



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

---

***AAB COLLEGE***

**INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION**

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*Brno, June 13, 2019*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1. Context.....	3
1.2. Site visit schedule.....	4
1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation.....	5
2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION.....	5
2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives.....	6
2.2. Strategic planning, governance and administration.....	7
2.3. Financial planning and management.....	9
2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability.....	10
2.5. Quality management.....	12
2.6. Learning and teaching.....	14
2.7. Research.....	15
2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development.....	17
2.9. Student administration and support services.....	19
2.10. Learning resources and facilities.....	22
2.11. Institutional cooperation.....	23



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:** May 29-30, 2019

**Expert Team (ET) members:**

- *Prof. Milan Pol, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic*
- *Ms. Oana Sarbu, PhD student, University of Bucharest*

**Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):**

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



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

---

- *Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation*

#### **Sources of information for the Report:**

- *Self-evaluation report (SER) of the AAB College*
- *Information gained during the site visit and interviews*
- *Additional materials submitted by the AAB College after the site visit upon the request of the ET*

#### **Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations**

- *KAA Accreditation Manual*

### **1.2. Site visit schedule**

#### 29 May

19.45 Meeting at the Reception of the Hotel

20.00 Working dinner

#### 30 May

08.30 Meeting at the reception of the hotel

09.00 – 10.30 Meeting with the management of the institution



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 under evaluation**

AAB College is a first non-public higher education institutions (HEI) in Kosovo, it was established in 2002. While it started with the program of Journalism and Mass Communication with 50 students, 20 employees and a limited infrastructure of 400 m<sup>2</sup>, now it has become much larger institution and it seems to play a significant role in Kosovo higher education landscape. It is currently having 14 faculties, a broad range of BA and MA study programs that are studied by more than 15,5 thousand students in campuses in Pristina, Gjakova and Ferizaj.

## **2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION**



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

---

## 2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives

The mission of the AAB College logically comes out of the vision of this HEI. The vision is formulated as follows: “AAB is a leading university institution in the region in applying an innovative approach towards higher education, science and technology. AAB sets new trends in the area of higher education in Kosovo and in the region and is part of the most relevant networks of institutions of higher education in Europe and wider. AAB is a leader towards country’s European integration processes and is a promoter of economic and societal development” (SER, p. 12)

The mission statement of AAB College sufficiently pays attention to teaching, research as well as to the so-called third role of the HEIs, public outreach (or community service, in other words). It emphasises contribution to the society through provision of quality and diversified study programs and applied science for the Kosovo labour market, region and beyond; advancement, development and dissemination of knowledge through research with the aim to improve the welfare and health of the population, as well as thorough cultural, societal and economic development; and also ensuring an environment which results into social mobility and personal development of individuals as responsible citizens. Also, AAB College’s mission stresses the involvement in a dialogue with economic and social partners, creativity, critical thinking, tolerance and universal values of academic community members, links to a life-long learning framework.

As for the process of mission development, the SER brings detailed information about a consultation process involving internal as well as external stakeholders. This was largely confirmed during the interviews. Also, most of the members of academic community whom we discussed with confirmed that they recognize the mission of AAB College.

It appears, the mission of AAB College can serve as an effective guide for further planning, both on strategic, and action levels; it can also be a solid basis for decision-making processes and operations of the AAB College. We also found medium and long-term objectives of AAB College (following five years) to be in consistency with the mission – they can effectively support the realisation of the AAB mission.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

6



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

---

### **ET recommendations:**

*None*

## **2.2. Strategic planning, governance and administration**

AAB College has developed and adopted its Strategic Development Plan for the period 2018-2022. This plan is broken down into six areas (directions), each of them further elaborated. These areas are as follows: 1. Management and administration; 2 Quality assurance; 3. Student services; 4 Teaching and research; 5. Infrastructure and technology; and 6. Cooperation and partnerships. On the top of it, there is one cross-cutting issue in the Strategic Development Plan, and this is Innovation and social dimension.

This way, it can be said, the strategic plan of AAB College covers all main areas of HEI's operation and penetrates it with a required dynamic and a broader dimension.

Each of the areas (objectives) is well justified and links to vision and mission of AAB College are clearly seen in a synergic way. Each strategic objective is further elaborated by means of a set of measures that should make it possible to achieve the objectives. These measures are sufficiently escribed, and they seem to be well chosen and realistic. Communication strategy and Performance evaluation framework are also a part of the document in focus. The attention to cross-cutting issue Innovation and Social Dimensions is rather implicit in the strategic plan.

It seems evident that the strategic plan was drafted in consultation with the academic community of AAB College, as well as external stakeholders and private sector. This is described in the SER and in a sufficient extend proved during the interviews at the site visit.

Annual as well as longer-term budget processes seem to be clearly linked to the strategic plan, the strategic plan seems realistically take into account internal as well as external environment that can affect the development of AAB College. The basic plan to monitor is prepared, some further development to monitor and evaluate targets and outcomes of strategic plan are to come, it seems.

The decision-making system and internal operating regulations seem to be in conformity with current legal provisions. According to the SER, the Steering Council is the leading governing

7



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

---

body of the AAB College, which consists of 11 members with the right to vote. The Statute of the AAB College indicates the Steering Council has 7 members with the right to vote (3 members selected by founders, 2 members selected by the Senate, an international member, and the founder), the rector and the General Secretary have no right to vote and the students can attend the meetings with no right to vote. During the site visit, ET found out that the Statute was not up to date to the reality presented in the SER. The Senate is the highest governing body of AAB College and it decides on all important issues in the field of teaching and research. .

The Senate's members include rector, vice-rectors, deans, elected member of academic staff from every academic unit, student representative, member of the administrative-technical staff, general secretary who is a permanent member of the Senate without the right to vote. The Faculty's management is represented by dean and vice-dean for teaching, and the QA coordinator.

Each faculty has also a Scientific Study Council and a Master Study Council (where MA level programs are offered) which consist of all the academic staff of the respective faculty with regular contracts, one member of the administration and one student representative.

The election criteria and processes of the decision makers and other elected positions are clear, transparent and published in the AAB College Statute and are in full compliance with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo; the responsibilities of the decision making bodies are defined in such a way that the respective roles and responsibilities for overall policy and accountability, the senior administration for management, and the academic decision making structures are clearly differentiated.

According to the statute, students' interests are represented within AAB College through the following bodies: President of students, Student parliament members, Student councils of academic units.

Based on the information collected from the SER and during the site-visit, the ET believes that the student representation mechanism is democratic. The mechanism for electing student representatives is clearly explained in the Procedures of the Parliament of the Students Union. Student representatives are members of all decisional, executive and consultative bodies.

The institution has an administration that is effective in terms of organization, staffing levels and qualifications. The roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and staff qualifications are appropriate for the positions they have. In addition to the AAB College Statute, the Regulation on the Systematization of Jobs has been approved, which aims at defining the internal organization and systematization of jobs at AAB College.



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

---

The AAB College has a set of central offices specialised to a specific services. They are as follows: Students Central Office, Office for Technology, Office for External Cooperation, Office for Support Services, Office for Finance, Office for Marketing, Office for Human Resources, Office for Development and Innovation, College Library, AAB College Institute, Publishing House. They seem to cover the range of main areas of the AAB College operation.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Elaborate in full the plan to monitor strategic plan and its targets and outcomes.*
2. *Update the AAB College Statute according to the current reality (i.e. number of members).*

### **2.3. Financial planning and management**

AAB College is a private higher education institution, which demonstrated financial sustainability and permanent development. The College budget is planned for 3 years (2019-2021), with 2019 year being approved, while the other two years are estimations based on the strategic plan. One of the vice-rectors is responsible for the development and finance. The vice-rector for development and finance reports to the rector about his work and he has the following duties and responsibilities: Develops short, medium and long-term financial objectives in accordance with the administrative procedures; Coordinates the drafting of the budget plan of the institution; Supervises the work of the Finance Directorate (Office); Supervises the revenues and expenditures; Proposes projects in the framework of social responsibility initiatives; Reviews and approves the financial requirements of the sectors.

At administrative level, there are explicitly defined appropriate positions related to budgeting starting from finance director, and then leading to supply manager, finance officer, accountant, supply officer, incomes officer, treasurer, transfers coordinator.

There is an accurate monitoring of expenditure and commitments against budgets and an annual report is produced. AAB College presented as the annex of the SER the Report of the Independent Auditor, which demonstrates that AAB College produces secure financial sustainability. ET believes that the College should consider possibilities to increase allocations to research.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant



**ET recommendations:**

1. *Consider possibilities to increase internal financial allocations for research.*

**2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability**

The AAB College has adopted different documents (the Code of Practice on Ethical Behaviour, the Code of Professional Conduct – 2016, and the Regulation on Disciplinary Issues – 2006) which aim to establish rules for professional conduct for College members, including academic, scientific, administrative staff and students, in accordance with the spirit of the academic, professional and moral ethics of the College and academic freedom. The Code of Professional Conduct stipulates that academic staff of AAB College should behave in line with contemporary standards in higher education. The Regulation on Disciplinary describes disciplinary procedure for the academic and administrative staff of AAB College and also for the students. The Code of Practice on Ethical Behaviour applies to all academic staff and it has been drafted based on the basic principles foreseen in the Law on Higher Education in order to provide a framework of rules with the aim of ensuring academic freedom, creating equal opportunities for the academic staff, and to improve the organizational climate and the work environment, by favouring the emergence of virulent behaviours and preventing unethical behaviour. The documents provide the specific sanctions applicable for breaches.

All the documents are made publicly available on the institutional website.

Additionally to the documents already mentioned, AAB College elaborated for students a Manual and Regulation for Academic Misconduct which explains in detail what is considered as an academic misconduct and academic dishonesty, what is considered to be plagiarism, and what are the sanctions.

The SER does not mention a Committee responsible for the analysis and resolution of any potential breaches in the code of ethics. In some cases, depending on the qualification of the violation, the College bodies establish a Disciplinary Committee which decides on cases involving serious violations. During the site visit, ET found out that the AAB College established an Ethics Committee, after the College submitted the SER. The students are represented in this Committee.



As observed during the site visit, students are not very much familiar with the content of the ethics regulations. Rather, students seemed to believe that each teacher has his/her own rules on respecting academic integrity

There is no anti-plagiarism software used at the College. Instead, students are required to sign a declaration confirming the originality of their work.

Generally, internal regulations and procedures are made publicly available. No information related to the new Ethic Committee has been identified on the website of the College at the time of the site visit, but this committee has just been set up. Also, the Code of Practice on Ethical Behaviour is not publicly available, but in order to increase the transparency of its actions, AAB College has made available the internal regulations and procedures to all members of the academic community on its electronic platforms. To stay open to a large number of stakeholders, general regulation as Code of Practice on Ethical Behaviour need to be made available not only internally, but also to the broad public, though.

The ET tried to identify on the website the typology and volume of information the institution is publishing about its study programs. Generally, there is sufficient amount of information published about academic staff, research and academic activities, the programmes offered, the number of students enrolled, the intended learning outcomes of programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the passing rates and the learning opportunities available to its students, graduate employment information, scholarship opportunities etc.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Update the AAB College Regulation on Disciplinary Issues which was launched in 2006.*
2. *Ensure that all internal regulation, procedures, self-assessment reports and decision of governing bodies are made public on the website of the College.*
3. *Improve the way of fighting against plagiarism.*



## 2.5. Quality management

According to the SER, the quality assurance system at AAB College is regulated by the Quality Assurance Guideline and the Regulation on Quality Assurance in line with the legal framework in Kosovo, such as the Law on Higher Education, the Administrative Instruction on the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in Kosovo and the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The regulations describe processes, mechanisms, instruments, reporting, data collection, timeframes, responsibilities and units involved in the processes.

The Quality Assurance Regulation and Guideline of AAB College consists of several parts that include: Part 1) Quality Assurance Structures, Part 2) Validation of Study Programs, Part 3) Internal Evaluation Processes, Part 4) External Evaluation Processes and Part 5) Quality Improvement Procedures. This document is publicly available.

Quality assurance processes and management at the overall institutional level are managed by the Central Quality Assurance Office, which closely cooperates with quality assurance coordinators at the faculty level as well as with the vice-rector for teaching. Each faculty within AAB College has a full-time quality assurance coordinator who manages quality-related issues at the faculty level

The Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of evaluation procedures in accordance with the statute and the regulations of the College. At the beginning of each academic year, the Quality Assurance Committee appoints a commission to be responsible for conducting the internal evaluation process as well as drafting a self-evaluation report, if applicable (Central Evaluation Committee). Committee members are elected by the Senate, based on the Rector's proposal according to the procedures specified in the Regulation on Quality Assurance. The Commission consists of five members, among them one member comes from the administrative staff and another one from the students. The mandate of the members of the commission is three years, whereas the student member's mandate is one year.

The ET considers the financial and human resources allocated to QA are in line with strategical aims considering QA.

There is an integrated data management system. This QA Office maintains AAB College's electronic platforms and ensures that it updates the data for each of its users. The Portal eService enables each professor to publish data, enables the registration of the lessons, records



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

---

the number of students present in lectures through the student's attendance card, etc. The course evaluation surveys are currently conducted on-line, and statistical data can be found in an accessible central database used in preparation of reports on indicators and other tasks in monitoring quality. After each internal periodical evaluation, QA Office prepares Development Plan and Annual Work Plans. The ET considers that the quality assurance has the ability to act as an early warning system in detecting irregularities and provide potential causes and solutions for them. Upon previous external evaluation process, AAB College focuses on implementing the recommendations that have been given.

Also, ET appreciates the quality of SER, which demonstrates knowledge of quality assurance policies and shows the existence of a quality culture in AAB College.

Although AAB College's QA principles stress that *Quality assurance is comprehensive; and Quality assurance includes all stakeholders inside and outside the College*, AAB College so far does not focus its internal QA activities on research and also, the ET didn't identify data collection instruments for alumni or employers. The College organizes informal consultations with different stakeholders, but it seems advisable to do this in a formal and regular way.

Upon completion of every semester, each Faculty management drafts a semester report which outlines the progress of the teaching process during the semester, meaning whether there were any lost lessons, the reasons why the lesson hours were lost, the number of substitutions that are made for those lost lessons, data on student attendance in lectures, the number of uploaded publications made by professors on the platform E-professor, and finally the student's success rate which outlines the analysis made about student's success for every subject over the last three examination period .

Quality assurance processes, as defined in the Development Plan, in Annual and Semester Working Plans, are evaluated and revised in accordance with the principles set out in the Development Plan.

ET is aware of the fact that the new external evaluation standards have led to numerous changes at the higher education institutions' level, and also, that some of the standards' requirements are difficult to be fully implemented in a short period of time, but the ET's mission is to judge the compliance to the standards at the time of the evaluation process.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

13



**ET recommendations:**

1. *Consider possibilities to focus the QA attention also on research.*
2. *Increase the stakeholders' involvement in QA processes.*

**2.6. Learning and teaching**

The College has developed and adopted policies and procedures applicable to all accredited programs at both Bachelor and Master levels, in all academic units, such as: Regulation on Studies, Regulation on Organization of Master Studies, Bachelor Thesis Guidelines, Master Thesis Guidelines, Citation of References and Academic Sources, Regulation on Good Academic Conduct, Regulation on Academic Staff Promotion, Regulation on Student Transfers, Code of Practice for Ethical Conduct and Quality Assurance Guidelines.

The ET analysed the course description for each module/subject presented in the programmes reports; each of them is provided with the ECTS credit number taking into account the weight of the subject, and each subject syllabus includes learning outcomes, curricula, evaluation methods etc. At the beginning of the semester, teachers present the subject syllabus to students; this contains a brief description of the subject, the goals and the learning outcomes of the course, as well as the assessment methods.

Student learning outcomes are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework.

Perhaps a bit more of specific attention could be paid to monitoring of quality indicators, and to identification of differences in quality between programs. The same can be said about ways of working with student feedback (the step of communicating the response to the feedback to students). And also, graduate and employer surveys with evidence from these sources need to be used as a basis for plans for improvement of programs.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Pay more attention to monitoring of quality indicators and to identification of differences in quality between programs.*
2. *Pay more attention to informing students about what happens with their feedback.*



3. *Use more graduate and employers feedback as a basis for plans of programs' improvement.*

## **2.7. Research**

While we did not see a concise Research Development Plan of the College, the research objectives are included in its new Strategic Development Plan: *Fundraising for research projects of AAB College staff; Establish a research fund for AAB College; Undertake measures for the systematic integration of research into study programs; Increase the fund for participation in conferences and publication of articles at home and abroad; Establish various awards that affirm scientific research at AAB College; Build capacity for application to local and international calls for research projects; Strengthen and support the journal "Thesis"; Raise funds for the organization of International Scientific Conferences; Support publishing activities of staff, researchers and creators in Kosovo; Establish a research centre for the medical fields and journals with ISSN and the International Scientific Council; Strengthen the practical work component* (pp. 21-23).

Specific activities/projects and measuring indicators have been associated to these measures, as well as a process of progress monitoring and reporting, but the College could not provide details of how are the research priorities in the institution determined, or what kind of benchmarks were realised.

A significant part of the financial resources is dedicated to the implementation of the research objectives, to education technology (including teaching tools and laboratory and technological equipment), and to the development of a more friendly learning environment for students and good working conditions for the teaching staff. Taking into account the resources of the College, the priority the College formally gives to research through its mission statement and strategic development plan, as well as the objectives of higher education defined by the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo, the ET would expect more emphasis expressed by the College on getting money from the external sources.

AAB College has established a vice-rector for scientific research as well as the Research and Training Institute. There are six research centres at the College with regard to the following study areas: Research Centre about Justice, Criminalistics and Security Studies; Research Centre for Development and Economic Prognosis; Centre for researching the public opinion;



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

---

Centre for Cultural, Social and Language Research; Centre for Research in Sports; Centre for Research in Architecture and Art.

A Publishing House was established for the publication of original scientific, artistic and publicity works and for translation of masterpieces from other cultures and a scientific journal of AAB College “Thesis” which has received ISSN in Croatia and has been indexed on several platforms like WorldCat, EconBiz, ErihPlus, etc. including those that MEST considers valuable for academic promotion.

According to the statistical data for research presented in SER, the number of scientific publications delivered by the academic staff for the period 2014-2018 includes 41 works by AAB College staff out of 95 total that have been published in the journal Thesis. List of publications presented as Annex 8 presents a considerably larger number of publications. There is no evidence that each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication/product per year for the past three years.

The College has organized 11 scientific conferences within the last 5 years in partnership with other universities held in AAB College, 3 symposia held in AAB College (health care, psychology, and nursing field) and 9 partner conferences, held outside of Kosovo.

The ET identified some active participations of students in the research processes:

- the research project developed by the Department of English Language entitled “Acquisition of Albanian as a first language from the perspective of natural order hypothesis”, which included 14 students,
- the research project “Cooperation of preschool institutions with parents toward early childhood education” which was developed by the Department of Social Sciences together with 24 students involved.

Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research activities is specified in their work contracts and, theoretically, performance in relation to these expectations is considered in the promotion criteria.

There have been isolated examples of staff members integrating their research results into their teaching activity; however, the ET considers this as an area in need of improvement so that it becomes a more generalised practice.

Issues relating to intellectual property, among others, are foreseen under the academic staff contract.

16



Even if AAB College has a new Ethics Code for Academic Staff approved in May 2019, this does not have clear ethical regulations for research activities. The College should draft and adopt formal procedures regarding the ethics in research and ensure that all its internal stakeholders conduct their activities in line with these procedures (such as signed consent forms for all human subjects, ensuring confidentiality of research data, etc.). Also, none of the ethical structures is responsible to ensure the safeguarding of ethical principles in research and to ensure their implementation through the approval of research methodologies (for staff, as well as students) that have to meet the basic ethical principles in research.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Ensure the research development strategy/plan includes specified indicators and benchmarks for performance targets, and that it is made publicly available*
- 2. Draft and formally adopt clear regulations for ethical principles in research*

## **2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development**

The rights and responsibilities, recruitment processes, promotion criteria and general principles of performance evaluation of teaching staff are spread across different internal documents: the AAB College Statute, Regulation on Academic Promotion of AAB College or on the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo.

Staff related policies and procedures are not centralised in the form of an employment handbook made available for staff at the beginning of their employment.

The recruitment processes ensure that staff have the specific areas of expertise, qualification and experience for the positions they occupy: the selection of academic staff is based on the public competition, according to the documents mentioned above.

The staff employed in the institution (academic and administrative) hold relevant qualifications so that they are able to effectively manage educational, scientific, research, creative activities and administrative processes.



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

---

The College ensures that candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions reflecting their duties and responsibilities prior to employment. The roles and responsibilities of the administrative staff are set out in the Regulation on the Systematization of Jobs.

Every new member of the academic staff, upon starting his employment with AAB College, is informed about various units and processes within the AAB College and is also supported by the Software Development Office regarding the use of AAB College's electronic platforms. The formal meetings with full- and part-time staff is organized at the beginning of each semester with a particular attention to the new staff members, informing them about the study program, students, organization of studies and any other contextual information of the College.

The teacher-student ratio at institutional level is 1:30 whereas for some of the academic units, in some cases it lowers down significantly, though (at the Faculty of Dentistry or Faculty of Radiology, for instance).

The institution has a staff performance review procedure that reflects all instruments dedicated for the evaluation of each category of staff, the impact each instrument has on the overall annual score and their impact on promotions, contract-related decisions etc. All the academic staff are informed about the criteria of the evaluation made by the students and by the management of the academic unit. Monitoring the performance of members of the staff is also defined under each academic staff contract.

When asked about the periodical evaluation of their activities, academic staff referred only to student course evaluations and was not clearly aware of other instruments. The results of the student surveys are not made public. There is no evidence of self- and peer-evaluation, but using the online system, the assessment conducted by the line manager seems to be a functional practice.

According to the SER, *“If the academic staff evaluations are not satisfactory, initially discussions are held between the individual and the Dean of the academic unit in order to find ways how to overcome such situations in the next academic semester. More serious remarks about the poor performance of any member of the academic staff are discussed at the rectorate level, where the situation is again analysed and the opportunities for improving the situation are looked at.”* (p.54)

Strategy and QA policies of the College took into account the need of permanent improvement of the staff of AAB College and there are clear actions in order to identify the needs and solve

18



the problems. AAB College periodically organizes trainings, conferences, workshops, focus groups etc., and is trying to respond to the needs as they are identified.

It appeared during our interviews, the staff believe they are given appropriate and fair opportunities for personal and career development, but ET did not have a chance to see any personal development plans. Yet it seems, each faculty proposes a staff development plan, focused on supporting the faculty staff in doctoral studies.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Develop an employment handbook that includes rights, responsibilities, recruitment processes, performance evaluation, promotion, support processes, professional development, promotion etc. for both academic, and administrative staff.*
- 2. Ensure that academic staff evaluation is done at least through self-evaluation, student evaluation, peer and superiors' evaluations.*
- 3. Provide more opportunities for personal and career development to all staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.*

## **2.9. Student administration and support services**

Admission procedures are clearly defined in the governing documents of AAB College. The criteria are consistently and fairly applied. For specific fields of study, the College organizes specific examinations for certain subjects (example at the Faculty of Arts); these are included in the student admission procedure. Students' admission requirements are specified in advertisements and published on the website of the College.

New students have all available information about AAB College's offerings, types and levels of the study program, study fees, offered scholarships, organisation of studies, and any other information needed for them. Information of new students about the abovementioned issues is done as following: through the official AAB College's web site, through social networks, through brochures and other advertising materials, through television and radio advertisements



in Kosovo etc. Another form through which AAB College informs students who are still at secondary education, are site visits organized at AAB College premises.

Every year, after new students' enrolment, the College organizes Information Days, an orientation program aiming to ensure thorough understanding of the range of services and facilities available to them. Also, on the first day of the new academic year, all students, depending on their study program, meet with the management of the respective faculty and students representatives who introduce them into the basic characteristic of the curricula, forms of assessment, policies and procedures governing the organization of studies, electronic platforms that students must use during their studies, inform them about their rights and obligations, and provide any other information that is important to students.

The institution offers different kinds of scholarships:

- 20% scholarship for each academic year for all students who have a grade 5 during secondary education;
- 10% scholarship for each academic year for all students who have grade 4 in secondary schools;
- 10% scholarship for each academic year for the students of social assistance;
- 10% scholarship for each academic year for students from the families which were victims of war;
- 10% scholarship for each academic year for students with disabilities sustained during the war;
- 30% scholarship for each academic year for students with disabilities;
- 10% scholarship for each academic year for students who study family;
- 10% scholarship for students residing outside of Kosovo, the Presevo Valley, Ulcinj etc.
- 10% scholarship for war veterans;
- 10% to 40% deduction for the other categories.

During the discussion with ET, students mentioned that two categories of scholarships can be cumulated. Also, each year, according with a signed agreement, three students from each Kosovo's' municipality study free of charge.

According to the information provided, there are processes in place to collect and analyse data referring to the student progression and drop-out rates. The institution collects also data on students' satisfaction with their programmes, the learning resources, and administration and



support services. There is a coherent usage of the data to support decision making and also for quality assurance purposes.

All information required for all phases of the student life cycle are publicly available on the website or on intranet, but they are not centralised in the form of a student handbook.

The student appeal procedure is specified in the AAB College Statute, published and made widely known within the institution, as well in the Regulation on Studies and the Code of Academic Conduct. The regulations make clear the grounds on which academic appeals may be based. The appeals procedure is intended to protect the person and student from unfair decisions.

The AAB College Statute, the Code of Conduct and the new Code of Ethical Behaviour detail the policy and procedures in place to deal with improper behaviour, academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating.

Adequate financial, human and logistic resources are provided to student's support. There is permanent concern for the identification, trial, implementation and assessment of student services.

Within the Students Office, AAB College has a Career Development Office that deals with career planning and employment counselling. The main responsibilities of the office are:

- help students with their application forms;
- assist students with the design of their CVs or other documentation needed for students who are in the process of applying for a job.
- 

Academic counselling is provided by Students Office which organizes and assists with the internships students' activities outside the College (banking institutions, various public companies, various administrative-governing bodies etc.). Also, this office organizes, supervises and assists with various visits to and from abroad.

The College does not provide specialised academic and psychological counselling, but the SER mentions that AAB College, through Faculty of Psychology, offers psychological services on a regular basis.

Common areas for students' meetings, recreational spaces, cafeteria, sports facilities, theatre hall encourage student participation in extracurricular activities.

During the discussion with students, ET identified various extracurricular activities involving students, such as:



- visits in Kosovo and abroad including hiking, skiing;
- organizing events related to marking important days like World Poetry Day;
- organizing parties to create a human link between teachers and students;
- making humanitarian arrangements, collecting funds for elderly people, for children in need;
- etc.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Centralize all information required for all phases of the student life cycle in a student handbook.*
2. *Consider possibilities of further support for student nobilities.*

**2.10. Learning resources and facilities**

The AAB College's campus in Pristina consists of two buildings located at a short distance from each other. The ET visited lecture halls, laboratories, student recreational corners, reading facilities, cafeteria and cantina, sports halls, administrative offices, student offices etc. AAB College provides a safe environment for students and academic and administrative staff, as it has a physical and electronic (through digital cameras) security system.

The facility possesses electrical stairs, elevators, emergency exits as well as the entire infrastructure suitable for students with special needs.

The library offers inspiring learning environments, extensive print and electronic collections and helpful staff to support students and teachers. AAB College Library provides to all of its users sufficient spaces for teaching and studying; basic literature for all study programs of all academic units; portals with various academic electronic journals from different areas of study.

The library is full member of the Consortium of Electronic Libraries of Kosovo, and has a cooperation agreement with the National and College Library of Kosovo (Kosovo Electronic Library Consortium) having the possibility to use the electronic resources provided by the Consortium through eIFL. The library has different cooperation with libraries in Kosovo and



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

---

abroad: Slovenian Library (Slovene National Library), IZUM (Slovenia), the US Congress Library, the library from Albania etc. Library and associated facilities and services are available for extended hours beyond normal class time to ensure access when required by users.

The College offers common areas for students' meetings, recreational spaces, cafeteria, sports facilities, theatre hall etc. AAB College does not offer accommodation to students, but this is envisaged in the development plan.

A major part of the management, administrative and academic activities of the AAB College is digitized. Different structures (as IT service or Office of Support Services) organize training and provide guidance to academic, administrative and management staff or to student on ways of using new platforms.

Technical support seems to be available for staff and students.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *None*

## **2.11. Institutional cooperation**

AAB College provided a Regulation for procedures of initiating, drafting and signing cooperation agreements as a guide for institutional cooperation. This Regulation is not an institutional internationalization strategy, but is placed under the strategic plan, and is focused on a following: 1. Strengthening of the Office for International Cooperation; 2. Signing and implementation of mobility agreements and mobility programs for staff and students (Erasmus +); 3. Building capacities to apply for local and international projects on higher education; 4. Signing and implementation of agreements for the implementation of study programs with well-known international institutions; 5. Promotion of internationalization of educational programs and services with the aim to increase the number of motilities and the number of

23



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

---

foreign students at AAB College; 6. Design and implementation of study programs in other languages; 7. Improvement of student information about international mobility programs and on institutional and individual exchange opportunities.

The institution has created and assigned this portfolio to the Vice-Rector for Foreign Cooperation that is directly mandated and accountable for the initiatives and results in this area:

- Drafts the work plan based on the action areas, mechanisms and structures carrying out certain activities;
- Coordinates its work with other vice rectors on issues and activities related to external cooperation;
- Explores the possibilities of agreements and other forms of cooperation with higher education institutions and other institutions at home and abroad and maintains their implementation;
- Explores, identifies and reviews the possibilities of organizing and participating in international activities for the academic staff, administrative staff and of students, with the aim to advance the teaching process and the scientific research work;
- Negotiates, prepares and signs national and international cooperation agreements under the Rector's authorisations;
- Coordinates the signing of external cooperation agreements for other sectors of the College.

In addition to the vice-rector, the Office for International Cooperation with three employees is established at the AAB College.

The signing of the cooperation agreements is done in accordance with the Regulation on Procedures for Initiation, Drafting and Signing of Cooperation Agreements. Last two years, AAB College signed a number of 21 agreements with different institutions, the main part for student's professional practice, but also with foreign higher education institutions for general academic cooperation, exchange of students and staff, institutional support for the organization of various conferences and training

The institution has taken part in international projects, but there it is enough room for improvement in this direction. Conferences are organised with universities in the region and in smaller numbers with European universities, too.

There is still relatively low student and staff mobility. In AAB College's SWOT analysis, low mobility of teaching staff and the difficulty of attracting more foreign students are highlighted.

24



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

---

Several factors can be suggested to explain the small number of students from abroad: the need for a stronger College-wide marketing strategy, absence of study programs in English, the need to approach international students individually etc. In addition, there is the issue of the visibility and image of AAB College on the international scene. The College should, therefore, formulate a clear international strategy and, in the medium- to long-term, consider providing more focused international links both in terms of countries and subject disciplines.

Despite to low mobility, staff and students were generally enthusiastic about the value of international links and opportunities. AAB College made steps in this direction, but even if internationalization is based on the relationships established by the College with international partners at various levels, an effective internationalisation strategy should be built step-by-step starting within the College, from the entire institution's community. The development of an internationalisation culture within the AAB College and building an internationalisation attitude among the students, but primarily among the staff, seem to be key preconditions for any internationalisation strategy to be successfully promoted and implemented.

The College is developing good relations with local business enterprises, and the local community in general. This has led to mutually beneficial cooperation and collaboration in a variety of regional initiatives. In this context the College's developing internship programme is of great value to AAB College students. This not only provides them with experience and knowledge of the realities of work in the "real" world, but it often leads to getting a permanent job after graduation. In this context it was suggested during discussions with staff and external stakeholders that student practical projects and internships should come earlier in the curriculum, and that the internship programme should be more expanded.

During the interviews, there was a positive feedback to AAB College provided by employers and other external stakeholders as regards the graduates of the College, but also as regards the overall offer of AAB College to the society. The collaboration includes not only internships for students, partnerships for applied research, continuing education and human capital development, but also includes consultancies, involvement in institutional development strategies etc.

The relationship with the graduates is not formal. Systematic contact with graduates could be an effective feedback system for the relevance of curricula with employment; alumni can also be a source of revenue; and, finally, alumni can play an important role in the efforts of AAB College to improve its reputation and to increase its visibility



**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Focus on diversified opportunities of international motilities (study stay but also internship stays, both for students, and the staff).*

**OVERALL EVALUATION AND JUDGEMENTS OF THE ET**

The AAB College seems to be doing well, sometime very well in key aspects of its operation, and there seems to be evident the developmental drive of the whole institution.

STANDARD 2.1 .....	Fully compliant
STANDARD 2.2 .....	Substantially compliant
STANDARD 2.3 .....	Fully compliant
STANDARD 2.4 .....	Substantially compliant
STANDARD 2.5 .....	Substantially compliant
STANDARD 2.6 .....	Substantially compliant
STANDARD 2.7 .....	Substantially compliant
STANDARD 2.8 .....	Substantially compliant
STANDARD 2.9 .....	Substantially compliant
STANDARD 2.10.....	Fully compliant
STANDARD 2.11 .....	Substantially compliant

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that:



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

---

1. The AAB College is *substantially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *to accredit* the study institution for a duration of **3 years**.

### Expert Team

#### Chair

**Prof. Milan Pol**

**July 27, 2019**

---

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

#### Member

**Ms Oana Sarbu**

**July 27, 2019**

---

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)