

**Report submitted to the  
Kosovo Accreditation Agency on an**

**Institutional Accreditation of Kosovo Art Academy  
(Higher Education Private Provider), and**

**Accreditation of Bachelor Programmes:**

- **Design**
- **Graphic-Design-Multimedia**
- **Photography**

**Expert Team:**

- **Doris Carstensen**
- **Bettina Henkel**

## **I. THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

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### **1. Institution and Study Programmes under Review**

An expert team visited the Kosovo Art Academy on 23rd of May 2016 for the purpose of considering an institutional accreditation of the Kosovo Art Academy as private provider of higher education supported by the private Art Academy “Libera Academia di Belle Arti – LABA” (which is legally recognized by the Ministero dell’Istruzione, dell’Università della Ricerca (MIUR)) and consideration of the following bachelor study programmes:

Design 180 ECTS, EQF 6	Graphics-Design-Multimedia 180 ECTS, EQF 6	Photography 180 ECTS, EQF 6
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### **2. Expert Team**

2.1 The expert team consisted of:

Doris Carstensen, MBA, Higher Education Consultant, Vienna (A)

Doz. Mag. art. Bettina Henkel, MEDIA LABORATORY, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (A)

2.2 The Team was supported by a member of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):  
Ms. Furtuna Mehmeti, Acting Director, Expert for Evaluation and Accreditation.

We want to thank Kosovo Accreditation Agency and its office for support, and for engaging us as experts and their expressed trust.

### **3. Basis of the evaluation**

3.1 The expert team based its evaluation on the *Self Evaluation Report* by Kosovo Art Academy initially submitted to KAA and send to the experts in May 2016 and the site visit made by the expert team in May 2016. Further information requested by the expert team at the end of the site visit.

### 3.2 Additional Documents:

contracts on cooperation with private or public partners for student's internship  
The Kosovo Art Academy provided 10 contracts (in Albanian language) with company for agreement and rules about the student's internship as described in SER page 42.

3.3 This report seeks to evaluate the current condition of the institution with its bachelor programmes in each department based upon the self-assessment documentation provided in spring 2016, the requested additional documents, the discussions with the management, course development, heads of the programmes, teaching staff teams and the visit around the facilities.

3.4. The revised curricula overviews in all three programmes, and the one course description provided together with the statement of the institution on the draft report **cannot be taken** into consideration, because of formal reasons according to the guidelines for Experts of Kosovo Accreditation Agency.

## 4. Site Visit

4.1. The expert team visited the Faculty of Arts on Monday 23rd May 2016. During this site visit, the expert team had meetings with:

- Director of LABA from Brescia, Prof. Roberto Dorzanelli as supporting partner of the Academy Art Academy and future president of the Kosovo Art Academy (diagram SER 4.2.1)
- Dean and vice dean of the Kosovo Art Academy with responsibility for the management of the institution
- Heads of the study programmes
- Members of the academic staff, most of them owing preliminary contracts.

4.2. The site visit by the expert team concluded with a closing meeting with the director of LABA, dean and vice dean of the Kosovo Art Academy and heads of the study programmes.

4.3. We are indebted to all members who attended the site visit. The discussions offered several interesting aspects about the Kosovo Art Academy and the designated team members.

4.4. The ET had the impression that most of the teaching staff saw each other in this context for the first time, which was mentioned by one prospective staff member. Not all of our discussion partners were informed about the programmes and its documentation in the SER. To the ET it seemed that the future employees had been informed vaguely about the accreditation process.

The founder and director of LABA acted as the main speaker, because of that it was difficult to get an impression about the unique position of the Kosovo Art Academy in distinction to LABA.

## **II. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

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### **1. LABA and the Kosovo Art Academy**

The Kosovo Art Academy have its institutional backbone at LABA in Brescia. The organisational structure and the programmes are mostly identical with the 'mother-institution'. LABA will support the Academy with its knowledge and later on also with staff from Italy. In the SER it is written that the study programmes are 100 % comparable with LABA. That makes it necessary to say some words about the institutional status of LABA.

### **2. Institutional Status of LABA**

LABA is accredited as higher education institution by the Italian Ministry, law nr. 508 from 21.12.1999. LABA belongs to the group of "Accademie di belle arti legalmente riconosciute"<sup>1</sup>.

On the homepage ANABIN of the German Cultural Ministry Conference – Central Office for Foreign Education<sup>2</sup> the status of LABA is characterized as higher education institution, having status H+. Status H+ means that degrees from this institution could be proved by a German institution as equal to higher education. Mostly H+ refers to post-secondary applied sciences and in this case applied arts.

## **III. Kosovo Art Academy**

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### **1. Institution Mission Statement**

The Kosovo Art Academy (KAA) is planned to be a private Kosovo school of higher education, to be established in autumn 2016 with three on campus bachelor programmes, and direct institutional support of the Italian Academy LABA.

KAA has started with a mission, to make major contributions to higher artistic education in the region and above, to foster individual, social and ethical-moral development in Kosovo, and to support the development of the Kosovo economy and culture.

The purpose of the designate HEI is to foster universal academic virtues, and on the other hand useful skills and knowledge for the labour market in Kosovo. Very few specific explications were given during the site visit about the qualification and skill demand of the local labour market. A written labour market research was not in place. A competitive analysis and general information about the institutions and programs in applied arts, and their number of students was missing.

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<sup>1</sup> AFAM <http://www.afam.miur.it/argomenti/istituzioni/accademie-di-belle-arti-legalmente-riconosciute.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Kulturminister Konferenz – Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen: [http://anabin.kmk.org/no\\_cache/filter/institutionen.html](http://anabin.kmk.org/no_cache/filter/institutionen.html)

There was no evidence - not on central level nor in the sub-units - for strategic planning with regard to teaching and how to provide a high quality education to a large number of yearly students. Research was not an issue.

The Director of LABA stated a sense of urgency with which creative and artistic work as a consequence of more and better educational activities and scientific research should contribute to the welfare of the Kosovar society and state. Unfortunately, the designated Director and Vice Director were not able to give an independent picture about the future Kosovo Art Academy.

Regardless of these inconsistencies the ET considers the school's undergraduate study programmes in the professional fields of design, photography, and graphic-design-multimedia as evidence of its *vocational* orientation.

## **2. Academic Freedom**

The concept of academic freedom as a right of faculty members to teach, to develop art and conduct research without being repressed or endangered of losing their job. It is related to institutional autonomy and freedom on academic ground as well.

In particular, the Academy tries to establish academic self-governance with several boards and councils. This might cause a better control of its internal affairs in distinction to LABA. But as long as the curricula are delivered by LABA the freedom of teaching and institutional autonomy will become rather empty concepts.

The ET considers the **one-to-one** transfer of the curricula from LABA without any adoptions to the local requirements and teachers' programmatic capabilities as evidence of their limited academic freedom.

## **3. International Co-operation**

Evidence was given to overcome the obstacles that faces an Academy in Kosovo in fostering international academic cooperation. The Kosovo Arts Academy is supposed links with the partner institution LABA in Italy. It would be possible for the Kosovo Art Academy to participate in the international institutional network of LABA. On request the ET was informed, that the several branches of LABA in China, Vietnam, Camerun are not available for cooperation, but international partnerships complementing the internationalisation of LABA.

Additionally, LABA plans to delegate Italian teachers to Kosovo Art Academy in the second year. This might stimulate internationalisation.

The organization of internationalisation is under the responsibility of the Committee for External and International Relations (Director, Vice-Director, Director of Administration, two representatives of the Scientific and Teaching Council and two student

representatives). This committee has the task to define, implement and stimulate external cooperation in teaching, studying and research.

The ET considers the potential positive effects for KAA of having an international institutional partner from Italy. Regrettably the interest and moral support of the Italian Ambassador in Kosovo mentioned many times during the site visit and in the statement as well, is not expressed officially with a letter of interest. Thereby for the ET the eventual interest is too uncertain to rely upon.

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

Direction of the Academy is in the hands of the executive Director of Administration and the Director of the Academy. Both Directors own wide-ranging responsibilities and decision rights.

Both are members of the Board of Directors, which consists of a President, representative of the founder and other advisors. The competences of the board cover the economic aspects and the establishment, organizational changes and dissolution of study programmes.

The major committee is the Academic Council (Director, Vice-Director, President, Director of Administration, 1 representative of the "Faculty"). The competences of this board are the programmatic leadership and governance, the institutional autonomy and financial compliance.

The major committee in academic-matters is the Scientific Education Council (Director, Director of Administration, student representatives and teachers). The Council is responsible for academic planning, coordination of didactic and research activities, development of research, proposal of evaluation teams, and decisions upon students' proposals.

A sub-part of the Scientific Education Council is the Student Representative Council with three students. It has binding opinions on proposals concerning programme development, didactic regulations, students' rights, appeal, and admission criteria.

This construction remains generally unsatisfactory, because it does not seem clear that academic decisions – concerning curriculum, teaching and assessment – are kept separate from decisions made by business managers. Decision making procedures in the committees are not explained. The ET does not know whether veto rights or additional voting rights are reserved to the leaders of the boards and committees.

A need for further formalisation of the Academics' decision-making processes is obvious, particularly with respect to the revision, planning and implementation of programmes. There should be programme teams and the role of the Department Council has to be strengthened with regard to decisions and proposals in academic-matters, such as staff-planning, course planning and delivery, student admission, recruitment procedures, quality assurance, curriculum development.

The mother-institution LABA is represented in the board. Since this body owns most of the economic and core programme decisions rights, LABA is able to influence most of the institutional decisions directly. During the site visit it was not clearly stated out whether the Director of LABA is going to be the President of the Academy, which is mentioned in SER, diagram 4.2.1. In such a constellation the impact of LABA would increase additionally.

There is no intermediary committee that observes and compares the quality and programme development of the Academy with the offer of the mother-institution LABA. On the contrary LABA offers academic supervision on programme delivery, didactic purposes and staff development. This is a kind of one-way-street with less cooperative exchange and mutual influence.

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

The proposed financial planning based on the assumption that in the calculation 30 Students per programme and year will be enrolled and will generate an increasing income from 225 T€ up to 675 T€ in the third year. Research activities are estimated to generate 50 T€ up to 150 T€ in the third year. This seems rather unrealistic under the financial conditions and the small amount of third party funding in Kosovo. On the other hand, there are yearly expenditures rising from 170 T€ up to 312 T€ in the third year.

Some of the projected expenditure items seem on the low side which may well require extra funding in the following aspects:

- the rent is fortunately below the market prices because of the owners liking of the newly planned institution
- yearly expenditures for academic staff do not correspond with the number of planned fulltime staff members and their salaries<sup>3</sup>
- yearly expenditures for administrative staff are very low
- a yearly reinvestment in infrastructure and teaching facilities because of the institutional growth and to keep the standard is not mentioned
- a very small library budget
- no extra budget for ICT and software licences
- low cost for telecommunication
- compared with other private institutions a very small marketing budget.

It is difficult to judge on the start-up costs by the documents because the expenditures for an initial infrastructure, technical resources and equipment for teaching and learning are not in the list.

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<sup>3</sup> It was mentioned that the salary should be modelled after LABA and thereby payment should be higher than usual in Kosovo.

The building is almost adequate for the purpose of the Academy. It is light, spacious and accessible by bus. The entrance hall offers an open space for students and staff members to rest and to communicate. Meeting rooms for the staff members and committees are available, but no individual offices for academics. Under the roof top there is a large hall for students, with seating areas.

The ET were surprised that a specialized infrastructure as regards the requirements of the academic programmes on offer and the research to be conducted is not carefully planned. The planned rooms, infrastructure and the presented technological equipment do not fulfil the demands of the study offers:

- Individual workspaces for students for independent and experimental learning with an adequate technological equipment are not installed. Students will be dependent on a sufficient infrastructure for their individual learning processes.
- Computers (Laptops) meet the professional demands of design, graphic design on an entrance level, in particular they will not be adequate for “4D Cinema, Web, 3D Animations,” (SER, 2.1.).
- A printer for graphics in the format to B0 +, art reproductions, photographs and proofing was not presented.
- Digital Photo-Cameras are in a good status for beginners, equipment for high professional needs are missing.
- There is no studio for painting and drawing planned.
- Since fashion is a professional field within the study programme of Design to be addressed by the Academy (SER, 36) the ET has to mention, that there was no equipment or infrastructure for fashion design, clothing materials, not workshops for manufacturing.
- The teaching rooms presented were organised like school classes. Since the furniture is not fixed, they can be rearranged.
- The Library is a collection of books by chance. According to the statement QUESTIA should be installed to provide online access to publications.<sup>4</sup>

## **6. Quality Management**

The KAA plans to install a Central Office for Quality Assurance with responsibilities for planning, coordinating quality assurance activities, monitoring teaching, learning processes and results, and the quality of services and infrastructure. The Academic Council will establish a Committee for Quality Assurance, to monitor and implement procedures for evaluation and approval of the programmes.

The components of the Quality Assurance are reasonable. The validation of the study programmes is essential for existing and new programmes. The internal evaluation on the basis of questionnaires and self-assessment might leads to a yearly reporting. External

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<sup>4</sup> Artstor might should be the first choice for the institution before installing a general scientific online access provider.



evaluation and accreditation are occasional. Quality improvement procedures and procedures for complaints should be installed regularly.

In line with European good practice, one important element in a quality development process would be publication of the conclusion of each academic year in a summative and evaluative Annual Quality Monitoring Report.

Questionnaires for students and teachers are planned to gather information and to assess the quality. Additionally, focus groups with students should discuss the findings. This might stimulate a self-critical debate.

The ET would suggest documenting the actions on accountability with typical written elements of e.g. minutes of boards, committees, staff meetings, assessment panels, etc. This will enable the members of the Academy to learn in practice and create a transparent communication structure.

As a priority task for the quality management, the ET perceive a need to review the Guide to Quality Assurance with regard to the small size of the Academy and the limited possibilities to participate in such labour intensive processes, and in order to enhance its transparency, consistency. Otherwise quality assurance will become a bureaucratic routine and empty concept.

## **IV. Academic Programmes**

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### **1. General remarks to all programmes**

#### *a) Formal Aspects*

All three programmes are similar to each other in structure, reasoning of the labour market, international comparability, target group, managing principles, ratio between theory and practise, calculation of ECTS, internship and research as it is described in the SER. Mostly the chapters in the programme description are copy and paste which minor adaptation. The content of the subject, curriculum matrix, course description and syllabi are specified. For that reason, the following paragraphs will describe the three programmes under evaluation structurally.

Some general formal aspects are mentioned beforehand:

- The Curriculum matrix, course descriptions and syllabi are inconsistent.
- The translation into English is sometimes weak and not understandable.
- Some paragraphs are unreadable, because words sticking together without space.
- Literatures of the courses often are in Italian language.

Specified chapters for relevant programmes are following see below in chapters 2., 3. and 4.

#### *b) Institution's Mission and Academic Programmes*

As mentioned above, the Kosovo Art Academy has a close relation to LABA, which offers similar study programmes with comparability of 100% (as written in the SER) and will provide the Kosovo Art Academy during the first phase of three years technical and academic support.

The institutions mission originating in “classism and humanism in Italy and Europe” (see also comments II./1.) like “Respect of universal values” and “Accountability for expanding knowledge and values to humanity” as well as clear labour market goals in an affirmative way: “Adjustment for the principles of meritocracy and overall management of quality” and “Ensuring constant repetition and productivity”. “Promoting creative and artistic work” appear at close to the end of the list of aims of the materialisation of the mission of the institution. Sad to say that this aim is not comprehensible in the three study programmes which are rather application-, technic- and crafts-oriented than in an artistic free and critical thinking to ensure universal values and humanity. How “respect of universal values” and how it infers to “value of humanity” – and what this means – can’t be seen within the curriculum. During the site visit concerning this topic no specific statement from the prospective leading personalities of the Kosovo Art Academy could be

done. The draft report was commented by the Academy in that case inter alia: “Every technical conquest serves ideal such as equality, freedom, development of personality and deep beauty”.

Looking for critical discourse in art theory and practises in the program, search for courses in e.g. Gender/Queer-Studies and Postcolonial-Studies, so to say as contemporary successors of humanism, are playing no role. In European Art Academies such discourses are unimaginable not to be thought and without being forced by law, legal and other guidelines. The referred discourses are interdisciplinary and applicable for all subjects.

Breaking gender stereotypes and not reproducing them again and again in Design, Multimedia and Photography, creating new forms of visual languages caused by a strong awareness of such discourses could be a main goal in modern art education and strengthen the respect of universal values of equality of humanity related to the aims of the institutions mission statement.

#### *c) Principles of Employability*

All programmes aiming intensely the labour market more than free artistic expression, which is needed to be successful in the creative and applied creative sector. It seems to the ET, that vocational demands dominate all areas of the programme and including internships.

Also the integration of an internship for the students during their three years of study is planned and documented by contracts with diverse companies in Kosovo.

The institution will create a “Career advisory service” for students, “either during their studies, as well as after graduation”. During the site visit this was strongly pointed out by Mr. Prof. Dolzanelli, that every student will have a job after graduation.

Unfortunately, employability as artist is not given much focus, although the institution persists on it. The ET misses central artistic fields, courses which main focus is on individual artistic development not on technical skills. If wished so, the study programmes should add clear artistic subjects with reflections on artistic appraisal and support on individual development of artistic attitude in the field of all shades of art and artistic practices.

#### *d) Academic degree*

The Italian Ministry of higher education accredited LABA as tertiary education institute law nr. 508 from 21.12.1999. But – as mentioned above - internationally LABA is recognised as a post-secondary institution.

The curricula of Kosovo Art Academy are 100 % identical to the curricula of LABA,

they said and wrote. In the SER the academic degrees are described as “Academic Diploma of First Level Design (danp) in Design”, “Academic Diploma of First Level Graphics-Design-Multimedia (DANPG-D-M)” and “Academic Diploma of First Level on Photography (ADFL)”. This does not correspond with the ECTS Users’ Guide which is describing levels of qualifications and cycles of learning<sup>5</sup>. The use of this naming of degrees and its abbreviations isn’t common.

*e) Structure of the Programmes*

The ET has reasonable doubts on quality and quantity of the offered courses within a BA study circle on level 6. If wished to be a BA on European standards, the programmes have to be revised fundamentally.

The academic profile is too low to be comprehended with a BA in arts from a university. The theoretical subjects are less in quantity, too broad and less specific in its range of content. In all of the subjects the institution save money and staff in blowing up the courses in ECTS, less contact hours and much individual work. As vocational training in form of an applied arts professional school with short cycle programs the institution would achieve good qualification, knowledge and skills. Characteristic for the form of a professional school is the strong connection to the labour market and a quick reaction to new professional fields. The academic qualifications of the programmes aren’t on universities level and not sufficient to connect to a following Master degree.

All courses are obligatory and no elective courses are offered. No modularisation is done, except the internship, which is somehow integrated in the curriculum (no clear wording in the curriculum). The ET can’t validate whether “Applicable Activities based on student’s choice” are elective course or not. No details were provided.

The range of subject matter is mostly enormous broad, but the input in contact hours only one third of the whole workload in theoretical courses and 50:50 in practical courses. The workload as such isn’t manageable by the students, because the individual study time is challenging because self-studying time is predominately.

In many cases course summaries are giving false information about content compared with description expected skills – which is the fact in all study programmes under evaluation<sup>6</sup>.

Theoretical courses, marked as such at the curriculums overview (but named as “basic” or

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<sup>5</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/2015/ects-users-guide\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/2015/ects-users-guide_en.pdf)

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<sup>6</sup> Please visit as an example syllabus and course description of Graphics-Design-Multimedia, 2nd semester: „History and Theory of New Media“. Part of the course is the history of new media, film, video, photography etc. Followed by analyses of the web. The analyses by web is indeed good and necessary – but for the whole history of film, new media, television, video and photography one hour only is calculated, which isn’t serious on any level of a specific education in this field. Again one third contact hours, two third individual studies. Side note: The course “History of cinema and video” in study program photography has the same summery.

Note: A completely new course description for the course mentioned above was transmitted with the comments, but can’t be validated and doesn’t effect the evaluation, since this is just one example.

“characterized formative activities” as well as “integrated or related formative activities”), are shared by all curriculums.

The overlapping course structure isn't transparent. In case of overlapping courses the naming, curriculum matrix, description and syllabi are inconsistent.<sup>7</sup>

Identical naming of courses through the study years causes irritation (eg. drawing, photography). Having a closer look at the course description of drawing it becomes obvious that an identical summary was in use but total different learning objectives: 3D-programm AutoCAD and free hand drawing. The institution explained that same working in order to stay coherent with Italian Ministry schedule.

#### *Recommendations*

- *Differentiation between course name, at least by numbers*
- *Differentiation between course types and harmonisation*
- *Harmonisation along the guide lines of the Kosovar Accreditation Agency and the European Users' Guide primarily and less relying on former Italian accreditation processes – which the ET do not doubt, but simple can't judge on it, since the assignment the Kosovo Accreditation Agency is to evaluate on the known criteria.*

#### **f) ECTS calculation**

In chapter 5.2.9 of the SER the calculation of the ECTS is described as such: 1 ECTS is equivalent to 20 hours, one year has “about” 1200 hours and 60 ECTS. The ECTS Users' Guide<sup>8</sup> recommends an amount of 25-30 hours per 1 ECTS and equivalent 1500-1800 hours per year. The workload calculation of the programs is below regulations on higher education in the republic of Kosovo<sup>9</sup> and the European standards according to the ECTS Users' Guide.

Every course has a very high amount of ECTS, starting from 4-6 up to 10-13 ECTS. The ratio between contact hours and individual study time is about 50:50 in practical courses, and about 1:2 in theoretical courses. But a clear distinction between theory and practise content wise in teaching isn't given. To quote the SER: “Although the composition of classes (...) it is observed no strict division between theoretical and practical lessons”. This system causes irritations how to understand the structure and the ET assume, that it will cause a big lack in theoretical knowledge, because in some cases one course is doing, what is expected from the other by naming.

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<sup>7</sup> E.g. course name „The history of modern art“ (curriculum matrix Design) and „Modern Art History“ (course description) with same naming through the study year, artistic sector/scientific discipline: „The style, the history of art and costume“. 6 ECTS, 36 hours class room, 84 individual study. Some courses, not less, having the same course name, but different course descriptions and level of knowledge.

<sup>8</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/2015/ects-users-guide\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/2015/ects-users-guide_en.pdf)

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<sup>9</sup> Both public and private institutions of higher education in the Republic of Kosovo the annual full-time student workload is estimated at 1500 hours, making one ECTS credit equal to 25 hours of planned classes. Please see [www.masht-gov.net](http://www.masht-gov.net); [www.akreditimi-ks.org](http://www.akreditimi-ks.org);

*The ET received the statement on draft report on 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, where acceptance is made towards revision of the three curricula. New calculation of ECTS ( 1ECTS = 25 h workload), more teaching hours in proportion to individual study time, more courses per semester, new description of “additional activities” and new fields of disciplinary areas (“Fine Arts”) are made as well as a completely new course description for an existing course (“History of Cinema and Video”, which is criticised by the ET in draft and final report).*

*We would appreciate the revision of the curricula as a major step towards adaptation of European standards. Regrettably we can’t judge on that in the moment on basis of the evaluation process which is based on the SER and site visit on the one hand, on the other, that a pure curriculum matrix without course description and syllabi plus the structural related changes, can’t be the basis for evaluation seriously – and sad to say – won’t affect this Final Report and its recommendation.*

*For resubmission for institutional accreditation we like to encourage the responsible persons of the study programmes to revise the curricula carefully along the guidelines of the Kosovar Accreditation Agency and the European Users’ Guide primarily.*

#### **g) Teaching Methods**

During the site visit the ET asked the programme leaders and the staff in two separate sessions about the overarching didactic concept. Unfortunately, the term itself wasn’t understandable and needed to be explained – the question couldn’t be answered. From the SER itself it was hardly recognisable.

The description of courses types is done for all courses in the following “typology of formative activities”<sup>10</sup>. Here only formative activities are divided in “basic formative”, “characterized formative” and “integrated or related formative” and expanded by “other forming activities” (elective courses?) and “formative activities by choice of the students” (internship?). The both last named categories are without any course descriptions and teaching guidance at all. It seems to the expert team very vague and not fulfilling a differentiation between learning elements on European standards. This typology also describes theoretical courses like “History of contemporary Art” as “basic formative activity”, which isn’t university level at all.

The teaching methods and didactics as such are not specified in the course descriptions and syllabi. In the syllabi there is a mix out of different forms (by copy and paste) – lecture, seminar, individual and group work etc. – but not a methodology (teacher or student-centered learning, frontal, interactive, explorative etc. just as very basic

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<sup>10</sup> see e.g. SER, p. 47, end of curriculum matrix

categories). Online/distance teaching/learning is not yet a topic.

#### *h) Enrolment and admission of students*

Up to 30 students per years and study programme should be maximum enrolment written in SER, during the site visit a maximum of 25 per study program was announced. Anyway the full capacity would be 225-270 students per year, which is the maximum concerning space and facilities.

The admission criteria are similar in all three programmes. They ask in a knowledge test for “general culture and knowledge”, knowledge of history of art, the discipline of management and English as well as basic computer knowledge. There is no test or criteria for any creative competences, which are widely needed. The ET would have expected an entrance exam for artistic aptitude according to the mission of the Academy.

#### *i) Practical Work – Internship*

All three programmes are planning to have internship programmes and or internship in public or private institutions to “produce cadres that in future could be engages in the labour market”. This internship can be done throughout the entire study, also in several stages, and accumulate “up to 10 ECTS”. This vague outline “up to 10 ECTS” could create problems with the overall ECTS amount to finish the study program. If less than 10 ECTS are achieved, there are no options for additional courses such as electives.

All agreements of the internship and the internship itself are under supervision of the programme head<sup>11</sup>. The ET doubts that the study programme head could manage up to 90 students in all study years in supervising the internship.

The ET asks the contracts of the cooperating companies as additional documents. The contracts are in Albanian without translation and the ET roughly translated them. They give no details in organising the internship or aspects of reflection or implementation into the study program as learning content.

#### *Recommendations*

- *Revise all formal aspects and considerations as mentioned upon and above*
- *Harmonise the structure of the curricula matrixes per semester uniformly (helpful for all former students, teachers and for any evaluation processes)*
- *Curriculum matrix per semester (now a mixture in semester and per year)*
- *Divide annual courses in consecutive courses over two semesters*

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<sup>11</sup> In the comments a commission will to be set and the way and planning of the internships will be evaluated from time to time.

- *Display ECTS per semester (now a mixture in semester and per year)*
- *1 ECTS = 25 hour of workload*
- *Display contact hours per week (not per year or semester in a mixture)*
- *Course description per semester in progress und division per semester consecutively*
- *Build solid foundation according institutional values in precise contemporary course offer – in every aspect – and curriculum matrix to create a unique profile grippingly oscillating between humanism, art, design and technique as according to the institutions mission.*
- *Add clear artistic subjects with reflections on artistic appraisal and support on individual development of artistic attitude*
- *Clear definition and integration of the internship within the curriculum*
- *Differentiated study programme descriptions*

## **2. Study Programme Design**

The quality of the programme is driven by the field of commercial design and aims a high vocational training with integrated marketing and management skills. Academic skills are not appropriate to a BA and in a minor position.

The study program Design focus on “appropriate training to develop professional profile of a designer who knows how to intervene and correct methodological way as a designer or consultant-designer on commercial consumption of goods”. Former designers would, among other things, be prepared to work as “traditional fashion professionals such as designer, textile model makers, and accessories designer ... , interior design, and designer capable of working in the field of fashion communication and display (retail, publishing industry, business showdown). The training also is focused on forming skills training in design, marketing and communication tools that will lead to development of business ideas in new markets and through use of new media.” This is a huge portfolio, which is only partly comprehensible in the curriculum. The whole area of fashion design, textile model, accessories design etc., which is prominently included in the reasoning of the programme for the labour market (SER 5.2.2) isn’t mapped in the curriculum. In the course description is no hint for specific content in this field. Also this programme seems to be focused on vocational training rather than on academic skills.

## **3. Study Programme Graphic–Design–Multimedia**

The study programme of Graphics-Design-Multimedia will offer “interconnection in the field of Graphics, Design and Multimedia, ..., communication and film.” This program “aims to prepare competitive professionals in the commercial sphere, ... marketing, ... advertising branch. The program promise that the students will have skills for leading positions in creative teams within public and private institutions operation within the culture, art, image and communication.” (SER 5.3.3)



This is a huge range of professionalisms, which the ET doubts to be fulfilled by the curriculum. Some courses really deepen a subject other have such a broad variety that they aren't appropriate for this wished quality, level and given aims for the programme. Also this programme is on educational level 5<sup>12</sup>, not on BA level 6.

#### **4. Study Programme Photography**

The programme of photography concentrates very much on the different forms of photography from "traditional to modern professionals in the field of photography, specialized on commercial photography, 3D photography, sportive photography, aerial photography, astral photography, editorial photography etc."

The ET wants to indicate, that in this programme has 7 courses on "Photography" with identical name and code, but different ECTS, course descriptions and syllabi. No differentiation is made, whether they are consecutive or having different focus, which isn't marked in the naming. Please see recommendations on 1. a) "Formal Aspects" and especially on 1. d) "Structure of the programmes".

The chosen form of repetition of same naming during several semester causes more irritation than the wished strong characterisation of the subject<sup>13</sup>. If this should be the main artistic subject, then it should be marked and expressed as such differently within the curriculum.

Also this programme is on educational level 5<sup>14</sup>, not on BA level 6.

#### **5. Student Management**

Independent study time is dominating the whole three years of the study programmes and is about 60% (of the whole workload of 180 ECTS = 3600 hours calculated with 1 ECTS=20 hours). But, concerning the higher education system in the republic of Kosovo<sup>15</sup> on ECTS is equal with the amount of 25 hour of Workload and the ECTS Users' Guide the workload of 180 ECTS would be 4500 (1 ECTS=25 h) to 5400 hours (1 ECTS=30 h). Consequently, the input of contact hours is only about 25-30 % of the Kosovarian and European Standard. This huge amount of individual study time without guidance can't be successfully managed by BA-students.

For the programmes purpose to train students practically for the commercial field of Design, Graphics-Design-Multimedia and Photography with artistic demand, the programmes are sufficient as short cycle level, as mentioned above, but not as BA-programmes on university level. The outcome of competences, qualification, knowledge

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<sup>12</sup> Level 5 according to EQF-LLL level of qualification without indicating any credit ranges, see European Users' Guide.

<sup>13</sup> See comment 4.) „Study Programme on Photography“

<sup>14</sup> Level 5 according to EQF-LLL level of qualification without indicating any credit ranges, see European Users' Guide.

<sup>15</sup> For public and private higher education institutions in the Republic of Kosovo the annual full-time student workload is estimated at 1500 hours, making one ECTS credit equal to 25 hours of workload. Please see [www.masht-gov.net](http://www.masht-gov.net); [www.akreditimi-ks.org](http://www.akreditimi-ks.org); [www.akk-ks.net](http://www.akk-ks.net)

and skills in the professional fields as vocational training with artist demand, also for building up further artistic steps, would be good.

The examination regulations are described in its structures. The final decision about the BA-thesis – and this is remarkable– is made by the director of the Kosovo Art Academy, who is judging on the report about the BA-thesis made by a commission, whose members again the director has appointed. Academic freedom seriously is in danger. But, the comment pointed out the duty of the director of verifying a correct procedure. This should be clarified within the SER.

Apart from this, the thesis description is not explained in its full extent (SER 5.1.3). The format of the thesis is described vaguely as short essay (if theoretical and not in an “artistic-projecting character”).

How shared courses of all programmes will be managed isn’t explained in the SER and the overlapping course structure isn’t transparent. In case of overlapping courses the naming, curriculum matrix, description and syllabi are inconsistent and slightly different.

## V. Teaching Staff

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The academic staff with preliminary contracts is, as far as the ET met them, ambitious and highly motivated. From the CVs we also see, that they are qualified, active artists (obtaining a MA degree in arts) and experienced teacher in other public or private universities. Some staff members were teaching over many years, but not used to reflect on pedagogical methods. Professors for theoretical subjects holding a PhD are rare, some are PhD candidates (e.g. Zeni Ballazhi, part time professor for Modern Art History).

Full time staff members (9 persons) and part time members (5 persons) are supposed to teach mostly in two or all programmes.

The balance between full and part time by teaching hours isn't traceable. E.g. Mr. Rrezeart Galica is teaching as a part time staff member 420 hours (per three years course of study) and Mr. Masar Kabashi, a full time staff member, only 208 hours (see SER 6.1 and 6.2).

In the SER 4.2.4 the chapter describes the "Procedures on selection of the personnel, especially procedures on appointment of teachers", which is transparent in process but not especially in quality driven. The ET is irritated about the last decision, which is made by the Director of the Academy on the basis of a written report by a commission, established by the Director again. But, the director doesn't take any decision without the academic authority approval, what is documented afterwards in the commentary by the Academy – that and the following point should be fixed in the academic statutes. A definition how the report should be done, which criteria should measure a candidate etc. isn't described and quality not necessarily guaranteed.

Concerning gender balance: Only 1 out of 9 full time professors is female; only 1 out of 5 part-time professors is female. A clear initiative in searching for qualified women as full and part time staff should be set. In this aspect the ET didn't find any statement for improving the gender balance or even general remarks on the gender issues (except in the comments of the Academy).

During the site visit and in the SER it is announced that staff from LABA in Italy would come for teaching to the Kosovo Art Academy as visiting professors.

The ratio of academic/artistic staff to students is 1:30 (full time staff from all departments / students from all departments). With part time professors, which are five all together, there are 14 professors (9:5 full/part time) teaching for 270 students (all cohorts). Since the courses are focused on practical work, which need more support and supervision by the teachers face to face the ratio is on its limit. No more students should be allowed for enrolment when 270 students are registered without increasing the amount of permanent staff.

Staff development in academic teaching skills is planned in cooperation with LABA, which offers training and study visits and staff supervision. An internal board will observe the study programmes and teachers.

## VI. Research

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All statements concerning research are in subjunctive and will be developed during the first three years. All programmes have a “Programme Research Plan” (SER 5.2.11, 5.3.11, .54.11), which is through copy and paste in all programmes identical.

The institution “May establish Research Centres... and cross-sectorial Research Service Centres” as it is wrote in the SER under 3.4.2.

The SER also declares, that the staff will be able for research and will be supported by the institution.

Students have the right to participate in research concerning regulation the “General Didactic Regulation”. Due to the minor theoretical and methodological input it won’t be possible.

## VII. Recommendation

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The ET recommend revise the whole structure of the programmes and the following main topics beside others as written in the report upon:

- Establishing European standards given by the ECTS Users’ Guide.
- Increasing the number and objectives of obligatory courses
- Invent elective courses.
- Sharpening the distinction between theoretical and practical subjects.
- Increasing contact hours in theoretical subjects and decreasing its ECTS
- Clear definition and description of “applicable activities...”
- Distinctive course names and course descriptions.

The ET cannot recommend an accreditation for the programmes at hand. With the strong focus on employability, the referred more practically oriented than academic reflected programmes with a narrow course offer, the programmes are on educational level 5 (short circle). The level of the study programmes corresponds to an Applied Arts College (Level 5 according to EQF-LLL level of qualification<sup>16</sup> without indicating any credit ranges).

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<sup>16</sup> ECTS Users’ Guide

**Evaluation Report Kosovo Art Academy (Higher Education Private Provider), June 2016**  
Institutional and programme accreditation

The ET doubt the institutional autonomy of Kosovo Art Academy in relation to LABA. Several findings indicate, that the designated team members transferred the concepts and curricula one-to-one from LABA without adapting them to Kosovarian standards and requirements in Higher Education.

Autonomy in strategy, academic planning, decision making, finances, and budgeting a realistic and adequate infrastructure was rarely recognisable.

The ET likes to commend the individual motivation, which has been evident in the staff meetings, to start up with a private school in the field of applied arts in Kosovo. Hopefully this motivation will remain for a revision of the curricula and more independency in cooperation with LABA.