

# **External Evaluation Report**

## **Institutional Evaluation of PBHE QEAR – HEIMERER**

### **Programme Evaluation of the Bachelor Programme General Nursing**

**Final version, April 7th, 2016**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Context**

The present document contains the draft version of the evaluation report 2016 and it focuses on the institutional evaluation level as well as on the level of evaluation of the bachelor degree programme in General nursing at the PBHE QEAR – HEIMERER, Pristina, Kosovo. It is the result of the collegial work of an international team of experts appointed by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA). The report is based on the self-evaluation report (SER 1) of the PBHE QEAR - HEIMERER, the visit of the expert group in Pristina on March 22, 2016, and further information of the PBHE QEAR - HEIMERER, as requested by the expert group.

### **1.2. Experts**

The team consisted of following experts:

- Prof. Dr. Danica Zeleznik/University College of Health Sciences, Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia
- Prof. Dr. Helvi Kyngas/University of Oulu, Finland
- Prof. Dr. Milan Pol/Masaryk University, Czech Republic

## **1.3. Procedure and Evidence Collection**

### **1.3.1 Self-Evaluation Report (SER)**

The PBHE QEAR – HEIMERER submitted a detailed Self-evaluation Report (SER 1) as the central document for the institutional accreditation and the accreditation of the study programme. The report well describes on 115 pages institutional procedures as well as the General Nursing programme (bachelor level). The SER enabled the expert team to get a clear picture of the current situation in the institution as well as the study programme concerned and this way served as a solid information source to prepare the on-site visit.

### **1.3.2. On-site Visit**

On March 21, 2016 the three experts gathered in the evening for a preliminary working dinner together with two members of the KAA:

- Ms Furtuna Mehmeti, Acting Director, Expert for Evaluation and Accreditation
- Mr Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring

The experts discussed their impressions of the self-evaluation report. Also, they agree on the allocation of responsibilities within the expert team in a following way. Prof. Milan Pol was made responsible for the institutional evaluation of the PBHE QEAR – HEIMERER and also for moderation of the meetings during the on-site visit. Prof. Helvi Kyngas and Prof. Danica Zeleznik were made responsible for evaluation of the study programme General nursing (bachelor level). All members of the expert team agreed to conduct their work during the on-site visit together and in close co-operation, the same concerned the way of developing the Final report.

On March 22, 2016 the expert team spent one day at the PBHE QEAR – HEIMERER.

The expert team was accompanied by two members of KAA:

- Ms Furtuna Mehmeti, Acting Director, Expert for Evaluation and Accreditation
- Mr Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring

The on-site visit took place as planned. It started in the morning with a meeting with the management of the institution from 9.00-11.00; then the visit to facilities followed (11.00-12.00). After a working lunch of ET and Co. KAA (12.00-13.30) the visit continued with (1) the meeting with responsible persons for the study

programme (13.30-15.30), (2) the meeting with the teaching staff (15.30-16.30), and (3) the meeting with students (16.30-17.30). At the end, the closing meeting with the management of the institution took place (17.45-18.00).

The expert team would like to express its gratefulness to the management of the PBHE QEAP – HEIMERER and to the representatives of the study programme for very good organization of the visit. Also, the experts warmly thank the KAA and especially Ms Furtuna Mehmeti and Mr Shkelzen Gerxhaliu for their outstanding support and cooperation before, during and after the visit.

### **1.3.3. Additional Documents**

After the on-site visit a few additional documents were requested. They were sent in time by the management of the institution.

## **2. Institutional Evaluation**

The PBHE QEAP – HEIMERER was established and accredited for the first time in 2010. Currently, it provides four bachelor programmes (three years) and one master programme (two years). Since its establishment, the institution has undergone several external evaluation procedures focused both on institution as a whole, and on study programmes.

Last institutional evaluation took place in July 2012 and PBHE QEAP – HEIMERER was given three-year accreditation for the institution. The expert team of March 2016 agrees with the analyses and recommendations of the expert team of 2012.

### **2.1 Vision and Mission Statements, Goals**

Vision and mission statements are formulated clearly and they reflect main purpose of the institution. They are formulated with regard to students, to the professional market, and also with ambitions of the institution to play a leading role in the country.

Goals as they are formulated represent a heterogeneous set of intentions; some of them are rather generally formulated and they would benefit from further specification. Some goals are explicitly related to teaching, some others to “all activities” of the institution. Time dimension is not stated. Some indicators (how to find out the goals are met), and some instruments (which way to realize the goals) are defined, sometimes this part would benefit from more explicit formulations and interlinks to concrete goals. In general, however, vision, mission and goals as they are formulated basically cover main areas of the institutional operation, they have a potential for innovation and I find them principally appropriate. Also, they seem to be a result of internal communication within/across the institution in some

extent. As a result, vision, mission and goals can play a positive role for the institution and its development in the case of PBHE QEAP – HEIMERER.

**Recommendation:**

To elaborate more concretely and concisely the category of goals, indicators and instruments.

## **2.2 Academic Freedom**

The organizational structure of the institution seems to provide opportunities for internal communication about main aspects of the study, research and organizational development. Within this framework, a certain space for academic freedom of teaching and research seems to be potentially present. This was also repeatedly confirmed by several institution's staff members in relation to teaching as well as research. Obviously, this has its limits, though, and the division of work/tasks plays a significant role, taking into account institution's perspective, too.

This aspect seems to be developed acceptably.

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

As already mentioned, at the moment the PBHE QEAP – HEIMERER provides four bachelor and one master degree programmes.

These programmes well correspond with the mission of the institution and they relate well to the principles of employability, since all the programmes are focused on preparation of the staff in health sector where a need for the staff clearly exists, both in Kosovo, and abroad. The employment rate of the graduates is relatively high.

As it seems, the quality, range and academic aims of the curriculum are – generally – appropriate to the academic degrees awarded, and there is a correspondence to international standards.

The didactic principles used vary, there seems to be, however, an implicit overarching didactic concept that has been communicated with the teaching staff. Numerous evaluation procedures, as adopted within the institution, open a possibility to reflect upon the teaching practice and possibly improve it when needed, throughout the whole process.

The structure of curricula provides a space for independent study, reflection and analysis, and the workload seems to be well manageable by students. But to use this space for study purposes effectively, some changes are needed. In particular, there is a need for provision of accessible study literature in Albanian language and of other sources of relevant information. So far mostly the basic literature is available which is not fully satisfactory. The library needs improvement and the strategy of using the literature and other sources for independent study, too.

The allocation of ECTS requires minor changes, as indicated in the report on General Nursing programme.

In cases of some disciplines (subjects), teaching methods were stated in the Self-evaluation report somehow without differentiation, in some other cases they were very well elaborated.

The evaluation of the students work is elaborated well. In general, the examination regulations are appropriate.

Admission criteria/procedures are developed and they are close to international standards. The question is, however, how they are implemented – while the management claimed about 30 % of refused applicants at the entry, some other respondents had the impression that most secondary school leavers that are interested in studies at the institution become accepted. At the same time, the drop-out rate is very low.

The ratio of academic staff to students seems to be acceptable, but a dramatic increase of student numbers in recent two years should not continue under given staff/facilities situation.

### **Recommendations:**

To be more specific about teaching and evaluation methods in case of some subjects in the curriculum.

To improve access to study resources.

To regulate number of students enrolled.

## **2.4. Research**

Research has partly been explicitly mentioned among the strategies of development of the PBHE QEAP – HEIMERER. Within the institution's structure, the office dealing with research is established. The research focus is believed to be,

mainly, determined in communication between research office/management of the institution and the researchers. There are few research projects funded by the external bodies gained by the institution, and the PBHE QEAP – HEIMERER seems to invest some money to research development, too.

Staff members are involved in the research in a different extent. As it seems, one of the most productive links is related to existing PhD research projects of some staff (some staff members do their PhD studies abroad).

The list of publication is extensive, in a closer look there can be found prevailing texts of several (not many) authors. Professor as strong research-leaders, creating their own research schools do not function here so far. Many international research co-operation projects, as indicated in the Self-evaluation report, are rather development-driven (Tempus, for instance).

In sum, there are elements of research work and since most of the study programmes provided are of a bachelor level, one can see it acceptable. Obviously, with regard to the institution's plans more systematic approach to research development will be required in the future.

There are some attempts to include students in research on the level of master studies. Some results seem to be evident; according to some respondents, this would deserve better financial support from the side of the very institution, though.

### **Recommendations:**

To stress the importance of professors as research leaders.

To continue linking student research and staff research.

To support financially staff research and also student research.

## **2.5. International Co-operation**

The PBHE QEAP – HEIMERER is existing in a close relation with the German educational institution Heimerer GmbH. This creates a very good pre-condition for developing international dimensions of the PBHE QEAP – HEIMERE's work. And indeed, there are numerous examples of how this is becoming a reality.

To start with, this relates to the management of the institution, to the development of staff (some staff members are doing their PhD studies abroad). There are international visiting staff members, too. Partly, the international dimension can

be seen in research/development activities/project, and also it is reflected by providing some students a chance (some students pass their practical internships abroad, for instance). Besides to it, main areas of the institution's performance are being evaluated by the International Advisory Board.

All this can be seen as a good starting situation that has a potential for further development of internationalisation of all main areas of the PBHE QEAP – HEIMERE's work, but mainly of teaching and research.

**Recommendation:**

To continue in developing the internationalisation opportunities to students and to the staff.

## **2.6. Staff**

As for the staff, the Self-evaluation report did contain little different information from what we received by the KAA office, and this is why we asked the PBHE QEAP – HEIMERE to submit to us additional information on this matter. As it looks now, in case of every study programme that the institution is realising there are always as minimum 3 PhD staff members.

Staffing is always a sensitive issue but in case of this institution one can see positive elements. At the PBHE QEAP – HEIMERE staffing seems to be a strategic matter. There is an internal staff development initiative (focused on teaching skills); the research activities of the staff seem to be having a chance to develop further. And a number of internal procedures leads to a continuous improvement within the institution. In sum, main body of the staff seems to be professionally strong enough to provide the programmes offered and to develop the institution towards a desired end.

**Recommendation:**

To continue in staff development strategy with its two-fold focus: teaching and research.

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

There seem to be clear and transparent decision-making structures for governance, management and administration matters at the PBHE QEAP – HEIMERE, and this relates also to academic matters (study, research, services).

The institution provided a detailed and concrete Improvement Plan that is showing how it deals with the recommendations of the Expert Group which conducted the institutional evaluation in 2012. This plan shows a number of positive moves ahead. As already stated at early part of current report, there is a relative clear plan for the future, too, and it covers main areas of the institution's operation.

It seems these materials have a good chance to be internally communicated (see QA procedures).

These aspects seem to be developed acceptably.

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

As for financial plan, it is elaborated and it has a reach from the level of overall organisation to the level of units. It is broken down into a number of items, covering educational activities and well as research and many other areas.

The building facilities seem to be sufficient for the theoretical parts of the study programmes, maybe for some research, too. As already indicated, library should be improved and should be made also a place to study. Some rooms/equipment for practical training would benefit by supplying of better equipment and some improvements are recommended in this direction (see also evaluation of the programme General Nursing).

### **Recommendation:**

To support effectively major improvements as for the library and study sources.

## **2.9 Quality Management**

The institution seems to be stressing the management of quality and as a consequence it is well organized. Quality assurance procedures reach different levels and areas of the institution's operation and involve a number of different people from the institutions (including students). External Advisory body is also a part of it. It seems, these procedures take place regularly and their results are being worked with in further efforts to improve.

The quality assurance system seems to be well developed at the PBHE QEAP – HEIMERE.



## **Conclusion – recommendation**

**With regard to the above mentioned, I recommend to award the institutional accreditation for the period of 3 years.**

Prof. Milan Pol

## **3. Re-accreditation of Bachelor Degree Programme in General Nursing**

### **3.1. Academic Programme and Student Management**

PBHE “qeap-heimerer” was established and accredited in 2010. It was established because it is needed qualified health care providers in the field of health and nursing science, in accordance with the requirements of the health and the education system in Kosovo. PBHE “qeap-heimerer” is applying institution and nursing programme re-accreditation. Nursing program (BSc) has been re-accredited for three years in 2013. The management and academic staff clearly described why the Bachelor level nursing programme is needed and how the program would contribute to higher education in Kosovo. That is also indicated in the self-evaluation report. It is obvious that there is insufficiency of the nursing staff with bachelor degree as well as the need for upgrading their formal competencies to the degree in Bachelor of General Nursing.

#### **Structure of the Program**

The programme for Bachelor degree in General Nursing is according to the European Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2000/36/EC, with amendment 2013/55/EU). The program is divided into six semesters (each with 60 ECTS) and the duration of study is three academic years, equivalent with 180 ECTS. All courses carry ECTS points and 1 ECTS is equivalent with 30 hours. In original program it was less than 18 ECTS elective studies which is not according to European Directive and its amendment mentioned above. But after visit it was sent corrected document where elective studies are according to requirements. It is also corrected all course to carry at least 3 ECTS which is according to requirements mentioned above.

According to European Directive and Bologna process nursing program in bachelor level should has at least 4600 hours (2300 hours for clinical part/1/3 theoretical part and students' self-study). The program fulfill this requirement. European directive requires that there should be at least 50% of clinical training with direct contact with patients which means at least 2300 hours. In program clinical training hours are 2430 because 1 ECTS is equivalent with 30 hours. It is

allocated correct number of hours for clinical training, theoretical studies and students' self-study.

In Nursing programme clinical training and laboratory training has very important role. Clinical training is done across Kosovo in the primary, secondary and tertiary settings. There is 33 mentors to supervise students in clinical settings. The clinical training is organized and carried out in proper way. For laboratory training there is a small room with only two beds. During the side visit the academic staff and students express to be satisfied with that even they also express that situation is not optimal. There is 10-14 students in each group and teacher to ensure their learning during the laboratory training.

The aim of program itself is appropriate for degree of Bachelor in Nursing. Expected learning outcomes, core competences and technical skills are logically connected to aim of program. As well each courses results and learning outcomes support the aim.

The content of curriculum is good and follow the European standards. In earlier re-accreditation it was paid attention to literature and recommended to update it. At the present curriculum the literature of program is mostly very good and updated and focused in Nursing.

The lack of literature with mother language is well recognized problem and it was discussed during the side visit. The academic staff try to do their best to prepare material, to translate it and to write and publish books. They show sample of them during the side visit.

### **Recommendations:**

1. It should be seriously consider to have bigger laboratory room/rooms with more beds and mankins.
2. To carry out nursing program it is recommended to take **not more than 40 students per year**.

### **3.1. Teaching and Learning**

It is planned to use variety of teaching methods which are proper for nurses' education. It is also educated academic staff to use them. However, in the curriculum it is not mentioned those methods and as well almost all courses have as a teaching/learning methods the following: lectures, seminars, role paly, group work, oriented problem and self-reflecting on exercise. We agree that these all are very good methods for teaching and learning but we wonder if it is critically considered which are the best methods for each courses and how to use those new methods which are developed. The students pointed out to be satisfied with teaching and learning methods.

**Recommendation:**

It should be critically considered which teaching and learning methods are the best for each courses from the both perspectives teaching (teachers) and learning (students) to achieve learning outcomes.

**3.2. Staff**

There is four PhD degree candidate in nursing and two master degree candidate in nursing. All other nursing academic staff are nurses with bachelor degree. To strengthen qualification of academic staff in terms of expertise in nursing it has been made contracts with international nursing teachers who are part-time. The qualifications of academic staff is according to the European Directive which defines that education of nurses should take place chiefly under supervision of nurses. Management explained during the visit how it is and how it will be support teachers who are nurses to do their Master and PhD degree in nursing. As well teachers pointed out being satisfied with that situation. It is absolutely necessary to assure the academic staff qualifications (who has nurses background) for long term.

**Recommendation:**

At the moment the requirements of the European Directive is fulfilled which explicitly defines that education of nurses should take place chiefly under supervision of nurses. Nevertheless, academic nursing staff qualifications is still very vulnerable issue in nursing program and because of this it needs to be continuously under control.

**3.3. Research**

It has been established the Office for Research which aim is to develop and implement research programs. It has three experts from PBHE “qeap-heimerer”, and international expert and two students who is the leading team of research office. The office has close collaboration with coordinators of study programs to aim to identify the needs of research. It coordinates the research and support both quantitative and qualitative methodology which is good because there is in nursing many areas where qualitative methodology is needed. There is collaboration with many higher education institutions all over the Europe. The collaboration is focused on development of teaching and research methodology, joint study programmes, joint research programmes, the mobility of students and professors. The academic staff also participate in national and international conferences. The students pointed out that even they are involved in research and

have abstract in conference they have to get money by themselves to participate in conference.

**Recommendation:**

1. To motivate students to be active in research and to participate in conference it should have the budget for that.

### **3.4. Space and Equipment**

The School provides sufficient and proper spaces for theoretical teaching and learning. All infrastructure for theoretical part for example such as lecture rooms, computer lab and library are good. However, computer lab might need air conditioner. The students said to be satisfied with library and computer lab services. There is databases such as Medline and Chinal available which are the most important databases for nursing.

The Laboratory for Practical Training is located in one room. There is two beds with two manikins and one for emergency medicine. The number of them is very low compared with the number of students. We wonder how it is possible to train all necessary nursing skills with that number of equipment. It was argued during the site visit that there is equipment enough but the situation is not optimal.

**Recommendations:**

1. It should be seriously consider to buy more beds and manikins and to have bigger room/rooms for laboratory training to ensure the quality of laboratory training.
2. The number of students have to be adjusted according to resources as recommended earlier not more than 40 students per year.

### **3.5. Quality Management**

The school has a well-organized and defined Quality management at the institutional level. It is the system of quality control and assurance consisting of structures, procedures and activities. At the previous re-accreditation it was recommended to prepare the questionnaire to collect feedback from students. That has been done and it has been collected feedback regularly from students. The students were satisfied with that. They also pointed out that if they have some problematic issues to solve these usually are solved in good and close collaboration with academic staff.

## **Conclusion – recommendation by the Expert Panel:**

**The accreditation of the General Nursing programme (Bachelor degree) for a maximum period.**

Prof. Helvi Kyngas

Prof. Danica Zeleznik