

# **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

**ESLG College**

**COMMITTEE OF  
EXTERNAL EVALUATION  
EXPERT TEAM**

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Commissioned by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA)

August 2016

## **Academic programme accreditation: MA in Law and Real Estate and Infrastructure Management**

### *Does the academic programme correspond to the institution's mission statement and principles of operation?*

This Master programme is designed to prepare specialists in law covering Real Estate and Infrastructure issues. This is fully in line with the Mission (p. 7) and the Strategy of ESLG (p.6):

- The Mission of College ESLG is to provide premier education in Kosovo with unique programs and unique teaching methodologies.
- Strategic Goal 1: DEVELOP UNIQUE STUDY PROGRAMS IN THE SECTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE MOSTLY TO GDP GROWTH OR WHERE THE EMPLOYMENT HAS BEEN MOSTLY GENERATED OR HAS THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO GENERATE EMPLOYMENT IN THE FUTURE.

It is also fully in line with the Mission of the Department of Real Estate (. 21): To provide premier education in real estate management and create the elitary managers and appraisers in the construction sector that will contribute to the saving of energy of the construction sector.

It is also important to consider the position of ESLG in the High Education System of Kosovo. It is difficult for ESLG to compete with other educational institutions in Kosovo so (p. 12): “College ESLG should neither compete with public universities and market leaders in the private higher education (Kolegji AAB) nor with the largers in the market (other 22 private bearers of higher education) but instead it should continue to pursue its niche markets in Kosovo and region by providing quality education through very unique study programs, foreign professors, modern teaching practices, involvement of students in foreign research projects, and very high degree of internationalization.”

According to some Studies and Surveys (p. 13, 44), construction is one of the most important economic sectors in Kosovo.

### *Are the programme's quality, range and academic aims appropriate to the academic degree?*

It is a two years Master programme with 60 ECTS for each year (120 ECTS total). It is then a large master programme in terms of content and duration.

The expected outcomes cover the main pillars when considering the construction sector: economy of real estate, real estate law, real estate valuation and real estate registration to real estate entrepreneurship and negotiation of contracts to sustainable architecture and urban planning, sustainable urban design, sustainable facility management and sustainable building materials.

- Considering the subjects, there seems to be no overlap of contents.

- Elective courses are offered, so that the programme is flexible and the student can choose some courses of their interest.

Although the Master programme has full-time and part-time students, there are no difference in contents and hours of classes. That should mean that part-time students will have to do the master programme in more than two years.

*Is the programme based on an overarching didactic concept that has been adequately communicated and adopted by the teaching staff?*

The ratio between the theoretical and practical parts of the program is established at 60% to 40%. That is an adequate ratio, although the quality of practical parts of the program should be the main criteria to evaluate it. If we consider the information given for each course the ratio theory/practice is 60:40, 70:30 and 50:50, depending on the course.

Internship program is considered in the Master programme. Although the number of students has been increased from 2014, it seems still low. It could be of interest to meliorate the statistical information on this introducing a differentiation between those students who are already working (and are not doing internship programme) and those who are not working.

**Recommendation:** To improve the information of students in the internship programme.

**Recommendation:** To evaluate the internship programme.

*Does the academic degree correspond to international standards?*

Similar Master Programmes can be found; most of them in European and North American Universities (see p. 70-71).

ESLG College already has agreements with other Universities. That is an interesting element of support of this Master programme. Anyway, efforts have to be done to get other agreements with other Universities. This will give more international support to the programme and will allow developing other actions in cooperation helping research in this area.

According to the information sent by the College, there were 31 students from ESLG outgoing to other Universities and 55 incoming. But no information is given about the years, that is when and the length of the stay.

**Recommendation:** To expand cooperation agreements with other Universities, especially those with similar programmes.

**Recommendation:** To increase the number of student incoming and outgoing.

*Does the structure of the programme give sufficient opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis?*

The hours of classes allows sufficient time-space for independent study, reflection and analysis. The student workload is established at 25 study hours per each ECTS. This is adequate for a full-time student and it follows the European higher educational standards.

However, it could be difficult to achieve for those students that are working and studying. A high percentage of the students are employed and they have to do an extra effort to follow the courses, to do practices and projects.

All the courses follow the same weight and type of components for the evaluation: 40% research paper, 50% final examination and 10% attendance. This has the advantage of facilitating unification of all the courses.

**Recommendation:** To evaluate the adequacy of the ratio theory/practice for each course at the end of the programme, inviting the students to participate.

*Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and justified?*

The Master programme has a total amount of 120 ECTS. It is a two year programme; that is 60 ECTS per year. Per semester, 30 ECTS may be achieved. All the courses in the first semester are 6 ECTS courses. There are three elective courses (one for each of the three first semesters) and a list of courses to choose. The last semester is dedicated to the Diploma Thesis estimated in 30 ECTS.

The allocation of ECTS seems to be adequate if we consider the work to be done by the students. It is a usual number of ECTS in most of the Master programmes in Europe following the Bologna Chart.

*Is the workload required for the academic programme manageable for students?*

Although the workload is manageable under the condition that the calculation of ECTS has been realistic, the Master will have two different collectives of students. Those collectives (students with only four-years of education in a degree programme and students employed and with professional experience) could need different attention to prepare some subjects.

The presence of part-time student could have some impact in the number of students per course if we consider that they will have to do the Master programme in more than two years.

*Are the teaching methods and content of teaching units sufficient for the successful achievement of the programme's goals and outcomes?*

According to the information we have, there seems to be an adequate teaching methodology. We are considering the equilibrium between knowledge and practice, skills and reflection. The theory/practice ratio for the program subjects shall be 60% to 40% (p. 72).

Internship shall be developed with some of the main companies in the construction sector in Kosovo (p.72). It is a great opportunity for students to know better the companies, the sector. It is also a good way of getting in touch with the labour market in this area.

The evaluation methods also reflect the importance of the “research paper” (40% of total).

The teaching staff is also a condition for the successful achievement of the programme's goals.

*Is the overlap of academic content of teaching units sufficient for the successful achievement of the programme's goals and outcomes?*

Attending the revision of the contents of the courses offered in the Master Programme there seems to be a low risk of overlap in the contents of the different courses. Anyway, the coordinator or responsible of the Master programme should control this through the quality surveys and meetings with academic staff and students.

**Recommendation:** Design adequate mechanisms to avoid unnecessary overlaps.

*Is the overlap of academic content between the various parts of the curriculum comprehensible and transparent?*

Although there seems to be a low risk of overlapping, it is always recommendable to create adequate instruments to detect and avoid it, when possible.

**Recommendation:** To establish an academic coordination commission to follow the syllabus and the contents.

*How do the admission criteria and admission procedure measure up to international standards*

With 50 places offered, the size is adequate and similar to other similar Masters.

The main criteria for admission (p. 74) are based on the academic performance of the student and the work experience. Part of the students come from degrees, but there is an

important number of them working in jobs related to the Real Estate and Infrastructure sector. That means an important percentage of students that are professionals and have an objective: career advance.

**Recommendation:** The level of other languages -mainly English- could be considered in the admission criteria.

### *Is the ratio of academic staff to students appropriate?*

Following the information given in the SER (p. 120) the ratio Academic Personnel/ Students is 12/70 for the Master programme. It is a better ratio than the one for the institution. Although the number of teaching staff seems quite good for the number of students, the main criteria should be the quality of teaching staff and the availability of the teaching staff to the students. That information will be given with the quality evaluation questionnaires.

One of the quality criteria in a Master programme is the opportunity to know and share experiences with a variety of teaching staff.

**Recommendation:** To consider the integration of experts through seminars and other no-full time academic staff.

**Recommendation:** To diversify the academic staff in order to guarantee a wide variety of opinions and approaches.

### *Dissemination of the programme*

There seems to be an adequate policy of dissemination of the programme, mainly using digital and online marketing (Facebook, digital media, etc.).

### *Others*

ESLG has an Alumni Association that helped the institution to create a network of alumni. It is also useful when contacting with companies and with the design of specific courses that alumni demand.

This Association can be of great interest to follow up the alumni and measure the success of the programme when considering the career opportunities and position in companies.

ESLG is working to establish technical and pedagogical condition to offer online education.

**Recommendation:** To use information from alumni to analyse the success of the Master programme in terms of job opportunities and professional career.

**Recommendation:** To accelerate the introduction of online education for specific courses or for the whole programme.

## Staff

According to the documentation provided by the ESLG, the PhD percentage at Master Studies is 100% (p 54). However the list of academic staff at the Master programme evaluated shows a different percentage (see p. 102-4).

The planned number of students for the next years will need to increase the number of teaching hours or to introduce new academic staff.

No information about the total teaching hours of the academic staff is given.

The Academic Personnel Development Plan seems to be adequate.

**Recommendation:** To plan the future needs of academics staff.

**Recommendation:** To consider the total number of teaching hours and its adequacy.

## Research and International Co-operation

Based on the revision of the documentation sent to the experts we want to stress the following:

- ESLG College has initiated in the last years an interesting path to develop research in different areas (p. 73).
- These research projects in which the ESLG College is participating are related to areas like energy, real state and infrastructure.
- In general, the CV of the academic staff shows an important involvement in research and publication.

There is an interesting research plan for the institution related with the topics of the Master programme.

**Recommendation:** To open new research opportunities with other Universities and institutions.

## Finances and infrastructure / Space and equipment

### *Does the institution have an adequate budget plan?*

The programme budget total Revenues show increase (2016 – 340 000; 2017 - 400 000 and 2018 - 400 000 Euros).

The main part of the income comes the tuition fees (2016 - 140 000; 2017 - 200 000 and 2018 - 300 000). However, there could be a risk in the number of students planned. It is considered an important increase in the number of students for the next years, but at the same time in 2015/16 only 70% of students could get a job (see p. 119 and 120).

Wages, compensations, air tickets all together represent more the 29% from total budget. Those concepts will represent 25, 3% in 2018. However, if we do not consider the revenues and expenses of SEEB and OSCAR projects, this percentage increases to more than 52% in 2016.

Library expense show increase, 10 000 to 15 000 Euros. The Journal of Sustainable Energy Buildings publication expense is 5000 to 7000 euros from 2016 to 2018. And the online journal expense increases from 4000 to 7000.

**Recommendation:** The Planned increase in tuition fees is associated with risk. It is necessary to find additional sources of funding and financing to the improvement of the learning process.

### *Does the institution have adequate buildings and specialized infrastructure for the requirements of the programme?*

College ESLG leases the infrastructure necessary for the study. The lecture and laboratory facilities are adequate. Practical work will take place in partner organizations.

The College is now adapting for eLearning. As we know, eLearning is becoming a good option for students, especially for those working or living far away.

Accessibility for handicapped people has not been considered in ESLG building.

Traditionally in most of the Universities social life is an important part of student experience. ESLG building has a minimum space for that; only a small canteen on the main floor.

**Recommendation:** To advance in eLearning methodologies and technology.

**Recommendation:** To improve accessibility conditions for disabled people.

**Recommendation:** To facilitate social activities (cultural, sports, etc.) in the University

## Quality management

### *Are the institution's programmes assessed regularly within the context of internal evaluation processes?*

The institution has an internal evaluation processes in place that should be able to identify the issues that need to be addressed. A number of indicators are also set, intended to measure whether the standards concerning quality assurance were achieved (see p. 53 and 54). Remarkable characteristics:

- The information includes quantitative as well as qualitative data.
- The most emphasis is put on the questionnaires that follow each course and on the focus groups that include student representatives with whom they meet regularly.
- They also involve students in periodical reviews of departments and of the faculty.

The college also involves industry experts. This is a very important element to know the needs of the industry and then consider the way to cover them. Experts are invited to participate to define needs and characteristics of the programmes to be launched by ESLG. It would also be advisable to involve the stakeholders in the phase of the evaluation of the programmes after they are already being run.

The participation and opinion of the experts could greatly benefit the programme. Expected learning outcomes are defined for each programme but analysing each course at a time (through a student questionnaire) does not give an opportunity for an overall assessment of whether the learning goals of the programme as a whole have been achieved (i.e. whether the desired educational accomplishments of the graduates have been realized). Feedback from the employers or other industry experts as well as from the alumni students can be very useful in this respect.

Experts coming from other countries and Universities should be participating in the Master programme. However, only the trips of the experts coming from Slovenia are considered in the budget of the programme (p. 232).

**Recommendation:** To extend invitation to participate as visiting professors/lecturers to other Universities in Europe.

**Recommendation:** Consider to introduce a questionnaire to measure the satisfaction of academic staff with the institution and the programme.

**Recommendation:** Consider to introduce a questionnaire to evaluate the whole programme by the students.

## Summary / Conclusion

The expert team comes to the conclusion, that at the given status **it proposes the accreditation of:**

- MA in Law and Real Estate and Infrastructure Management

However, the expert team strongly encourages the ESLG College to consider the recommendations made by the expert team.

Prof. Dr. Aurora Pedro Bueno