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Kosovo Accreditation Agency



AAB COLLEGE, FERIZAJ CAMPUS

**MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATICS, BSc
Programme**

RE-ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

June, Ljubljana 2021



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit:

Expert Team (ET) members:

Expert Team

Dr. Yelena Istileulova, the Bologna expert of DAAD project "Hub Peer Support" (Bonn-Brussels)

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

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
- Ilirjane Ademaj, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Leona Kovaci, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring

Sources of information for the Report:

- *SER submitted by AAB College on programme evaluation in Ferizaj campus, Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Management and Informatics*
- *Web-site*
- *Articles published on Kosovo market of HEIs*
- *Site visit (information obtained from all online meetings with stakeholders)*
- *The list of additionally requested documents:*
 1. Organogram in Ferizaj versus Prishtina; and explanation
 2. The tasks and responsibilities of the administration staff in Ferizaj; CV of QA Officer in Ferizaj. Please, describe the role of Student Coordinator in Ferizaj vs. Prishtina (CVs)
 3. Do you use the principles of ESG, and if yes, how they are implemented?
 4. Please describe the process how the internship is organised for students and the difference between Prishtina and Ferizaj (if any)?
 5. List of trainings for the Teaching staff, rate of participation conducted in Ferizaj, dates



6. Results of the survey processes in Ferizaj and how their results have been addressed? Is there any difference in the results received between Ferizaj and Prishtina, and if yes, why?
7. The list of the names of the full-time members of the academic staff and the subjects they teach:
 - (a) Ferizaj;
 - (b) Ferizaj and Prishtina
 - (c) PrishtinaHow the decision is made who will be teaching where; and the list of publications for Ferizaj's academic staff members (who teaches only in Ferizaj)? Are the conditions of employment different in Ferizaj vs. Prishtina (standard 3.1)?
8. Are there any consultancies, projects carried out in Ferizaj? How students are engaged in research projects in Ferizaj vs. Prishtina?
9. The number of students in Ferizaj vs. Prishtina for the last 3 years; the ratio of students per teacher in Ferizaj versus Prishtina (examples how it varies from subject to subject – 2 examples) and their dropout rates;
10. It has been mentioned that AAB College's programme has the students who are coming from Europe to study to AAB. Could you please provide the list of these outside students, the origins of countries they are coming from (Switzerland, etc.), their numbers – in Ferizaj vs. Prishtina for the last 5 years.
11. AAB College by Webometrics (webometrics.info/en/search/Rankings/Kosovo), please, provide the screenshots or snipping tools of the AAB rankings.
12. Please, give an example of the most typical flexible treatment of students in special situations (5.6 standard) in Ferizaj vs. Prishtina

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *KAA Accreditation Manual;*
- *Benchmarking of HEIs in Kosovo;*
- *Triangulation;*
- *International articles published on the HEIs of Kosovo*



Site visit schedule of FERIZAJ BRANCH, 2021

21st of May

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 09.00 – 09.50 | Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated (<i>no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion</i>) |
| 09.55 – 10.40 | Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff |
| 10.40 – 11.30 | Lunch break |
| 11.30 – 12.30 | Meeting with the heads of the study programme: Management and Informatics / Prishtina Campus |
| 12.35 – 13.20 | Meeting with teaching staff |
| 13.25 – 14.10 | Meeting with students |
| 14.15 – 14.55 | Meeting with graduates |
| 15.00 – 15.30 | Meeting with employers of graduates |
| 15.30 – 15.40 | Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts |
| 15.40 – 15.50 | Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program |

| No | Study programs | Experts | Responsible persons of study programs | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Management and Informatics / BSc Prishtina | Prof. Dr. Yelena Istileulova | Lulzim Shabani Gezim Selimi | Shqiponja Nallbani Ilir Rexhepi | Gëzim Shabani |

Site visit detailed schedule with the names of representatives:

Management of the Faculty

| No | Name and Surname | Position |
|----|------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Shemsedin Vehapi | Vice rector |
| 2 | Medain Hashani | Dean |
| 3 | Kosovare Ukshini | Vice dean |

Quality assurance representatives and administrative staff



| No | Name and Surname | Position |
|----|-------------------|---|
| 1 | Furtuna Mehmeti | Head of quality assurance |
| 2 | Roberta Bajrami | Quality Assurance Coordinator/Economic Faculty/Pristina |
| 3 | Zija Rexhepi | Head of administrative staff |
| 4 | Albulena Ramadani | Manager for administrative services |

**Heads of the study programme: Management and Informatics / Pristina
Campus**

| No | Name and Surname | Academic title |
|----|--------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Lulezim Shabani | Prof.ass.dr |
| 2 | Gëzim Selimi | Prof.asoc.dr |
| 3 | Shqiponje Nallbani | Prof.ass.dr |
| 4 | Gëzim Shabani | Dr.sc |
| 5 | Ilir Rexhepi | Dr.sc |

Teaching staff

| No | Name and Surname | Academic title |
|----|------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Agron Mustafa | Dr.sc |
| 2 | Vrullim Buja | Dr.sc |
| 3 | Brikena Berisha | PhdC |
| 4 | Fidan Qerimi | Prof.ass.dr |
| 5 | Fellenze Pula | Prof.ass.dr |
| 6 | Arbëresha Behlul | Dr.sc |

Current students

| No | Name and Surname | Program of study |
|----|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Alma Jakupi | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |
| 2 | Valentina Hajrullahu | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |
| 3 | Elona Hashani | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |
| 4 | Arlinda Kamenica | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |
| 5 | Kaltrina Muqaj | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |
| 6 | Gentrit Deliu | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |
| 7 | Donat Fuga | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |



Graduate students

| No | Name and Surname | Program of study |
|----|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Lulezim Azemi | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |
| 2 | Fatos Haliti | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |
| 3 | Flora Ahmeti | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |
| 4 | Albion Hasani | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |
| 5 | Endrita Hyseni | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |
| 6 | Ilirida Ajdari | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |
| 7 | Rilind Balaj | Menaxhment dhe Informatikë |

Employers of graduates

| No | Name and Surname | Business |
|----|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Betim Qerkini | Ex Projekt Shpk |
| 2 | Sead Krasniqi | Prisig |
| 3 | Liman Hashani | Divani |
| 4 | Alban Beqiri | Storm ICT |
| 5 | Arburim Shabani | Human Capital |
| 6 | Linda Osaj | Kosova Menaxhment Institut |

1.2 A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation

*The Bachelor degree's **Management and Informatics** Study programme of the Faculty of Economics of the AAB College in Ferizaj, one of the branches (second largest after Prishtina campus) is under the current evaluation of the ET. The programme lasts for 3 years, 180 ECTS with a total of 6 semesters. The aim and programme profile are provided under the website: <https://aab-edu.net/en/faculties/economics/study-programs/management-and-informatics/>*

The AAB College was established in 2002, and later it proceeded with the accreditation of study programmes in the field of forensic sciences in cooperation with the Public University of Sarajevo. Currently, AAB has 14 faculties with study programmes at the Bachelor and Master levels. Teaching for Bachelor and Master levels at the AAB College is organised in 3 campuses: in Prishtina, Gjakova and Ferizaj, and the branches have the same academic standards, similar infrastructure as in the central campus Prishtina. The AAB College has a network of collaborations with national and international colleges and universities. The



mission of AAB College <https://aab-edu.net/en/about-aab/mission-and-vision/> is located on its website, and it says, that AAB contributes to society through:

- ***Provision of quality** and diversified programs in higher education and applied science for Kosovo's labour market, region and beyond;*
- *Advancement, creation, and dissemination of the knowledge through **scientific research** with the aim to improve the welfare and health of the population, as well as through cultural, societal and economic development;*
- *Ensuring an environment which results with **social mobility and personal development** of individuals, a **responsible citizen**.*

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

In terms of administration, the description is provided to explain the difference between Prishtina and Ferizaj campuses for the same study programme which is more understood through organizational chart. The ET would like to mention that Ferizaj is the second municipality with the active economic development after Prishtina. It is natural that the report is very complied in a very similar way to Prishtina's campus. At the same time, this chapter will include more information than its title "mission, objectives and administration" to provide more internal position of branch in Ferizaj versus the main campus.

It should be mentioned in this part of this report that the ET takes into consideration the comments received by the AAB:

"please be informed that we are an Albanian speaking country and our students are Albanian students. Albanian versions of the published information are all correct and comprehensible to our academic community..."

Although it is not yet required by the standards of Kosovo HEIs to publish all information with the specifics directly related to the English language, but it should be noted that the digital information on the website is the key information collected by the 3rd parties and stakeholders. Therefore, the Webometrics, and other rankings, measurement tool platforms, students and funding parties refer to the website as the main source of information. The ET also would like to make emphasis (due to the new policy, and the Bologna documents published up to 2030), that visibility of HEIs is becoming more and more important, which is directly connected to the sources of the digital English version of website. It is related to the requirements of the Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (**standard 1.2**), the 3rd parties (stakeholders, potential students, funding agencies, ect) are paying attention and collect the information from the websites of HEIs.



It is just a recommendation to reflect the required information on the website in the correct and clear messages and language, because it is used for the rankings purposes, visibilities and many others sources of analytics.

The branch in Ferizaj is managed by the Director and the duties and responsibilities of the Branch Director are more of a logistical and coordinating nature which aims at maintaining the work progress on campus and build a network of cooperation with relevant partners in the region where the branch operates. What remained unclear only is how the branch organises the teaching activities.

As far as the mission, and objectives – they are similar to each other. The **mission of study programme** is provided in SER only (not found on the website):

- To develop students' analytical, innovative and strategic skills, by promoting the most modern **concepts** in the field of management and informatics by making **them** (**ET comments: “them” – making whom? students, but it sounds that it is related to the concepts**) principled and smart leaders who create and promote positive change at various levels of society.

First, the SER continues the following statements/paras “The program enables students to display...”, so it is not quite clear whether it is a continuation of the same mission, or it is just an explanation of the mission. The required study programme mission does not specifically reflect the research pillar (in addition to the Faculty's mission of implicit research pillar).

Second, this programme's mission contains the phrases like “to develop skills by promoting ...concepts” which are not quite clear, in terms of the logical conclusion or might have some translation deficiencies. For instance, the promotion of the modern concepts does not lead to the development of skills. Moreover, the promotion of modern concepts does not make the person a smart leader.

Third, as far as the programme mission vs. the overall mission statement of the institution is concerned, the SER says that it is fully in line with the mission of AAB College which is aimed for provision of “quality and diversified higher education programs”. However, there is no concepts of “quality”, linked to “knowledge” and “competences” embodied in the formulation of mission.

Fourth, SER does not contain the internal market's analysis of the competitors in the SER for Ferizaj. At the same time, following the request of the ET, AAB College prepared the related information on competitors' analysis, and according to this information, the related programme on “Management and Informatics” is being offered not only by **AAB, but also by the UP**.

At the same time, there are three major concerns – first, what is understood under “Informatics”, vs. „Information” (what is available on the website under the title of



“Management and “Information”), second, high unemployment rate (about 50% in 2019 prior COVID-19, which has worsened the situation), and the dominated attitude of students/graduates towards the formation of small businesses (according to the majority of students’ opinions – which again may not be quite favourable trend in the time of epidemic diseases for young graduates).

The online site session reveals the positive assessment of stakeholders and the current needs in this programme by all external stakeholders, who are also prepared to provide the internship opportunities and jobs to the current students and graduates. There is also positive opinion about the graduates from the side of the external stakeholders has been perceived during the online session with the AAB College’s stakeholders. At the same time, the situation with the youth unemployment is growing (see also 2.5 Students).

Fifth, SER includes the details of its other branch – in Ferizaj. The website also does not separate the information for the study programme in Ferizaj from Prishtina.

Sixth, the mission of study programme (related to standard 1.1.) is not available at the website, but the aim and programme profile is available: <https://aab-edu.net/en/faculties/economics/study-programs/management-and-informatics/>.

The ET noticed that the aim/programme profile includes the tautology (which might be the technical mistake as well and should be checked out): “The programme will build a powerful *students* that will enable *students*...” (below)

MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATICS



Aim and program profile

The programme offers students highest international education standards in the field of management and informatics. Our programme will assist students to develop their personalities with powerful ethical, analytical and problem solving skills through critical thinking. Students will be able to see all types of management challenges in all types of companies from various perspectives and will have sufficient knowledge on relations between companies and other disciplines. The programme will build a powerful students that will enable students to know their potential as responsible managers, who think clearly, judge wisely, communicate effectively and act with integrity during all times.

Seventh, there are **5 study** programmes in Ferizaj which ranks as the second municipality with the largest development after Prishtina versus 25 study programmes of the Faculty of Economics in Prishtina, and the demand for this programme is not clearly explained for Ferizaj.

According to the website <https://aab-edu.net/en/faculties/>, on the one hand, there are 6 study programmes in the Faculty of Economics – 3 Bachelor and 3 Master degree programmes (see screenshot 1). It looks that it is Prishtina campus, but it is not clear how the programmes are organised in branches, particularly in Ferizaj. Indicators show that 25 programmes are the



target for 2022 (screenshot 2), so it is understood that the strategy is prepared for the main campus. The place for Ferizaj or branches is not clearly targeted.



Screenshot 1.

| Indicator | Current | Target 2022 |
|------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------|
| Square meter space for students: | ~ 2.5 m2 | ~ 5 m2 |
| Square meter square/ Total Space | 53,000 | + 20,000 m2 |
| Number of laboratories: | 20 | 40 |
| Number of computers: per student | 1 për 10 | 1 për 6 |
| Number of professors for students: | 1/30 | 10 medical 20 human sc |
| Bachelor Programs | 20 | 25 |

Screenshot 2

On the other hand, the check of the website <https://aab-edu.net/en/faculties/> indicates that there are **22 study programmes** at the level of **Bachelor degree** in 14 Faculties. Therefore, this information should be double-checked in (a) number of programmes/and students and (b) number of programmes/students in the related campuses with the division of information for campus in Ferizaj.

Eighth, the programme has undergone the process of comparison with a number of outside universities (foreign ones), and by the opinion of ET, the detailed analysis is well-provided with the proper explanation. At the same time, there is no written explanation of the internal market's analysis and comparability and comparison of the internal competitors inside Kosovo. Indeed, the needs of the labour market of Kosovo exist for informatics and data management according to the labour market's external stakeholders, but it remains still uncertain how many graduates are provided with the jobs due to the fact that majority of students mention that they want to set up their own business. At the same time, the description, curriculum and explanation about this programme remind more the fields of information and management. Thus, the resemblance of programmes may not be always identical, because programmes are delivered in other environment, other language and culture, and with the different literature and background.

Ninth, it has been mentioned that the study BSc programme "Management and Informatics" has been subject to the reaccreditation procedure for the fifth time now. It also means that the market can be saturated with the management specialists and the knowledge of Informatics. Therefore, the analysis of the internal competitors is even more required (mentioned before) for the current needs of Kosovo labour market, because students are coming from this local market, and not from LSE, SEB LJ, or University of Manchester (where programmes, research capacity, internationalisation and teaching in English make the same programme very much differ from each other).

Notes to clarify: The website: <https://aab-edu.net/en/faculties/economics/study-programs/management-and-informatics/> refers to the following academic level and degree



“Bachelor of Sciences – Management and Information” (the snapshot is below), but SERs for Ferizaj is submitted for the title “Management and **Informatics**”, BSc.

The screenshot shows the website of Kolegji AAB. The header includes the logo and name 'Kolegji AAB' along with navigation links: SCHEDULE, E-SERVICE, E-PROFESORI, WEBMAIL, and SQ. The main content area has a red sidebar with icons for a checkmark and a building. The text on the page reads: 'implement a research project • Manage time efficiently and independently • Master a number of computer and communication skills.' Below this is the section 'Academic level and degree' with the title 'Academic degree title: Bachelor of Sciences – Management and Information'. The next section is 'Duration of studies and workload', which states: 'Calculation of ECTS was done taking into consideration that students are engaged for up to 4,0 hours per week, including: lectures, exercises, internship, homework, consultations with professors, seminars, individual work (at library or at home) and exams or other assessment activities. During a school year, the student needs to accumulate 60 ECTS to complete the year. Based on these data, we assign ECTS individually for each course.'

Informatics is a branch of information science, but there is a following conceptual **difference** between “**informatics**” and “**information**” (see in the *Academic level and degree, academic degree title: “Bachelor of Sciences” – Management and **Information***”).

- Informatics is (computing) a branch of information science and of computer science, that focuses on the study of **information processing** and particularly as respect to systems integration and human interactions with machine and data¹; Informatics is the theoretical and fundamental knowledge and concept behind the applied fields of information technology (IT);
- Information is things that can be known about a given topic; communicable knowledge of something; or knowledge obtained from investigation, study, or instruction²

In addition, the information from the report and by the content of this information collected during the online site-visit, have been more related to the direction of “Management and Information” rather than to “Management and Informatics”. The advice is to differentiate between these two types of concepts since this information and provide the proper information on the official website.

In general, as a comment, some small numeration is recommended to be adjusted in the SER, for instance, standard 1.2 should corresponds to the point 2.1.8 (while 2.1.7 is indicated), standard 1.3 – to 2.1.10 (while 2.1.9 is listed), and so on.

¹ According to <https://wikidiff.com/informatics/information>

² Pursuant to the : <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/information>



Standard 1.2 (in 2.1.8) also includes information about Ferizaj and consultations with the relevant actors, the peculiarities which are not quite reflected in the report, but some of them have been reflected in the session with the employers. As it has been mentioned before, the EHEA requirements have to be taken into account as well – both for Pristina and Ferizaj branch.

The following positive features should be observed in this chapter of SER:

- The market of Kosovo is described in terms of the typical business structure linked to the predominant number of small businesses;
- It is also confirmed by the interviews of the graduates and the current students, who are willing to set up their own businesses.

Standard 1.3 only partially covers both research and didactic concepts. It is not clear how the didactic has been covered during in-class, and then – during the online studies, during the lockdown time. The interesting idea has been revealed during the online visit, that AAB launched its TV and radio, and therefore, the didactic approach was mentioned in the association with these methods combining with lectures and within AAB labs. At the same time, the comments provided that there is no relevance between the launched TV and Radio Station of AAB and the didactic and research concept. The ET mentions, that this could be different understanding between the academic staff and management about this, but some TV station of other universities provide video programmes for didactic purposes, and the members of academic staff probably would like to use this opportunity as well (as an example of good practices). The ET takes into consideration „*that it is not part of the didactic concept of the Faculty of Economy*”, and “*the teaching didactic concept of the Faculty of Economy comprises of a combination between theoretical teaching, laboratory work and internship whereas the teaching philosophy is student centred learning and inquiry-based teaching*”. The other trends are coming with the digitalisation as well – as it is reflected in all EC documents with the short term, medium and long term strategic documents (one of them is »Towards a 2030 Vision on the Future of Universities in Europe«).

More information about the teaching didactics is found under the Annex 2 attached to this document. However, we welcome the recommendation to improve the didactics and research concept of the study program and will address the issue by the beginning of the new academic year.

However, the branch was not clearly mentioned. The members of academic staff did not mention these specifics, and it is also not reflected in the curricula. The themes of the trainings



for the members of academic staff have not included any pedagogics, or didactic seminars. During the online teaching, the expected trainings on didactics and peculiarities of technology to cover the didactics were not revealed.

As for challenges, the following problems were mentioned: the capacity to purchase the software (the majority use the old software programmes), private/public forms of ownership; involvement of stakeholders, and the low research capacity due to the formation of the research culture which is moving from the embryonic state towards its further development.

As far as the policy and regulations are concerned, the website of the institution has the related policy and regulations publicly located on the website (available source: <https://aab-edu.net/en/about-aab/policies-and-regulations/>) with the following policies/documents provided below.

At the same time, the updated check of the current 40 regulations, has shown that 14 documents are not currently available on the website (and SER does not explain where the missing documents are):

1. Statute
2. Study Regulation- AAB
3. Regulation for organizing master studies
4. Regulation for promotion of academic staff
5. Regulation for internal communication
6. Regulation for students' transfer
7. Regulation for the regular calendar of annual activities
8. Regulation disciplinary proceedings
9. Regulation for travel expenses abroad
10. Working regulation about Architecture and Arts' center
11. Working regulation for the Centre of justice, criminology, and security studies
12. Working Regulation for Public Opinion Research Center
13. Working Regulation about Linguistics and Cultural Research Centre



14. Working regulation for the Centre of Research in sport
15. Working regulation for the Centre of Development and Economic Forecast
16. Regulation of Procedure of the Standing Committee for evaluation
17. Regulation of Procedure of the Permanent Commission for Habilitation
18. Regulation of Procedure of the Permanent Commission for Curricula
19. Regulation of Procedure of the Standing Committee for Students
20. Working regulation of the Senate
21. Regulation about publications
22. The regulation about the tutorial system
23. Regulation on the use of official vehicles
24. Manual proposals on working Master's thesis
25. Diploma paper guide – Master program
26. Dissertation Study Guide – Bachelor Programs
27. Manual and Regulation for academic misconduct
28. Guidelines for academic references and bibliography writing
29. Code of conduct
30. Regulation on the procedure and conditions for obtaining the diploma
31. Regulation for the operation of the archive
32. Regulation on the criteria for awarding scholarships to outstanding students
33. Regulation report on exam results
34. Work regulation of the Steering Council
35. Regulation- for procedures of initiating, drafting and signing cooperation agreements
36. Code of Ethics 2019
37. Student Code of Conduct
38. Regulation for publications
39. Code of Ethics for Scientific Research
40. AAB Development Plan

The consideration of policies and regulations are very important, and there are relevant and appropriate documents listed for 1.5 standard. The check of the listed documents showed that those documents (in red colours) – available, but the other ones (in black colour) are not available.

Next, regarding the ethical conduct *in research*, it should be noted that the Ethical Code (N 8. page 3) of AAB refers to the only statement on the problem of plagiarism: “*when participating in research activities, not be involved in plagiarism, sell the work of others as theirs, or falsify the results, and respect the ethical principles for the protection of personal data and other*



established principles in other areas”. By the opinion of the ET, this statement implied in 1.5 standard, without any introduction of additional and specific measures will not be enough for the Faculty of Economics, and more anti-plagiarism measures should be introduced to ensure its normative nature; second, the procedures for thesis writing do not include any references to the procedures linked to the use of the anti-plagiarism tool.

At the same time, the positive side is that the request of the ET for the additional documents has been satisfied, and the AAB administration provided 3 theses (from Gjakove, Prishtina and Ferizaj campuses) with the check for plagiarism in Albanian language.

According to the experts Foltýnek¹ et al., (2020) refers to the specifics of Kosovo region that “*Software cannot determine plagiarism, but it can work as a support tool for identifying some text similarity that may constitute plagiarism*”. Regarding the use of anti-plagiarism tool, the Turnitin version in both languages - English and in Albanian ones should be applied depending on the use of language. In addition, the specific attention should be paid to the Albanian written works with the special instructions/developed recommendations of by AAB related to anti-plagiarism measures to be incorporated to the policy for QA (part 1.1. Policy for QA ESG, 2015): academic integrity and freedom with a policy vigilant against academic fraud.

Last, considering that various authors like Shala et al² (2018), and Leka et al., (2018)³ show the spread of this problem with the lack of law implementation and adherence, making it difficult to achieve any proper results. The problem is becoming a widespread challenge not only for private, but also for public universities (in both languages). In addition, the anti-plagiarism tool has been a long-term problem, and there are not effective mechanisms that exist for the national language. Therefore, the additional anti-plagiarism measures with the certain instructions are to be introduced (which are to be initially created) for each group of users, and, first of all, for Bachelor and Master students.

The comments received: “With respect to plagiarism, please be informed that plagiarism is a challenge identified in the entire higher education sector in the Republic of Kosovo. Until now

¹ Foltýnek, T., Dlabolová, D., Anohina-Naumeca, A., Razi, S., Kravjar, J., Kamzola, L., ... & Weber-Wulff, D. (2020). Testing of support tools for plagiarism detection. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 17(1), 1-31.

² Shala, S., Leka, D., & Morganella, T. (2018). Plagiarism in Kosovo: a case study of two public universities. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 14(1), 1-15.

³ Leka, D., & Kosumi, B. Plagiarism in Kosovo and its Perception in Kosovo and Albania Society. *Towards Consistency and Transparency in Academic Integrity*, 43.



no solution has been made at the level of MEST nor at a regional level, on how to create a software's that identifies Albanian documents and papers. AAB College has purchased the software, as one of the first HEIs in Kosovo, we have just started to implement the platform and so far, and we have not been able to assess the suitability of the platform for our study programs". The ET agrees that it is a positive trend, and it has been considered. However, the efforts to implement the quality should be reflected in the certain policies, action and motivation.

In addition to the listed issues above, there are few more things that remain unclear from SER related to this chapter. It is rather the position of 3rd parties – rankings and other sources of information about the situation in Kosovo's higher education market. The information for rankings is usually collected from the website (English language's version) and that is why it is important to provide the relevant information on the related English version's website.

Therefore, some of the examples of the Webometrics (which is mentioned by the AAB) reveals some inaccuracies:

1. The SER refers to the rankings of AAB College by Webometrics, with the following information and results which may raise some questions due to the following facts:
 - (a) HEIs of Kosovo are mixed with Serbian universities - <https://webometrics.info/en/Europe/Serbia>;
(Comments: The ET agrees that it could be related to some political issues, but please, consider this when the international students and other parties check this information – how would you reflect on it. It is important for Kosovo HEIs to see what are then the logical consequences of this information and consider these political moments as well).
 - (b) positioning of AAB **College** as AAB **University** (leading to various questions by the third parties and stakeholders);
 - (c) AAB has its rank ("excellence" rank) which is under the number of **6683**;
 - (d) the same rank number - 6683 is also given for other universities of Kosovo (from the range of different institutions – from the University of Prizren up to RIT Kosovo); but it is clear that all of these universities are different from each other;



(e) Colleges (like AAB College) are compared to the Universities

| ranking | World Rank | University | Det. | Impact Rank* | Openness Rank* | Excellence Rank* |
|---------|------------|--|------|--------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1 | 403 | University of Belgrade | 98 | 983 | 467 | 352 |
| 2 | 922 | University of Novi Sad | 98 | 1383 | 794 | 1138 |
| 3 | 1466 | University of Niš | 98 | 3173 | 1045 | 1572 |
| 4 | 1811 | University of Kragujevac | 98 | 4644 | 1342 | 1774 |
| 5 | 3022 | University of Prishtina (Albanian language) | 98 | 5934 | 1586 | 3597 |
| 6 | 3173 | Singidunum University | 98 | 6486 | 2175 | 3546 |
| 7 | 3792 | University of Pristina (Serbian language in Mitrovica) | 98 | 4550 | 2451 | 4934 |
| 8 | 5248 | Megatrend University Belgrade | 98 | 13117 | 5963 | 3996 |
| 9 | 5261 | State University of Novi Pazar | 98 | 16477 | 5963 | 3281 |
| 10 | 6063 | AAB University | 98 | 5829 | 3473 | 6683 |
| 24 | 14217 | University of Prizren | 98 | 15461 | 5442 | 6683 |
| 25 | 15377 | Universum College | 98 | 14322 | 5963 | 6683 |
| 26 | 15745 | University of Peja | 98 | 19505 | 4707 | 6683 |
| 27 | 15840 | RIT Kosovo (American University in Kosovo) | 98 | 14873 | 5963 | 6683 |
| 28 | 15862 | (3) Union University Faculty of Computer Sciences | 98 | 14896 | 5963 | 6683 |

- Research and didactic concepts are not clear for this programme: in terms of research, there is only one subject for students - Market research (but it is the elective course), and didactic concept is not particularly explained in the SER. Therefore, how the thesis is prepared is also remaining unclear. This requested question during the site visit revealed that didactic approach includes combining the lectures as well as TV and radio. It would be great to explore more on these possibilities for Ferizaj as a branch.
- At the same time, during the online visit the following current challenges listed for this programme have been outlined like: 1. the capacity to purchase the related software, because majority of programme's users deal with the old software; 2. involvement of the AAB stakeholders in participation, 3. culture of research still remains to be a problematic issue (which is reflected on the research capacity), 4. administration of financial issues when faculties are not independent.
- Policies are reviewed at least once every two years, but the 2.1.15 refer to the AAB College Development Plan of 2018-2022 with the following targets:
 - By 2020, AAB will become a leader in the region for its technological and educational base (if we make the reflection towards programme's challenges, it does not look like the current state);



- By 2021, AAB has achieved the standards of European higher education institutions for new technology equipment (however, from the challenges described, the current state is different);
- indicators reflect different number of Bachelor programmes.

Mission, objectives and administration

| <i>Standard</i> | Compliance | |
|--|-------------------|-----------|
| | Yes | No |
| <i>Standard 1.1.</i> The study programme mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution | X (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 1.2.</i> 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 (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 1.3.</i> The study programme has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept. | X (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 1.4.</i> 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 (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 1.5.</i> All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to <i>ethical conduct in research</i> , teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities | X (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 1.6.</i> All policies, regulations, terms of references and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the <i>programme</i> are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances | X (0.5) | |

The mission, objectives and administration is calculated as 50% of the assessed standards in a general area met at this report.

Compliance level: Partially-compliant

ET recommendations:

1. To prepare the consolidated version of this programme – there is a conceptual difference that exist between “informatics” (SER version) and “information” (website version; under the academic degree title: “Bachelor of Sciences” – Management and Information”);
2. Think how to embody the research-related pillar to the study programme (with the correspondence and possibilities for embracing the research-related pillar in the mission of the Faculty of Economics).



3. Include the instructions and additional motivation for consideration of anti-plagiarism procedures as the required procedure (with the introduction of the written instructions how to use it); and additional anti-plagiarism measures with the motivation mechanisms for BSc students.
4. The Turnitin version in both languages - English and in Albanian are recommended. The attention should be paid to the Albanian written works with the special instructions/developed recommendations related to anti-plagiarism measures for different levels of users, especially for BSc students of this study programme.
5. Anti-plagiarism measures are recommended to be incorporated to the policy for QA (part 1.1. Policy for QA ESG, 2015): academic integrity and freedom with a policy vigilant against academic fraud.
6. The internal market's analysis of the Kosovo competing programmes of HEIs is recommended to understand how the programme is developing.
7. Review the goals and indicators in the related Programme documents/regulations (example is provided - in its Development Plan, page 32 and adjust indicators where needed).

2.2. Quality management

QA Coordinator (also lecturer, her CV has been also submitted) located in Ferizaj office handles her activities and report to the Prishtina office (Coordination and Faculty of Economics). The Branch – Ferizaj maintains the same syllabus.

Ferizaj campus which is second after Prishtina, has a specifics. According to the online visit, there were some inconsistencies in the information collected: it was mentioned that the demand is higher from Ferizaj, and at the same time, there were the following numbers mentioned: there are 5 study programmes in Ferizaj) whereas in Prishtina in 25 programmes.

With respect to availability of the quality assurance framework (link was provided), the comments have been made that »regulations, policies, and processes, applied in the centre, are equally applied in the two branches of AAB College. This is not expressively stated in various documents, such as the quality assurance regulations...« The ET would like to mention that the level of attention to the branch is less than to Prishtina campus are not only due to the documents (which do not incorporate the specific attention to the branches), but also due to the preferences in students. There are more students in Prishtina office, and it is therefore, more attention is paid to the main office in Prishtina compared to the less-students's programmes in Branches. Therefore, it has to be compensated by more quality checks at the level of branches.



Staff participate in the various self-evaluation processes through the evidence that is submitted in addition to SER. There is also evidence about other Questionnaires collected from students, and the additional comments on Ferizaj about the survey processes are considered.

Recent survey introduced and conducted among the stakeholders - private and public companies, the processed results show that students lack:

(a) skills in practice (mainly related to the leadership and soft skills), (b) digital marketing skills and knowledge, and (c) development of competencies in the analysis of numerical data as well as their interpretation.

According to SER, Quality assurance (QA) is regulated by 3 internal documents:

1.Regulation on QA, 2.QA Guidelines and 3.Strategic Development Plan of AAB College.

One of the related documents - Strategic Development Plan 2018-2022 refers to the ESG 2015 for

- ensuring that quality assurance processes and policies are maintained in accordance with Part 1 of the European Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015);
- The principles set by ESG 2015 are an integral part of the quality assurance model within the institution (in 2.3.1). According to ESG, the policy should have a formal status which is publicly available

However, out of 3 documents listed, the first 2 documents are not available (list of the publicly available documents are in p. 2.1, page 13). When documents are not available at the level of institution, it is more uncertain what is happening at the level of programme (in Prishtina), and even much less – in the branch of Ferizaj.

The check of these two regulations (for 2.2. and 2.3) showed that it is difficult to make projections about any running programmes versus branches (including Ferizaj), because first of all, these policies are not available on the official page, and second, these documents do not contain any no references in regulations related to branches (other parts of institution). Third, since KAA introduced the new QA standards in 2018, it is also recommended to make a revision of QA regulations issued earlier and include the statements related the regulation in branches. The comments and explanations have been received on some of these statements.

The ET received an additional evidence about standards 2.4, and related 2.5 with attention to learning outcomes for the available students based on specific recommendations from the members of the academic staff, concerning the contents/ structure of the program. It has been evident that the survey data is being collected from students, and stakeholders from the labour market, but the ET did not find that some results are publicly available or reflected somewhere at its programme's level (2.6). It has been mentioned in the late comments, that the Quality



Assurance Office is under the process of circulating the Newsletter, and the results might be probably better from this introduced practice.

The evaluation results in the SER are related to the satisfaction of online learning, platform and teaching, although it is not clear what is the participation rate of students (this information is missing) who answered Questionnaires. It is pretty important to know because, the following information in the SWOT (SER; p. 27) suggests that there is no interest of students to be involved in the electronic evaluation of academic staff and administration.

There is no clear evidence about investigation of the student's workload, academic success and employment of graduates. The management of AAB College has introduced a number of various mechanisms integrated in the normal planning processes aimed at evaluating and improving the quality of study programmes, but does not specifically list them.

At the same time, what remains unclear is the issues related to the previous chapters, and the areas of responsibilities related to:

- Titles of programmes
- Updates in Regulations themselves
- Inclusion of branches
- How workload is distributed

From the online session, the staff confirms that it participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting, but in terms of improvement process – some more efforts should be done to get academic staff to be motivated, for instance, about the feedback in development of questionnaire for available programmes.

Some reporting and development of the survey process, still requires attention and involvement of others into the improvement of QA process. All aspects of the future programme are recommended to consider just to be sure that the process is organised in the right direction. As the example, the SER provides the following answers (SER, pages 26-27):

■ Very satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Moderately satisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied

While here it is related to the extent of satisfaction, the additionally submitted Questionnaires have the different structure of answers (Annex 3, "Survey Templates"), related to the state of agreement:

1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 - Neutral 4 - Agree 5 – Fully agree



Therefore, there is a principal difference between the satisfaction of process (and therefore, the fulfilment of expectations and needs) and agreement with one or the other statement (the formal act of approving or accepting something).

The provided answers (1. The professor has been prepared for the course: 2. The professor has adhered to the topics set out in the syllabus of the course and has given sufficient practical examples during lectures) have the structure which is related to agreement/disagreement answers, and not to the level of satisfaction (provided).

The other results of survey – the students' satisfaction have also been submitted by the request of the ET – from the form it looks that two branches - Prishtina and Ferizaj branches are included.

The results of the other provided survey:

1. They are not prepared in the final form (without formula as well), and therefore, the question arises, based on which evidence the improvement process takes place if there are no final results provided?
2. It looks like there is a following situation: the level of dissatisfaction is higher in the related branch (- could be in "very dissatisfied 2" – it seems to be branch (?) compared to Prishtina office, but again the results do not mention either Prishtina campus or branch;
3. Specifics of calculation provided earlier (in excel file) are not clear: the results of the second column has the whole number, and the result of next column includes the different structure of number, presented in the following form:

Exerpt1:

| Total | Very Dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied2 | Dissatisfie | Dissatisfied |
|-------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 68 | 3 | 4.411764706 | 2 | 2.941176471 |
| 68 | 2 | 2.941176471 | 3 | 4.411764706 |

Quality Management

| <i>Standard</i> | Compliance | |
|---|-------------------|-----------|
| | Yes | No |
| <i>Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement process in their sphere of activity</i> | X (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning process</i> | X (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 2.3. QA processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery including services and resources provided by other parts of the institutions</i> | X (0.5) | |



| | | |
|---|---------|--|
| <i>Standard 2.4. Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different component within it, the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students</i> | X (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 2.5. QA processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance</i> | X (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available</i> | X (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 2.7 Results of the internal QA system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student's workload, academic success and employment of graduates</i> | X (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 2.8 The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses</i> | 0.5 (X) | |
| <i>Standard 2.9 The QA arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.</i> | 0.5 (X) | |

There are 4.5 standards which can be assessed at the programme level with the correspondence of 50% of general area.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Check the public availability of key QA regulations and the related information embedded on branches*
- 2. Check the process of a survey design;*
- 3. It is recommended to prepare analysis of the survey results for Prishtina vs Ferizaj to see the difference in results with a clear set of recommendations*
- 4. Please, include the feedback (from different related groups/stakeholders) on the introduced new practices of Newsletters*
- 5. Include Plan for QA improvement at the branch level (with more efforts towards branches) with all aspect of programme planning and delivery*

2.3. Academic staff

According to the SER, there are 56 members of academic staff, and **38** members are employed on a **full-time basis**, and **18** – **on a part-time basis**. According to the additional information submitted (see Table 2.5.2 on its sub-chapter: Students), there are **26 full-time members** of academic staff, and therefore the contradiction information is emerging on the number of the



full staff members of the academic staff. Although the comments are received, but these inconsistencies in information should be explained beforehand.

From the online sessions, the lecturers from Prishtina go to Ferizaj and vice versa, and it is up to the management to decide. The Teaching staff did not know and could not explain what is the logic behind. It has also been noticed that the subjects are different, but there is no explanation provided on the website or from campus Ferizaj – whether there are any differences in curricula. According to the answers, and SER, it is a standardised. The ET recommends to set up the policy regarding the branches on teaching of academic staff. It is not clear how the policy is made regarding the teaching process of the academic staff in Ferizaj and Prishtina.

Out of 38 members (who are employed on a full-time basis? – according to the SER) , there are 30 CVs available. If we take into account the information in SER, therefore, CVs are missing for 8 members of the academic staff employed on a full-time basis. It is 27% of the missing information. If there are 26 members, it means that 4 CVs are excessive.

Among the listed members, there is only one CV who has a PhD in Computer Sciences related to the Informatics field.

Therefore, the question is raised whether the members of the staff with available CVs are provided with a contract and job description, and why CVs of other members of academic staff are missing (in the case of 38 members)?

The teaching staff should comply with the regulations that are listed as the internal Statute of the AAB College, Labor Law, and KAA's Administrative Instruction (AI). The check of the available internal document – AAB Statute includes the key section 5 that embeds the employment conditions, and some more references inside this key regulation.

As far as the job description, SER refers to the additional regulation entitled as the Regulation on Systematisation of jobs. This Regulation (which refers to the standard 3.1 and 3.7 according to SER) is not available in the website, but the SER includes it among the main documents for this chapter. According to the tasks of academic staff, the staff is required to conduct work related to the teaching process, research, engagement with students and engagement in the community again, according to the Regulation on Systematization of Jobs of the AAB College.

The provided list of training materials (Table 1, in addition to SER) is more related to quality enhancement of teaching staff provided for Prishtina and branch Ferizaj (standard 3.9) which includes the following webinars - under N 2. Online Teaching, and the related N 3. "Writing a scientific paper", and N 6 – on learning (submitted as the requested documents on training in addition to SER):

Table 2.4.1.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim
Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

| No. | Type/title of the training provided | Holder of the training | Time | Method | Assessment |
|-----|---|--|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Re-Thinking Student Assessment in Online Learning Key topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment in traditional learning versus assessment online - How to assess effectively in an online course? Diagnostics, formative and summative assessments. - Technology tools to support assessment (i.e discussion forums, online quizzes, portfolios, blogs, etc.) - Key considerations when designing assessment for online learning - Designing online exams and quizzes: Tips and guidelines | Organized by CLICKS Dr. Narimane Hadj-Hamou | 9 November 2020 | Online Platform "ZOOM" | Certificate |
| 2 | WEBINAR Transitioning Effectively to Online Teaching - AAB College Key topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online/blended learning essentials: Knowing the difference with f2f learning - Challenges and opportunities in teaching Online - Defining key characteristics for successful online learning - Various ways of delivering online: How to create the right blend? - Understanding the intersection between technology, pedagogy and people - Planning your online course: Connecting pedagogy with technology - Creating an online presence - Creating online content – Define online 'content' and how content is planned to | Organized by CLICKS Dr. Narimane Hadj-Hamou | 29 October 2020 | Online Platform "ZOOM" | Certificate |
| 3 | "Writing a scientific paper" Numerous methodological issues and specifics that the author should keep | Prof.Dr. SILVIA PEZZOLI | 16 October 2020 | Online Platform "ZOOM" | |
| 4 | Using TURNITIN platform to ensure originality of papers Key topics that have taken place include: What is Academic Integrity? Core Values of Academic Integrity | Jason Gibson Professional Services Consultant, EMEA | 21 August 2020 | Online Platform "ZOOM" | |



| | | | | | |
|---|---|--|-----------------|----------------------------|--|
| 5 | Using electronic platform for online assessment Key topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Forms of student testing through the platform - tests with alternatives, tests with essays, combined tests, forms of tests from numerical and statistical subjects.- Inserting questions into the online platform.- How to open the virtual exam and generate questions (the system was such that no student had the same test).- Ways of inserting results in the case of written tests, essays.- Forms of conducting virtual consultations about assessments in the virtual exam. | Valdete Daku Software Development Office – AAB College | 30 Mars 2020 | Online Google- meet | |
| 6 | Using electronic platform for online learning | Valdete Daku | 19 Mars 2020 | Online Google- meet. | |

It seems that the standard 3.9 can be understood in different ways – by the ET opinion, it is about the strategies developed (both in documents and in practices) that lead not only to QA but to the quality enhancement process. In general, the quality enhancement is the next, and more profound stage in a process that began with quality assurance, and after quality assurance processes is in place, both in the set of the regulated documents and in the processes.

The SER explains the standard 3.9 from different perspectives, - the organization of additional training for academic staff who have not had a very positive evaluation from students or management, but it does not mention which strategies it employs. At the same time, the SER lists these trainings, but it does not refer to the number of academic staff (in Ferizaj campus, in other campuses) on these trainings provided, and how many of them attended the trainings.

The explanation for this standard is rather related for Standard 3.6 (and not 3.9): *Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties. This standard is explained in SER with the reference to only one case – the group of PhD candidates, and not the other groups or cases.*

The SER also makes references for the related training, which are certainly beneficial for the members of the staff.

The positive comments have been received: „We had e-system where we provided material, it made us easy to come up online ...After we had a training with one international expert – online



teaching Strategy of teaching online, regarding types of teaching, and how to provide a transition...“.

On the other hand, there was only one webinar on the transition to online teaching. There is a clear needs and demand (according to the online sessions as well), for the range of trainings online - from the didactic interactive methods and online teaching with the innovative teaching methods. The decision related to 3.9 Quality enhancement as it is understood by ET are mainly based on student assessment, but so far there are no holistically formulated strategy to improve the teaching activities.

Academic staff

| 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 (0.5) | |
| 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 (0.5) | |
| 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 (0.5) | |
| Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least | X (0.5) | |



| | | |
|---|---------|--|
| through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available. | | |
| Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials. | X (0.5) | |
| 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 | |

Out of 10 points, there are 7.5 points collected corresponding to substantially compliant criteria which corresponds to 75% substantially compliant.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The list and CVs of the members of teaching staff employed on a full-time basis is recommended to keep in the administrative data basis;*
- 2. The regular training of the academic staff is recommended on the didactics methods and teaching methodologies in class and online environment;*
- 3. Formulation and preparation of strategy of the teaching activities, as well as the opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff*
- 4. The written instructions should be prepared how to use Turnitin Plagiarism tool;*

2.4. Educational process content

On the one hand, this External Review Report (ERR, p. 8) refers to the contradictory information on the “Bachelor of Sciences – Management and Information” (in the website) at the very beginning of SER for Ferizaj. It was submitted for the title “Management and Informatics”, BSc and outlined already the problematic issues of content’s difference between two concepts of “Informatics and Information”. On the other hand, the SER refers to the concepts of management discipline and outline 50% of professional subjects (again which can be different depending on the 1st content).

There are also two comments of the ET for the additionally provided information by the AAB College:

- Syllabus has been provided for the other programme (on Banking), and not for Management and Informatics
- Content of syllabus incorporates various mistakes as it has been recognised:



Some comments to this Report have been received regarding the 2.4 from the AAB on the following:

“As concerning the syllabuses, respectively standard 4.3. please be informed that we have checked once more the contents of the syllabuses submitted to KAA. Based on this verification, we can state that there are some technical mistakes such as:

- International Business (has 13 weeks)*
- Accounting (has 14 weeks)*
- Leadership (has 14 weeks)*
- JAVA Programming (the literature is not presented for each week)*
- European Economic Integration (the literature is presented at the “Basic Literature” but not under each week.*

Based on this verification, we can confirm that 13% of the syllabuses, as stated above, have the mistakes, whereas the rest of the syllabuses, respectively 87% of them fulfil the standard according to the Accreditation Manual, respectively the rest of the syllabuses contain correctly the information such as: Faculty, Department, etc.

The SER provides only one example of the most popular courses for students - E-business for its study programme “Management and Informatics” - how to set up company that does all or most of its transactions through the internet. At the same time, the check of this course shows that it is not the mandatory, but only elective course.

Therefore, the ET check website, SER and additional material for its correspondence as well. Web-site of the Faculty of Economics, Bachelor of Science in Management and Informatics available in <https://aab-edu.net/fakultetet/ekonomik/programet-studimore/menaxhment-dhe-informatike/> illustrates 3 years of study below with the listed subjects and available ECTS:

Example 1a.



| | | |
|--|------------------------------|---|
| Mikroekonomia I 9 ECTS | Menaxhment 9 ECTS | Menaxhimi i Burimeve Njerzore 6 ECTS |
| Matematike për ekonomi dhe Biznes 9 ECTS | Marketing 6 ECTS | Menaxhimi i Operacioneve 6 ECTS |
| Gjuhe Angleze I 6 ECTS | Bazat e te Dhenave 9 ECTS | Ndërmarrësi dhe NVM-te 6 ECTS |
| Makroekonomia I 9 ECTS | Lidershipi 9 ECTS | Kontabiliteti Menaxherial 6 ECTS |
| Statistike për ekonomi dhe Biznes 9 ECTS | Menaxhmenti Financiar 9 ECTS | Sistemi i Informacionit te Menaxhimit 6 |
| Kontabiliteti 6 ECTS | Informatike Biznesi 6 ECTS | Menaxhmenti Strategjik 6 ECTS |
| Lëndët zgjedhore | Lëndët zgjedhore | Marketingu Ndërkombëtar 6 ECTS |

Therefore, the first year's course (on website) suggests: Microeconomics, Math for business, English, Macroeconomics, Statistics for Economics and business, Accounting, Elective subjects.

First, the website shows **6 subjects and Elective course(s)** for the 2020-21, but the material which is submitted for the first course is **11, 12 (for the second), 13 (for the third) consecutive subjects – (Example 1a and Example 2); as well as (Example 1 a and Example 1 b)**

Example 2

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Accounting.docx | Business Informatics.doc | Commercial Laws and Taxes in Kosovo.d. |
| Business accountant.doc | Database.docx | Diploma Thesis.docx |
| Business communication and academic.d... | European Economic Integrations.docx | E- biznes.docx |
| Business Law.docx | Financial Accounting.doc | Financial Markets and Institutions.docx |
| English Language 1.docx | Financial Management.doc | Human resource management.doc |
| English Language 2.doc | Globalization Trends.doc | INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS.doc |
| Introduction to informatics.doc | Introduction to Java programming.docx | Knowledge and Inovation Management.. |
| Macroeconomics 1.docx | Leadership.doc | Management Informations Systems.doc |
| Mathematics for economics and busines... | Management.doc | Managerial Accounting.docx |
| Microeconomics.docx | market research.docx | Operations Management.doc |
| Statistics for economics and business (1).... | Marketing.doc | Organizational behavior.docx |
| | Public Financial.docx | Project Management MI.doc |
| | | Strategic management.docx |



Second, the difference occurs not only between each version: 1. Albanian language version available in the website and submitted version (in the files) 2. Difference in the website: Albanian vs. English languages (<https://aab-edu.net/fakultetet/ekonomik/programet-studimore/menaxhment-dhe-informatike/> vs. <https://aab-edu.net/en/faculties/economics/study-programs/management-and-informatics/>) and 3. Examples 3 and 4

Finally, the version is also different in credits for some subjects: example is Marketing (9 ECTS/on the website) & Marketing (6 ECTS, in the SER, page 7);

Some subjects like Entrepreneurship and SMEs (Example 3) are not available in any other versions. There are much more examples of difference, but the listed selected examples provide the broad range of discrepancies available all over through texts.

Example 1 (b)

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| Microeconomics 9 ETCS | Human Resources Managment 6 ETCS | |
| Mathematics for Economics and Business 9 ETCS | Operations Management 6 ETCS | |
| English Language I 6 ETCS | Managerial Accounting 6 ETCS | |
| Introduction to Business 6 ETCS | Managerial Accounting 6 ETCS | |
| Business Communication and Academic Writing 6 | International Business 6 ETCS | |
| Elementary Mathematics 6 ETCS | Financial Markets and Institutions 6 | |
| Macroeconomics I 9 ETCS | Advanced Business English 6 ETCS | |
| Statistics for Economics and Business 9 E | Databases 9 ETCS | Management 9 ETCS |
| Accounting 6 ETCS | Entrepreneurship and AMEs 6 | Business Informatics 6 ETCS |
| Business Law 6 ETCS | Globalization Trends 6 ETCS | Marketing 9 ETCS |
| English Language II 6 ETCS | Market Research 6 ETCS | Managment of Natural resources 6 ETCS |
| Introduction to Informatics 6 ETCS | Business analist for IT 6 ETCS | Business English 6 ETCS |
| | | Economics European Integrations 6 ETCS |
| | | Leadership 9 ETCS |



Therefore, there is quite an obvious differences within one study programme – in terms of content, numbers and subjects, as well as the different ranges in all subjects.

The most relevant courses related to Informatics are discovered to be the elective courses: Introduction to Informatics (1st year) is elective course, Introduction to Java programming (2nd year) – elective, E-business (3rd year) is elective, and course linked to the research skills – which is “Market research” is also elective course.

There are only three courses during 3 years programme - Business Informatics, Database, and Information system management which are mandatory.

Example 3 (Exerpt)

| | | | | | |
|--------|-----|--|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Year 1 | I | Microeconomics I | Prof.asoc.dr Gëzim Selimi | Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 1 | I | Mathematics for Economics and Business | Dr.sc Arbëresha Behluli | Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 1 | I | English language I | Phd.c Veton Fetahaj | Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 1 | I | Business Accountant | Dr.sc Agron Hajdini | Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 1 | II | Macroeconomics I | Prof.ass.dr Besime Ziberi | Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 1 | II | Statistics for Economics and Business | Dr.sc Arbëresha Behluli | Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 1 | II | English language II | Phd.c Veton Fetahaj | Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 1 | II | Introduction to informatics | Ma. Besnik Avdijs | Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 2 | III | Business Informatics | Dr.sc Shpetim Latifi | Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 2 | III | Management | Dr.sc Agron Mustafa | Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 2 | III | Marketing | Prof.ass.dr Shaip Bytyqi | Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 2 | III | Financial Accounting | Dr.sc Nazmi Iballi | Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 2 | IV | Database | Dr.sc Ilir Bytyqi | Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 2 | IV | Public Finances | Prof.ass.dr Nakije Kida | Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 2 | IV | Public Finances | Ma. Blerta Haliti Derguti | Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 3 | V | International Business | Dr.sc Pleurat Mustafa | Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 3 | V | Human Resources Management | Dr.sc Agron Mustafa | Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 3 | V | Managerial Accounting | Prof.ass.dr Nazmi Iballi | Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 3 | V | Financial Markets and Institutions | Prof.ass.dr Florije Miftari | Ferizaj | Elective |

The SER (p. 38) refers that students should know

- different applications and the data systems and the possibilities that come from them;
- building a basic database system and analysing and interpreting them.

Some courses related to Informatics area (Introduction to Informatics - elective) covers only the very basic foundation – the standard office applications - Word, Excel, Powerpoint, which is not quite expected from this course. The ET thinks that Informatics course (comments: Informatics studies the representation, processing, and communication of information in



natural and engineered systems) should includes more specific courses, unless this study programme is related to Information.

The mandatory course “Business Informatics” again refers to applications, but from the course description it is not clear whether it means the standard office applications (like in previous course), or application programmes (Email, Web browsers, Games, Word processors, softwares, Media players, Database management), or it includes Application software and system software. Therefore, the ET thinks that “capability of taking up the adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students’ personality” would be quite difficult here.

As far as the study programme, syllabus and content of the courses are concerned, there are the following comments:

- learning outcomes are prepared not for all subjects; the course objectives are missing from many subjects, (4.4), as well as the related structure recommended by KAA standards (the basic thematic content, distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, etc)

The various versions of programme have been submitted, and these versions are all slightly different in terms of subjects.

Example 4



PRISTINA AND FERIZAJ

| Program Bsc. Managements and Informatics - Pristina/Ferizaj | | | | | |
|---|----------|---|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| YEAR / SEMESTER | | CURRICULUM | | | |
| | Semester | Subjects | Teacher | Campus | M/E |
| Year 1 | I | Microeconomics I | Dr.sc Erblina Pira | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 1 | I | Mathematics for Economics and Business | Phd.c Kaltrina Qerkini | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 1 | I | Business Communication and Academic Writing | Prof. Ass. Dr. Hasan Saliu | Pristina and Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 1 | II | Statistics for Economics and Business | Phd.c Kaltrina Qerkinu | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 1 | II | Accounting | Phd.c Ylber Prekazi | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 1 | II | Introduction to Informatics | Dr.sc Laurik Helshani | Pristina and Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 1 | II | Business Law | Prof.ass.dr Vjollca Hasani | Pristina and Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 2 | III | Business Informatics | Phd.c Shpresa Bajrami | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 2 | III | Financial Management | Phd.c Ylber Prekazi | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 2 | III | Financial Management | Ma. Arijan Ibrahim | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 2 | III | Introduction to Programming (with Java) | Dr.sc. Jusuf Qarkaxhija | Pristina and Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 2 | III | European Economic Integrations | Prof.ass.dr Rrezarta Gashi | Pristina and Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 2 | IV | Leadership | Prof.ass.dr Vjollca Hasani | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 2 | IV | Entrepreneurship and SMEs | Dr.sc Baki Rexhepi | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 2 | IV | Globalization Trends | Dr.sc.Fjolla Trakaniqi | Pristina and Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 2 | IV | Market Research | Prof.ass.dr Shqiponja Nallbani | Pristina and Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 3 | V | Operations Management | Dr.sc Arbëresha Behlulii | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 3 | V | E-Business | Prof.ass.dr Shkumbin Misini | Pristina and Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 3 | VI | Information Systems Management | Dr.sc Pranvera Dalloshi | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 3 | VI | Project Management | Dr.sc Ilir Rexhepi | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 3 | VI | Strategic Management | Dr.sc Naim Ismajli | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 3 | VI | Diploma Thesis (Bachelor) | Dr.sc Fidan Qerimi | Pristina and Ferizaj | Mandatory |
| Year 3 | VI | Commercial Laws and Taxes in Kosovo | Prof.ass.dr Enver Bajcinca | Pristina and Ferizaj | Elective |
| Year 3 | VI | Commercial Laws and Taxes in Kosovo | Ma. Blerta Haliti Derguti | Pristina and Ferizaj | Elective |

From the online discussions, it is understood that the Internships in reality are organised through the deans' office according to the employers. The SER however makes reference to the career centre. The website does not provide any information on how the career center is functioning, but the additional information is provided.

In some selected subjects (European Economic Integration), there are some general references like: "Basic literature, supplementary literature" – and then there is so called "main and additional literature" of the year (2015) and (2011), but it claims to explain the process of



Brexit which took place in January 2020. The other subject – “Economics” refers to the “Summary of the lectures”. Bibliography is recommended to diversify, but the ET is not quite sure how the member of academic staff feel themselves about the infrastructure of library.

Regarding 4.9 – there is a regular check of student achievements with the described procedures, but there are no specific regulations mentioned or listed (4.10) how to deal with students if their standards are inadequate. There is nothing is mentioned how students practice is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.

Some more thoughts:

- (1) A diminishing trend in the number of students in Ferizaj campus, mentioned in SER for this study programme (see 2.5. Students). The question is whether there any interest in this programme, and does it depend on the region or on the teachers who deliver the programme, or any other factors?
- (2) Issues of motivation for the Academic staff, on the one hand, and teaching responsibilities in Ferizaj campus versis Prishtina
- (3) cooperation agreements, contracts with institutions/organisations/practical training units are not mentioned for Ferizaj

| <i>Standard</i> | Compliance | |
|---|-------------------|-----------|
| | Yes | No |
| <i>Standard 4.1.</i> The study programme 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, the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality | X (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 4.2.</i> The study programme complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA. The individual components of the programme are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning. | X (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 4.3.</i> 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 (0.2) | |



| | | |
|--|--------------------|--|
| and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation. | | |
| <i>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 programme under evaluation</i> | X (0.5) | |
| <i>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.</i> | Not related N/R | |
| <i>Standard 4.6. The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of teaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.</i> | X | |
| <i>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.</i> | X (0.5) | |
| <i>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.</i> | X | |
| <i>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.</i> | X | |
| <i>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.</i> | X (0.5) | |
| <i>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</i> | X (0.5) | |



| | | |
|---|---------|--|
| <i>practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.</i> | | |
| <i>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.</i> | X (0.5) | |

There are 11 standards (because 4.5 is not applicable) and 6.7 points collected 60%

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Compliance and harmonisation of subjects are needed within their curricula*
2. *Educational process content is recommended to be checked for the correspondence between the various versions available in the SER, website in English and website in Albanian language, as well as the correspondence on the concepts between Information and Informatics*
3. *Bibliography/Literature is recommended to be diversified*
4. *In syllabi it is also recommended check the learning outcomes (knowledge) and add the skills and qualifications in addition to it (good practices)*
5. *Include the standard structure with the discipline's objectives, the thematic content, etc.*
6. *Ensure teaching strategies for different groups of students' needs*

2.5. Students

Differently from Prishtina office, there is a diminishing trend in the number of students in Ferizaj campus, mentioned in SER for this study programme (Table 2.5.1). The question is whether there any interest in this programme, and does it depend on the region or on the teachers who deliver the programme, or any other factors?

Table 2.5.1

| Ferizaj | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Level of study/academic year | 2020/2021 | 2019/20 | 2018/19 | 2017/2018 | 2016/2017 |
| Program | | Number of students | Number of students | Number of students | Number of students |
| BSc Management and Informatics | 19 | 33 | 53 | 30 | 66 |

Table 2.5.1. Number of students in this program in the campus of Ferizaj.



The criteria for admission is to be set based on the Statute of the AAB College (under so called “acceptance”), with procedures and public competition (for instance, 68 article). The article 84 (translated in English is not quite clear: which programme is it written for (Q: Bachelor degree?)). It also raises the question about “the acceptance condition” (meaning “admission”) for this programme: whether this article on admission is written for bachelor programme, and if yes, why there are similar conditions listed (repeated twice, - under 1. and under 2: “high school” of 12 years with the Diploma shall automatically include the previous level of study - which is a primary school). It is assumed that the criteria is provided for bachelor degree, but the study programme’s level (bachelor or master) is not indicated. The article 67 mentions that there are only two modes of study: full-time and part-time basis programmes. The Statute does not make the references for the online, digital or blended modes of studies which may appear, and it is recommended to think about its inclusion in the case of some repeated “non-optimistic” scenarios.

The Statute and related documents, including SER should harmonise their requirements on admission according to the above, despite the formal criteria for admission of new students are set in the Statute of the AAB College. SER does refer to the process of admission at the level VI of the NQF.

The standard 5.2 is formally regulated, and according to the opinions collected during the online sessions (during the online site visit), it currently may include the actual admission for those students who live abroad. As it understood from the online site visit, there are more students (**majorities are of Kosovo origins** who live abroad, but study in Kosovo, and therefore the amendments/additions are recommended to be adjusted to the local and the English versions of AAB policy/regulations to open the doors to its “internationalization” as well. Therefore, it is recommended to make some additions in the admission procedures reflected in the regulatory documents as the step-by-step process for both the local, international, and other categories of students.

In terms of interactive teaching and learning process, according to the internal regulations (p.2.3.7) a group of students may not consist of more than 80 students (SER, page 30). At the same time, according to the provided ratio (Table 2.5.2) – 1 professor delivers the lectures for the average of 7 or 8 students (ratio =7.4 students).

The grading, and the system of exam are described regulated. As far as the requests for extension and flexible treatment of students, the SER provides the description that these requests are always approved. The regulation that describes these cases is not mentioned (when the request of student is linked to the disease, for instance, is one case, and what about the other cases - if the student simulates, for instance).

According to the table 2 provided, it seems that one of the provided figures - 26 full-time professors would be enough for 2020/2021 BSs Management and Informatics. At the same time, it is not explained why every 5th student is leaving this programme (dropout rate



according to the Table 2.5.3 is ranging between 19, 3% and more than 21%) which is expanding the possible unemployment rate (according to Table 2.5.1)

The data for the youth unemployment (according to provided Brussels, 6.10.2020 SWD (2020) 356 final, p. 57) shows a slight drop 49.4% in 2019 compared to 55% of unemployment in 2018, but due to the COVID-19, the situation has been worsed by the beginning of 2021 (no data collected yet). According to the recent data from Brussels Report “COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Kosovo, 2020 Report (Brussels, 6.10.2020 SWD (2020) 356 (p. 114): Youth unemployment rate: proportion of the labour force aged 15–24 (for 2007; 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018) Table 2.5.1

| | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Youth unemployment rate: proportion of the labour force aged 15–24 that is unemployed (%) | 70.0 | 61.0 | 57.7 | 52.4 | 52.7 | 55.4 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|

Table 2.5.2 refers to the dropouts – in both campuses, but in Ferizaj, the dropout rate is a bit lower, and ratio of students per professor is higher:

Dropouts

| Management and Informatics BSc | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------|-----------|----------|---------|--------|-----------|----------|---------|-----------|
| Campus | Total Nr. | Dropout | % | | Total Nr | Dropout | % | | Total Nr | Dropout | % |
| Prishtinë | 191 | 41 | 21.45% | | 145 | 28 | 19.31% | | 120 | 5 | 19.16% |
| Ferizaj | 49 | 9 | 18.36% | 2020/2021 | 33 | 7 | 21.21% | 2019/2020 | 53 | 11 | 20.73% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 2018/2019 |

Student – professor ratio

| Management and Informatics BSc | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Academic year 2020/2-21 | | | |
| Campus | Nr. Total | Full time staff | Student staff ratio |
| Prishtina | 191 | 26 | 1/7.35 |
| Ferizaj | 49 | 9 | 1/5.44 |

Dropouts

| Management and Informatics BSc | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------|-----------|----------|---------|--------|-----------|----------|---------|-----------|
| Campus | Total Nr. | Dropout | % | | Total Nr | Dropout | % | | Total Nr | Dropout | % |
| Prishtinë | 191 | 41 | 21.45% | | 145 | 28 | 19.31% | | 120 | 5 | 19.16% |
| Ferizaj | 49 | 9 | 18.36% | 2020/2021 | 33 | 7 | 21.21% | 2019/2020 | 53 | 11 | 20.73% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 2018/2019 |

| Ferizaj | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Nr | Niveli i studimit / viti akademik | 2020/2021 | 2019/20 | 2018/19 | 2017/2018 | 2016/2017 |
| | Programi | Numri i studentëve | Numri i studentëve | Numri i studentëve | Numri i studentëve | Numri i studentëve |
| 1 | Ba Menaxhment dhe Informatike | 19 | 33 | 53 | 30 | 66 |



SER makes a reference to the adoption of Regulation on Bachelor studies which includes the rights and obligations of students (re. 5.9 standards), but the check of this regulation was not successful on the internet website. The version in Albanian language is however, provided. The Statute contains the Article 73 on the students' rights and obligations as well as 78 Article – with the rights to form the students' council of academic unit and parliament.

In addition to the information provided in SER, there is an Article 98 of the Statute which allows students to move from one HEI to the other one (5.10). SER also provides more information about the additional 2 hours consultations per week, when teachers allocate their time for the counselling meetings with students, including the through electronic platforms.

All students enrolled in the study programme possess an equivalent document of study with the formally prepared admission requirements prepared for all students. There are also 41 students who participates in additional curriculum activities (examples are provided – for the New Economists Club).

The ET understands that information on scholarship (submitted, but not visible on the website) as a percentage of discount to the student's tuition fees is provided for different categories of students - with excellent grades and the different social groups of students, including those with disabilities. Effective procedures with instructions and motivation are still to be introduced in addition to the described ones to ensure the originality of students' works.

Students

| <i>Standard</i> | 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 (0.5) | |
| 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 (0.5) | |
| Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process. | X (0.5) | |
| 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 (0.5) | |
| 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 (0.5) | |
| 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 (0.5) | |
| Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents. | X | |
| Standard 5.11. Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning. | X | |

There are 8 points out of 11 related points which is 72 %

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Expand the visibility of your website, and add the specifics of admission for students in English (in the case of foreign students – “internationalisation” process – one of the possible group is Albanians who live abroad) in the related regulations;*
2. *If there is an emerged demand observed from the students abroad, therefore, the amendments are recommended to be introduced (for various types of students) that also increases the internationalisation phase.*
3. *The Statute does not make the references for the online, digital or blended modes of studies for students, and it is recommended to think about its possible inclusion in the case of other scenarios (non-optimistic ones).*
4. *Effective additional procedures with instructions and motivation are recommended to be used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.*



2.6. Research

The list of submitted papers have been provided for 23 members of academic staff from Ferizaj campus, but it is still not clear how many members are working in Ferizaj. There are either 26 (submitted as a requested information) and 38 members of academic staff (in the SER) working on full time basis. As it understood from online session, the members of academic staff can work both in Prishtina and in Ferizaj, and there are some complications linked to the information on the academic staff members. It is mainly related to the policy and motivation how and who teaches in which campus. It is important to make the clear policy related towards the members of academic staff, because research area is the consequences of 2.3 point (Academic staff). The most important is that the members of academic staff clearly understand why they located in branch and consideration of their own motivation.

The additional information has also been supplied to the ET. For instance, the Thesis Journal was not accessible previously by the link provided in the SER (few checks had been undertaken), but now this information is accessible <https://thesis-journal.net/>

- Regulation on Academic promotion (has also been added)
- the number of research projects have been provided in the additional documents.

In the rest of documents, it is difficult to separate the members of academic staff working on the full time and part time basis, because there are not clarifications inside documents. The positive side reflected to improvement and broadening the research interests at the Faculty level is organisation of different events like “Challenges of Kosovo during the journey to European Union” (19.01.21), discussion with students, students’ conference on “The challenges of employment for youth in the period of transition” (2019).

The check is made for the specifics of this study programme related to the selected fields of “informatics”, and there is only one member of academic staff who participated in the conference in this field for the last five years (in the year of 2016 in the international 7th conference in the Department of Statistics and Applied Informatics organised by the Faculty of Economy in the University of Tirana in collaboration with Academy of Science of Albania University). As far as the clear policies for defining research, SER provides the general statement on what is related to the research work. Based on the internal procedures at the College level, according to the SER, development of research at AAB is divided into 4 different categories:



- (a) Thematic research work of the departments;
- (b) Research work developed by Research Centers;
- (c) Individual research work of academic staff (with provision of grants);
- (d) Scientific publications

Defining 4 categories for research is the first step towards the policy formulation (policy is not clearly present). The policy and the plan of actions should be activated – first of all, it should take the efforts of 3 levels – institutional, faculty and study programme. It should be the policy to connect the institutional targets to the faculty's and study programmes level's (including their branches). Therefore, the bottom-up approach is suggested due to the specifics of this programme. Afterwards, it should also be balanced by the holistic top-down approach (institutional-faculty-study programme).

SER refers that the Faculty of Economics made an improvement in the fields of research, but does not provide a clear evidence in terms of the study programme. It is not clear which sufficient financial logistic and financial assistance is proposed. Study programme has not clearly defined the scientific research objectives, and Strategic development plan 2022 does not include this particular study programme's defined input and output (also at the Faculty level). According to the Strategic Development plan, every year AAB organises at least two scientific conferences of regional and international character are organized, but the SER does not reflect on it, except the expectations, that at least one paper is published. SER does make reference that it is aiming to organise scientific conferences (which refers to the future tense) and increase cooperation with universities, but it contradicts to the Strategic development plan 2018-22 (it says that the event handles these activities twice a year). The targets specified in the Strategic development plan -

- *Each year AAB supports at least 50 small research projects.*
- *Every year, at least two scientific conferences of regional and international character are organized for the presentation of the results of the research projects.*

are not clearly specified in the study programme in terms of its participation (how many research projects have been implemented by the study programme of "Management and Informatics" in Ferizaj campus, and which 2 scientific conferences, the members of this study programme participated in).

The academic staff is expected to have publications once a year. The positive component is that AAB College has also introduced the International Scientific Journal entitled 'Thesis', with the anonymous double blind peer review process. The Journal "Thesis" for scientific publications has also its International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). The check of all



members of academic staff illustrates that there are only 4 members of academic staff who used this opportunity. It is also not specified whether it is motivated or there is any promotion for those who publish their papers and articles.

The ET has also undertaken the few attempts at different time to see the publications in the Thesis Journal (<https://thesisjournal.net/>), but the page shows that it cannot be reached.

At the same time, there is no any specific policy/document found, and also involvement of the current academic staff into the activities of existing research units. The additional check was undertaken in the connection to policy implemented within this study programme – to find the links to already established research units and centers, for instance, the Center of Development and Economics Forecast available at the Faculty of Economics <https://aab-edu.net/en/about-aab/policies-and-regulations/> with its working regulations – available (under 15p.). However, these research links and connections are not mentioned in this study programme's related Research. The journal of AAB Collee International Scientific Journal "Thesis" that is mentioned as the one available for the academic staff members, is also not in use by the members of academic staff for the last few years (according to the list of publications).

According to the latest report, - the Commission Staff Working Document Kosovo, 2020 Report (Brussels, page 86)¹: *"Research is not a priority for universities, with most of the funding allocated to teaching. Private and public higher education institutions apply very uneven criteria for promotion based on scientific research and publications"*.

The Development Plan of the AAB College states that the strategic objective is directed to support research projects of staff and students to improve working conditions for educational and research services. The SER also includes the statement that each member of the academic staff is obliged to produce at least one scientific (1) paper within the academic year and to engage in other cooperation projects which aims to increase the quality of teaching.

The additionally requested List of updated scientific papers of the Faculty of Economics academic staff/Bsc Management and Informatics showed that many members of academic staff did not publish the research papers according to the requirements or it was unevenly distributed (some members published more than one required publication per year and the others – did not publish the one publication required).

¹ Commission Staff Working Document Kosovo, 2020 Report Brussels, 6.10.2020 SWD (2020) 356



Due to the unclear policy on research and publications, the ET is not sure and confident how the members of academic staff are informed what would be the results for promotion, how many hours of research loads versus teaching they are going to have and other clarifications not mentioned in the SER.

The students are involved in the various events at the Faculty level which might be related to research activities – various discussion with students, students' conference on "The challenges of employment for youth in the period of transition" (2019). At the same time, it is not clarified how many students at the level of Faculty are active (especially, from this particular study programme, campus, who particular - names as well as their participation in the International student conferences and which particular subjects and research). There are topics of research papers provided for 10 people (no names provided) – for those who write the diploma thesis – partially confirmed.

| <i>Standard</i> | Compliance | |
|---|-------------------|-----------|
| | Yes | No |
| <i>Standard 6.1.</i> 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 (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 6.2.</i> 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 (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 6.3.</i> 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 |
| <i>Standard 6.4.</i> The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity. | X (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 6.5.</i> 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 (0.5) | |
| <i>Standard 6.6.</i> Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation. | X (0.5) | |



| | | |
|--|---------|---|
| 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 (0.5) | |
| 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 (0.5) | |
| Standard 6.10. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities | X (0.5) | |

There are 4 points collected out of 10 available points which corresponds to 40% of general area for research.

Compliance level: partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Research Policy is recommended to be prepared at the level of the Faculty adjusted for each study programme (if not available), or it is recommended to be activated (since it has not been visible).*
2. *The Research policy and the plan of actions is recommended with the bottom-up approach. The efforts are also recommended at different levels – institutional, faculty and study programme.*
3. *It is recommended to connect the institutional targets to the faculty and study programmes levels (including their branches). Therefore, the bottom-up approach is suggested due to the specifics of this programme. Afterwards, it should also be balanced by the holistic top-down approach (institutional-faculty-study programme).*
4. *Research policy's Action plan should include the information about the possible involvement of teaching staff in the activities of already established units (for instance, the Center of Development and Economics Forecast available at the Faculty of Economics) or other working centers.*
5. *Check the research targets for study programme and adjust them in the related documents*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

The video entitled “Kolegji AAB | Introduction to our campus/Premises of Economics Study Programs” has been prepared and submitted through the following link: <https://youtu.be/IXs4-j46Jbg>



The video covers the premises of AAB College, including the Faculty of Economics of this campus, - Prishtina, as well as the facilities of other two campuses of AAB College, - in Gjakova and Ferizaj. Video includes the overview of all facilities – from the premises and outside infrastructure up to rooms, labs, library, administration, and the internal rooms of branches are shortly covered as well.

There are excellent conditions for students with a modern infrastructure located in its 64 000 sq. meters. In terms of infrastructure and resources, the AAB College has modern infrastructure and offers the comfortable conditions for students, including the premises for sport and theatre, and according to SER, *“it is the largest non-public higher education institution”*. The video covers all campuses with the sections of Students services, e-administration, Deans’ offices, gym-sport facilities, restaurant, inner park’s area, snack corners, career and employment offices, computer labs and others, library and start up and innovation rooms. Video does not provide any specific information whether the infrastructure and facilities are adapted to the students with special needs. However, the SER makes reference that the building has escalators, elevators, emergency exits and all relevant infrastructure, but it does not explore any specific information on this topic.

The AAB College generates revenue, and thus, it ensures the financial sustainability of the study programme. The Report includes the structure of financial means from the 7 sources, but do not provides the financial plan itself. Due to the availability of the audit company it should be checked on a regular basis.

There are 2 libraries in Prishtina and in the other campus, in Ferizaj. The additional information has been provided about the Library for the Faculty of Economics in terms of libraries, number of seats and many other facilities, as well as the subscription

- Central Library: 380 seats
- Branch Library (AAB2): 60 seats

What is not quite clear is whether there are any specific books related to “Management and Informatics” and whether it is possible to borrow related literature, including the online access during online learning (like last year, 2020).

Currently the Faculty of Economics in Prishtina and the Ferizaj branch mentioned about the students with special needs, but do not mentions how many of them the study programme has. It would be interesting to know whether there is any policy about this category of students. It



is also recommended to expand the social responsibilities towards the students with special needs, considering what can be done for this category of students.

Infrastructure and resources

| <i>Standard</i> | Compliance | |
|---|-------------------|-----------|
| | Yes | No |
| Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account. | X | |
| Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum 3 years. | X (0.5) | |
| 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; d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so | X | |



| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 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 | |

There are 5.5 allocated points out of 6 points which is 91% corresponds to general area of substantially compliant.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Please, include the list of different categories of students (who are considered as the students with special needs) and the related facilities for those categories of students with special needs.

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that Ferizaj CAMPUS MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATICS, BSc Study Programme offered by AAB COLLEGE is *Partially compliant* (the most frequent one) with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation manual and, therefore, recommends *Not to accredit* this study program in Ferizaj.

| Standard | Compliance Level |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Mission, objectives and administration | Partially compliant |
| 2. Quality management | Partially compliant |
| 3. Academic Staff | Substantially compliant |
| 4. Educational Process Content | Partially compliant |
| 5. Students | Substantially compliant |
| 6. Research | Partially compliant |
| 7. Infrastructure and resources | Substantially compliant |
| Overall Compliance | Partially compliant |

The overall compliance: **Partially compliant**

The branch in Ferizaj lacks the strength of compliance with the standards, and it is recommended that more attention is paid to the branches in all aspects of study programme to ensure that the quality of the institution will not be compromised. The focus should be made



on more clear understanding of the educational process content, syllabi on Informatics and Management, information provided for the 3rd parties (consistencies and transparency) in the branches as well as the clear motivation of the academic staff and their understanding of policy where to teach and research (Prishtina vs. Ferizaj)

ET recommendations:

1. Please, pay attention to the mission and objectives of the programme and pay attention to the English version of the website due to the visibility for the 3rd parties, stakeholders and rankings. This information is the basis for the rankings as well.
2. Review the goals and indicators in the related Programme.
3. Anti-plagiarism measures are recommended to be incorporated to the policy for QA (part 1.1. Policy for QA ESG, 2015): academic integrity and freedom with a policy vigilant against academic fraud.
4. The regular training of the academic staff is recommended on the didactics methods and teaching methodologies in class and online environment;
5. Please, pay attention to the Educational Process Content regarding syllabi (or syllabuses) in terms of learning outcomes, time, literature. It is also recommended to add the skills and qualifications to the knowledge (learning outcomes)
6. Pay attention to the members of academic staff's understanding for their workload/allocation preferences and policy of teaching/preferences in research in Ferizaj vs. Prishtina in the case of off-line (physical classroom teaching)
7. Formulation and preparation of strategy of the teaching activities, as well as the opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff
8. Effective additional procedures with instructions and motivation are recommended to be used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.
9. Research Policy is recommended to be prepared at the level of the Faculty with the bottom-up approach. The efforts are also recommended at different levels – institutional, faculty and study programme in Prishtina and at the branch level – Ferizaj.

Expert Team

Chair

Yelena Istileulova

02.07.2021

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)