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Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim
Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

COLLEGE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES “REZONANCA”

***Programs under evaluation:
Program of BSc in Midwifery***

ACCREDITATION Evaluation

FINAL REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

9th July, 2019



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 21st June 2019

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Prof. Danica Zeleznik – chair;*
- *Ms. Delia Gologan – Student Expert*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Avni Gashi, Acting Director of KAA*
- *Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*
- *Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-Evaluation report;*
- *The webpage of the institution;*
- *Data collected during the site visit.*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *The KAA (re)accreditation manual;*
- *The ESG in QA of HE;*
- *The international recommendations and practices.*



1.2. Site visit schedule

21st June

07.30	Meeting at KAA premises
08.00 – 08.30	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated (<i>no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion</i>)
08.30 – 10.00	Meeting with the heads of the study programmes
10.00 – 10.30	Meeting with quality assurance representatives
10.30 – 11.00	Meeting with teaching staff
11.00 – 11.40	Meeting with graduates and employers of graduates
11.40 – 12.30	Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure (<i>used for the implementation of the programme</i>)
12.30 – 13.40	Lunch break
13.40 – 14.20	Meeting with students
14.25 – 14.40	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program

1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation

According to the SER: ‘*College of Medical Sciences "Rezonanca" was established on May 12, 2003, by Dr. sc. Ramadan Idrizaj, in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Kosovo nr.2003/14. On 30.12.2008 we have joint with College "ILIRIA" as its academic units. On 07/13/2015 is accredited as College of Medical Sciences "Resonance" for the period of three years (1 October 2015-30 September 2018). According to decision no. 452 / 18D, dated 18.05.2018, the State Council of Quality (SCQ) extends the period of institutional accreditation and study programs for a period of one year (1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019).*

The College of Medical Sciences "Rezonanca" is a private higher education institution and is located at str. Gllogu te Shelgjet, Caglavica, Pristina. Tel. 038-544-754, Fax: 038-544-756. E-mail: info@rezonanca-ks.com. Web-page: www.rezonanca-ks.com.



2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

The External Expert Team (ET) has decided to present the results of the current evaluation by referring in this section to each of the standards linked to the general areas of the KAA manual. Each of them will consist of: stating the standard from the manual, one or two paragraphs presenting the current situation, the conclusion regarding the level of compliance of the program for that particular general area and then followed by recommendations.

General observation: since the external evaluation of this program was conducted in the same time with the evaluation for the reaccreditation of the Nursery BSc program, some of the aspects – those that refer more to the institutional capacity and less to the program capacity - presented here can also be found in the report of that program.

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The mission of the program proposed now is, according to the SER: *‘the advancement of knowledge and creative and scientific ideas in the field of Midwifery, in accordance with European standards. The program aims at full integration into the European Higher Education Area as well as Scientific Research in the Midwifery Field’*. This is in line with two of the three pillars of the institutional mission as it doesn’t include any reference to the Community service. When designing the program – its curricula and learning outcomes – the head of the program and her team have considered the need of bachelor level-educated midwives in Kosovo, the national legislation and European guidelines (e.g. Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament). The team has also consulted the offer of similar European programs in order to contribute to the development of professional midwives for the national and international job market.

Even through that the mission of the program has both a didactic and research overarching concept, the program focuses more on the didactic aspects of its activity.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:



- 1. Discuss with the members of the community the vision and objectives for research and elaborate a strategy and a plan to meet these objectives in short, medium and long term. This way, everybody can be motivated to join the common effort.*
- 2. Involve more students in decision making processes – for e.g. more than 1 student in the Board of the University; Also students could be involved in evaluating the ECTS allocation to disciplines because they are the best to know the workload required for them in order to successfully complete a course.*
- 3. Encourage the student union / organization to develop projects to involve students more in the improvement of the quality of the institution and their program in order for the students to function as partners in the educational process.*

2.2. Quality management

The university management is committed to the quality assurance of the institution and its programs. There is a QA structure responsible for these procedures and policies, that also includes a student. For the other programs that the institution has, all staff and students are part of the quality assurance process and are involved in a form or other of evaluation of almost all aspects of the program. So it is possible that this will also be done for this new program – the Midwifery. Therefore we present in this section the QA policies and procedures undertaken by the college for the rest of its programs.

For example: the academic staff is evaluated by the students (whose perception about the teaching process is asked at the end of each term) and their superiors. Moreover, they have the opportunity to self-evaluate and to also comment (reply) to the evaluations received from the other parties. However, since the interviews with the current staff indicated it might not be yet fully-understood or fully-in-place, we encourage the institution to intensify its efforts should to motivate them to go through this complex evaluation as part of their improvement efforts. Students also evaluate their program, the infrastructure and administrative services through surveys that collect data about their perception. When it will be the case for this program, similar surveys could be addressed to the graduates and employers.

Moreover, data about the programs and the overall activity of the university is planned to be collected and gathered by different units of the institution.

Collecting them in a centralized manner within the QA unit in order to be prepared for generating different reports regarding the status of the university and of a certain program would definitely benefit the institution. This could fundament future decision-making processes as well as could help with the writing of the self-evaluation reports. Other examples



of data that can be collected: statistics on the success rate in promoting a certain exam, number of hours spent by each academic staff on teaching-research-other activities, amount of money spent by the university on teaching materials / materials for research, costs of teaching per student, percentage of graduates who found a job within a year, student workload etc.

Until now the results of the perception surveys filled-in by the students, for the other programs offered by the institution, have not been made public, but there are plans to start to publish the Self-evaluation reports prepared for the external evaluations. However, periodical reports were presented to the management (rectorate) and discussed individually with the academic staff in order to plan for improvement – e.g. they would plan to follow some training etc.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Annually publish a report on the state of the university in relation with the key indicators decided within the university and alongside with the plan of the institution to improve and the resources planned to be allocated for these improvements to take place.*
- 2. Allocate resources (human, financial and technological) in order to centrally collect data and protect them in order to fundament evidence-based decisions. These will complement the perception surveys filled in by the stakeholders.*
- 3. Involve students in the periodical revision of the perception surveys.*
- 4. Develop and implement surveys for graduates, employers and administrative staff to fill in.*

2.3. Academic staff

The academic staff allocated for this new program planes to offer interactive problem-based teaching in order to make the program attractive to students. Theoretical lectures and practical skills laboratories are planned to be complemented by internships in both the hospital of the college and the clinical hospital in Pristina.

The academic staff are more than 19 for this program which at this point seems to cover the needs of the program and its functioning with 30 to 40 students. All of them were aware of their responsibilities and what is expected from them in terms of teaching, researching, administrative tasks and their implication in the society. For e.g. they knew that if the program is accredited they will have to allocate more time to research in order to fulfil the new



institutional requirements regarding their research activity (minimum 1 article published/year) and that will be difficult due to their main -jobs in the hospitals. However, they fill the institution could do more in the sense of building more research facilities and allocated the appropriate financial resources for this activity.

They are not yet ready to give up their jobs outside of the HE institution since this latter one cannot guarantee their jobs on the long term. We understand this context, but we think it is both risky and a pity that the institution cannot fully benefit from having the human resources they have identified.

They were promised the financial and material resources to ensure the qualitative functioning of this new program. They know they will share their offices and spaces, but they are ok with this since the working conditions are very good in general and they know the institution has future plans to improve their infrastructure. The institution also promised them to allocate funds for their participation in international conferences or exchange programs, which they believe it will definitely help them improve the program in the future.

Most of them are already involved in other study programs offered by the institution that is why they are familiar with the internal regulations. They all seem passionate and dedicated to this new program in which they believe.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Strategies for the professional development should include opportunities for developing teaching skills for all academic staff, not only the young ones.
2. The evaluation procedures of the academic staff performance should be clear and announced in advance so that they know what happens if they meet or not the standards.
3. Financial motivations could be offered to those who fulfil all their responsibilities and also meet the standards of research.

2.4. Educational process content

The Midwifery BSc program is taught in Albanian and is modelled on the qualification of midwives, therefore graduates will be able to find a job in Kosovo and abroad fast after graduation. The program is in compliance with the national legislation and the European Unions' recommendations, as well as the NQF and EQF.



The disciplines have analytical syllabuses that meet the minimum criteria. According to the SER seven of the learning outcomes of the program are:

- *‘Demonstrate the independent management of primary health screening and health promotion of women from peri-menarcheal through post-menopausal periods.*
- *Demonstrate the independent management of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum period.*
- *Demonstrate the independent management of the well-born during the first 28 days of life.*
- *Evaluate, use, interpret, and collaborate in research.*
- *Demonstrate professional accountability through collaborative communication in the provision of midwifery care to women and their families.*
- *Demonstrate understanding of the concepts of health care principles and familiarity with the Ministry of Health and Nursing Chamber of Kosovo.*
- *Demonstrate critical thinking and clinical judgment in the practice of clinical midwifery.*
- *Apply interpersonal and communication skills to care for diverse populations of women and their families’.*

Learning outcomes are going to be explained to students in the beginning of the course. The teachers intend to try to create interactive classes in order to motivate their students to learn. In order to reach this desiderate, the institution has invested in high-tech modern equipment that simulates working with patients so that students develop their practical skills before starting their contact hours with patients – and more investments are plan to meet the needs of the Midwifery program.

The head of the program plans to invite professionals or international teachers as guest lectures.

The allocation of ECTS credits to disciplines could be reviewed with the students in order to assess the real workload needed to successfully graduate from a discipline. Now, there seems to be an imbalance in credit allocation as in the sixth semester even though the work on the bachelor thesis has 6 ECTS allocated as part of the 30 ECTS of the semester. Students from other programs with similar structures don’t manage to finish it. This indicates that either they need more than 180 hours to complete this task (6 ECTS * 30 hours/credit) thus needing more credits for this, or the credits allocated to the other disciplines of the semester don’t reflect the real workload. The head of the program and her team could consider watching this and planning in advance to overcome or counter-act potential risks associated with this.



Knowing that other programs offered by the college, with similar structures, only enable students to receive their themes / titles for their final papers in the beginning of the sixth semester – when they are already stressed with final exams and clinical work, and thus leading them to finishing their studies late, the ET recommends the allocation of the subjects to be done earlier, so that the students have at least a full semester to prepare for their papers. Alternatively, the institution could consider allocating the themes in the beginning of the third study year so that students have 2 semesters to work on the thesis. This could help them finish in July or September and enrol for a Masters' program or find a job.

Even if the program is offered in Albanian, institutional efforts are made in order to help students to develop English-language competencies and even develop their competencies in other languages – e.g. German. For this they have one English discipline planned for the 1st year 1 sem. II. Moreover, learning materials will always provided in English too – especially as they are more accessible than those in Albanian.

As far as the assessment is concerned, the SER mentions at page 130: *'The Assessment Policy and Procedures of Examination Board specifies the procedures and actions to be taken to address situations where student achievement standards are inappropriate or unequal'*. **SER, page 130:** *'For students with unsatisfactory performance, according to the Assessment Policy and Procedures, it is foreseen the implementation of the improvement program, which includes: allowing additional classes, organizing examinations, organizing additional collocations and applying the Remediation Program'*. These institutional regulations will also apply to the Midwifery program.

Otherwise, written exams will be organized on the computer in order to ensure they are objective and the oral exams will have a grading scale – just like in the cases of the other programs offered by the college. After the exam, the teacher plans to organize individual and group meetings to discuss the results and the process with the students. The latter can either refuse the grade or appeal against it to the vice-rector – in most of the cases, the students reported that appeals are solved in favour of the student.

Moreover, the institution plans to offer mobility opportunities to its students and academic staff though Erasmus+ projects, but also through the cooperations established within the Alma Mater group. Increasing the number of these opportunities would also be appreciated by students.

Compliance level: Fully compliant



ET recommendations:

2.5. Students

The Program has a clear admittance procedure that will be organize during the autumn if the program is accredited. It verifies that potential students have graduated from high-school and have passed the Matura exam and includes a written exam announced in advanced.

The head of the program proposes to enrol up to 60 students in the first year, but the expert team believes that in the beginning until the full-development of study materials and acquisition of learning materials, this number is too high – not correlated with the capacity.

The programs' disciplines propose several ways of assessment of student progress during the semester which will create the context for offering students feedback. The ET recommends the college to encourage their teachers to use these opportunities and give individual feedback to students by building with each one of them plans of getting closer of meeting the learning outcomes.

The college has an internal online platform where teachers will share learning materials with their students and the grades will be recorded.

Though the college has no acquired software for checking for plagiarisms, the academic staff – who is responsible for monitoring students' work in order to prevent it from happening – offers guidance to students on their work for the final thesis in order to prevent plagiarism to occur. The ET recommends the college to make sure that the Code of Ethics includes provisions about plagiarisms and the potential risks / punishments proposed for those who violate the code by attempting plagiarism.

Academic staff will be available for consultations according to the internal regulations of the institution. Especially in the beginning of the program, the ET recommends the academic staff to encourage their students to attend the consultations hours.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The college could consider organizing contact hours with patients in such a way that the patient – who is anyway suffering – is protected from any inconvenience. The ideal would be that only one student and the mentor (a senior nurse/ medical professional) enter in contact with the patient at a time.*
- 2. The teacher could also help students identify strategies on how to improve their progress in meeting their learning outcomes.*



- 3. The QA Unit as well as the heads of the program should have access to centralised data about the program, but also about other programs to be able to compare their quality among the programs and to aim for constant improvement.*
- 4. Making the appeal procedure clear to everyone and more close to the students – for e.g. they could appeal at a program coordinator instead of going to the vicerector with this.*

2.6. Research

The program has both a didactic and a research component, but being proposed for a first time there is no previous records of research activity within the program. Nevertheless, the academic staff allocated for this program have conducted research previously including in the field of midwifery.

Both the college management and the head of the program have manifested their intention to intensify the activity and efforts in regard of the research and the academic staff have joined this endeavour. Therefore, starting from the autumn, more funds will be allocated to research and teachers will be expected to publish at least one paper per year.

The ET recommends the academic unit to monitor the research activity of its academic staff and support their efforts. Establishing a research strategy at the level of the institution or the academic unit, can help concentrate the scarce resources available in strategic directions. Moreover institutional support could be offered (optionally) to those academic staff members who intend to obtain alternative funding for research - e.g. from European funds, from the business sector etc.

In order to motivate teachers to intensify their research activity and reach the desired outcomes, the college could consider to financially recompensate those with high performances in the research field – as a result of the annual evaluation of this component of the program.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Include in the promotion criteria indicators regarding the research activity or financially motivate academic staff to dedicate more time to research – for e.g. by giving up their second full-time job in favour of a second part-time job.*



2. *Consider publishing collective scientific monographies in Albanian which should also count as part of the research-related responsibilities as it provides essential teaching and learning materials;*
3. *Financially motivate academic staff to obtain results in the field of research – especially that in order to do so they might need to develop new skills.*
4. *Involve students in research projects;*
5. *Offer institutional support for attracting external funds for research either by proposing research activities of interest for the business sector or by applying for external funding of research projects.*

2.7 Infrastructure and resources

The college has invested a lot in the previous years both in infrastructure and in learning resources. The program will share the building with other similar programs but with the right planning the ET is confident that they will have enough spaces to conduct the learning process. The building they will have access to has both lecture rooms and skills labs. The latter are equipped with modern equipments that permit simulations of the procedures so that future students will be able to gain some practical experience before having contact with real patients. The lecture rooms have videoprojectors and white screens for projection.

The building also has a library with a few reading spaces and several computer rooms which are used both for computer-science classes but also for exam-sessions as most of the written exams are on the computer.

The college has plans to develop another campus with bigger buildings that will also comprise dormitories for students and research laboratories. For now, the current building that the program will use also has some, but not enough, research facilities.

The college is not so big so taking this into account, the management has decided to keep a centralized budget. This has the disadvantage that the head of the newly proposed program did not know the budget that the program will have for the first year of functioning nor could evaluate its potential expenses. However, the program benefits from the support of the college management and was promised the financial resources for the initial investment in learning materials if the program is accredited.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant



ET recommendations:

1. *Since the financial resources don't allow the library to buy textbooks for all students, their reading or buying them themselves should not be mandatory. We recommend that teachers continue their efforts of providing students with study materials and encourage them to use the electronic library to access recent research articles from the platform that the library has joined.*
2. *The library and the academic staff should encourage students to access more frequently the EBSCO databases.*
3. *Organizing an alumni structure could help the program attract extra-resources from its graduates.*

6. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program Midwifery BSc offered by Rezonanca College is *Substantially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *to accredit* the study program for a duration of 3 years with a number of 40 students to be enrolled in the program.

1. APPENDICES (if available): NA

Expert Team

Chair

Prof. Dr. Danica Zeleznik

9th July, 2019

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member

Delia Gologan

9th July, 2019

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

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