

AUK – The American College of Kosova

# Institutional Reaccreditation

Final Report – Site visit May 11/2016

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Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA)

## Site Visit Program

Institutional Reaccreditation Procedure at PrBHE “AUK –The American College of Kosova”

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> May

Address: Germia Campus Nazim Gafurri, 21 Dr. Shpëtim Robaj, p.n, Prishtinë 10000

### Expert Team

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### Coordinators of KAA

- Prof. Dr. Blerim Rexha  
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Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring - KAA

## Site Visit Program

### 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016

19.45	Meeting in the Reception of the Hotel
20.00	Working dinner

### 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016

07.45	Meeting in the Reception of the Hotel
08.00 – 10.00	Meeting with the management of the Institution
10.00 – 11.00	Meeting with academic staff
11.00 – 12.00	Meeting with students
12.00 – 13.30	Lunch and discussion of ET and Co. KAA
13.30 – 13.45	ET and Co., KAA consultation
13.45 – 13.30	Closing meeting with the management of the Institution
13.30 –	The end of the site visit

The site-visit was carried out by the two experts listed above and by the coordinators of KAA, Mr. Shkelzen Gerxhaliu and Fisnik Gashi, both Officers of Evaluation and Monitoring. A slight adjustment to the programme was made due to the Graduation Celebration of the College on that day: Item “ET and Co., KAA consultation” and “Closing meeting with the management of the Institution” was shifted before the lunch break.

The draft report has been compiled on the basis of

- Application documents submitted to the KAA prior to the site visit
- Findings collected during the site-visit
- Further material requested and received on May 17th

and comprises the information gathered in the meetings with the management, academic staff and students of the institution.

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## 1. Mission Statement

A.U.K. stands for American Education in Kosovo. It is a Non-Governmental-Organisation (NGO) with public benefit status. Since 2015 it is officially known as „A.U.K. – The American College of Kosova“ and organised as a „501(c)(3) non-profit organisation in the United States known as the American University of Kosovo Foundation“ (SER p. 8). It does not award degrees; the 4-year bachelor programme in Applied Arts and Sciences (BSc) A.U.K. and the 2-year Associate Degree (AAS) in Multimedia and Web Design (SER, p. 101) A.U.K. offers are from the Rochester Technology Institute, US, and based on an agreement between A.U.K. and RIT. To this extent A.U.K. is quoted as an „additional location“, within RIT’s statement of accreditation.

The mission statement is very general but states the general purpose, to deliver American education to students from Kosovo, including students from anywhere in the world, stressing their interest in diversity in terms of backgrounds and nationality. If this was the case the question came up why A.U.K. applied for (re)accreditation by the KAA. Management feels that the institutional accreditation assures their status within the European environment and protects their students against potential disadvantages in terms of status, recognition and opportunities in their future careers in higher education, international organisations or in industry. A.U.K. will not ask for programme accreditation by KAA – they will apply at respective American organisations (presently indirectly through RIT) – realising their American bias, being different from European approaches within the European Higher Education Area. This conclusion can be underlined by the statement „ECTS calculation“(12.6 page 151 of the Self-Evaluation Report): „One US-semester credit hour is equivalent to 2 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits. Therefore, all credits are calculated using this formula...“. As the US credits refer to contact hours only, this „formula“ is not applicable within the EHEA as it does not reflect on the workload approach. This does not exclude that credits would be recognised, not at all, but a more sophisticated approach has to be chosen.

As A.U.K. is also looking for increased coordination with Erasmus+ programmes to increase mobility of students, faculty and staff, an analysis of the requirements to become a partner might be advisable. This does not only refer to „technical“ elements like credit allocation but also to instruments like Course Catalogue, Learning Agreement, Transcript of Records, Diploma Supplement, Grade Distribution and in particular to the constructive alignment of Learning, Teaching and Assessing within the National Qualifications Framework of Kosovo, thus the two European Qualifications Frameworks, and finally an independent Quality Assurance System.

The vision of A.U.K. focuses on South-Eastern Europe. It is not clear whether the region is identical with the Western Balkan or whether other European countries, e.g. Greece, are included, i.e. partner countries of the EHEA. There is another location of RIT in Croatia, in the EHEA, but the relationship between the institutions seems to be through RIT only. The vision, in fact, underlines clearly their intentions to deliver US Diploma, „...to bring the RIT undergraduate programs, accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, is of vital importance in fulfilling this mission“ (SER, p. 15).

Mission and vision are shared by the academic staff and also the students see themselves as „American students“, the latter having chosen the institution because of this to a large extent, expecting better future perspectives.

The present development of A.U.K. focuses on widening their present study-programme. So far this has been initiated by market research. If the need arises A.U.K. will offer more „concentrations“ or majors/minors or separate study-programmes. Their market research is not only focused on new concentrations but in particular on „job profile demands“. It could be argued that this might be too narrow an approach for higher education. The term „employability“, stressed within the EHEA as a key objective, might be more adequate.

In the discussion with the Management a paper was distributed being called „Strategic Questions for A.U.K., dated May 22, 2015, in which the issues raised above had already been listed: the identification (American institution), the undergraduate programme, service to Kosovo and the region. It appears that management is aware of these strategic questions and seems to be continuously challenging what they are doing so that they adapt their programme profile or develop a programme portfolio.

Ten years ago, when A.U.K. started, 50 students were enrolled. Today more than 500 students are registered in the one four-year-bachelor- programme they offer. The programme comprises four different concentrations.

Presently it appears that the institutional educational environment fits the intentions of the institution so that the mission expressed and the goals identified could be fulfilled and achieved. However, if new programmes were started or the philosophy changed, the educational environment had to be checked again, in particular in the light of available teaching staff and the need for developing and widening the research activities and scope. Also, what would happen if the RIT programme(s) AUK wanted to offer in the Kosovo were not accredited?

**Recommendation:**

If the institutional accreditation is granted to A.U.K., the KAA should nevertheless accredit their study-programmes albeit having been accredited by an American organisation. The KAA would recognise the American accreditation as such but would have to consider to which extent the programme(s) are in line with the Kosovo system of higher education and to this extent a part of the European Higher Education System. Similarly this policy has been applied to other institutions from abroad having wanted to start programmes, also those from within the EHEA.

As graduates may also continue their studies within the EHEA the credits allocated to the programme and its educational components should also be calculated on the basis of the ECTS User´s Guide of 2015. The present calculation of 1:2, i.e. one US semester credit hour is equivalent to 2 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits is not necessarily correct as the philosophies of both systems are not identical. Whereas the US credit system is based on contact hours, ECTS reflects the workload, e.g. independent studies. Depending on the level more or less independent studies are required to cope with the volume of learning within programmes of the EHEAS and therefore the formula might not be adequate. Prima facie and technically speaking, the 1:2 formulae seems so obvious but students may face difficulties when transferring to other programmes at bachelor or master level within the EHEA because of the different philosophies. It might be useful to document – on the basis of the workload – that 4 or 5 modules per semester reflect the workload of a semester, corresponding to 30 credits or similarly the number of modules for a whole academic year requires a workload expressed by 60 credits.

As A.U.K. expresses their wish to become active in ERASMUS +, it might also be useful to integrate some of the tools being used in networking but also for the labour market, e.g. Learning Agreements, Diploma Supplement (see also ECTS User's Guide 2015).

## 2. Academic Freedom

Academic Freedom, it is stipulated, exists within academic institutional structures, set by processes and procedures (SER, p. 106), being nevertheless open for overall refinements, bearing in mind the objectives of the programme, finally those of RIT.

The A.U.K. sees a major element of Academic Freedom in a fair grading system. Percentages are defined as rather strict guidelines. For example, it is expected that “most A.U.K. courses are expected to give between 10% and 30% of the studentets with a grade A” (SER p 44). Exceptions are possible but have to be reasoned with the „A.U.K.-RIT-Director of Academic Affairs“(SER p 44). Academic Freedom depends also on the legal form of the organisation, i.e. to which extent is it an independent body. A clarification of the status seems to be decided upon when the new president will begin in the next academic year. For this accreditation, the present format, A.U.K. as an independent body (NGO) which offers an accredited American study-programme of RIT, is investigated. However, to this extent, A.U.K. totally depends on being able to make agreements with American higher education institutions to offer their programmes at the Prishtina site of A.U.K.

These issues were intensively discussed with management, academic staff and students. As outlined above the relationship between RIT and A.U.K. frames the independence of the institution. Whereas the college stresses that they have not made a franchise agreement with RIT and also points out that they are not a branch, the impression of the expert team is that they act like a branch: A.U.K. provides the infrastructure but the programme (they only have one for the time being) is designed by staff from RIT. Teachers on site more or less present what has been thought of at RIT. It appears that they do not have a word in the design but are expected to make proposals if the need arises and may also propose subjects. This does not mean that they do not discuss and interpret the material they receive from RIT; they meet regularly, but their way of thinking is very much geared towards the US. They want a „European status“ but at the same time underline their „competitive profile“ of being an American institution in Europe – outside the EHEA alignment – following an American curriculum and syllabus. Most of the teachers have „American experience“, or are Americans. They are proud of their organisational culture being American.

The teachers take it for granted that they receive the material for learning and teaching from American colleagues. They review sample syllabi and the respective course outline along with the intended learning outcomes as a framework within which they may make changes. Some of the RIT staff AUK teachers know in person; all of them are electronically connected. Also the type and contents of examinations are set by American colleagues and a selection of grades is being sent to RIT thus supporting a RIT-quality control in Kosovo. Teachers see their freedom in deciding about the way of learning and teaching – as long as they meet the learning outcomes fixed by RIT.

To this extent staff is not really discussing the learning outcomes of the specific course and – not visibly – EHEA related topic as there is no reference made to the European developments in the SER. On the other hand, teachers in Kosovo may design specific courses, which are subject of approval by the Curriculum Committee at RIT. Once the course is approved it is included in the RIT course listing under a “Special Topics” heading.

A „non-inclusive list of ... limitations“ are briefly described in the SER (p. 106). They comprise guidelines referring to the authority of staff, content, group work, projects, zero defects and grades and focus on learning, teaching and assessing.



Teachers can apply for grants to attend conferences; they are supported overall by the Staff Development Centre of A.U.K. As there is no official unit structure at AUK all staff feels equal and motivated in their job. This refers to research and publications as well.

The mission and also the teachers refer to attracting the „best students“, however, there was no clear definition how a best student could be identified except according to admission requirements. Teachers specify that the top students of a class are „exceptionally good“.

### **Recommendation**

To be able to compare the standards of students and the degree offered it might be useful to check the Kosovo and the European Qualifications Framework. It may also be an idea to define the „best students“, e.g. in terms of the Dublin Descriptors but surely not on a knowledge basis only. The „Student Development Aspects“ outlined in the SER (p. 67) should be included in the learning outcomes which would entail that they were assessed through adequate forms of assessment. Finally it would be interesting to learn whether the “best students” in terms of fulfilling admission requirements perform similarly during the studies, in their finals and also on the labour market.

### **3. Academic Programmes and Student Management**

At the time of this institutional accreditation, A.U.K. is a NGO in Kosovo which delivers a study programme of Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Philadelphia, United States, awarding an „US Diploma“ (SER, p. 14).

Currently, one 4-year bachelor degree programme in English language „Bachelor of Science in Applied Arts and Sciences“ with four concentrations) is offered. In addition, a 2-year Associate Degree in Multimedia and Web Design (AAS) (SER, p. 101). In the past, master degree programmes were also provided, but are now discontinued. The latter is an indication of management’s concern for ensuring financial viability of institution while maintain the quality standards (SER, pp. 100-102). In this section we focus on a 4-year bachelor degree programme, as SER provides details only on this programme (e.g., section 6 – Students on pp. 51-52 reports only student numbers for BSc. programme).

In the first two years of the bachelor degree programme, the core courses (general education) are offered. In years 3 and four, each student has to select two specialisations (out of four) and one minor (out of three). Recent changes in programme delivery (two semester-based calendar) were implemented to facilitate in part international student exchange and credit transfer (SER, p. 102). However, the students expressed in the interview with the ET a need to prolong a semester from 13 weeks to 15 weeks, with one-week break before the exams.

High importance is placed on practical training. Each student has to complete two co-ops (paid internship to the extent of 400 hours) in order to be eligible for B.Sc. degree. One co-op may be completed at A.U.K., and the other must be found elsewhere (excluding family business). Finding a position is responsibility of a student, but A.U.K facilitates the process through a Co-op office (by advising students on how to prepare the CV, organising job fair, etc.).

As discussed above (see Section 2), programme content and delivery rules are designed by RIT, with an exception of occasional “Special topics” courses (which can be designed by the local faculty). Hence, from the local perspective, curriculum and syllabi are more or less fixed. The local faculty can adapt them to local environment by adding some local elements (e.g., case studies). Some flexibility is allowed in the choice of textbooks, teaching methods and forms of assessment, provided that course learning objectives are met. Self-assessment of the learning outcomes by the faculty is performed on a regular basis. Standardisation in program and individual course evaluation via the RIT Office of Educational Effectiveness Assessment (EEA) enables comparisons of results (benchmarking) across RIT’s campuses (in the USA and abroad).

While academic degree conforms to the USA standard, it is structure- and content-wise appropriate also for the European context. As recommended in Section 2 of this report, to foster student exchange and graduates’ employability in the region and in Europe it would be advisable to systematically compare the programme to the European Qualifications Framework.

Overall, it is our opinion that academic programme offered corresponds to the institution's mission statement and the principles of employability, the quality, range and academic aims of the curriculum are appropriate, and are based on an overarching didactic concept that has been adequately communicated to and accepted by the teaching staff.

In the academic year 2014-2015, in total, 540 students were enrolled. The student/teacher ratio was 14.5:1, which is adequate. Student body is highly diverse by Kosovar standards; the students come from 17 countries (p. 32; 22 countries are mentioned on p. 5; this discrepancy is most likely due to fluctuation in foreign students intake over the years). Nevertheless, the students mentioned in the interview with the ET, that they would prefer even a higher international student intake.

The students have to pass an entrance exam, and the admission criteria and admission processes are consistent with international standards. Depending on their background, the students have to take SAT, TOEFL and/or an examination in mathematics.

The students that were interviewed seem to be very satisfied with the programme and with A.U.K. in general (albeit they had some critical comments regarding the campus facilities and “atmosphere”). They reported that the exams reflected course content (if not, they can launch a complaint), the grading was fair, the regulations on plagiarism were strict, and that the active class participation was encouraged (it is also graded). They listed as the main motivators to enrol to the A.U.K.: reputation of being one of the best schools in the region, small class sizes, school’s location (no need to study abroad to obtain an international degree), good employability of the graduates, and good prospects for further education (possibly abroad).

The students have their governing body (student organisation) and are also represented in the Senate. They present regularly to the Board of Trustees. The student senator is independent of student organisation. A.U.K. provides a budget of about 3000 EUR to the student organisation. Most students seem to be active in one or more student clubs.

## Recommendations

The SER (p. 16) states that, pursuant to its mission, A.U.K. intends to develop programmes that are in line with market demand and economic development goals of Kosova. However, there is no

indication that the standard RIT programmes have been significantly adapted to meet these specific needs. The number of locally developed courses seems rather small. While one can appreciate the mission to deliver a high quality American education which enables the students to find jobs or pursue further education in the international markets, it seems, however, that there is not much room for programme adaptation to the local needs. It would be advisable to provide some flexibility in the curriculum to include some EU-related topics, and the courses that would meet specific educational needs in Kosova (as identified by research on educational needs in 2013; SER, pp. 47-48). They could become part of the learning outcomes (see also recommendation above, Nr. 2).

#### **4. Research**

A.U.K. is positioned as a teaching and not a research institution, and it is modelled on a classical liberal arts college model. While RIT currently offers nine Ph.D. programs in other areas, it does not offer Ph.D. degree in the field of Business. Although it runs master-level programmes (mostly MBA-type), it is undergraduate degree focused and a professional degree oriented institution.

Interviews with the management team and the faculty indicated that academic research by A.U.K.'s faculty is encouraged, but not actively supported (neither financially nor organisationally). Some faculty members produce scientific publications (mostly conference papers) but overall, the scientific research output is weak.

The A.U.K.'s management endorses the idea that faculty should engage in research projects and, especially, that the students be included in these projects, however it does not provide a research-conducive environment. Teaching loads are relatively high and do not leave much time to do any research. Also, research dedicated funds are small (intended mostly for (co)financing participation at the conferences). As explained by the management, if resources were ample, research would be supported, but given the institutional financial limitations, A.U.K. has to rely on individual initiative of faculty to find research funds. A similar model is applied at RIT. If faculty procures research funds from external sources, it can buy-off some teaching time.

Nevertheless, faculty has initiated some applied research projects (mostly in cooperation with local institutions and companies), in which students are involved. An example was given in an interview with the faculty, that the entire course was designed around such project. The students also seem to appreciate this type of learning.

The only group of students that are invited to undertake research are A.U.K.'s best students (full-time students with GPA 3.8 or higher). They have to complete a one-year research project to be eligible to be invited to join the "A.U.K. Honors Society" (SER, p. 34).

A.U.K. aspires to be one of the leading institutions of higher education in South-Eastern Europe, offering students a standard of education that allows the graduates to compete with those of leading universities anywhere in the world (SER, p. 13). The ET question if a non-research oriented faculty is capable of fulfilling this vision.

#### **Recommendation**

A.U.K. is encouraged to establish a research fund that would allow faculty to pursue scientific research and co-finance applied research projects. This would be a way to build up faculty academic qualifications and would represent a step to extend RIT's portfolio of AACSB accredited programmes to the programmes run in Kosova. Developing research capabilities and qualifications of faculty are especially relevant if A.U.K. decides to once again offer master degree programmes.

## **5. International Co-operation**

A.U.K. was established in partnership with RIT, and, effectively, it acts as a foreign subsidiary of the American institution (although its legal status is different). Hence - in regard to Kosova environment - internationalisation is at A.U.K.'s core. In the Strategic development plan (outlined in the SER, pp. 13-14), international cooperation is not mentioned at all, hence it could be assumed that this is not a relevant issue for the future development of A.U.K. However, issues regarding several forms of internationalisation are listed among the Strategic Questions for A.U.K. prepared by the current A.U.K.'s president (document dated May 22, 2015, provided at the site visit).

The students have opportunities for mobility to the RIT campuses in Rochester and other international locations. Hence, they can gain some international experience, but mostly within RIT units. The SER mentions that an increasing exchange between the global campuses within RIT network is a priority initiative (p. 102), which would, no doubt, intensify the faculty and student mobility.

On the other hand, A.U.K. has only a small number of agreements with international partners which severely limits the student mobility outside of RIT locations. A.U.K. seeks to join Erasmus + network (SER, p. 103) as a charter school (as soon as Kosova qualifies), which would greatly improve mobility. A data on student exchange for the period 2013-2015 (submitted after the site visit as a part of additional documents requested by the ET) indicates that the number of students that obtained some course credits at international locations is substantial, but mostly due to participation in the summer school (albeit about 50% of these exchanges refer to the Summer school offered by University of Prishtina, which cannot be considered an international location).

It could be said that A.U.K.'s students benefit from "internationalisation at home" as about 20% of the students participating in the summer school come from abroad. In addition, about one third of faculty members are foreign nationals. Student and faculty internationalisation creates cross-cultural environment and thus enhances the international "component" of students' educational experience.

### **Recommendation**

A.U.K should strengthen its international links beyond the RIT network. Exposure to the international environment is nowadays an important part of business education, necessary to fulfil A.U.K.'s mission and vision. To this end, a comprehensive internationalisation strategy should be developed and implemented. It should encompass all important facets of international cooperation: internationalisation of students, faculty, mobility, programme curriculum and syllabi, co-op programme, and research.

## **6. Staff**

The official list of academic staff provided by KAA shows that A.U.K. employs 19 full-time and 16 part-time instructors. 11 full-time teachers hold Ph.D. degree; therefore the faculty sufficiency requirement is met. About half of the faculty are women.

The tasks and responsibility of instructors seem to be clearly outlined in the A.U.K. documents, and processes are explicit and structured (e.g., evaluation, faculty portfolio submission, annual reviews, etc.). Faculty is involved in the governance through participation in the Academic Senate and other bodies. Academic units used to exist, but they were disbanded.

In response to the previous institutional accreditation review, A.U.K. increased the proportion of permanent academic staff with Ph.D. degree (from 44% in 2013 to 78% in 2016). It also developed and adopted a “Faculty Policy Handbook” which outlines the criteria and procedures for faculty rank and promotion in line with Kosovo legislation (in 2015) and considered the issue of ensuring equivalency across RIT campuses (SER, p. 102). In 2016, A.U.K. faculty developed a “Faculty Development Center”, which is modelled according to a foreign benchmark (San Jose). The Faculty Development Center came into being through the initiative of the previous academic director who secured the grant and brought in the expert from the USA. The Center organises seminars, where individual faculty members present their research; it provides information on workshops and on availability of financial support (grants). It administers a small fund for supporting the cost of conference attendance.

As mentioned in Section 4, research activity is very much an individual endeavour, so is the involvement of students in research as part of courses.

### **Recommendation**

Faculty support and development policies are still being developed. To fulfil its mission of providing a high quality education, A.U.K. has to attract and keep the best teachers. Their loyalty and commitment to the school would be, no doubt, further enhanced by providing infrastructure and support for research and personal development of individual faculty members. These faculty members should also be in the know as regards developments in the EHEA and in particular in Kosovo.

## **7. Organization, Management and Planning**

A.U.K. is an NGO with public benefit status that provides infrastructure and support (under the service contract) for the delivery of a RIT bachelor degree programme in Kosovo. The governance structure is typical of an American educational institution. The highest governing body is the Board of Directors, which appoints the A.U.K. President. A.U.K. Vice-President and Director of RIT Programs (AKA as the Vice-President for Academic Affairs) report also to the RIT Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs, thus ensuring coordination and control regarding all aspects of the delivery of RIT programme. Decision-making structures for governance, management, administration, and academic matters are transparent.

A.U.K. has a development plan which outlines 7 strategic dimensions. RIT is currently undergoing the strategic planning cycle, and A.U.K. is about to enter a transition period as the current president will

retire soon. Some key questions regarding future strategic orientation and implementation have been identified by the current management but will wait for a new president to address them. A.U.K. and RIT are currently discussing the merits of the existing model and whether it requires some adjustments.

### **Recommendation**

The issues listed in the document "Strategic Questions for A.U.K." are all highly relevant and should be addressed in the near future (many are raised also in this report).

## **8. Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment**

In recent years, A.U.K. has stabilised its financial situation. The proposed budget for the next three years shows a stable profit. The main source of revenues will be from undergraduate tuition fees, followed by the income from special programmes and summer school. A.U.K.'s local academic budget represents about one half of the revenues.

A.U.K. campus is located in Germia Park in a former dormitory. The building was donated for being used by the Municipality of Prishtina, and was completely renovated in 2005. The plans for a new campus seem to be on hold.

Physical facilities are adequate and in a good condition. Disabled access to higher floors is enabled. A.U.K. library is linked to the library at RIT, hence in addition to the printed materials (books, journals) and other physical materials, the students and faculty have excellent on-line access to academic resources.

A.U.K. has 15 standard classrooms, one auditorium (sitting 110), a science lab, a visual arts classroom and 6 PC labs. It also has (limited) outdoor sports facilities. Wi-fi access is available throughout the campus.

It is especially commendable that all undergraduate students are issued notebooks at the beginning of their studies. They can purchase them at the end of the studies for a price of 1€.

## **9. Quality Management**

A.U.K. clearly state throughout their report that they intend „to deliver high quality American education to outstanding students“ (SER, p.13). In 2008 they were described as „a model of good practice for the delivery of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programs“(SER, p. 7). To which extent the postgraduate programmes play a role here is not obvious unless the term refers to the second part of the 4-year-bachelor programme on offer or to their master programme they used to run. A further element of their claim for top quality can be underlined by the fact that „...-one fifth of our graduating class- were awarded scholarships for postgraduate study in US and EU universities“.

These results definitely indicate a very good quality of the student body. However, it is amazing, that the organisational chart of the NGO does not foresee an official Quality Management Department, Office or Manager. Quality seems to be focused on the careful selection of staff, students and the

„locational connection“ with RIT, e.g. by sending samples of marked examination papers to colleagues at RIT or through their Self-Assessment-Reports with feed-back from RIT.

Programme Quality Assurance is highlighted in the appendix of the SER (p. 105) being founded additionally to the elements described above on academic freedom, transparent employment procedures, core essentials for teaching, scholarship and service, maintenance of high quality faculty instructors and faculty and student integrity.

The quality of teaching is evaluated through student teaching evaluations, classroom visitation by peer faculty and administrators, syllabi, reading lists, evidence of curricular and pedagogical innovation, student supervision records and records of student performance, and other adequate material.

Teachers are asked to submit a self-assessment and receive feed-back from their American counterparts. The grading is according to US practice and the learning outcomes are mainly content oriented although they have the student development on their mind, well beyond knowledge acquisition. This is – for example – stipulated within the SER (p. 67) but it seems to be left to „Academic Advisors“ to foster these developments. The SER distinguishes between academic and personal development and specifies the role of an advisor in this process. It is not clarified to which extent these developments are also part and parcel of the learning outcomes of educational components as such. The Advisors are part of the organisation chart beyond the Chief Academic Officer, same as the various science departments – but without a direct link between them. On the other hand the SER states under the heading „Teaching“ (SER, p. 113) that „advising is closely related to the educational process. Faculty member spend time outside of class working with students...“.

Full-time and also part-time staff will have an annual review (from November – March of each academic year), the results of which are submitted to the President of A.U.K. and have to be approved. They are discussed by the faculty member and the Director of Academic Affairs.

### **Recommendation**

There are many elements of quality control. It might be useful to link them together in a more structured way. What could be discussed is a more neutral office of „Quality Management“ which protects the teacher from difficult personalised relationship and makes the procedure more anonymous and thus most likely fairer, avoiding any human reactions, attitudes, negative expectations and impression.

### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

The experts propose to the Board of the KAA to confer institutional accreditation to AUK – The American College of Kosova.

