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Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

AAB COLLEGE
Study Program: HEALTH MANAGEMENT / MS

ACREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

Pristina May 30, 2019



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. CONTEXT

This Programme Accreditation took place as part of a wider evaluation of the institution and other study programmes during the course of one day.

Date of site visit:

30 May 2019

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Prof. Dr. Milan Pol
- Prof. Dr. Alan Brickwood
- Prof. Dr. Peter Parycek
- Prof. Dr. Zdravko Lacković
- Prof. Dr. Ulrike Webersberger
- Ms. Oana Sarbu

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

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

Sources of information for the Report:

- Self-Evaluation Report (SER) comprising an Institutional Evaluation, submitted in advance by AAB
- Information obtained during the site visit;
- Meetings conducted with the management of the institution, teaching and administrative staff,

Because this is a proposal for a new program, that did not start yet, the meetings with students or graduates was not possible



Meetings were held with the management of the institution, quality assurance representatives and administrative services and heads of study programmes, teaching staff (Dr. Luan Jaha, Dr. Mybera Mustafa and Dr. Fatime Qosaj). Due to time limitation most of the meetings concerned with the evaluation of this MA Health Management proposal, were held together with the meetings related to BA Radiology program

Criteria used for program evaluation:

KAA Accreditation Manual (2018) together with formats for the preparation of expert report by Expert Teams (ET), Compliance Calculation Template.

1.2. Site visit

The site visit was on the 30th of May at the AAB College site and organized as follows:

09.00 – 10.30 Meeting with the management of the institution (no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion)

10.40 – 11.50 Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative services

12.00 – 13.00 Meeting with the heads of study programs

13.00 – 13.50 Lunch break

13.50 – 14.50 Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure

14.50 – 15.40 Meeting with teaching staff

15.50 – 16.40 Meeting with students

16.50 – 17.40 Meeting with graduates

17.50 – 18.40 Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders

18.45 – 19.00 Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA

19.00 – 19.15 Closing meeting with the management of the institution



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

Established in 2002 AAB College describes itself as both the first and the largest non-public institution of higher education in Kosovo.

Currently, AAB has a total of 14 faculties that offer BA and MA degree programs, 15 729 students, and over 500 full-time and part-time academic staff. AAB College currently operates in 3 cities of Kosovo, that in Pristina, Gjakova and Ferizaj all accredited branches by KAA decision.

Since 2010 AAB College is a regular member of the Magna Charta Universitatum thereby ensuring recognition of university values and expanding opportunities for building strong cooperation relations when more than 750 universities have signed this document.

During the last years, AAB College has been focused on strengthening relationships with universities of the region and Europe as well as in expanding its research capacity by providing a strong foundation for the opening of doctoral studies. Strategic development of the institution in establishing and improving the quality of commitment represents essential component.

Name of the study program	Health Management
Level of qualification according to NQF	MSc (7 NQF; EQF)
Academic degree or the name of the diploma	Master of Science in Health Management
Study field according to Erasmus Subject Area Codes (ESAC)	12.0; 04.0
Profile of the study program (specialisation)	/
Minimum duration of studies	2 years, 4 semesters
Form of studies	Regular studies
Number of ECTS	120 ECTS
Number of study places	150
Responsible persons of the program	Luan Jaha, Mybera Mustafa, Fatime Qosaj

Master in Health Care Management creates capacities to analyse and assist in solving many complex problems faced by the healthcare sector. Doctors / economists / lawyers or academics from other areas are often selected for senior leadership positions based on clinical / economic / legal expertise or in other relevant areas. These enhanced roles require knowledge of critical



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management skills and leadership practices, which are usually not part of basic education training. With a Master in Health Care Management, it can be employed in the administration of health services in the public and private sector, local and central government in the health sector and the health financing system, including the scheme of social and private health insurance.

Candidates will come with academic qualifications in the field of medicine, law, economics and other sciences, this variety will enrich the pacification and knowledge about specific aspects of health management. All candidates for master studies will need to have English language skills, as this has become also a requirement from the Ministry of Education in Kosovo.

According to SER assessment methods typically include, according to the course description, colloquiums, projects, presentations and the final exam (students will undergo the final exam only they have failed to pass the course through the colloquium or the project works). Since this is a MA study program, students are expected to deliver research work and projects which will further advance their independent research skills.

The results of exams and communication of students results are made electronically through the electronic platform. The E-Student and the E-Professor are two student data management systems that are entirely electronic, and besides allowing the entire progress of the academic process to be documented through the system, it contributes to a much faster and more accurate communication between the lecturers and students. This electronic service retains all the marks posted by the professor for each student, it generates data and reports that serve to make various analyses through which the AAB's management makes the necessary interventions in improving the entire teaching and academic process.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The programme on Health Management builds on main points of AAB mission for quality study programmes that are relevant to the Kosovo market and target population of Kosovo and which provide quality teaching and research in line with respective standards of the Bologna Process within the European Higher Education Area. It is expected that the majority of

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candidates for this study program will be employees of institutions in respective sectors who either are leaders who want to improve their performance or are officers and professionals that are ambitious to improve practices of management and leadership in their institutions. The program on Health Management is a master programme oriented towards required competences for specific short-term and long-term management of health institutions. Knowledge, skills, values and attitudes integrated into the programme are in service of professional development with practical and authentic focus as well as with cases and simulations from real life in the respective field. Theoretical and informative part covers aspects that are relevant to transformation in specific relevant experiences within the field of study. The research part offers skills for conducting specific research, for accurate evaluation of the situation in a given organization or health institute for well-informed decision-making, for obtaining quality information to draft master thesis in the respective field, and to further professional development and education.

The *Regulation on Studies* is a public document, applicable to all academic units of AAB which is applied by students, academic and administrative staff. In terms of teaching and learning methods, in accordance with this regulation, the study program is provided through theoretical lectures, practical exercises, seminars, individual assignments and projects individually or in small groups of students. Students throughout their study period are required to visit institutions of health care in order to oversee the actual work being done there.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET Comment: *There might be a conflict between the program that is organized as regular continuation of study for candidates with bachelor degree and the idea expressed in SER that candidates will come with academic qualifications in the field of medicine, law, economics and other sciences, this variety will enrich the pacification and knowledge about specific aspects of health management. Such candidates that are already employed in health sector would need differently, more flexibly, organized life as long-learning program.*

2.2. Quality management

Quality management within the study program on Health Management will be done according to the *Regulation on Quality Assurance and Quality Assurance Guidelines*, which are in compliance with the Kosovo legal framework, such as the Law on Higher Education, the

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Administrative Instruction on Accreditation of Institutions of Higher Education and the *European Standards for European Quality Assurance Network (ENQA)*.

There is a *Central Office for Quality Assurance* at AAB, which cooperates with each Faculty staff in order to make sure that the quality assurance

processes are implemented throughout the academic year. There are clear plans drafted each semester, which typically include the following:

- Standardization of syllabuses
- Monitoring the implementation of syllabuses
- Monitoring the online platform - namely monitoring the work of the academic staff regarding the publication of electronic materials on online platforms
- Attending weekly meetings with academic staff organized by the Dean
- Internal evaluations for accreditation purposes (if applicable)
- Monitoring student success rates
- Trainings for colleagues in the field of curriculum development, teaching methodology, etc.
- Assessment of academic staff by students, assessment of administration and student services after the end of the semester
- Preparation of semester reports after the end of the semester

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations: None

2.3. Academic staff

Master of Health Management is specific type of programme aimed to students with bachelor degree and there is a wish (described previously) to attract people of different professional profiles and mostly to people who already have responsible position in the Kosovo society. Thus success of proposed program depends primarily on:

1. Public perception of quality of institution (AAB College)
2. Professional and research excellence of the teaching staff

Characteristic of AAB College is described in introduction. It might be expected that public reception is in line with that.



SER contains a SWOT analysis about infrastructure and resources i.e. important aspects of AAB College quality:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The infrastructure is new and modern- Best infrastructure and equipment available for student's use- Campus life- The institution has a good financial background- The library is equipped with books and online journals- Current equipment is of good quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lack of attractions-
Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- To become a leading digital learning institution- Access to online libraries, space for filming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fast developing technologies-

Professional and research characteristics of teaching staff

According to the Administrative Instruction No. 15/2018 for this study program are required two PhD holders, in order to support the development of the program we have assigned three professors. Employment of academic staff is carried out in compliance with the provisions of the Law on Labour of the Republic of Kosovo, UA on Accreditation of HEIs, in Kosovo, the Statue of AAB College and other relevant internal documents.

Three key members of the staff are experts from the field with theoretical and practical experience in health management. Probably important is association of their professional activities with Kosovo Ministry of Health.

SER contains a brief overview of their CVs:



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Dr. Mybera Musafa: “Doctor of Dentistry” (1999) “Master of sciences of Health Management” (2009), PhD (Tirana). Political career include the function of 2008-2010: Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Health Kosovo.

Dr. Fatime Qosja: MD (Sarajevo 1991), Specialist in Anaesthesiology and Intensive care – Prishtina 2000), Master of public health, International health (University of Harvard – School of Public Health 2004)- PhD in Medical Research – International Health (Ludvig Maximilians Universität München). PhD title “*An empirical model of access to health care, health care expenditure and impoverishment in Kosovo*”. One publication in PubMed: *Local irrigation of the surgical field with antibiotics in the end of procedure reduces the infection rate in herniated lumbar disc surgery*. Many different activities associated with Kosovo Ministry of Health, including WHO etc.

Dr. Luan Jaha: MD (Zagreb 1992), Master of Medical Science (Prishtina 2006), PhD (Skopje 2013). Currently he is external health adviser to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo.

In addition to that SER contains extensive list of dozens of other academic staff with PhD degree involved in health study programs within AAB. Since those program include Faculty of Nursing, Faculty of Dentistry, Faculty of Radiology the purpose of that list in SER on Master program in Health Management is not clear. However in continuation of evaluation activity ET was informed that the purpose of that extensive list is to show AAB College human potential that can be included in different courses of proposed Health Management program.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

2.4. Educational process content

According to SER the programme on Health Management MA is structured in three levels:

- system level: sector-wide approach, legal framework, policies and strategic planning
- organization/institution level: planning/reporting, organization development, and facility management, and
- personnel level: personnel management and development

A special part within the structure of the programme, as well as during study experiences, is drafting a master thesis for a specific topic. Consequently, the programme develops

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competences of leadership, planning, research, *writing, presentation/communication, interaction*, etc.

At the end of the programme, attendees will be able to:

- Demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of key aspects of functioning of the health sector
- Implement and develop original ideas based on clear information on improvement of the work place, organization performance and personnel efficiency
- Engage in systematic approach of research and processing of information and phenomena in health care organizations
- Implement new approaches for solving problems in new situations using knowledge and experiences accumulated in the health care sector
- Make competent judgements in situations with limited information always reflecting on social and ethical considerations as well as on wellbeing of end users
- Clearly express and communicate their conclusions and judgements to a specialized or non-specialized audience;
- Continue to advance their knowledge based on systematic, coherent and conscious approach and efforts for personal development.
- Take responsibility for individual actions and professional development and work of a group of personnel in the health sector

Courses on Health Management

Semester I: Methodology of Scientific Research, Organisation and functioning of health system, Elective Subject, Elective Subject - 2 ECTS 6

Semester 2: Management of health institutions, Leadership, Elective subjects, Elective subjects

Elective subjects of first year: Ethics and the Deontology, Legal aspects of health system, Human resources management and communication, Health economy, Financial management

Semester 3: Information Technology and communication in health care, Quality in health care, Master Thesis, Elective subjects

Semester 4: Global health, Trends in health care, Master thesis

Elective subjects in second year II: Environmental health, Project management

Quantitatively Health Management program consist of 500 lectures (Total for both years), 390 seminars etc. Total ECTS: 120.



SER contain SWOT analysis for educational content:

Advantages

- Modern curricula which is harmonised according to region and European programs
- Curricula is drafted taken full consideration of the labour market in Kosovo
- The program is drafted in compliance with the descriptors of the National Qualification Framework
- Teaching process is regularly monitored from the management of the Faculty
- Teaching and learning process are based on modern technology
- Ongoing training of staff for teaching methods
- Organisation of students in smaller groups
- Ongoing assessment of student progress

Weaknesses

- Greater need for visiting professors

Opportunities Risks

- Bigger opportunities for exchange of students and academic staff through international projects
- Possibility to participate in working groups which aim at harmonizing the national legislation
- Possibilities to expand the opportunities of students to attend practical work which are related to the relevant field

Compliance level: Fully Compliant

ET recommendations: *If Master Thesis is going to be based on research methodology introduction of a new module Health Statistics seems necessary. This cannot be only a part of module on Research methodology. Many information are available on internet for example “Health statistics and information systems” by WHO https://www.who.int/healthinfo/country_monitoring_evaluation/documentation/en/) containing data collection tools, data analysis tools etc.*

2.5. Students

According to SER students at this Master program will undergo the same procedures that are applied at the institutional level. The study program is dedicated to students who have finished



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a BA level and wish to continue their studies. Students can enrol the study program right after their graduation from a BA level or can be employed people in health sector in Kosovo who wish to advance their knowledge further about their work place.

However, from some other part of SER it can be concluded that Master in Health Management could also be life-long learning programme and not only regular continuous study process. Details are not described and such programme can be only partially regulated by KAA standards.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations: None

2.6. Research

Since the program Health Management did not start yet evaluation of research output is not possible.

According to SER students will have the opportunity to implement their research ideas, to make professional supervision, assistance and media presentation of findings from research works, participate in workshops, seminars and conferences organised by AAB College in partnership with other institutions within the country and abroad. In addition, under the support of this research office and responsible mentors, students will have the opportunity to publish their works in professional and scientific journals.

According to KAA Accreditation manual

Standard 7.6. 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.

Standard 7.9. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff.

In PubMed data base (without time restriction) under the terms AAB College and Kosovo we found only 6 publication (accessed 27.05.2019).



Obviously transferring “opportunities”, mentioned in SER, into real research achievements and international visibility of health programs of AAB will be difficult process.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Create a research plan for the study program – clear research objectives, research themes and resources;*
2. *Motivate academic staff to increase research production by considering research results as promotion criterion;*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

Currently at the AAB campus in Pristina has 2 libraries. The contract with digital library J-STOR (a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary sources) for 2019 has been renewed. Also, students and other researchers have access to other sources such as: DOAJ (Open Access Journals), OPEN J GATE, EBSCO, Science Common, Edward Elgar, The New England Journal of Medicine, and other hard copy journals.

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

SER document on Master program in Health Management is partially confusing:

Part of the proposal contains description of program in Nursing.

Proposal contains a long list of staff in different health programs (Dentistry, Nursing, Radiology). The significance of such list is not sufficiently explained.

Proposal to start Health Management /MA could have positive influence on health system in Kosovo. However, there might be a conflict between the program that is organized as regular continuation of study for candidates with bachelor degree and the idea expressed in SER that candidates will come with academic qualifications in the field of medicine, law, economics and other sciences, this variety will enrich the pacification and knowledge about specific aspects of



health management. Such candidates that are already employed in health sector would need differently, more flexibly, organized life long-learning program.

Recommendation of the Expert Team

- New module Health Statistics should be introduced
- Research Publication of teaching staff in internationally visible medical journal practically above AAB standards, but much bellow standards of such programs in EU countries. Health Management /MA and AAB College in general should develop all possible measures to make its research internationally visible:
 1. *Create a research plan for the study program – clear research objectives, research themes and resources;*
 2. *Motivate academic staff to increase research production by considering research results as promotion criterion;*

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program HEALTH MANAGEMENT/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 *3 years* with 50 students to be enrolled in the program. (Because it is 2 years program optimal period for reaccreditation would be 2 years but that is not in line with KAA recommendations.)