



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

AAB College
ARCHITECTURE
Bachelor of Art (BA) program

RE-ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

21.06.2019, Pristina



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1. Context	3
1.2. Site visit schedule	3
1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation	4
2. PROGRAM EVALUATION	5
2.1. Mission, objectives and administration	5
2.2. Quality management	7
2.3. Academic staff	8
2.4. Educational process content	10
2.5. Students	12
2.6. Research	13
2.7. Infrastructure and resources	15
8. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET	16
3. INTRODUCTION	19
3.1. Context	19
3.2. Site visit schedule	19
3.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation	20
4. PROGRAM EVALUATION	21
4.1. Mission, objectives and administration	21
4.2. Quality management	23
4.3. Academic staff	24
4.4. Educational process content	26
4.5. Students	29
4.6. Research	30
4.7. Infrastructure and resources	32
9. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET	33



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 13.05.2019

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Prof. Dr. Balint Bachmann
- Prof. Dr. Peeter Normak

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- Avni Gashi, Acting Director of KAA
- Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation

Sources of information for the Report:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Course descriptions (syllabus)
- CVs of academic staff
- Strategic Development Plan for 2018-2022 of AAB College
- Public web of AAB College (<https://aab-edu.net/>)
- Other documents provided by request (incl. Quality Assurance Guideline)
- Meetings with the management, responsible persons for the study programs, quality assurance representatives, teaching staff and employers.

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *KAA Accreditation Manual*
- *National Qualifications Framework*
- *Professional Qualifications in the European Union (Directive EC/2005/36 Article 21/7)*

1.2. Site visit schedule

(12th May)

19.45	Meeting at the Reception of the Hotel
20.00	Working dinner



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

(13th May)

08.30	Meeting at the reception of the hotel
09.00 – 09.30	Meeting with the management of the faculty of Computer Science
09.35 – 10.35	Meeting with the head of the study programme
10.40 – 11.15	Meeting with quality assurance representatives
11.20 – 12.10	Meeting with teaching staff
12.10 – 13.15	Lunch break
13.20 – 13.50	Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure
14.00 – 14.50	Meeting with students and employers of graduates
14.55 – 15.40	Meeting with graduates and employers of graduates
15.45 – 16.00	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program

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

AAB College is the biggest non-public higher education providing institution in Kosovo. It offers a wide range of study programs at BA and MA level as well as professional study programs. About 50% of its academic services and about 70% of administrative services are digitalized. Its mission is the following: “AAB College applies the most up-to-date approaches to teaching and research, provides perfect working conditions and studies for students of all levels and for teachers, including the latest technologies, enabling a friendly, academic and developing environment, actively contributes to social and economic life of the country and realizes quality programs of international cooperation in higher education and in scientific research. In this sense, AAB cultivates a secure environment that enables creativity, critical thinking, tolerance, and high ethical values of teachers and students within a lifelong education framework.”

The vision of AAB College is to become a leading education and research institution that exemplifies the best national and international quality, values and traditions in higher education and promotes high standards of academic and research life at home and abroad, in line with new technological developments.

The *Bachelor of Art in Architecture* program was accredited first in 2015 and has been launched successfully at AAB College. The number of enrolled students per year is far above 100 recently. Different from other regions of Europe where the gender ratio of students in Architecture is nearly equal, at AAB female students are the 30% minority. The BA in Architecture is a three-year study program with mandatory training during the studies and final thesis in the final 6th semester. As the intention of the study program AAB states:

- Architecture BA program is based on the stimulation of artistic and creative aspects of the occupation, but in a proper relation to technology and structure of buildings as immanent parts of the profession;



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

- in line with the needs of the practice of Architecture, knowledge of materials, space, forms, proportions and competences in technology are taught as fields of competence;
- professional practice of an Architects requires MA level education. The BA in Architecture program is followed by the MA in Architecture completing the competences of the students of the study programs;
- the study programs of both levels intend to connect art and technology giving priority to the creative ability of the future professionals in Architecture;
- the program puts emphasis on both residential planning and the design of public buildings as required by the labor market in the building industry;
- developing awareness of the students for preservation and revitalization of the built heritage is a key element of the study program; Analyze and evaluate online risk versus cyber security standards.

The course descriptions filed separately contain the purpose and content of the course, the expected learning outcomes are explained in a very dense form, the recommended literature, teaching methods and assessment of students' performance.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

Comments of the Expert Team (ET) on each standard are numbered according to the standards of KAA Accreditation Manual.

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

- 1.1. The mission statement of AAB College is published on its homepage both in Albanian and English and includes the aspects of teaching, research and community service. The mission statement does not specify any subject area of the college. The Art oriented study program is not the main focus of the portfolio of AAB, but it is complimentary to the business, applied sciences and media areas of their academic activities. The vibrant urban development of Kosovo requires labor force in engineering and architecture too. Therefore, although not explicitly stated, the study programs in Architecture complies with the mission statement of the College. The Scientific Council of the Faculty of Architecture implemented several changes in its curricula upon request of the students and inputs collected from the labor market. Practical components as compulsory subjects in design studio and on the building site are part of the study program too. Exhibition and discussion of the students' work help to prepare for the future profession of the Architect.
- 1.2. The Self Evaluation Report (SER) states, that the Scientific Council of the Faculty of Architecture implemented several changes in its curricula upon request of the students



and inputs collected from the labor market. Additional subjects in Mechanics, Statics and Construction were added.

- 1.3. Practical components as compulsory subjects in design studio and on the building site are part of the study program too. Exhibition and discussion of the students' work help to prepare for the future profession of the Architect. Design studio in every semester requires project work of the students who work in groups. The design process includes collecting of relevant data as research work of their projects.
- 1.4. The main document stating the structure and administration is a thorough (30 pages) *AAB College Statute*. There were 33 other documents about specific policies and regulations listed in the public web (<https://aab-edu.net/en/about-aab/policies-and-regulations/>), from which about half are freely available in English. However, the Albanian versions of these documents are not in the web (<https://aab-edu.net/per-aab/aktet-universitare/>). Moreover, it seems that some important documents are missing in the list (for example, *Strategic Development Plan 2018-2020* and *Quality Assurance Guideline*). It was explained to the experts that private colleges do not normally publish policy documents and regulations in the web because they are competitors to each other. AAB College management declared in its comment on the draft of the report, on 19th June 2019 that the missing documents were made accessible on their website.
- 1.5. Issues related to academic ethics are regulated by the *Code of Conduct* of AAB College (<https://aab-edu.net/assets/uploads/2016/10/Code-of-conduct.pdf>). The college considers high ethical values as one of its strengths. Additionally, the *Regulation on Studies* considers the actions to be taken in case somebody (student, teacher or any other employee of the College) violates ethical or moral norms.
- 1.6. The Faculty of Architecture applies different forms of assessment in line with the institutional regulations. Students' questionnaires on administration and study services, syllabus monitoring by the Central Quality Assurance Office, preparation of semester reports and receipt of inputs from students through meetings, debates, roundtables and seminars on academic issues. Students' success rate is monitored regularly. In case of low success rate additional exercises are organized to harmonize the subject's content and requirements with the respective students' needs.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Update the list of intended learning outcomes with general competences to be gained (communications and team-working skills, readiness to follow established professional, ethical and intellectual property protection principles) beside specific skills more detailed in the subjects' description.



2. The SWOT analysis shall detect weaknesses within the institution, meanwhile threats are more determined by the external circumstances should be listed as well

2.2. Quality management

- 2.1. The responsible persons of the Architecture BA program Mr. Bujar Demjaha (Arch.), Ms. Atifete Zuna (PhD, Eng.) and Mr. Ilir Gjimmolli (PhD, Arch.) were actively involved in the processes of Quality Assurance at AAB College, they are fully aware of the national and institutional requirements on QA in higher education in Kosovo. They took part in the TEMPUS project related to QA development and actively participate the Association of Kosovo Architects.
- 2.2. QA evaluations and planning for improvement is conducted on semi-annual bases at the faculties. However, the coordination of quality assurance on the College level is divided: Quality Assurance Office (QAO) is dealing with teaching matters, issues related to research and academic development belong to the Vice Rector for Research.
- 2.3. The recommendations made in semi-annual reports will be submitted to the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs who will review these in cooperation with the QAO. The observations are analyzed by the Rectorate, and the requirements for improvements are reviewed by the College's management.
- 2.4. Quality assurance and evaluations are regulated in the *Quality Assurance Guideline*. Quality assurance is declared to be one (out of six) intervention fields in the *Development Plan of the College*. Corresponding Strategic Objective is: "Provide increased support for transparent and participatory quality assurance procedures". The – extensive – measures for realizing this Strategic Objective take three full pages in the Strategic Development Plan 2018-2020.
- 2.5. There is a dedicated QA manager of the Faculty Ms. Medina Spahiu, who works closely together with the Quality Assurance Office of the College (QAO). The QAO prepares a work-plan for the upcoming semester for the whole College. Based on that, the Faculty plans are composed. The reports contain the most important teaching and learning related aspects: success rates of students, deficiencies, challenges, recommendations etc. Semi-annual reports are analyzed in the QAO.
- 2.6. Surveys from students, alumni and stakeholders are part of processes at AAB. The results of the surveys are taken in consideration in the improvement of the college, the SER of 2018 states the findings in many aspects and consequences are visible in the decisions of the management based on those data. Private colleges in Kosovo tend not to share information gained during their operation with the public, this way they try to protect their interests on a competing market.
- 2.7. The results of the semi-annual survey of the Faculty are taken into account by improvement of the curricula and changing number of enrolled students for example. All participants of the education are involved in an annual cycle of updating of the



study programs. Since the last program evaluation, the Architecture BA went through major changes reflecting on earlier recommendation by introducing some engineering content subjects and practice oriented design studio.

- 2.8. An analysis of the study process and related aspects (including data on student attendance) recommendations for improving is made at the end on each semester. All internal partners – students, teachers, administrative staff – are involved in the analysis.
- 2.9. A thorough in-depth analysis on the overall quality of all study programs is undertaken once every three years as part of the re/accreditation process and it is essential to reflect on the needs of the academia and labor market. For each semester, a *Quality Assurance Activity Plan* is composed, that covers all important aspects of QA.

Compliance level: Fully compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. Results and consequences of QA surveys shall be made more public for transparency of the HEI and to prove its vocation for continuous improvement of academic activities.
2. The SWOT analysis shall detect weaknesses within the institution, meanwhile threats are more determined by the external circumstances should be listed as well.

2.3. Academic staff

- 3.1. The SER contains a table with relevant information of the staff: Name, Scientific degree, Academic title, Duration of contract, Teaching workload. More detailed data were submitted in the CV-s of academic staff.
- 3.2. The program Architecture BA is launched successfully at AAB for and meets all legal requirements. The ratio of FT/PT staff meets the provision as well. Three teachers were reported to work part time in other HEIs.
- 3.3. The legal requirements on the occupation of the teaching staff are fully met. During the site visit it was mentioned, that there is a verified database named Accreditation System operated by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, which was not accessible for the ET unfortunately. Legal requirements are met on the employment of teaching staff: academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time).
- 3.4. About 85% of teachers are full-time, and they cover about 75% of the BA courses. Most of the staff members have a relatively short employment contract of 1 to 3 years, that raises the risk of fluctuation.
- 3.5. Three full time teachers of the Architecture BA program in charge: Mr. Bujar Demjaha (Arch.), Ms. Atifete Zuna (PhD, Eng.) and Mr. Ilir Gjimolli (PhD, Arch.) fulfil the requirement of having PhD or equal relevant artistic activity.



- 3.6. The staff members participate regularly at the AAB organized annual conference “archiKOMB” in cooperation with the Association of Architects in Kosovo (AAK). The president of AAK is Mr. Arianit Loxha, who is a lecturer at AAB at the same time. Many of the lecturers visit conferences, they attend continuing education courses offered by AAB College. Architects reported to be involved in TEMPUS project related to the development of higher education of the region cooperating with HEI from Graz, Cork and Bucharest. A surprisingly high number of staff members have PhD, more dedicated funding would be necessary for PhD candidates for finalizing and defending their PhD thesis to continue the legacy of having teachers of Architecture with an academic title.
- 3.7. The responsibilities of the teaching staff are determined in the Statute of AAB College and other internal regulations (including *Regulations on the Systematization of Jobs*). These comply with the national regulation Administrative Instruction on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions. The academic staff is also supposed to take part in the planning, preparation and implementation of projects in the relevant field. In case of the Architecture BA program the responsible persons are very active in professional engagement inside and outside the College.
- 3.8. After the end of each semester, the academic staff will be assessed by the students. Assessment is anonymous and is conducted electronically. Self-evaluations are reflected in semi-annual reports; these are discussed with the Dean. The ET was not given evidences about making the evaluation results publicly available.
- 3.9. The *Quality Assurance Activity Plan* that semi-annually foresees – among other aspects – also trainings for academic staff on curriculum design, teaching methodology. Since the Faculty of Architecture covers one discipline on BA and MA level, namely Architecture, it is the competence of the Dean and the program leaders to secure the implementation of new strategies and methods.
- 3.10. Not applicable according to lower age of staff and private status of AAB College.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Introduce additional support measures for increasing the share of academic staff with long-term full-time employment.
2. Accessible database for academic staff’s scientific and artistic achievements would make the HEIs performance transparent and could contribute to their international recognition. A database on national level would be even more useful for the regular evaluation of Kosovo institutions.
3. Dedicate finances for professional development of the staff, especially for academic career.



2.4. Educational process content

- 4.1. Architecture BA at AAB College is composed on the example of TU Wien, Academy of Applied Arts of Wien and the University of Ljubljana. It resulted a well-balanced ratio of artistic/architectural and technical/engineering competences throughout the curricula. Since Kosovo is respectively oriented towards European standards and guidelines, the Architecture BA program of AAB is taking in consideration the recognition of Professional Qualifications in the European Union (Directive EC/2005/36 Article 21/7) and its Modernization of the Professional Qualifications Directive: “*for architects, the revised Directive sets the training requirement to either five years of university training or to not less than 5 years instead of 4 years of full-time study at a university, supplemented by supervised professional traineeship of a minimum of two years. This solution offers the necessary flexibility to accommodate different approaches in the Member States (the duration of both the academic and practical components varies between Member States).*” As long as Kosovo is not part of the EU, those directives can be recommended to follow, that can ensure the smooth recognition of diplomas in Architecture in the future.
- 4.2. Six intended learning outcomes are listed in the SER: *higher level of knowledge as the basis for original design thinking including research, integrating the gained knowledge to their design project during the studies, developing critical understanding of theories, concepts and principals, extensive and detailed of one or more specializations of their field, critical awareness of interaction of related engineering fields, to be qualified for Master level studies.* These present a coherent and compact set of competences.
- 4.3. The formulation of the learning outcomes could be partly improved, these should be more general than learning outcomes of separate courses. The eleven points of the Guidelines for Architecture Education of the European Commission could help to complete the expected outcomes, less points can be formulated according the local preferences of the profession:
- The content of the curriculum takes into consideration the Council Directive 85/384/EEC of 10 June 1985 on the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications in architecture, including measures to facilitate the effective exercise of the right of establishment and freedom to provide services. The program shall be balanced between the theoretical and practical aspects of architectural training and shall ensure the (1) acquisition of the ability to create architectural designs and satisfy both aesthetical and technical requirements, (2) an adequate knowledge of the history and theories of architecture and the related arts, technologies and human sciences, (3) the knowledge of fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural design, (4) an adequate knowledge of urban design, planning and skills involved in the planning process, (5) an understanding between the relationship between people and



buildings and between buildings and the environment, (6) an understanding of the profession of architecture and the role of architect in the society [social factors]. (7) methods of research and investigation for design project, (8) an understanding of the structural design and engineering problems associated with building design, (9) knowledge of physical problems and technologies, (10) necessary design skills to meet users' requirements within the constraints imposed by cost factors and building regulations and (11) knowledge of the industries, organizations, regulations and procedures involved in translating design concepts into buildings and integrating plans into overall planning.

- 4.4. The syllabus contains all the necessary components of the study program submitted in electronic form.
- 4.5. The language of instruction is Albanian.
- 4.6. The subject descriptions start with the Introduction of the course, where all essential aspects related to the course can be discussed.
- 4.7. Architecture BA curricula uses teaching methods across all subjects offering active learning by case-studies, project work, problem-based learning and research by design. Site visits in museums, building sites, production facilities and exhibitions are important features of applied architectural education.
- 4.8. The specifics of assessment will also be discussed during the first class
- 4.9. Architecture BA program has reference from the last three years conducted successfully at AAB. The administration of students' performance and its assessment is secured through the *Quality Assurance Guidelines*. Colloquium documents and portfolios are kept for three years. The work required for different grades is defined and consistent, it is comparable with other HEIs' regulations. According to students' opinion during the interview, they were aware of the standards and process for verifying their achievements, no concerns turned out about proper and fair maintenance.
- 4.10. The *Regulation on Studies* states the procedures to be taken if students are inadequately or inconsistently assessed. Exams can be repeated 5 times, if the student appeals the Dean set up a commission to evaluate the performance.
- 4.11. There is design studio practice course (S1) in the 5. semester of study program and site work practice (S2) in the final 6. semester. During the whole study period Architectural design subjects are conducted in form of project work.
- 4.12. The SER lists of companies with whom a cooperation agreement has been signed: LIN Project, ELNOR, A-Design Studio, Urban Plus located not only in Pristina but other cities of origin of the students.



Compliance level: Substantially compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. Launch more and wider cooperation agreements with external entities, such as architects' offices, building companies, professional bodies and research institutes to enable practical experience for all students of Architecture.
2. Apply terminology for Architecture competences and outcomes of the study program using European Commission Directive EC/2005/36 Article 21/7 [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012XC1221\(01\)&from=DE](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012XC1221(01)&from=DE) or UNESCO/UIA Charter for Architecture Education <https://www.uia-architectes.org/webApi/uploads/ressourcefile/178/charter2017en.pdf>

2.5. Students

- 5.1. The criteria for admission of new students are determined by the Senate of AAB College, according to the Statute of AAB College and in accordance to the legal regulations established by MEST and KAA. Announcement of the Architecture BA is July of the respective year and August for MA. Beside completed high school education applicants for Architecture BA must take *Space perception* and *Free drawing* entrance exams.
- 5.2. The students enrolled must have finished secondary education, have successfully passed the final Matura exam and possess personal documentation, such as certificates of education, ID card etc.
- 5.3. One group of students of the Faculty of Architecture consists of 50-70 students per lecture while for laboratory work and exercises 20-25 students.
- 5.4. The communication of the students' evaluation results is made no later than 7 days from the date of the exam, according to the official schedule. If a student is not satisfied with the grade then he or she has the right to make a written complaint to the Dean and request an evaluation through a commission.
- 5.5. The electronic student data management system retains all records for each student, including assessments, colloquium scores, final exam scores etc.
- 5.6. The exam from the same subject can be repeated up to 5 times (the 5th possibly to a commission).
- 5.7. At the end of each semester, the Faculty prepares a semester report in which, among others, the percentage of student success rate is reported. Improving student performance is one of the strategic objectives of AAB College in all disciplines.



- 5.8. Procedures related to academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of copying are defined by the Statute of AAB and by the Manual and Regulation for Academic Misconduct. Through this regulation, it is determined what constitutes an academic misconduct, what constitutes plagiarism, copying during exams, and foresee the penalties that can be made in those cases. In Architecture education copying of others' design is rather difficult to track, but project work and continuous evaluation of the design process during the seminars is a good tool to ensure originality.
- 5.9. All rights and obligations of students in terms of teaching, attendance of lectures, evaluation, etc. are determined in the *Regulation of Studies* and in the *Statute of AAB College*. The Statute is freely available on the homepage.
- 5.10. There is a separate document about students' transfer (Regulation for Students' Transmission). Students of Architecture are frequently transfer from other HEIs to AAB, up to 20 cases reported every year.
- 5.11. The professors are obliged to hold consultations with the students at least 1 hour per week, as well as at least 1 hour per week will be held through the blog option (discussion) of the e-professor platform, if there is a request from the student. In Architecture BA program, most of the interactions between students and professors happens in form of consultation of project work. The high number of students enrolled can cause overload of the teachers in charge of design projects. A welcoming atmosphere of the facilities can ensure a permanent interaction of students and staff through constant presence of both parties.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations: no recommendations.

2.6. Research

- 6.1. The Architecture BA program doesn't aim to provide scientific work, meanwhile field study, interviews, database analysis and research by design are part of the study method of project works. Members of the staff are dealing with research based design and are successful in their professional architectural practice. With their assistance AAB can set up more research groups by cooperating with economic entities.
- 6.2. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are specified in the work contract and in the *Regulation for the Promotion of Academic Staff*. The performance in relation to these expectations is considered in semi-annual reports. Employees are obliged to complete one publication every year.
- 6.3. The research priorities are stated in Strategic Development Plan for 2018-2022: conducting projects advancing basic and applied research and serve to improve educational and scientific services at AAB. In Architecture completed buildings and successful competition attendance is considered as scientific record.



- 6.4. The research of the academic staff is in general conducted on the topics of the study program, since most of them are acting architects or engineers, many of them with a PhD are active in publishing in the intern published, but peer-reviewed journal *Thesis*.
- 6.5. The research of a majority of academic staff is internationally visible Majority of the staff fulfil the basic criteria of AAB on publication activity and comply with the competence criteria set in the *Regulation for the Promotion of Academic Staff*. More over the scientific/artistic activity and visibility of the lecturers in databases like Google Scholar are not detectable.
- 6.6. Research is basically validated by scientific/artistic publications. The College issues twice a year a journal *Thesis* which applies a double anonymous reviewing. The biannual conference of *archiKOMB* is an opportunity for architects to show their activity in design and development of architecture. The magazine *ARCHIDES* publishes the work of students of Architecture and graphic design.
- 6.7. According to the employment contract, each member of the academic staff is obliged to publish at least one scientific work within the year and to be engaged in other cooperation projects aimed at increasing the quality of teaching in the Faculty of Architecture. Current co-operations with international partner HEIs shall help AAB staff to be involved in research projects. The SWOT mentions as one of the weaknesses the lack of scientific funding from MEST and other state organizations.
- 6.8. The regular academic staff within the Faculty is obliged to publish papers on behalf of AAB College. It seems – according to the publications available to the ET – that this requirement is met. The *Research Center for Architecture and Art* formally exists, 2018-2013 development plans insist to launch trainings for staff for R+D activity. Two scientific events were organized at AAB: International Conference on *Architecture and Urban Planning, Architecture and Identity* and *Architecture and Arts under the theme Identity and Autence*.
- 6.9. Clear evidences that academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities were not provided in the SER nor during the discussions with the academic staff. Significant professional activity can substitute scientific/artistic performance for a while, but academic excellence shall evoke from permanent and coherent co-working of the staff and othe entities involved in scientific work.
- 6.10. Issues relating to intellectual property are foreseen in the Employment contract of academic staff, Article 14, which stipulates that intellectual property rights in any work that is done or created by the employee during the employment relationship (during the hours and in the workplace) shall be counted as the employer's work.
- 6.11. Architecture Bachelor in Art program is rather an applied art curricula with strong link to labor market demand, but project work and practice courses prepare the students for MA level applied scientific work in the field of Architecture.



Compliance level: Partially compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. Set specific topic for research by design or applied development for the building industry to be conducted by capable staff of AAB. According to rapid urbanic development of Kosovo, future issues of the built environment could be in focus of scientific activities.
2. According to the focus of scientific interest, facilitate proper infrastructure in form of laboratories, hardware and software and allocate maintenance costs.

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

- 7.1. The College has modern buildings and has spent considerable resources for buildings and equipment for the general services of students, academic and administrative staff.
- 7.2. The budget is centralized; no financial plans at the level of the study programs is composed.
- 7.3. The study programs of the Faculty of Architecture are conducted in a multi-story building next to the brand new central services building. The students of Architecture clearly profit of the new facility, but the quality and quantity of rooms dedicated to their daily work are not in line with the – planned- scale of the new number of students expected in near future. Approximately 1200m² designated for architects' education doesn't seem to be enough, considering the annual intake of 100+ students. The quantity of equipment is rather low, 55 computers in total 10 projectors, 2 Scanners, 4 Printers are very few for several hundred students in a practice-oriented study field. The new library will have smaller rooms for group-work after its completion.
- 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms and laboratories are related to the expected groups' size. During the site visit the dedicated spaces for architecture didn't seem well occupied by their users. Better equipped facilities shall insure permanent usage by the students.
- 7.5. There are two libraries in the building: the main library on the ground floor and another on the 1st floor. The latter contained textbooks in big quantities (copies). Additionally, there are several other places where students can learn and socialize. The literature on architecture and other related issues is still poor, local and international magazines are obligatory for a well-run program in Architecture.
- 7.6. The facility possesses electrical stairs, elevators, emergency exits as well as the entire infrastructure which is needed for students with special physical needs.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

ET recommendations:

1. Improve the quality of the library by quantity of art and design related literature and magazines.
2. Provide well equipped space for students' independent work by better equipped dedicated space.

8. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The Architecture BA study program is launched and run by AAB College Faculty of Architecture successfully with a growing number of students in the last three years. The curricula balances between artistic/architectural and technological/engineering content. The practice oriented approach of the program is ensured by design studio courses and project working during the planning tasks. Practices in architect's office and on building site are part of the education plan. The study program is over-all in line with institutional, national and European guidelines and recommendations for Architecture education towards a licenced professional practice.

The AAB management requested the ET in its comment on the draft of the report on 19th June 2019 to reconsider the recommended accreditation of the Architecture BA program of 3 years to 5 years. In case of the bachelor level study program facilities like library and space dedicated for students work (workshops) are important. Improvement of infrastructure of Architecture education shall be checked in no longer than one study period time, in 3 years from now on.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program *Architecture BA* offered by AAB College is ***Substantially compliant*** with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *to accredit* the study program for a duration of **3 years** with a number of **180 students** to be enrolled in the program.

Expert Team

Chair

(Signature) Peeter Normak 21.06.2019

Member

(Signature) Balint Bachmann 21.06.2019



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

AAB College
ARCHITECTURE
Master of Art (MA) program

RE-ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

21.06.2019, Pristina



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
1. INTRODUCTION	2
1.1. Context	2
1.2. Site visit schedule	3
1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation.....	4
2. PROGRAM EVALUATION	4
2.1. Mission, objectives and administration.....	4
2.2. Quality management	4
2.3. Academic staff	5
2.4. Educational process content.....	5
2.5. Students.....	5
2.6. Research.....	6
2.7. Infrastructure and resources	6
3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET.....	7
4. APPENDICES (<i>if available</i>)	7



3. INTRODUCTION

3.1. Context

Date of site visit: 13.05.2019

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Prof. Dr. Balint Bachmann
- Prof. Dr. Peeter Normak

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- Avni Gashi, Acting Director of KAA
- Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation

Sources of information for the Report:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Course descriptions (syllabus)
- CVs of academic staff
- Strategic Development Plan for 2018-2022 of AAB College
- Public web of AAB College (<https://aab-edu.net/>)
- Other documents provided by request (incl. Quality Assurance Guideline)
- Meetings with the management, responsible persons for the study programs, quality assurance representatives, teaching staff and employers.

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *KAA Accreditation Manual*
- *National Qualifications Framework*
- *Professional Qualifications in the European Union (Directive EC/2005/36 Article 21/7)*

3.2. Site visit schedule

(12th May)

19.45 Meeting at the Reception of the Hotel

19



20.00 Working dinner

(13th May)

08.30 Meeting at the reception of the hotel
09.00 – 09.30 Meeting with the management of the faculty of Computer Science
09.35 – 10.35 Meeting with the head of the study programme
10.40 – 11.15 Meeting with quality assurance representatives
11.20 – 12.10 Meeting with teaching staff
12.10 – 13.15 Lunch break
13.20 – 13.50 Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure
14.00 – 14.50 Meeting with students and employers of graduates
14.55 – 15.40 Meeting with graduates and employers of graduates
15.45 – 16.00 Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program

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

AAB College is the biggest non-public higher education providing institution in Kosovo. It offers a wide range of study programs at BA and MA level as well as professional study programs. About 50% of its academic services and about 70% of administrative services are digitalized. Its mission is the following: “AAB College applies the most up-to-date approaches to teaching and research, provides perfect working conditions and studies for students of all levels and for teachers, including the latest technologies, enabling a friendly, academic and developing environment, actively contributes to social and economic life of the country and realizes quality programs of international cooperation in higher education and in scientific research. In this sense, AAB cultivates a secure environment that enables creativity, critical thinking, tolerance, and high ethical values of teachers and students within a lifelong education framework.”

The vision of AAB College is to become a leading education and research institution that exemplifies the best national and international quality, values and traditions in higher education and promotes high standards of academic and research life at home and abroad, in line with new technological developments.

The *Master of Art in Architecture* program was accredited first in 2015 and has been launched successfully at AAB College. The number of enrolled students per year is 20 to 30 recently. Similar to other regions of Europe, the gender ratio of students in Architecture is nearly equal on Master level at AAB. The MA in Architecture is a two-year study program with mandatory

20



professional architectural and management/law practices during the studies and Master thesis/Final project in the 4th semester. As the intention of the study program AAB states:

- Design skills in relation to urban context to improve built environment;
- contemporary architecture and history, architectural theory as well as the space where art and technology meet merge to enable students to develop their sense for innovation connected with time, space, people and culture;
- management skills in architectural practice and teamwork;
- ability to utilize the resources, materials and production technologies and create a sustainable architecture in the environment;
- knowledge and sensitivity in the application of methodology for the preservation of heritage as well as the connection of the new environment to the old one.

The course descriptions filed separately contain the purpose and content of the MA courses, the expected learning outcomes are explained in a very dense form, the recommended literature, teaching methods and assessment of students' performance.

4. PROGRAM EVALUATION

Comments of the Expert Team (ET) on each standard are numbered according to the standards of KAA Accreditation Manual.

4.1. Mission, objectives and administration

- 1.7. The mission statement of AAB College is published on its homepage both in Albanian and English and includes the aspects of teaching, research and community service. The mission statement does not specify any subject area of the college. The Art oriented study program is not the main focus of the portfolio of AAB, but it is complimentary to the business, applied sciences and media areas of their academic activities. The vibrant urban development of Kosovo requires labor force in engineering and architecture too. Therefore, although not explicitly stated, the study programs in Architecture complies with the mission statement of the College. The Scientific Council of the Faculty of Architecture implemented several changes in its curricula upon request of the students and inputs collected from the labor market. Additional subjects in Mechanics, Statics and Construction were added. Practical components as compulsory subjects in design studio and on the building site are part of the study program too. Exhibition and discussion of the students' work help to prepare for the future profession of the



Architect.

- 1.8. The Self Evaluation Report (SER) states, that the Scientific Council of the Faculty of Architecture may change its curricula upon request of the students and inputs collected from the labor market.
- 1.9. Practical components as compulsory subjects in design studio and on the building site are part of the study program too. Exhibition and discussion of the students' work help to prepare for the future profession of the Architect. Design studio in every semester requires project work of the students who work in groups. The design process includes collecting of relevant data as research work of their projects.
- 1.10. The main document stating the structure and administration is a thorough (30 pages) *AAB College Statute*. There were 33 other documents about specific policies and regulations listed in the public web (<https://aab-edu.net/en/about-aab/policies-and-regulations/>), from which about half are freely available in English. However, the Albanian versions of these documents are not in the web (<https://aab-edu.net/per-aab/aktet-universitare/>). Moreover, it seems that some important documents are missing in the list (for example, *Strategic Development Plan 2018-2020* and *Quality Assurance Guideline*). It was explained to the experts that private colleges do not normally publish policy documents and regulations in the web because they are competitors to each other. AAB College management declared in its comment on the draft of the report, on 19th June 2019 that the missing documents were made accessible on their website.
- 1.11. Issues related to academic ethics are regulated by the *Code of Conduct* of AAB College (<https://aab-edu.net/assets/uploads/2016/10/Code-of-conduct.pdf>). The college considers high ethical values as one of its strengths. Additionally, the *Regulation on Studies* considers the actions to be taken in case somebody (student, teacher or any other employee of the College) violates ethical or moral norms.
- 1.12. The Faculty of Architecture applies different forms of assessment in line with the institutional regulations. Students' questionnaires on administration and study services, syllabus monitoring by the Central Quality Assurance Office, preparation of semester reports and receipt of inputs from students through meetings, debates, roundtables and seminars on academic issues. Students' success rate is monitored regularly. In case of low success rate additional exercises are organized to harmonize the subject's content and requirements with the respective students' needs.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:



3. Update the list of intended learning outcomes with general competences to be gained (communications and team-working skills, readiness to follow established professional, ethical and intellectual property protection principles) beside specific skills more detailed in the subjects' description.
4. The SWOT analysis shall detect weaknesses within the institution, meanwhile threats are more determined by the external circumstances should be listed as well.

4.2. Quality management

- 4.1. The responsible persons of the Architecture MA program Mr. Ejup Dullinja (PhD, Arch.), Mr. Oliver Petrovski (Dr. Sc.) and Mr. Fatos Tahiri (PhD, Eng.) were actively involved in the processes of Quality Assurance at AAB College, they are fully aware of the national and institutional requirements on QA in higher education in Kosovo. They took part in the TEMPUS project related to QA development and actively participate the Association of Kosovo Architects.
- 4.2. QA evaluations and planning for improvement is conducted on semi-annual bases at the faculties. However, the coordination of quality assurance on the College level is divided: Quality Assurance Office (QAO) is dealing with teaching matters, issues related to research and academic development belong to the Vice Rector for Research.
- 4.3. The recommendations made in semi-annual reports will be submitted to the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs who will review these in cooperation with the QAO. The observations are analyzed by the Rectorate, and the requirements for improvements are reviewed by the College's management.
- 4.4. Quality assurance and evaluations are regulated in the *Quality Assurance Guideline*. Quality assurance is declared to be one (out of six) intervention fields in the *Development Plan of the College*. Corresponding Strategic Objective is: "Provide increased support for transparent and participatory quality assurance procedures". The – extensive – measures for realizing this Strategic Objective take three full pages in the Strategic Development Plan 2018-2020.
- 4.5. There is a dedicated QA manager of the Faculty Ms. Medina Spahiu, who works closely together with the Quality Assurance Office of the College (QAO). The QAO prepares a work-plan for the upcoming semester for the whole College. Based on that, the Faculty plans are composed. The reports contain the most important teaching and learning related aspects: success rates of students, deficiencies, challenges, recommendations etc. Semi-annual reports are analyzed in the QAO.



- 4.6. Surveys from students, alumni and stakeholders are part of processes at AAB. The results of the surveys are taken in consideration in the improvement of the college, the SER of 2018 states the findings in many aspects and consequences are visible in the decisions of the management based on those data. Private colleges in Kosovo tend not to share information gained during their operation with the public, this way they try to protect their interests on a competing market.
- 4.7. The results of the semi-annual survey of the Faculty are taken into account by improvement of the curricula and changing number of enrolled students for example. All participants of the education are involved in an annual cycle of updating of the study programs. Since the last program evaluation, the Architecture MA went through major changes reflecting on earlier recommendation by introducing some engineering content subjects and practice oriented design studio.
- 4.8. An analysis of the study process and related aspects (including data on student attendance) recommendations for improving is made at the end on each semester. All internal partners – students, teachers, administrative staff – are involved in the analysis.
- 4.9. A thorough in-depth analysis on the overall quality of all study programs is undertaken once every three years as part of the re/accreditation process and it is essential to reflect on the needs of the academia and labor market. For each semester, a *Quality Assurance Activity Plan* is composed, that covers all important aspects of QA.

Compliance level: Fully compliant.

ET recommendations:

3. Results and consequences of QA surveys shall be made more public for transparency of the HEI and to prove its vocation for continuous improvement of academic activities.
4. The SWOT analysis shall detect weaknesses within the institution, meanwhile threats are more determined by the external circumstances should be listed as well.

4.3. Academic staff

- 3.11. The SER contains a table with relevant information of the staff: Name, Scientific degree, Academic title, Duration of contract, Teaching workload. More detailed data were submitted in the CV-s of academic staff. Mr. Oliver Petrovski's CV – who is one of the three responsible persons of the MA program - is not among the files.
- 3.12. The program Architecture MA is launched successfully at AAB for and meets all legal requirements. The ratio of FT/PT staff meets the provision as well. Three teachers were reported to work part time in other HEIs.



- 3.13. The legal requirements on the occupation of the teaching staff are fully met. During the site visit it was mentioned, that there is a verified database named Accreditation System operated by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, which was not accessible for the ET unfortunately. Legal requirements are met on the employment of teaching staff: academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time).
- 3.14. About 85% of teachers are full-time, and they cover about 75% of the MA courses. Most of the staff members have a relatively short employment contract of 1 to 3 years, that raises the risk of fluctuation.
- 3.15. The full time teachers of the Architecture MA program in charge: Mr. Ejup Dullinja (PhD, Arch.) and Mr. Fatos Tahiri (PhD, Eng.) fulfil the requirement of having PhD or equal relevant artistic activity. Mr. Oliver Petrovski's missing CV shall be added.
- 3.16. The staff members participate regularly at the AAB organized annual conference "archiKOMB" in cooperation with the Association of Architects in Kosovo (AAK). The president of AAK is Mr. Arianit Loxha, who is a lecturer at AAB at the same time. Many of the lecturers visit conferences, they attend continuing education courses offered by AAB College. Architects reported to be involved in TEMPUS project related to the development of higher education of the region cooperating with HEI from Graz, Cork and Bucharest. A surprisingly high number of staff members have PhD, more dedicated funding would be necessary for PhD candidates for finalizing and defending their PhD thesis to continue the legacy of having teachers of Architecture with an academic title.
- 3.17. The responsibilities of the teaching staff are determined in the Statute of AAB College and other internal regulations (including *Regulations on the Systematization of Jobs*). These comply with the national regulation Administrative Instruction on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions. The academic staff is also supposed to take part in the planning, preparation and implementation of projects in the relevant field. In case of the Architecture MA program the responsible persons are very active in professional engagement inside and outside the College.
- 3.18. After the end of each semester, the academic staff will be assessed by the students. Assessment is anonymous and is conducted electronically. Self-evaluations are reflected in semi-annual reports; these are discussed with the Dean. The ET was not given evidences about making the evaluation results publicly available.
- 3.19. The *Quality Assurance Activity Plan* that semi-annually foresees – among other aspects – also trainings for academic staff on curriculum design, teaching methodology. Since the Faculty of Architecture covers one discipline on BA and MA level, namely



Architecture, it is the competence of the Dean and the program leaders to secure the implementation of new strategies and methods.

3.20. Not applicable according to lower age of staff and private status of AAB College.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

4. Introduce additional support measures for increasing the share of academic staff with long-term full-time employment.
5. Accessible database for academic staff's scientific and artistic achievements would make the HEIs performance transparent and could contribute to their international recognition. A database on national level would be even more useful for the regular evaluation of Kosovo institutions.
6. Dedicate finances for professional development of the staff, especially for academic career.

4.4. Educational process content

- 4.13. Architecture MA at AAB College is composed on the example of TU Wien, Academy of Applied Arts of Wien and the University of Ljubljana. It resulted a well-balanced ratio of artistic/architectural and technical/engineering competences throughout the curricula. Since Kosovo is respectively oriented towards European standards and guidelines, the Architecture BA+MA program of AAB is taking in consideration the recognition of Professional Qualifications in the European Union (Directive EC/2005/36 Article 21/7) and its Modernization of the Professional Qualifications Directive: *“for architects, the revised Directive sets the training requirement to either five years of university training or to not less than 5 years instead of 4 years of full-time study at a university, supplemented by supervised professional traineeship of a minimum of two years. This solution offers the necessary flexibility to accommodate different approaches in the Member States (the duration of both the academic and practical components varies between Member States).”* As long as Kosovo is not part of the EU, those directives can be recommended to follow, that can ensure the smooth recognition of diplomas in Architecture in the future.
- 4.14. Six intended learning outcomes are listed in the SER: *higher level of knowledge as the basis for original design thinking including research, integrating the gained knowledge to their design project during the studies, developing critical understanding of theories, concepts and principals, extensive and detailed of one or more specializations of their*



field, critical awareness of interaction of related engineering fields, to be qualified for Master level studies. These present a coherent and compact set of competences.

- 4.15. The formulation of the learning outcomes could be partly improved, these should be more general than learning outcomes of separate courses. The eleven points of the Guidelines for Architecture Education of the European Commission could help to complete the expected outcomes, less points can be formulated according the local preferences of the profession:
- The content of the curriculum takes into consideration the Council Directive 85/384/EEC of 10 June 1985 on the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications in architecture, including measures to facilitate the effective exercise of the right of establishment and freedom to provide services. The program shall be balanced between the theoretical and practical aspects of architectural training and shall ensure the (1) acquisition of the ability to create architectural designs and satisfy both aesthetical and technical requirements, (2) an adequate knowledge of the history and theories of architecture and the related arts, technologies and human sciences, (3) the knowledge of fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural design, (4) an adequate knowledge of urban design, planning and skills involved in the planning process, (5) an understanding between the relationship between people and buildings and between buildings and the environment, (6) an understanding of the profession of architecture and the role of architect in the society [social factors]. (7) methods of research and investigation for design project, (8) an understanding of the structural design and engineering problems associated with building design, (9) knowledge of physical problems and technologies, (10) necessary design skills to meet users' requirements within the constraints imposed by cost factors and building regulations and (11) knowledge of the industries, organizations, regulations and procedures involved in translating design concepts into buildings and integrating plans into overall planning.
- 4.16. The syllabus contains all the necessary components of the study program submitted in electronic form.
- 4.17. The language of instruction is Albanian.
- 4.18. The subject descriptions start with the Introduction of the course, where all essential aspects related to the course can be discussed.



- 4.19. Architecture MA curricula uses teaching methods across all subjects offering active learning by case-studies, project work, problem-based learning and research by design. Site visits in museums, building sites, production facilities and exhibitions are important features of applied architectural education.
- 4.20. The specifics of assessment will also be discussed during the first class
- 4.21. Architecture MA program has reference from the last three years conducted successfully at AAB. The administration of students' performance and its assessment is secured through the *Quality Assurance Guidelines*. Colloquium documents and portfolios are kept for three years. The work required for different grades is defined and consistent, it is comparable with other HEIs' regulations. According to students' opinion during the interview, they were aware of the standards and process for verifying their achievements, no concerns turned out about proper and fair maintenance.
- 4.22. The *Regulation on Studies* states the procedures to be taken if students are inadequately or inconsistently assessed. Exams can be repeated 5 times, if the student appeals the Dean set up a commission to evaluate the performance.
- 4.23. There are professional architectural practice courses (A+B) in the semesters 1-2. and practice in management and law courses (A+B) in the semesters 3-4. During the whole study period, Architectural design subjects are conducted in form of project work.
- 4.24. The SER lists of companies with whom a cooperation agreement has been signed: LIN Project, ELNOR, A-Design Studio, Urban Plus located not only in Pristina but other cities of origin of the students.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant.

ET recommendations:

3. Launch more and wider cooperation agreements with external entities, such as architects' offices, building companies, professional bodies and research institutes to enable practical experience for all students of Architecture.
4. Apply terminology for Architecture competences and outcomes of the study program using European Commission Directive EC/2005/36 Article 21/7 [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012XC1221\(01\)&from=DE](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012XC1221(01)&from=DE) or UNESCO/UIA Charter for Architecture Education <https://www.uia-architectes.org/webApi/uploads/ressourcefile/178/charter2017en.pdf>



4.5. Students

- 5.12. The criteria for admission of new students are determined by the Senate of AAB College, according to the Statute of AAB College and in accordance to the legal regulations established by MEST and KAA. Announcement of the Architecture BA is July of the respective year and August for MA.
- 5.13. The students enrolled must have finished secondary education, have successfully passed the final Matura exam and possess personal documentation, such as certificates of education, ID card etc. For MA applicants a related Bachelor level degree is obligatory. Applicants have to present a portfolio documenting their previous studies and work experience.
- 5.14. One group of students of the Faculty of Architecture consists of maximum 30 students per lecture while for laboratory work and exercises not more than 20 students.
- 5.15. The communication of the students' evaluation results is made no later than 7 days from the date of the exam, according to the official schedule. If a student is not satisfied with the grade then he or she has the right to make a written complaint to the Dean and request an evaluation through a commission.
- 5.16. The electronic student data management system retains all records for each student, including assessments, colloquium scores, final exam scores etc.
- 5.17. The exam from the same subject can be repeated up to 5 times (the 5th possibly to a commission).
- 5.18. At the end of each semester, the Faculty prepares a semester report in which, among others, the percentage of student success rate is reported. Improving student performance is one of the strategic objectives of AAB College in all disciplines.
- 5.19. Procedures related to academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of copying are defined by the Statute of AAB and by the Manual and Regulation for Academic Misconduct. Through this regulation, it is determined what constitutes an academic misconduct, what constitutes plagiarism, copying during exams, and foresee the penalties that can be made in those cases. In Architecture education copying of others' design is rather difficult to track, but project work and continuous evaluation of the design process during the seminars is a good tool to ensure originality.
- 5.20. All rights and obligations of students in terms of teaching, attendance of lectures, evaluation, etc. are determined in the *Regulation of Studies* and in the *Statute of AAB College*. The Statute is freely available on the homepage.



- 5.21. There is a separate document about students' transfer (Regulation for Students' Transmission). Students of Architecture are frequently transfer from other HEIs to AAB, up to 20 cases reported every year.
- 5.22. The professors are obliged to hold consultations with the students at least 1 hour per week, as well as at least 1 hour per week will be held through the blog option (discussion) of the e-professor platform, if there is a request from the student. In Architecture BA program, most of the interactions between students and professors happens in form of consultation of project work. The high number of students enrolled can cause overload of the teachers in charge of design projects. A welcoming atmosphere of the facilities can ensure a permanent interaction of students and staff through constant presence of both parties.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations: no recommendations.

4.6. Research

- 6.12. The Architecture MA program shall prepare students for a potential doctoral education. However AAB has recently no PhD program offered. AAB Institute runs the Research center for Architecture and Arts, preparation of scientific work are undertaken. Field study, interviews, database analysis and research by design are part of the study method of project works in the MA program. Members of the staff are dealing with research based design and are successful in their professional architectural practice. With their assistance AAB can set up more research groups by cooperating with economic entities.
- 6.13. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are specified in the work contract and in the *Regulation for the Promotion of Academic Staff*. The performance in relation to these expectations is considered in semi-annual reports. Employees are obliged to complete one publication every year.
- 6.14. The research priorities are stated in Strategic Development Plan for 2018-2022: conducting projects advancing basic and applied research and serve to improve educational and scientific services at AAB. In Architecture completed buildings and successful competition attendance is considered as scientific record.
- 6.15. The research of the academic staff is in general conducted on the topics of the study program, since most of them are acting architects or engineers, many of them with a PhD are active in publishing in the intern published, but peer-reviewed journal *Thesis*.
- 6.16. The research of a majority of academic staff is internationally visible Majority of the staff fulfil the basic criteria of AAB on publication activity and comply with the



competence criteria set in the *Regulation for the Promotion of Academic Staff*. More over the scientific/artistic activity and visibility of the lecturers in databases like Google Scholar are not detectable.

- 6.17. Research is basically validated by scientific/artistic publications. The College issues twice a year a journal *Thesis* which applies a double anonymous reviewing. The biannual conference of *archiKOMB* is an opportunity for architects to show their activity in design and development of architecture. The magazine *ARCHIDES* publishes the work of students of Architecture and graphic design.
- 6.18. According to the employment contract, each member of the academic staff is obliged to publish at least one scientific work within the year and to be engaged in other cooperation projects aimed at increasing the quality of teaching in the Faculty of Architecture. Current co-operations with international partner HEIs shall help AAB staff to be involved in research projects. The SWOT mentions as one of the weaknesses the lack of scientific funding from MEST and other state organizations.
- 6.19. The regular academic staff within the Faculty is obliged to publish papers on behalf of AAB College. It seems – according to the publications available to the ET – that this requirement is met. The *Research Center for Architecture and Art* formally exists, 2018-2013 development plans insist to launch trainings for staff for R+D activity. Two scientific events were organized at AAB: International Conference on *Architecture and Urban Planning, Architecture and Identity* and *Architecture and Arts under the theme Identity and Autence*.
- 6.20. Clear evidences that academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities were not provided in the SER nor during the discussions with the academic staff. Significant professional activity can substitute scientific/artistic performance for a while, but academic excellence shall evoke from permanent and coherent co-working of the staff and the entities involved in scientific work.
- 6.21. Issues relating to intellectual property are foreseen in the Employment contract of academic staff, Article 14, which stipulates that intellectual property rights in any work that is done or created by the employee during the employment relationship (during the hours and in the workplace) shall be counted as the employer's work.
- 6.22. Architecture Master together with Bachelor in Art programs are rather applied art curricula with strong link to labor market demand, but project work and practice courses prepare the students for doctoral level applied scientific work in the field of Architecture.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant.



ET recommendations:

3. Set specific topic for research by design or applied development for the building industry to be conducted by capable staff of AAB. According to rapid urban development of Kosovo, future issues of the built environment could be in focus of scientific activities.
4. According to the focus of scientific interest, facilitate proper infrastructure in form of laboratories, hardware and software and allocate maintenance costs.

4.7. Infrastructure and resources

- 8.1. The College has modern buildings and has spent considerable resources for buildings and equipment for the general services of students, academic and administrative staff.
- 8.2. The budget is centralized; no financial plans at the level of the study programs is composed.
- 8.3. The study programs of the Faculty of Architecture are conducted in a multi-story building next to the brand new central services building. The students of Architecture clearly profit of the new facility, but the quality and quantity of rooms dedicated to their daily work are not in line with the – planned- scale of the new number of students expected in near future. Approximately 1200m² designated for architects' education doesn't seem to be enough, considering the annual intake of 100+ students. The quantity of equipment is rather low, 55 computers in total 10 projectors, 2 Scanners, 4 Printers are very few for several hundred students in a practice-oriented study field. The new library will have smaller rooms for group-work after its completion.
- 8.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms and laboratories are related to the expected groups' size. During the site visit the dedicated spaces for architecture didn't seem well occupied by their users. Better equipped facilities shall insure permanent usage by the students.
- 8.5. There are two libraries in the building: the main library on the ground floor and another on the 1st floor. The latter contained textbooks in big quantities (copies). Additionally, there are several other places where students can learn and socialize. The literature on architecture and other related issues is still poor, local and international magazines are obligatory for a well-run program in Architecture.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

8.6. The facility possesses electrical stairs, elevators, emergency exits as well as the entire infrastructure which is needed for students with special physical needs.

ET recommendations:

3. Improve the quality of the library by quantity of art and design related literature and magazines.
4. Provide well equipped space for students' independent work by better equipped dedicated space.

9. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The Architecture MA study program is launched and run by AAB College Faculty of Architecture successfully with a constant number of students in the last three years. The curricula balances between artistic/architectural and technological/engineering content. The practice oriented approach of the program is ensured by design studio courses and project working during the planning tasks. Practices in professional architectural work and practice of management and building law are part of the education plan. The study program is over-all in line with institutional, national and European guidelines and recommendations for Architecture education towards a licenced professional practice.

The AAB management requested the ET in its comment on the draft of the report on 19th June 2019 to reconsider the recommended accreditation of the Architecture MA program of 3 years to 5 years. In case of master level studies in Architecture the request of AAB can be respected, since the European (EC) and global (UIA) requirements of licencing for professional practice of architects oblige a minimum of 5 years continuous studies, it is in interest of the Kosovan building industry to have more qualified professionals.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program *Architecture MA* offered by AAB College is **Fully compliant** with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *to accredit* the study program for a duration of **5 years** with a number of **60 students** to be enrolled in the program.

Expert Team

Chair



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

(Signature)

Peeter Normak

21.06.2019

Member

(Signature)

Balint Bachmann

21.06.2019