Evaluation Report

02.07.2015

Contents

0. Preface

The present document is the final evaluation report on the evaluation of programs of the "ISPE College" in Pristina. The report is the result of the collegial work of an international team of experts (ET) appointed by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) to evaluate five study programs of the "ISPE College".

- **BA - Computer Science**

- **BA in English Language and Interpretation**

- **Security Studies, MA**

- **BA in Psychology**

- **MA - Economics**

The evaluation report is based on the self-evaluation report (SER) and associated documents provided by "ISPE College" prior to the site visit and on additional documents that were submitted to the team of experts upon their request after the site visit. The site visit took place on May 27, 2015. The expert team was accompanied by Ms Furtuna Mehmeti, acting director of KAA and Mr Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, KAA Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring.

On June 26, 2015 an elaborated report "Comments to Draft Report" was received. The ET acknowledges the prolific effort which is certainly a valuable step in the right direction of ISPE´s further development. Yet, the ET is obliged to guidelines and regulations which only allow for considering the actual current situation rather than announcements. Particularly, regulations concerning staff and their contractual liability do not leave room for interpretations and had to be taken into consideration only based on the official staff list.

The on-site visit started with the meeting with the management of ISPE College (09.00-09.30), followed by the meeting with the responsible persons for the study programs (09.30-12.00), then the visit to facilities followed (11.30-12.30). The visit ended with a short consultation of the expert team and KAA and a closing meeting with the management of ISPE College.

The ET wishes to thank Ms Furtuna Mehmeti and Mr Shkelzen Gerxhaliu for their professional organization and support during the accreditation procedure. The ET also wants to thank ISPE College for their hospitality and their engagement and due provision of valuable information prior, during, and after the visit.

The ET is aware of the ongoing issues between ISPE and KAA. Despite of such a delicate situation the review process has not been affected in any disturbing manner. All meetings with the management and with the responsible persons of the study programs have been held in a very constructive atmosphere. The members of the ET wishes to thank all participants for making this possible.

Team of Experts

- DI Dr. Erwin BRATENGEYER/Danube University Krems (AT)
- Prof. Dr. Srebren DIZDAR/University of Sarajevo (BA)

> Prof. Dizdar could not attend the site visit. He was meeting with the responsible persons for the English Language and Interpretation program via video conference.

- Prof. Dr. Hans J. GIESSMANN/ University of Hamburg (DE)
- Prof. Dr. Melita KOVACEVIC/ University of Zagreb (HR)
- Prof. Dr. Tiu PASS/University of Tartu (EE)

Review Process

The on-site review process was headed by Prof. Dr. Melita Kovacevic. The five study programs were evaluated by the following experts accompanied by members of KAA:

DI Dr. Erwin Bratengeyer Dr. Blerim Rexha	BA - Computer Science
Prof. Dr. Srebren Dizdar Ms Furtuna Mehmeti, partly	BA in English Language and Interpretation
Prof. Dr. Hans J. Giessmann Ms Furtuna Mehmeti, partly	Security Studies, MA
Prof. Dr. Melita Kovacevic Ms Furtuna Mehmeti, partly	BA in Psychology
Prof. Dr. Tiu Pass Mr Shkelzen Gerxhaliu	MA - Economics

1. BA - Computer Science

DI Dr. Erwin Bratengeyer, Danube University Krems, Austria

Introduction

Accreditation for the BA – Computer Science program has been applied previously but has been rejected. According to the previous evaluation report (2014) several issues are still pending.

1.1. Academic Program and Student Management

ISPE College has a focus on European studies and politics. As a matter of fact there is **little IT-background** concerning staff, subjects, and infrastructure, consequently a specialized study program dealing with computer sciences somehow seems to be in limbo. Nonetheless, as the director pointed out there is an inherent and increased need of knowledge in information and communication technologies in most of the programs offered and one could think of several links to these programs and **synergies to be developed**. However, none of these potential links and synergies have been addressed, neither in the SER nor in the Strategic Development Plan 2014-2020. The latter comprehensibly stresses European integration, security issues, politology, law and economics, also refers to new programs (Security Studies, MA and BA in English Language) but remarkably does **not mention computer sciences** at all.

The curriculum presented in the SER is quite traditional it contains typical subjects of a **generic computer science program** and the academic aims are appropriate to the academic degree. But the curriculum does not seem to depend on any overarching didactic or thematic concept. While on the one hand offering generic content seems appropriate for a bachelor program there also should be a **thematic priority** embedded reflecting the college´s orientation. As an example *security* could serve as such a priority. However, elaborating such a thematic priority should be the result of the work of a team responsible for the curriculum following the college´s guidelines.

When it comes to teaching methods the curriculum does not contain any information on the methods applied (instead a general phrase is quoted). According to the subjects of such a program one has to expect that **up-to-date methods based on substantial use of ICT** and Internet-based resources will be applied. The discussion with the teaching staff revealed that there is plenty of competencies, awareness and skills to do so.

As a next step **eLearning** (or better to say blended learning) should be considered to be implemented. Running a Computer Sciences program is offering best conditions to implement the required hard- and software and to provide the required skills and competencies. Introducing eLearning requires proper planning, i.e. by developing an eLearning concept which has to address didactical, organizational, technological, economical aspects and by training lecturers. Also it requires to engage a person in charge for the administration of a Learning Management Server (LMS). Running a dedicated **Learning Management Server** (e.g. Moodle) allows for more efficient use of resources (flexibility of space and time, content delivery, assessments, testing, …) and offers a diversity of didactic approaches. The general limitations when it comes to eLearning - requirement of computer literacy and access to equipment - is not expected to be an issue at the College. As additional benefit the study program can be easily enriched with international

contributions by video conferencing or webinars thus improving the internationalization aspect without running into troubles with visa issues. The implementation of a Learning Management Server also offers room for research activities for both staff and students. The availability of an in-house server providing advanced learning and teaching functionalities could also replace the praxis of using cloud-based services which are not always meeting the conditions of academic demands.

Course overview, contents and objectives are presented in a very clear manner and relevant literature is listed. However, **the concept of learning outcomes has been misinterpreted**. Learning outcomes are concerned with the achievement of the learners, they specify what a learner is expected to be able to do. In the syllabus it is mentioned that the learning outcomes were similar to course objectives which is definitely not the way it should be! Teaching staff should understand the role of learning outcomes as those also influence teaching methods and assessments. There are some verbs which are to be avoided when writing learning outcomes because they are not measurable. Verbs to avoid include "understand", "know", "learn".

In almost any technical domain and particularly in computer science English language plays a predominant role. Teaching, learning and research at an academic level in the IT-domain is very much depending on English literature which was taken into account properly. **Teaching some of the IT subjects in English** could improve language skills considerably.

The exact name of the program and the associated academic degree needs clarification as there can be found different expressions in the documents (Computer Science, Computer Sciences, BA in Computer Science, Computer Science – BA, BA Computer Sciences). There should be one single expression which is according to the regulations. In particular, make sure not to confuse the term BA (short for bachelor) with the academic degree BA (Bachelor of Arts) which should be avoided in this case. Students of a Computer Science program should be awarded the **Bachelor of Science**, (BSc) degree.

The allocation of 180 ECTS to the three-year study program is in accordance with EU standards. But in the curriculum the subjects have been allocated nearly uniformly the same amount of 6 or 7 ECTS, which seems quite unrealistic. It is worth mentioning that ECTS are not necessarily correlating with the number of contact hours nor do they measure the relative importance of a particular course. Rather, they represent the workload estimated for an average student to fulfill the learning outcomes of the course. Academic staff should receive training on how to **allocate ECTS in a justified manner**.

The admission of students should be well justified in terms of numbers and pre-qualifications. Students of Computer Sciences programs have to meet **increased demands when it comes to Mathematics and English** which is probably limiting the number of eligible candidates given the comparatively low standard of high school graduates. Those increased demands should be considered in the admission process. Running a new program with special requirements on equipment and infrastructure might lead to unexpected challenges which also suggests **limiting the number of students to the lower end of the intake capacity**.

Recommendations

- Establish a strategic justification for the college to allow for offering a study program on Computer Science and illustrate the potential synergies between the current programs and

the new program.

- Make sure that students of the Computer Science program (which is to be defined by an exact name according to study regulations) are awarded a Bachelor of Science degree (BSc).

- Thoroughly allocate ECTS to each subject based on realistic, reasonable, differentiated assumptions. Make use of the ECTS User´s Guide and train staff.

- Clarify the operational goals of the individual courses by providing properly formulated learning outcomes.

- Develop an eLearning concept addressing didactical, organizational, technological, economical aspects. Implement a Learning Management System (e.g. the open source LMS Moodle which is being used by very many universities worldwide) allowing for introducing the benefits of eLearning (blended learning) and thus also introducing contemporary teaching methods.

- Ensure that only students are admitted who have sufficient command of English and Mathematics. Limit the number of study places to the number of workstations currently available in a classroom.

- Adjust the curriculum along a thematic priority reflecting the college´s orientation.

- Following adjustments of the current curriculum are recommended:
    Substitute "European Economic Integration" by "Computer Circuits" as a bases for following courses.
    Combine "Academic Writing" and "Research Methods" and offer this course in a later semester.
    Substitute "IT Project 1,2,3" by subjects dedicated to specific topics.
    Substitute "International Business" by a computer science related subject.
    Include "Internship" as a compulsory course, allocating ECTS, thus strengthening the concept of a praxis-related program.

1.2. Staff

The availability of staff is a critical issue. Understandably, there is hardly any permanent staff with dedicated qualification in computer science as there is no such program running yet (apart from some IT courses in other programs). It was irritating to learn only at the meeting with responsible persons of the study program that staff listed as full time scientific personnel in the SER (p. 89) was obsolete. A completely **new team** has been introduced during the meeting and a list of 11 lecturers has been provided, none of them has been mentioned in the SER so it was agreed that this issue will be clarified by providing additional documents on staff responsible for teaching and by also clarifying formal aspects with KAA.

An updated SER has been provided after the meeting. 12 scientific staff are listed (p. 90), only three members of this list, Izet Ibrahimi, Vehbi Ramaj, and Hamez Rama appear on the list of eligible staff provided by KAA (Academic Staff of ISPE College 2015). Despite this staff is listed

under the category "Full time scientific/artistic personnel" it became evident that **in most cases permanent engagement was not applicable**. To which extent individual staff members are or will be engaged in teaching could not be clarified. At the meeting no official person in charge for the study program could be identified, however, Arben Xhuka, CEO of KEK, introduced himself as the speaker of the group and he proved to have substantial competencies. The updated SER shows Arben Xhuka being in charge for the program.

During the fruitful discussions with this group it became clear that the participants basically have **plenty of skills and experiences** in their respective domain. No evidence of teaching competencies has been collected. The formal qualifications of the majority, however, were only limited to masters´ degrees, resp. PhD cand. To support PhD candidates they should carry only minimal teaching loads. During an intermediate period special part-time careers for finishing their PhD studies in a reasonably short time should be arranged.

According to KAA Standards permanent teaching "*staff should be qualified or distinguished in arts and must cover at least 50% of the entire teaching load of a course of study **and be qualified via PhD** or artistic achievements*". While this regulation certainly makes sense, it may be considered that in the domain of computer science young staff still in academic training may benefit from the fact that their knowledge is up-to-date. Yet, PhD students should be encouraged to finish their studies prior to taking over too much responsibility in teaching.

Several points concerning the curriculum have been addressed by the group in a professional manner which were particularly suited to **improve the curriculum and anticipated some of the recommendations** (see above). The updated SER contained several improvements of the curriculum though the focal point of the program has not been addressed specifically.

Recommendations

- Install a permanent staff member of ISPE College as responsible person for the study program.

- Make sure that a sufficient number of permanent staff holding contracts drawn up in due form is available for the program.

- Regular teaching staff should be recruited among people who have a PhD.

1.3. Research and International Co-operation

As the program has not been implemented yet it is understandable that there are **currently no relevant ICT-related research activities** going on. PhD candidates are expected to conduct research as part of their individual academic training, so somehow the college could benefit from these activities. Four of the staff members published in journals and conference proceedings as reported in the list of publications. Research and international cooperation in the domain of ICT and informatics are still to be developed.

Recommendation

- Establish a strategic plan for focus research areas, funded projects acquisition, and international cooperation. The plan should also include activities of students in the course of their bachelor and master´s theses.

1.4. Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment

The available space in the building we saw seems to be quite small for the intended growth of the college. With respect to the Computer Science program there is a need of computer labs with available workplaces for each student. Alternatively, one could think of following a "bring-your-own-device strategy" which would require to make sure that each student who does not own a personal laptop would have to be supplied with a laptop, the College should think about special fellowships or loan devices. The College should focus on attractive campus licenses for the necessary software. Installing licensed software and supporting multiple devices might put quite some workload on IT staff, the availability of whom could not be verified.

The currently **available equipment**, namely the number of computers in one classroom is **not meeting up with the envisaged number of 70 study places per year**, theoretically (without considering drop outs) adding up to 210 students in the third year (to take no account of student intakes of other programs). The capacity of the building and its infrastructure does not seem capable to handle this huge amount of additional students of all the programs. The development plan should be based on considerably decreased numbers. The SER does not clarify on how the infrastructure would be adapted to such an amount of students.

Internet access via WLAN seems to be available all over the campus. The workstations attached to LAN proved to have **high speed Internet connection**. The College has installed a Student Information System (SIS) which in an exemplary manner allows students, teaching staff and administration to access various services online.

The library does not offer books on computer sciences yet. Investments are required and also know-how is required on how **to equip the library in the digital age** with open access data bases, open educational resources, electronic journals, ebooks, etc. The librarian needs to be trained on how to deal with contemporary requirements. The librarian should be able to support students accessing scientific literature of any kind and should also by aware of copyright issues.

Recommendations

- Limit the planned number of student intake in proportion to available space and resources and adjust the budget plan accordingly.

- Upgrade the library. Take the chance to modernize it not just by adding books but by expanding its services.

1.5. Quality Management

The College has an Office for Quality Assurance that is responsible for the organization of the evaluation and improvement of the quality of the programs. The duties of the office are in detail described in the SER. Whether the development of the curriculum has been subjected to quality assurance processes has not been verified.

1.6. Conclusion

The remaining issues with this application are concerning the lack of strategic commitment to implement a new subject area like ICT and the lack of space and infrastructure to cope with a new cohort with specific requirements. The most critical issue is concerning the lack of staff with appropriate formal qualifications. The majority of the lecturers introduced do not hold a PhD, Moreover, there is a lack of involvement of Professors with a solid background in computer science. Due to these shortcomings and the issues addressed above **accreditation of the Computer Science program cannot be recommended at this time.** Upon fulfillment of the key recommendations ISPE College would certainly benefit from offering a Computer Science study program in the future and so would the students. At the present stage ISPE College would rather risk its good reputation.

2. BA in English Language and Interpretation

Prof. Dr. Srebren Dizdar, Department of English, Faculty of Philosophy University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introduction

ISPE College in Prishtina, Kosovo, had applied for a BA program in English Language and Translation/Interpretation to be accredited on two previous occasions: in 2013 and in 2014. Regretfully, both applications were not successful, but the previous experts had strongly encouraged ISPE College to work on the proposed curriculum and to re-apply at a future date. On this particular, third occasion, it was expected, again, that the outcome might be both productive and favourable to the submitted application. Due to unexpected administrative (visa) barriers, the expert cold not join the rest of the team during the agreed term of visit on May 27 2015, but, thanks to IT, a Skype session was organized on that same day, from roughly 10.00 AM to 11.15 AM. The ISPE BA program in English Language and Translation/Interpretation was represented by Dr. Dukagjin Gorani and two other staff members: Shqipe Jetishi and Saranda Aliu. During the Skype session, it was mostly Dr. Dukagjin Gorani who gave the necessary explanations, whereas, at one point, a German linguistics teacher Shqipe Jetishi joined in, but her English was not that good, so Dr. Dukagjin Gorani translated her observations and explanations from Albanian. The third person, although present but not visible, did not take part in our exchanges.

2.1. Academic Program and Student Management

Profile of studies

As it has been envisaged, and in part explained by Dr. Gorani, the main emphasis of the programme is to be in the area of translation/interpretation within the context or structure of an English department. It is one of the four pillars ISPE believes to be the real foundations of its plans in this academic area of study and research. However, the current profile of BA programme of studies is somewhere 'in-between' a traditional English department, or what had been usually referred to in Eastern and central Europe in pre-Bologna system, as English Philology, i. e. English language and Literature; and more professionally-oriented, 'applied' studies in translation/interpretation. It seems that the current profile of ISPE BA program in English Language and Translation/Interpretation has taken only those segments of English Philology that emphasised courses on language instruction and, only partly, English linguistics. Literature and similar courses related to literature written in English (social and cultural history, cultural studies in a broader context) have been reduced to a few surveys of English Literature (Introduction to English Literature, Introduction to Albanian Literature, Introduction to Cultural Studies), which are not sufficient for any English language and Literature programme of studies at BA level, due to its rather limited scope of authors/periods/genres proposed. On the other hand, language courses vacillate between a pure language drill courses (such as Grammar of English language, English Language I and II), and somewhat over-structured linguistics courses (phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax).

The load is, definitely, on translation/interpretation courses, but, although they happen to cover many important areas of such expertise, they are too ambitious to be achieved in three years study at BA level. Such a claim refers primarily to courses that require rather well-prepared students,

whose competences and skills of English as a second or non-native tongue had to be at such a high level that they could aspire to engage in overtly demanding courses of Consecutive interpretation I & II (in the third and fourth semester), or Simultaneous translation I & II (in the fifth and sixth semester). It is the feeling of the expert that neither prospective students nor the currently listed academic staff had been even remotely aware what kind of difficulties they would face if the programme were to be administered in the proper sense of studies.

Does the academic programme correspond to the institution´s mission statement and principle of operation?

As already mentioned, the proposed curriculum should be seriously re-designed and re-thought, since it does not conform to either English language and Literature studies or Translation studies. It is highly recommended that the programme should be seen as two tiers structure. At undergraduate (BA) level, students should be exposed to acquiring high competences and skills in oral and written English in the first four /4/ semesters of studies through a variety of courses that are based on drill-oriented courses in order to improve their command of English. Other languages offered in the current curriculum (Albanian, German, French, Serbian) should be offered as complementary or minor line of studies, or even as electives. These basic or initial courses could be accompanied with courses in English Linguistics, starting from the third semester (Phonetics and Phonology, Morphology, Morphosyntax, Syntax), as well as in more courses in Literature and Cultural studies. Introduction to Translation and Interpretation studies courses can be envisaged in the fifth and sixth semester; whereas the majority of professionally-oriented courses dealing with translation and interpretation should be transferred to MA level. It is only at MA level that students, with previously acquired very good if not excellent command or oral and written English, can hope to master a variety of courses dealing with such various aspects of translation and interpretation.

Are the programme´s quality, range and academic aims appropriate to the academic degree? Does the academic degree correspond to standards?

As it is not clear from the proposed learning outcomes at BA level, they should be tailored primarily to the MA level of studies, with a school-leaving certificate of Translator/Interpreter depending on courses passed, or specialist knowledge acquired. A general type of Translator/Interpreter could be seen as a basic qualification, but Consecutive or Simultaneous Translator/Interpreter can be achieved after passing State-level exam and acquiring the license in either area.

Does the structure of the programme give sufficient opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis? Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and justified? Is the workload required for the academic programme manageable for students?

There is a real concern about the books and other materials listed in relation to certain course and their respective syllabi. Some of them have not been suitable for University level studies, whereas the other cannot be offered at undergraduate level, because of their obvious complexity. Evaluation of students have been proposed in more or less uniform manner, where the 'main' courses, regardless of their inner structure, bring seven /7/ ECTS, whereas others range between four /4/ or six /6/ ECTS. If the appropriate ECTS formula is to be applied on any of such courses, it would be difficult to defend such a distribution. The majority of courses envisage one final exam

that carries 70% of the final grade. In the programme such as this, more diverse forms of evaluation should be proposed, such as quizzes, dictations, oral exams, mid-term tests etc., in order to build different forms of expertise among the students. If someone wants to grade a course in either consecutive or simultaneous translation, it must envisage oral examination in addition to the written ones.

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

The information on teaching methods tend to be of general nature and somewhat uniform ("The module will be developed through class discussions, analysis, practical commitments"), which does not take into account a gradual yet properly designed set of teaching methods for different kind of classes, where in early semesters the emphasis should be more on language acquisition through a number of practical exercises and less on lectures or seminars. Such forms of teaching are more appropriate in the higher years of study, when certain level of good command of English cannot be seen as barrier but a normal means of courses of instruction. Teaching methods should be both diversified and tailored to the expected cohort of students in view of their previous competences and skills within such a demanding programme of studies.

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

In the expert's opinion, it is at places, but it lacks the overall coherence **as the programme**. It is not clear why certain books and other teaching materials have been listed under the respective headings of 'Literature' to most of the courses, since one cannot understand the reasons for their inclusion in terms of necessary academic content. These segments of syllabi need to be carefully re-examined and possibly replaced with more appropriate texts, especially there where a certain courses continues the subject-matter on the next level.

How do the admission criteria and admission procedures measure up to international standards?

The admission criteria procedures are up to international standards, but, since, there have n students in the programme yet, it is hard to ascertain how these criteria and procedures would be applied in real situations.

Is the ratio of academic staff to students appropriate?

Given the predicted number of 50 students to be admitted into the first year of study, the number of hours per week and the proposed load of teachers, the ratio of academic staff to students is on the minimum level, especially in regard to a definite lack of teaching assistants who should do most of work with students in the first three to four semesters.

2.2. Staff

Does the institution have an adequate proportion of permanent staff and appropriate proportion of permanent and external staff?

In view of the data and other available pieces of information from documents consulted, it seems that, at the moment, the programme does not have either permanent or external staff, but mostly a number of persons designated to fill in such academic roles. The list of academic staff, having been submitted by ISPE prior to the proposed visit, differs a great deal from the one that was sent afterwards, but only two /2/ out of ten /10/ of them (Llokman Mirtezani and Shqipe Jetishi) was mentioned in the KAA official list of staff. It is also unclear if other persons mentioned as teachers covering 25 different courses had passed the regular procedure of academic appointments and other legal procedures, or they just happened to be listed as prospective candidates for designated teaching positions.

Does the academic staff demonstrate proven ability at a high academic and didactic level and are their qualifications appropriate to the position they hold within the institution according to the basic criteria?

There is no evidence to support an affirmative answer to such a crucial question, but such a statement must necessarily lead to the second major weakness of the programme. The Department staff, mentioned in the submitted documents, clearly had **NO proper academic or professional qualifications to teach** such an ambitious programme. Most of them have very little real experiences in teaching English studies, or Translation/Interpretation studies for that matter, at University level; and even if they have had academic degrees of MA, PhD candidate or PhD, these had been acquired in journalism or political sciences or similar related areas. If the language of instruction is to be in English, a rather high command of oral/speaking/written competences is to be expected from potential teachers, together with some experience in the relevant studies at University. Given the presented CVs of the staff mentioned as 'members of the English Department', it must be concluded that they do not fulfil usual academic criteria for such positions. Their academic background is so diverse, but, at its best, some of them had attended and even graduated from English studies at BA level (dr. Gorani, dr. Mirtezani), or German (Sqipe Jetishi), but their further studies led them to Journalism, Economics, Law, Political Studies, European Studies (even Engineering!), and not to English Philology or Language & Literature Studies at MA or PhD level.

The distribution of teaching load shows that some teachers have been assigned to teach two or three courses, three of them should teach four courses, whereas one person, Mr. Shaun Hughes (whose CV has not been supplied and who goes by the title of 'Professor' without any other appropriate explanation) is supposed to teach six /6/ courses! The same label of 'Professor' has been attached to Ms. Saranda Aliu, supposed to teach French 1 & 2; whereas her CV (in Albanian) shows that she has no degree in French but BA in Economics. There is no information available of any teaching assistant, whereas all the academic staff listed, regardless if they have attained MA, PhD or are PhD candidates, can deliver both lectures and seminars, which is against current legal regulations on academic positions in the region, Kosovo included. In short, it can be concluded that none of the persons listed possess the academic or scholarly qualifications or credentials to teach on a program of this kind.

Recommendation

- It is of utmost importance that ISPE finds a suitable person, preferably someone, with proper, internationally recognised academic qualifications (PhD in English, at least an experienced

Associate if not Full Professor, not necessarily a native speaker) and expertise in the field, who will be able to set up the programme. It will be an additional asset if such a person could stay for the next four-five years and coordinate and manage the programme until it becomes ready for a real evaluation and accreditation. **It is the expert's earnest opinion that such a development, where ISPE College employs a suitably qualified person to design and lead the programme, can be the best way for the ISPE College to apply and, in due time, be awarded accreditation.**

2.3. Research

There is no evidence of any relevant research or publications in the field of English studies or Translation/Interpretation studies, which must be taken as a major obstacle for hiring any of currently listed 'staff members' for any academic position in the English department.

2.4. Internationalisation

Professional or academic contacts with any similar department of a kind in the region of South-eastern Europe or Europe or USA have not been presented, apart from a remote possibility of collaboration with some professors at the universities of Regensburg and Bremen in Germany, who are, clearly not involved in the programme design, let alone in its implementation.

2.5. Finances

ISPE has shown some incentive in providing enough funds to sustain other programmes under its auspices, but it is hard to imagine how this programme can survive on 50 students it wants to enrol in the first year of study without very detailed and structured financial plan and strategy of attracting students not only from Kosovo but also from neighbouring countries in the region.

2.6. Infrastructure

I had no chance to see any facilities related to the programme, but the expert suggested to Dr. Gorani that Institute for Translation/Interpretation at Graz University in Austria, or any other relevant centre in EU, should be visited in order to see what is needed in terms of language labs and other facilities if they want to start this programme.

2.7. Teaching

It is highly recommended that ISPE should not consider starting this programme without qualified teaching staff, especially in terms of its potential developments in the future.

2.8. Conclusion

Despite some detailed answers and some additional documents duly provided by ISPE, however, and for the reasons presented in detail below, it is the opinion of this expert that **accreditation of the BA in English Language and Translation program at ISPE College cannot be recommended** at this moment. The programme suffers from many shortcomings, but its main

flaws can be seen in an apparent discrepancy between its ambitions and available potentials in diverse areas addressed above.

3. Security Studies, MA

Hans J. Giessmann, Berghof Foundation Operations GmbH, Germany

Introduction

ISPE College has applied for the accreditation of a MA-programme in "Security Studies". It is the second application for this programme after the first submission was rejected in 2014.

This report evaluates

(a) the academic programme and student management

(b) the Staff

(c) research and international cooperation

(d) finances and infrastructure as well as

(e) the quality management for this programme

3.1. Academic Program and Student Management

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

   According to the mission, as stated in the Strategic Plan 2014, ISPE wants to prepare students to face "the needs of the market", through providing skills to carry out research and field research to support companies, the Government, the public and the private sector. The focus is on preparing the graduates for becoming attractive employees in all branches of the developing society. Taking into account that the "security market" is of a particular quality, i.e. widely is not a "market" sui generis but also an important section of the state's institutional setting, the programme is in compliance with the mission in the sense that it intends to make the graduates fit for the variety of potential assignments and challenges in the security sector.

   Overall, the focus seems to be very much focussed on the realm of "hard security", which one usually would expect to be dealt with by specialized schools and academies related to the Army, Police and Intelligence. But the proposed programme does correspond with the institution's current mission statement and principles of operation.

Recommendation

- The faculty might be advised to insert more elements into the programme that attract students who are interested to work in the civilian nexus of security and economy, security and development, security and ecology, security and disaster management, security and civil society – to mention a few. In a longer run, cooperation with academic institutions that are affiliated to the professional security sector might be advisable.

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

   Overall, the curriculum is coherent and appropriate for a security studies programme. It cannot be expected that all relevant topics in the realm of security can be covered by a 3+1 semester modular programme. This being said, the balance of curricular elements could be

further discussed. Almost all obligatory components relate rather to *strategic* studies than to security studies, whilst topics related to *conflict studies* are predominantly subject to selection. The curriculum is in compliance with the aims of a master degree. It provides specialized knowledge, building on the preceding bachelor degree that can be obtained at the College.

Recommendations

- The curriculum planners might consider to re-arrange the structure of the curriculum by turning (for example) the modules of peace and security and of criminology (possible reframed as "policing and judiciary") into obligatory components of the programme and to check if some elements in the current modules National Security System & National State-building process as well as Organized Crime & Criminology are redundant, i.e. could be merged, while terrorism could become rather a selective topic

- There are other topics that are also relevant for modern security studies such as arms transfers, arms control, non-state armed groups, regional security arrangements, which seem to be not yet adequately covered, but as said before, some flexibility in the curriculum is advisable and minor adaptation according to experience and qualification of Staff can take place later on.

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

   The faculty does explicitly intend to inspire independent study, reflection and analysis. The curriculum itself is not very outspoken on *tailor-made* didactics that would address this aim. However, the discussion with the management revealed, as an asset, the availability of a significant number of high profile professionals and practitioners who are well positioned to provide first-hand knowledge and skills, which can attract students a lot. Moreover, a few faculty members have applied already interactive methods of teaching in the BA programme, but this is definitely an area to take care of and improve for the MA programme.

Recommendation

- The teaching didactics should leave more space to interactive elements such as simulation, role plays, dialogue technics and others, which are more adequate to a Master programme and which can help enhance the students' creativity, their capability to reflect and to carry our analysis independently.

4. *Does the degree correspond to international standards?*

   Formally the academic degree is comparable to similar programmes in other countries. According to the curriculum designer the curriculum has taken into account comparable programmes such as those at Bradford University (UK). As a caveat, however, it must be noted that both the overwhelming focus on "national (i.e. Kosova) security" and the lack of English language skills on the side of parts of the faculty may run the risk of qualifications for graduates confined to a use only within Kosova. The predominant use of translations into Albanian language confines the current curricular and academic focus to a comparably small set of academic literature. To start off with a three years accredited programme the

preparations are basically sufficient. Continued efforts to improve are necessary during the accredited period of time to make the programme sustainable beyond that time-line.

Recommendations

- The faculty should take care – in close cooperation with the management – that language skills will be sufficiently trained and use, both in reading and writings.

- Access to indispensable resources (literature, online sources etc.) is a prerequisite for a independent study according to international standard. Despite visible progress more efforts must be undertaken to improve the current standard at ISPE.

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

See also my comment under (3). The courses are predominantly held in-class; some of them are still carried out in the form of front-class teaching. This is understandable, given the limited facilities for independent study.

The introductory course on study skills and research methodology is definitely an asset. Difficult to understand though is that this one is obligatory. Many students (postgraduate students, maybe also the in-house BA graduates) should be sufficiently qualified to take it as a selective class only, if necessary. Be it important as it may for the individual student: A general training in methodology should be rather extra-curricular than a core element of security studies programme.

Many modules offer small group work, or "work in terrain", field work etc. The curriculum, unfortunately, does not specify the purpose, focus and design of these elements. It can be assumed however, that the practitioner-lecturers are able to offer interesting on-site visits and exercises.

Recommendation

- The role, form and purpose of fieldwork should be explicitly explained in the syllabuses. As for independent study see also comment 3.4 (1).

6. *Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and justified?*

Overall yes, critical remarks, however, apply to the introductory course on skills training (7 ECTS), the lack of any credit-related information on internships that are envisaged, but not listed in the study plan, and the fairly high number of credits (7) for the module on strategic project management, which is more of a general subject with a weekly workload of 2+1 hours than a core module for a master programme in security studies.

Recommendation

- If the structure of the modules would be more precise and transparent with regard to the applied didactics the allocation of credits would be more convincing. The distribution of credits should be also looked at from the perspective of the comments under a2. The modules

of more general character could be adjusted and specified according to the needs in the security sector.

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

Yes. However, the internships that are envisaged do not have an adequate slot within the programme. The idea to ask the students for taking internships during the concluding 4th semester seems to be not realistic. The workload of compulsory courses is manageable.

Recommendation

- The workload planning should be updated, internships should be included.

8. *Are the teaching methods and content of teaching units sufficient for the successful achievement of the programme's goals and outcomes (competences, qualifications, knowledge and skills)?*

The staff is qualified to provide knowledge on the main concepts, institutions and policies in the field of strategic and security studies. The chair of the programme is well qualified, experienced and assertive. Most lecturers who presented their topics during the meetings on site have a background as practitioners. Many lecturers are still in the phase of academic qualification (mainly PhD), so the teaching record is mixed, at best. On the other hand, since the accredited BA course in Security Studies has been running for the 4th consecutive year, the lecturers have been able to accumulate sufficient practice and to draw lessons learned with regard to proper didactics.

The intended MA programme is facing the problem of different pre-qualifications. BA graduates in security studies are obliged to cope with the same structure of obligatory courses than other BA graduates from other universities, Y-MA students (students with 240 ECTS pre-qualification) and more or less experienced practitioners.

The current model of up to 5 additional classes for students who do not have a background in social sciences may not suffice for a programme, which is basically multidisciplinary and theory/practice focused. The overall competences, qualification, knowledge and skills are sufficient if applied properly in order to level the students' prerequisites to achieve the programme goals successfully.

Recommendation

- A concept to level the different knowledge that the students bring to the course should be developed and be applied to all students. Otherwise the risk emerges that some students will be short of necessary knowledge and skills while others feel bored due to redundant but obligatory topics. One opportunity could become optional tutorials, another are rolling seminars for first semester students who have not graduated from a preceding BA in security studies.

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

The overlap is comprehensible. A spoiling issue though is again the role of language. Since the set of literature is a great deal dependent on translation, the selection of titles seems to be

outdated in some cases, or even random. However, since the selected literature provides some essential knowledge, it is considered acceptable – but should stay in issue of permanent attention (see also comment on 3.3(1)).

10. *How do the admission criteria and admission procedures measure up to international standards?*

The enrolment is based on legal regulations, which brings about restrictions for the flexibility of admission procedures. If applicants are formally eligible they can apply, and usually they will be eventually enrolled. For a specialized and practice-oriented Master Programme at least some qualitative admission criteria, which are applied up to international standards, should exist or be elaborated also for the Security Studies programme at ISPE because they could help attract applicants who are well qualified for this particular Master. To translate courses that are conducted by the instructor in English can be accepted only as a temporary practice, the removal of courses held in English would not be acceptable at all, because English is European lingua franca in the realm of security.

Recommendation

- A distinct profile should be developed and publicly communicated which refers to the outspoken needs for qualified graduates in the field, to the particular knowledge and skills being taught at ISPE and the level of knowledge or skills that is expected to be owned by the applicants, for example with regard to language skills or internships. This, however, it is also a then challenge for the faculty to increase the number of classes offered only in English language. The gradual increase of classes that are offered in English may take some time, but a 50% balance should be achieved before the end of the accredited time-frame.

11. *Is the ratio of academic staff to students appropriate?*

If 100 or more students to be enrolled, the number of faculty staff will not be sufficient and additional staff must be hired. This question, however, must take into account also other framework conditions, for example the lack of space for classes to be held simultaneously at the current ISPE premises. Also, it must be taken into account that the interest in having more interactive and skills-training based classes can work out well only if the number of students is comparably small. Current plans intend to divide a group of 100 students into three parallel sub-groups. This may not suffice for direct dialogical and interactive teaching, which is envisaged. For front-class teaching a higher number of lectures is comprehensible.

Recommendation

- Staff planning must be flexibly adapted to the final number of enrolments. Tutorials might be envisaged to support the lecturers during the first 2 semesters. Additional space will be needed if more than 50 students p.a. become enrolled.

3.2. Staff

1. *Does the institution have an adequate proportion of permanent staff and appropriate proportions of permanent and external staff?*

The MA programme enjoys support from high profile and experienced foreign lecturers (former Generals, Judges etc.). This is definitely an asset and should be continued. This international Staff, however, is not listed in the Staff list of contracted teaching staff. As the accredited BA programme demonstrates, this international Staff has been involved during the last years in regular teaching. Two representatives participated in the Staff presentation at the College. The balance of permanent staff and part-time staff is almost even. However, some staff can be found in the staff list of different programmes which can hardly work out if all programmes are accredited successfully. The high number of PhD candidates among the faculty may cause problems of time-management. On the other hand, the academic qualification of Staff is in the interest of the programme, since it can help to enhance the academic profile, the amount and quality of research, as well as the attractiveness of the programme to applicants and future employers.

The overall structure seems to be sufficient for *a first period of three years*. The program benefits from contributions in kind from international teachers, but sustainability must be questioned in case these very supportive (but in some cases retired) staff drops of. For a re-accreditation after three years the Staff list must become upgraded and expanded.

Recommendation

- For a successful renewal of accreditation after 3 years a sustainable perspective must be developed. As a matter of principle, the present PhD candidates should be supported in order to make them join the core team of qualified staff soon. In general the current number of full-time staff does provide a solid basis for a long-term engagement. This challenge must be taken very seriously.

2. *Does the academic Staff demonstrate proven ability at a high academic and didactic level and are their qualifications appropriate to the positions they hold within the institution according to the basic criteria?*

While there are some lecturers with a proven academic record, the biggest strength of this programme lies in the high number of experienced practitioners who may have less didactical skills than academically qualified teachers but who can attract students with their distinct knowledge and skills emerging from practice.

The qualifications that were presented during the on-site meeting were sufficiently high and appropriate to the various positions of teaching. There was a discrepancy, however, between the qualifications and skills that were presented during the meeting and the presented qualifications from the tentative Staff list that was submitted earlier.

The presented total number of staff for the Master in Security Studies in the SER Report is 19 + 5 international Staff. Among them are 9 members of teaching staff who possess a PhD or higher academic degrees. Experience from practice is an additional asset that can partly compensate for lacking academic qualification. Overall, however, teaching staff with PhD teach in all modules but three. The academic and didactic level is overall sufficient. The provided statistics is blank, with regard to other teaching obligations (other programme at ISPE or other academic institutions). Hence it is not possible to assess if the workload for the teaching staff, in particular the PhD candidates, can be managed. 5 of 19 staff do not have sufficient English language skills to gold lectures in English. Irritating is the discrepancy between the Staff list in the report and the officially submitted Staff list to KAA, which is much

shorter and with key teaching Staff missing. This discrepancy cannot be clarified by the expert; the ISPE comments on the draft report refer to the extended list.

Recommendation

- A plan should be elaborated to expand and improve the use of English in teaching and research to make the program attractive for students from abroad and to prepare the students for assignments in international IGO and NGO.

3.3. Research and International Cooperation

1. *Is the teaching Staff involved in research activities inside or outside the institution, and to these research activities feed back into teaching/course contents?*

   Some Staff members are conducting research, most of them, however, as part of their PhD qualification. Same and other Staff members have been involved in publication activities, but the number is limited. Not any single funds were raised for research in 2014 and 2015. The local Staff is not sufficiently involved in research activities. The number of academic publications is unevenly distributed. Some publications are not scientifically referenced, so it is difficult to validate them as publications at all. Part of the problem is the comparably small number of currently running research projects, apart from PhD projects. Some research results from empirical sociologist studies have fed back into the BA programme and can be useful also for the MA programme.

Recommendation

- Research is indispensable advertisement of profile and quality. The faculty should develop a strategic planning for selecting and determining core research topics related to the ISPE MA programme in order to attract with the students with appealing research programmes and to engage the Master candidates in concrete research projects within those programmes that have practical relevance or that are academically challenging. The guiding idea behind this recommendation is to find partners both within the security sector and amongst the national/international academia for collaboration, and to simultaneously sharpen and communicate the foci of a distinct thematic research and teaching profile of ISPE in the field of security studies.

2. *Are the extent and the quality of international cooperation in research and teaching adequate?*

   A letter of intent exists for cooperation with the University of Applied Sciences in Regensburg. A final contract is not signed yet, because, according to the management, this will depend on the successful accreditation of this ISPE Master. Other, basically "on/off" cooperation, particularly on workshops and teaching, exist with the University of Bremen and Heidelberg that can be nurtured for the MA programme once it is established. Overall, however, both the quantity and quality of cooperation can be improved. The recently established Office for Research and Cooperation (see comments on Draft Report) can be helpful in this respect.

Recommendation

- The faculty and management should sign the intended partnership agreements on academic cooperation and exchange of students. But they should also consider running for collaborative funding from the EU for research and for teaching.

3. *Are students involved in research and cooperation projects?*

   Not yet. But the programme has also not yet started.

Recommendation

- See comment 3.3 (1).

3.4. Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment

1. *Does the programme have an adequate budget plan?*

   Overall, the budget plan is sound. However, questions relate to sustainability of students intake if the focus is primarily on (retired) personnel from services.

   In addition the national focus may lead to a quick decrease of interest in the programme, given the fact that it must compete with many other offers inside and outside Kosovo. As a starting point for a three year accredited period of time the preparations are acceptable.

Recommendation

- An annual stocktaking on the budget should be measured against expectations of growth and students intake. Additional funding opportunities should be explored (research, conferences, field trips etc.)

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

   The constructional quality of the building is sufficient; the basic equipment with respect to furniture and sanitary installation, is basically adequate. There will be not enough space for classes (both lectures and small group sessions) within the current building if more than 50 students become enrolled. Computer equipment is only basic and will definitely not suffice for additional MA programmes especially if the dependence on electronic resources (in comparison to the poorly equipped library) is taken into account. The library stock of books is poor. Most literature is provided by the lecturers. The printing facilities are not sufficient for hundreds of students. The number of workstations to read literature online on-site is also currently not sufficient.

Recommendation

- Either additional space must be rented or new/additional facilities must be found in a short-term perspective. Additional electronic workstations have to be installed in order to increase the number of accessible terminals. The recommended literature for all obligatory courses should be available in physical course readers and be available in the library. The Master Programme should compile a physical reader to be available in the library (hand library) that

can be copied in total or in part by the students if necessary. A second multifunctional printer (including scan-function) should be available at the library.

3.5. Quality Management

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

   An internal review process is applied. Basically it builds on a structured questionnaire to be filled out be the students. A sophisticated quality management process must be developed. It could build on the experiences from the BA course in Security Studies.

3.6. Conclusion

The proposed MA programme addresses a relevant area of academic knowledge and skills that Kosova – still being a state in the making – is in the need of. The security sector is of utmost significance for any form of state-building, and in the case of Kosova, where the new state that was born out of a national and armed conflict, this challenge is particularly evident.

A continued requirement for hiring qualified personnel in the comprehensive security sector is particularly high in this country, both in the field of national practice (completion of security-related institutions in Kosova) as for the ambitions of integrating the state into the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. This is all the more so relevant, since parts of the security system in Kosova are still substituted or complemented by a solid international presence (e.g. EU, OSCE, KFOR). But, apart from needs in the field of practice, there is also a need for improving and expanding informed and solid academic reflection and a debate that feeds back into the conceptual and practical development of Kosova's security strategy and institutions.

The overall mission of the MA programme is, as stated by the management and faculty, to qualify cardres from and for the Kosova Police, from and for the Kosova Security Forces, from and for intelligence service and from private military companies.

Other target groups are eligible students (B.A. graduates as minimum entry requirement) who are interested to work in the Security Sector at-large, including, for example, public administration, politics, media and the judiciary.

From the expert's perspective the programme ***can be accredited for a period of three years*** but some existing serious risks and weaknesses must be taken into account and properly eliminated during the period of granted accreditation to make the programme sustainable. Otherwise reaccreditation after three years is unlikely.

The overall positive conclusion takes into account the obvious need of this programme, the efforts that ISPE has undertaken to establish a coherent curriculum and to hire a qualified national and international faculty with an exceptional field experience, and the successful record of the BA programme in security studies.

Risks and weaknesses refer in particular to the figures 3.1(1), 3.1(4), 3.1(8), and 3.1(11); 3.2; 3.3(1) and 3.3(2), 3.4(1) and 3.4(2).

4. BA in Psychology

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Introduction

ISPE College provided some additional documents that were considered in this report as well. In addition, ISPE College provided a number of additional updated documents containing various information. Some significantly revised documents were resubmitted as well, such as, for example, the study programme (curriculum). It should be noted that two versions of the same documents could have a different impact on the final evaluation outcome due to their noticable differences in the content. As it was articulated during the study visit, one of the staff members noticed that they would need some additional time to redifine the parts of the programme and possibility of the 'gradual' accreditation could facilitate better development of the programme.

General Findings

The program seems to be well fitted into the national needs, both considering the interest for the field as well as the employability perspective. There are still probably not enough programmes that cover this area of education which means that the program could assure employability of graduates. The issue, which remains to be explored, is the financing perspective of a study programme. Psychology as a field and area of study requires adequate financing and it cannot be based only on teaching. It does require at least modest research environment and a possibility to engage students in research. This could be an important factor not only for the study programme itself but also it could have an impact on the overall quality of students' education.

4.1. College Staff

The issue of a significant teaching load of staff is a permanent issue for number of Kosovo institutions and most likely cannot be completely solved on a short-term basis. However, it should be identified and it has to be resolved to some degree before starting the new programme. It seems that ISPE college still struggles with a sufficient number of staff who can meet the needs of psychology programme, staff that is equipped with an adequate level of education and expertise in the field. In particular, the problem is the fact that the list of staff provided by the Agency does not match the list of staff provided by the ISPE College. In addition, the provided documents do not tell what is the teaching load of each staff member at other educational institutions (or their other kind of working load/working hours). Nevertheless, it appears that the potential ratio of students (in some documents stated 50 per year, in other 70)/teachers/courses does not appear to be optimal and/or adequate. From the received documents it is not clear how many staff members got academic appointment and who did go through regular academic procedure to be given a teaching position within academia.

During the site visit it has been suggested that the new staff will be added gradually as the programmes develop. However one has to be sure prior to the first intake of students that the programme assures enough of appropriate quality staff.

On a positive side, on the list of ISPE, there are some staff members who do have experience in teaching and international experience and there a few doctoral candidates who are doing their doctoral research at the European universities and/or with European supervisors.

Another issue that is a challenge for a teaching staff is to publish more in the international journals. This would not only assure better visibility but it will increase the quality, both of possible research, but teaching as well. Publication lists were not enough transparent.

Unfortunately, there were also some CVs not written in English. Considering the engagement of staff in research, certainly it is very low level. It was even more difficult to have a full information taking into account that the list of research projects did not state who awarded the grant, did not provided any common info such as the number, logo of the grant etc., and on the top, the most research projects by their title did not indicate that they are really focused on highly profiled research in the field.

Recommendations

- Teaching staff, at the moment, is not sufficient to carry out the whole programme. It will be required to hire more permanent staff as well as to make sure that the teaching/working load is appropriate.

- Research engagement needs to gain an adequate attention and international publications should gain a better recognition, both for the employment of teaching staff and for their promotions. CVs need to be written in a more transparent form. There is a need for transfer from research into teaching practice.

4.2. Admission Procedure

Admission procedure seems to be not very selective and ignoring some relevant prereqisits. If, as it is claimed, students must use foreign, predominantly English literature, than knowledge of English should be checked once they apply for the programme.

It is also important not to forget that 50, and even more 70 students, could be easily too many. The number of students should be adequate in order to match available number of the teachers.

4.3. Quality Management

According to the available documents and reports it seems that the QM exists. It appears that the institution also developed adequate procedures for providing a feed back to the students i.e. teachers. However, it is important not to develop administrative system, which will ignore relevant qualitative mechanisms. Sometimes one can question the gap between very well developed and written documents and the performed activities.

4.4. Infrastructure

The whole ISPE College is situated in the fairly small building with relatively limited number of lecture rooms. Considering the number of students, and ambitious plan to start a number of new programmes, it is not transparent how it is meant to assure working conditions for all the students/programmes. Moreover, if there is a plan to start the psychology programme there should be some additional space for labs needed, and common, in psychology departments.

Special concern is availability of recent literature. Although there are some developments towards better e-literature access, there is extremely small number of available titles for psychology. The

main load of the available selection of chapters, books is in pdf format provided by one of the teachers. Unfortunately, there is no a selection of some basic international journals.

The library service would need a staff who can help students in searching for the papers/titles and to be English proficient.

Recommendations

- Before starting a new programme/s, ISPE College has to assure enough space. Evaluation of one programme cannot be treated separately from the other new programmes when the space and availability of rooms are considered.

- Before starting a new programme, sufficient number of titles and relevant literature needs to be assured. In addition, there should be a sound financial/activity plan how to increase the number of relevant books and journals.

4.5. Research and international Co-operation

The self-report does not provide sound information on this aspect of the programme/teachers. But, as it has been noted, indirect measure of the established research profile and/or international cooperation could be observed via list of publications. Accordingly, this still requires a more efforts from both individual teachers and the institution itself.

It is evident that the part of the staff has international experience and attends international conferences, which certainly opens possibility to establish connections with international colleagues. However, from the report is not clear what are the results of those possibilities.

It is also evident that ISPE College has signed the number of MoU and agreements with foreign institution. What is not clear what is the real outcome of those cooperations and how much is relevant for a psychology in particular.

As mentioned earlier, doctoral candidates who have supervivisors from the institutions/universities outside Kosovo, could contribute for further international cooperation.

Recommendations

- More support for international cooperation and research should be provided by the institution, besides establishing new structures (e.g. office for international relations). Strategic documents should define the role of international cooperation and there is a need to develop the activities plan.

- What is not clear from the self-assessment report is the student/teacher accessibility to international scientific literature what is the prerequisite for developing research. It should be approached as one of the institutional/program priorities.

4.6. ECTS Allocation and Course Load

There is a good allocation of the ECTS, at least in the new version of the programme. However, when checked the submitted version to the Agency, across the semesters, it seems that there are different problems (i.e. not well calculated, too many courses/exams per semester, underestimated the thesis in terms of ECTS etc.).

While the work load in a new version of the programme seems to be better balanced and manageable, in the submitted version to the Agency the distribution of different courses is not realistic. There are too many courses, some of them being very specific and not really needed for the bachelor level.

Recommendation

- When considered the newly submitted version of the programme, it seems much more appropriate in terms of the structure of the programme, number of courses and their distribution accross semesters, as well as the distribution of ECTS when compared to the version submitted to the Agency. What it is not clear how these new programme could be prepared on time for the beginning of a new academic year, in particular, bearing in mind who will carry the programme out.

4.7. Conclusion

The study programme Psychology BA that was submitted together with the additional requested documents after the site visit is a significantly revised version. It seems to be better-composed programme compared to the first version submitted to the Agency for the evaluation (Fall 2014). Most likely, it could be carried out once when/if ISPE College meets the requirements for the permanent and appropriate academic staff as well as assures the adequate infrastructure. Nevertheless, the new programme itself still requires careful analysis and examination.

However, the first version of the programme that was given to the expert for the evaluation and which was analysed and discussed at the ISPE college during the visit is the relevant document for the evaluation process.. Bearing in mind the programme itself, insufficient qualified staff and the lack of adequate infrastructure, from the expert's perspective **Psychology BA programme cannot be accredited**. It is unlikely that the programme could be successful and sustainable in a given circumstances.

5. MA - Economics

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Introduction

The ISPE College has been running a bachelor programme in „Economy" since 2012/2013. In order to provide possibilities to continue education in economic field on the master level, the College elaborated master level study program in Economics that has been provided to the evaluation by the international experts in 2014. This version of the program was not accredited. The remarks and suggestions made during the previous evaluation were taken into account by the elaboration of the new version of the program which was presented for the re-accreditation in May 2015. The description of the new version of the program is presented in the Self Evaluation Report - 2015-2016 (hereafter SER). The expert team's opinion about the new version of the master program in Economics and the recommendations for its development and implementation are elaborated based on the SER, materials presented in the appendices of the SER, additional materials presented upon the request during the site visit and on the information experts collected in the meetings with the faculty members during the site visit. The site visit of the international expert team was in May 27, 2015.

5.1. Academic Program and Student Management

According to the information presented in the SER, the recent version of the master program in Economics (presented for the evaluation in May 2015) was elaborated taking into account stakeholders' opinions about Kosovo's labour market demand, which were expressed during the stakeholders' roundtable meetings (see SER, p. 50). The stakeholders proposed that master program in Economics should have focus on specialisations in marketing and finance. The target group of the elaborated study program are students who have undergraduate university diploma (at least 180 ECTS credits) and who want to develop their education focusing on marketing and financial management gaining research and analytical knowledge with the modern European focus (SER, p. 51).

Does the academic programme correspond to the institution´s mission statement and principle of operation?
According to the ISPE College Strategic Development Plan 2014 -2010 (hereafter SDP), the mission statement of the College is comprehensive focusing on the preparing „...*professional and able individuals that will face the challenges and the needs of the market. This mission will be accomplished by offering to the students an appropriate high education environment*" (SDP, p. 6). This very broadly defined mission statement in general corresponds to the program's aim and the expected learning outcome. But it does not provide remarkable support and specific guidance for the development of the study programs. The Strategic Development plan of the College declares that the mission is also "...*to enable our students to have international experiences*" (SDP, p.3). Thus, internalisation has be to among the most important targets of the development and implementation of the master program in Economics as well as other study programs of the College.

Are the programme´s quality, range and academic aims appropriate to the academic degree? Does the academic degree correspond to standards?

The scope of the program measured by the ECTS in general corresponds to the international standards. The program under evaluation provides 60 ECTS annually with total amount of 120 ECTS during two study years including also 5 ECTS for internship and 25 ECTS for master thesis. According to the SER, the program has strong focus on teaching European issues, which are playing an important role in all study programs of the College and corresponding to the defined niche of the College in Kosovo's educational and labour market. Following this focus, the curriculum of the master program includes courses in Economics of European Integration, Economic and Monetary Union as well as several other (including elective courses) allowing students to get knowledge about EU and globalisation issues. The expected academic excellence and learning outcome, formulated in the SER, are ambitious stating that graduates will be able „....*critically analyse modern Economics problems from an academic perspective, use economic models and methods to compare and contrast theories, examine research papers in order to logically connect real life issues with marketing metrics and financial models*" (SER, p. 52) and „...*students will grasp sufficient research and analytical skills*" (SER p. 51).

The possibilities for achievement of these targets are somewhat doubtful relying on the elaborated study program and its curriculum design. The proposed curriculum does not contain sufficient amount of courses and credits devoted to getting deep knowledge in various aspects of economics allowing fulfilling the expected high academic standards (e.g. to critically analyse modern *economics;* to compare theories, etc.). In order to create preconditions for the achievement of these ambitious aims, the curriculum should include advanced topics in economics (e.g. advanced micro- and macroeconomics, institutional economics, other advanced courses in economics) and research methods (advance knowledge in statistics and econometrics, good skills of using modern statistical and econometric software as well as other software for implementing quantitative and qualitative research methods). In that case also the requirements to students' educational background and their previous knowledge in economics and research methodology have to be more strongly settled in the admission regulations comparing to them presented in the SER-2015-2016 (SER, p. 55).

Taking into account the opinion of stakeholders as well as strategic goals and targets of the College (see SER, p 51-53; SDP, p 2), more applied orientation of the program focusing on the offering deep knowledge in marketing and finance will be acknowledged in the Kosovo's labour market. Thus, the College should consider the possibilities for the revising program' aims and content in order to have a sufficient balance between the defined study outcomes and curriculum design. Taking into account that the main focus of the program is on the marketing and finance issues, it is also recommendable to consider the possibilities for the development and implementation of the master program in the field of Business and Management with the specializations in Marketing and Finance instead of the master program in Economics. These developments will also be in accordance with the study field formulated by the ESAC and reflected in the program profile (see SER p. 48)

Does the structure of the programme give sufficient opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis? Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and justified? Is the workload required for the academic programme manageable for students?
According to the information presented in the SER, the allocation of ECTS seems to be appropriate and the workload required is manageable for the students. But of course, it will possible to

evaluate these issues more profoundly after the implementation of the program and after getting first feedback from the students and faculty members.

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

Based on the SER and the meetings with some faculty members during the site visit, it is possible to expect that teachers are motivated and able to implement new teaching methods according the possibilities offered by the College's infrastructure. The profound evaluation of these issues will be possible after the getting first experience of the program implementation and having feedback from the students. Of course, in order to achieve the defined aims and outcomes of the program, continuous attention should be devoted to the life-long training of teaching staff and to offering support for the successful participation in national and international projects and networks.

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

The SER presents brief and rather laconic description of the study courses and expected study outcome of every subject. Therefore it is difficult to make very profound analysis of the transparency and compressibility of the proposed curriculum before the implementation of the program. The syllabuses and curriculum design should be continually developed during the implementation of the program and after having regular feedback from the students and other stakeholders. Thoroughly elaborated syllabuses have to be correctly and comfortably accessible through the well-functioning electronic study information system of the College. The implementation of a matrix approach for the collecting information about the course' contents will help avoiding threats for the overlapping of the course' contents and that will also improve curriculum transparency.

How do the admission criteria and admission procedures measure up to international standards?

The SER does not provide detailed information about the admission procedures of students to the program under evaluation. The experts also did not get fully clear answer on these questions during the site visit. Hopefully these issues will be profoundly elaborated and developed during the implementation of the program. If the program will be implemented following the expected ambitious academic aims and learning outcome, the admission criteria should be rather strong in order to guarantee that the admitted students have sufficient prerequisite knowledge for the successful participation in the program under evaluation. Another option is that the program will have more applied focus on business and management with the proposed specialisations in marketing and finance.

Is the ratio of academic staff to students appropriate?

According to the information presented in the SER and additional information the College offered during the site visit, it is possible to expect that the ratio of academic staff to students will be appropriate in order to start with the implementation of the program with the limited number of students. If the number of the admitted students will grow rapidly, the College should quickly recruit new qualified faculty members in order to achieve and keep high quality standard of the new program and to manage students in both specialisation fields.

Recommendations

- The program should be revised in order to have better balance between the defined aim, expected study outcome, curriculum design, content of study subjects and the requirements to the educational background of the students.

- If the program is aiming to provide strong and internationally competitive master level education in Economics, the curriculum should contain advanced topics in mainstream economics (e.g. advanced micro- and macroeconomics, institutional economics and other advanced courses in economics) and prerequisite courses for the implementation of advanced research methods (e.g. advanced knowledge in statistics and econometrics). In that case also students' admission criteria should be made clearer and stronger fulfilling the expectations that candidates' background in economics and research methods will be on the sufficiently high level for the participation in the master program in Economics. Another option is that the program under evaluation will have more applied direction with the focus on Business and Management having specialisations in Marketing and Finance.

- It is recommendable to develop the curriculum structure considering the possibilities to have three blocks of study subjects or modules: I. block. Mainstream courses in Economics (or Business and Management if the College decides to move the program to more practical direction) and research methods and also courses related to the EU developments as the general educational focus of the College; II block. Specialisation courses in the fields of Marketing and Finance (students have to choose subjects/ modules according to the specialisations); III. Block. Elective courses that students can choose from different programs of the College and possible also other universities, if the College will contracts with them.

- In order to avoid the threats of serious overlapping the content of courses, it is recommendable to implement a matrix approach for collecting information about the course' contents of all programs of the College including both obligatory and elective courses.

5.2. Staff

Does the institution have an adequate proportion of permanent staff and appropriate proportion of permanent and external staff?
According to the information presented in the SER and additional information the College offered during the site visit, the proportion between permanent and external staff is more or less adequate in order to start with the implementation of this new master program. The enlargement of the program and the remarkable increase of admitted students require quick recruitment of additional permanent and qualified staff for the achievement of the log-run sustainability of the program.

Does the academic staff demonstrate proven ability at a high academic and didactic level and are their qualifications appropriate to the position they hold within the institution according to the basic criteria?
During the site visit and meetings with the faculty members, academic staff demonstrated their readiness and motivation to work with the master students in Economics. For the sustainability of the program, the upgrading the qualification of young faculty members – PhD candidates and/or the recruitment of young well-qualified teaching staff is necessary in near future. The SER as well as the meetings with the faculty members of the College during the site visit did not

present sufficient information about the College's concrete plans how to increase the motivation of young faculty members to successfully finish their PhD studies and to continue academic career using possibilities for post-doctoral studies. The improvement of some faculty members' abilities and readiness to communicate in English is necessary.

Recommendation

- It is recommendable to elaborate the action plan for the improvement of staff recruitment and development, and to regularly monitor its implementation by the program committees and College management. International experience of teaching staff should be important criteria for the recruitment and promoting of the faculty members.

5.3. Research and International cooperation

Some international cooperation activities, mainly with the colleagues from German universities, are developed or are in the development stage. Hopefully these activities will also support the development of the study programs in the field of economics and business. During the site visit, faculty members expressed their willingness and ability for international research cooperation. At the same time, they also expressed the expectations that the College will implement some supportive measures (including financial) for the increasing the motivation for the applying of research projects and for successful participation in the international research networks and projects. So far, the publications of the College staff seemed to be geared more to the specific situation and issues in Kosovo or/and the Western Balkans. People are aware that successful participation in the much broader international networks is unavoidable in order to have better possibilities for the preparing and publishing joint research papers with much larger international impact. Taking into account that new master program in Economics includes internship and master theses, there is a necessity and also hope that master students will be step by step involved in the research process.

Recommendations

- Remarkable attention has to be devoted to the internalisation of the program (active exchange of students and faculty members, high level quest lectures, more orientation on the using of internationally well-known basic text books making them available in the library, etc.). In order to fulfil all internalisation targets, it is recommendable to elaborate the action plan and regularly monitor its implementation by the program committees and College management.

- It is recommendable to elaborate a concrete plan for the development of research and for motivation of the faculty members to improve their research quality and participation in international networks. The fulfilment of this plan has to be regularly discussed and evaluated by the relevant institutions of the College.

5.4. Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment

College's current infrastructure is offering rather limited preconditions for the implementation of the new study programs and for the enlargement of its activities. But the College has ambitious visions and plans for remarkable development of its infrastructure. The College has budget plan which is continually in the development stage and its implementation also depends on the

successfulness of the elaborated and implemented study programs in the Kosovo's educational and labour markets. The programs in the economic fields are playing a remarkable role in the College's planned activities and therefore permanent monitoring of their quality and development trends are essential for the creating the preconditions for the long-run sustainability.

Recommendation

- The infrastructure, equipment, library etc. need continues development. It is recommendable to elaborate concrete plans for the purchasing set of internationally well accepted textbooks, scientific journals, databases, software etc. taking into account the enlargement plans and financial possibilities of the College. The implementation of the plan has to be regularly discussed and monitored taking into account also stakeholders' feedback and suggestions.

5.5. Quality Management

The management of the College is aware of the importance of the well-functioning Quality Assurance System in order to create and keep good imago of the College in educational and labour markets. This system is still in development stage. The results of the elaboration and implementation of the College's study programs are assessed regularly but the deepness and profoundness of the assessment procedures and reactions on the stakeholders' feedback vary depending on College's sub-institutions and programs.

Recommendation

- The Quality Assurance System elaborated in the College has to be continually developed in strong cooperation with all stakeholders and College management. The discussions and decisions of meetings focusing on the development and implementation of the Quality Assurance Systems should be correctly documented; the information about the decisions has to be available to all stakeholders, particularly to students and faculty members.

5.6. Conclusion

The elaborated master program has certain potential for its implementation but improvements and development of the elaborated program version are necessary in order to be sustainable in both short-run and long-run perspective (see recommendations above). We recommend accreditation of the **program for 3 years.**

For the compilation of the report
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