE and nutrition. To give students an additional practical insight, the Faculty of Physical Culture and Sport has a number of cooperation agreements with various companies / institutions that are organized and supervised through the career office.

The program is designed in a logical flow and supports the development. The focus on practical experiences within the program will enable the students to make mistakes from which they will learn. This will underpin the knowledge gained during the theoretical classes. Stated learning outcomes within the SER are:

- describe the principles of health and wellness from a multidimensional and interdisciplinary perspective.
- Students will be able to think and act ethically in the context of health, nutrition and wellness.
- demonstrate a variety of communication strategies in health and wellness education with the different categories.
- demonstrate competence in assessing the health-related components of physical fitness.
- develop, implement, and evaluate physical activity programs for apparently healthy individuals and individuals with specific health conditions.
- explain the benefits of physical activity and nutrition for health, wellness and relation with quality of life.
- interpret and apply nutrition science concepts to improve the health of individuals and communities.
- Independently design effective experiments and research strategies by conducting a research project;



The syllabus of classes is accessible for the student through the e-student portal and communicated at the start of the class (based on SER). The provided documents in the SER clearly described the objectives of a class, the content, the learning outcomes, the assessment system and a selection of bibliography. Teaching strategies across the classes include different types of learning that are appropriate for the program. Practical sessions are included in the study program and the intended learning outcomes are clearly specified in the syllabuses. The practice stages are allocated ECTS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports.

While the submitted documents in the SER were in English, classes are taught in Albanian, which presents a limitation for exchange programmes.

Based on the conducted interview and the SER there are no guidelines in respect to assessment mechanisms to stay as objective as possible. However, the students can challenge a grade received. Further, students' achievements are monitored, and additional clear procedures are in place if performances are inadequate.

	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
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	x	



and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.		
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.		x
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 into 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 ECTS 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: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- Staff members should be encouraged to teach in English / take English classes.
- Clear grading guidelines should be defined to assess students' performances consistently.



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Students

During online visit and according to Self-evaluation report, expert team concludes that:

Faculty has a defined clear procedure regarding student admission that will be announced each September of the respective academic year. Criteria for the admission is based on the provisions of the Statute of AAB College and legal regulation established by MEST and KAA. To enrol in an MA program in Fitness and Nutrition, candidates need to possess a Bachelor degree of 240 ECTS and therefore also a high-school diploma.

Regarding the number of students, student groups are designed in a way to promote efficient teaching with no more than 80 students for lectures and not more than 20 students for practical exercises.

Students receive feedback based on their performance and in accordance with the AAB College Regulations for Studies. Furthermore, the results obtained by the students are electronic and available in the student academic record. We found that, in the case of special situations, there is a flexible treatment envisaged regarding the examination schedule. Records of student completion rates are reported and summarized at the end of each examination deadline and are analysed and evaluated by the Vice Rector's Office for Teaching.

To ensure that the work submitted by students is original, Faculty uses several methods: testing the originality of submitted papers, reporting plagiarism to the Dean and Disciplinary Committee, following Code of Ethics and in case of a Master thesis, Master Studies Council is established to evaluate and approve the thesis work.



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We found that Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available and are in accordance with the Statute. Additionally, student obligations are also set out under the contract that the student signs upon enrolment at the College as well as through the E-Student platform.

	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
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	
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	
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Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- Increase student mobility as a part of this Master program
- Make transfer between other universities smoother
- Make sure that plagiarism softwares are used for the Master thesis



Research

Based on the SER, one of the main objectives of the AAB College is scientific research. To achieve this goal, AAB is organizing scientific conferences, increasing the number of staff involved in scientific publications with an international impact, and by increasing cooperation with regional and international universities. The has a clear definition of what research is and based on the SER, research projects are validated through scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, and other structures. Staff members are required to produce at least one scientific project within the years based on their employment contract. Further, AAB has been organizing classes for staff members to improve scientific writing skills and based on the conducted interviews with staff members, research is supported by financial aid, time off, student research and encouragement of attending international conferences.

The SER reported 102 published papers in the last 4 years (reported publications date back to 2017). However, after removing duplicates (based on title) of the given list only 79 unique publications remained. Further, the list contained approx. 60 conference submissions (conference papers are included in the count). The combined paper and conference count per person is 0.86 publications per person and year (79 publications, a 4-year period and 23 full time staff members). Research was published under a AAB affiliation and staff members are encouraged to include their research in their lectures. Students have been participating in conference paper proceedings.

Further, policies established for ownership of intellectual property are defined under the faculties research regulations article 14 (see SER), while no clear procedures are defined for commercialization of ideas developed by students – staff work / IP is considered as created by the employee during the employment.

	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
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		x



institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.		
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 6.9. 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	
Standard 6.10. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.		x
Standard 6.11. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.	x	

Compliance level: Partially Compliant



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ET recommendations:

- Lose the high profile paper expectation, as this will put staff members under pressure and lay out a clear research plan for the program. This should state possible fields of research for staff members and already started projects. Stating possible fields of research will give guidance and keep the research in light of the program. It could also lay out papers with much higher impact than self-driven staff research papers / uncoordinated research efforts. For started projects clear milestones should be defined.
- Staff should be offered / forced to attend English classes to enable them to publish in proper peer-reviewed journals.
- Conference papers should not be considered as publication, as the peer-review process is not as rigorous as in the journal paper. Also while we appreciate the effort of having an in-house journal, we feel that a lot of work is being directed toward creating a work around of publishing without fixing the problem of research quality. There is no need for creating a new journal (there are enough) focus your efforts on staff member upskilling.
- Keep your webpage (<https://aab-edu.net/conferences/>) and upcoming events better up to date.
- Please define clear regulations, of ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas that originated from ideas coming from students with staff members - e.g. Master thesis.



Infrastructure and resources

During online visit and according to Self-evaluation report, expert team concludes that:

Faculty has modern and up to date infrastructure that meets the needs of students and provides a good environment to conduct research and teaching activities.

We note that the Faculty has developed a financial plan that is in accordance with the provisions of the Statute. Funding is received through tuition and administrative fees, payments for commercial and other services, from the funds of the Ministry for teaching and scientific-artistic research of general interest, donations and gifts and other terms of funding showing diversity among resources obtained.

From the point of facilities we found that the Faculty has: lecture halls, laboratories, student corners, reading rooms, cafeterias, canteen, sports halls and other infrastructure needed for this program. College operates within 3 separate campuses located in the city of Prishtina, where the main campus is found and also in other two locations in Kosovo.

Regarding the Library, there are two libraries on the site of Prishtina campus that have all the necessary equipment to ensure the adequate materials and space needed for this particular program. Furthermore, the Faculty provides access to various academic journals accessible to both students and academic staff. We were, however, not provided the exact number of book titles available to students that are part of this Master program.

Overall, we find infrastructure to be at a really developed stage and that it fulfills completely current needs of students and is enabling further development of the program in both its teaching and research activities.

	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and	x	



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	
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.	x	



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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: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- Make sure that all the facilities are accessible to students with special needs.



OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The ET would like to commend the programme development team for their proactive engagement with the Panel during the validation event. There was a very strong sense of teamwork and ownership exhibited by the programme development team. It is evident that a good level of care and attention has been given to the design of the program. Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the programme development team, the accreditation panel recommends the following:

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

The overall compliance is assessed by the experts at the level of substantially compliant. However, the following recommendations need to be considered in relation to programmes re-accreditation:

1. A dedicated research activity plan should be developed with a clear research focus, questions that should be tackled and what data will be used / captured to answer these questions. Clear milestones should be defined and desired fields of research for staff



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members should be defined. Stating possible fields of research will give staff member guidance, keep the research in light of the program and will coordinate AAB's research efforts. For started projects clear milestones should be defined and research should be monitored through Quality assurance processes.

2. The faculty should develop a continuing professional development plan (CPD plan) for the staff members. Staff should be offered / encouraged to attend English language courses. We were impressed by the rotation of PhD students with other institutions to have an active knowledge transfer and to establish collaborations; this should be extended to FT staff by introducing sabbaticals into contracts.
3. Due to the pandemic crisis, there is a strong need in further development of teaching practices through strengthening e-learning and online teaching. Both approaches should be integrated systematically in the teaching strategies. In order to reach an extensive deployment of online teaching methods, an extensive program of teacher training offering appropriate courses for teachers should be implemented, standards for e-learning and online-teaching should be defined and made part of the course evaluation and of the self-assessment of teachers. A staff member who can take the lead on developing manuals / teaching resources for blended learning models in the light of current challenges and transition to online learning.
4. Explore the possibility to grant students an automatic accreditation of a certificate of the internationally recognized institutions on which the study program is based or grant ETCS for successful participation in such a program.
5. Please start drafting a grading manual for staff members, to ensure a fair and consistent grading of students. This document can also help in situations of disagreement between a student and a lecture and will lower the impact of subjectivity for the referee.

In conclusion, the expert team considers that the Master Programme in Fitness and Nutrition offered by AAB COLLEGE is **substantially compliant** with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation Manual and, therefore, **recommends accreditation for the above study programme for a duration of three years with 50 students enrolled in the programme.**



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Expert Team

Dr. Chris Richter

24/05/2021

Signature

Chris Richter

Date

Domagoj Vugić

24/05/2021

Signature

Domagoj Vugić

Date



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APPENDICES (if available)

None