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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

COLLEGE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES “REZONANCA”

Program of BSc in Nursing

REACCREDITATION 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. dr. Danica Železnik – 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.

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.

According to the SER, page 127: *‘The mission of the program BSc of Nursing is: The program enables the advancement of knowledge and creative and scientific ideas in the field of nursing, in accordance with European standards. The program aims at full integration into the European Higher Education Area as well as Scientific Research in the Nursing Field’,* while the mission of the institution ‘includes three main pillars: **teaching, research and community service**’ (SER, p. 9). Therefore the mission of the study program is in compliance with only two of the three pillars of the overall mission statement of the institution.

Standard 1.2. Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

SER, p. 125: *Because the Nursing program leading to degrees Bachelor of Sciences in Nursing, which is regulated professions, the College accepts the recommendations of professional organizations that govern their licensing, such is Central Board for Registration and Licensing of Health Professions in Ministry of Health when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.*

Moreover, the interviews indicated that the program is constructed in compliance with the European Directives 2005/36/EC and 2013/ 55/EU of the European Committee for the medical professions , which is not mentioned in the presented program. The program also following

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the model of other established similar programs. Moreover the advice of the Central Board for Registration and Licensing of Health Professions in Ministry of Health was sought before designing this programs' outcomes.

Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.

The study program has been built on an overarching didactic and research concept, thus aims to both ensure high quality education and undergo scientific research in the field. The focus on educations seems to have been, so far, more emphasized than the one on research. However, due to the management commitment to the institutional research objectives, things seem to change towards putting more efforts and more resources towards research – for e.g. starting with the next academic year the academic staff is required to have at least one publication per year.

Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.

SER, p. 128 states that the College has developed and adopted '*the College Statute, the Rules of Study, the Regulation of Academies of Units*', as well as a Code of Ethics. All of them are published on the university website <https://rezonanca-rks.com/rregulloret-e-kolegjit/>¹.

Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.

The SER, p. 128 states that all staff and students comply with the internal regulations and thus with the Code of Ethics. It was developed by the Steering Committee after the recommendations of the Senate and it includes the measures to be taken against those who violate it – e.g. the termination of the contract of the academic staff that violates it or suspension for students who cheat in exams. It also includes elements about academic freedom, students' right to appeal etc.

Standard 1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.

¹ Last checked on June 2019;



The SER mentioned that all policies and internal regulations are reviewed periodically, but without referring to any decision regarding the periodicity of these reviews.

Recommendation: please consider reviewing the internal regulations every two years, based on the collected data about their implementation. Involve students in this process

Compliance level: Fully 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

Standards linked to this general area:

Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.

Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.

Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.

Standard 2.4. Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.

Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.

Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available



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Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.

Standard 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.

Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.

Short presentation of the current status:

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. 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. 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 teachers were not able to give too many details about this process, this might not be yet fully-understood or fully-in-place and efforts should be put 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. However, similar surveys could be addressed to the graduates and employers.

Evaluations follow the key performance indicators decided at the level of the university (SER, page 129) and intend to check if they are met and support the permanent improvement of the university and program. According to the SER, page 132: *‘Academic staff is assessed on the basis of performance requirements for the staff of teachers and researchers. The criteria and processes for assessing the performance of teachers are specified in the document “Academic Staff Performance and Assessment” according to these criteria: Teacher Activity, Researcher Activity, Engagement in international cooperation, Administrative and Governance Activity, Community Services’.*

Moreover, data about the programs and the overall activity of the university is collected and gathered by different units of the university as proved by the SER: *‘Course completion, program progression and completion rates, and student course and program evaluations, are retained in records in a file form that can be readily accessed by the department and college,*



and analysed centrally with summaries and comparative data distributed automatically to departments, colleges, senior administrators and relevant committees at least once each year. According to the strategic plan 2019-2023, it is planned to merge all data on a central base accessible at any time’.

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 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



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Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.

Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.

Standard 3.3. Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.

Standard 3.4. At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.

Standard 3.5. For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.

Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.

Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.

Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through selfevaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.

Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.

Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.

Presentation of the current status:

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The majority of the academic staff of the program is full-time dedicated to the program, thus working 4h/days in the afternoon and during Saturdays as they all have another full-time job (for e.g. in the hospital). They comply with the national legislation concerning the occupation of teaching positions in this field and were provided from the moment of signing of their contract with a description of what they are required. However, in time these requirements have increased alongside with the quality standards of the institution – for e.g. starting from the next academic year academic staff will be required to undergo consistent research work and publish their results in internationally recognizable journals. We praise the efforts of the college management to motivate their academic staff to comply with these requirements as well as the motivation and passion of the academic staff proved in relationship with this program.

The institution has a professional development plan for its academic staff and provides training opportunities for them. For example at the beginning of this academic year they received training for using the e-platform and the EBSCO online libraries. Moreover, as part of this plan, the institution is supporting its staff to take up PhD programmes, thus there are five of them who are now PhD candidates and other three who are preparing to enrol in such a program outside of Kosovo in the next academic year. Supplementary, the teachers now that if they applied for funds to go to conferences abroad they always receive the financial support they need.

Academic staff is expected to fulfil their teaching responsibilities, offer consultation hours to students, fulfil administrative tasks and undergo research. There is no mention of any expectation of them to be involved in community service provision. However, most of them work in hospitals, thus doing so.

Upon retirement, teachers withdraw from the activity.

Given that most of the members of the community admit there is a shortage of the learning materials available in Albanian, many academic staff are involved in preparing and constantly improving them;

Compliance level: Fully 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

Standard 4.1. The study program is modelled on **qualification objectives**. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.

Standard 4.2. The study program **complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area**. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.

Standard 4.3. **The disciplines** within the curriculum are provided in a **logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies**, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. **To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.**

Standard 4.4. **The disciplines** within the curriculum **have analytical syllabuses** which comprise at least the following:

1. **the discipline's objectives,**
2. **the basic thematic content, learning outcomes,**
3. **the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities,**
4. **students' assessment system,**
5. **the minimal bibliography, etc.**

The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.

Standard 4.5. If the language of instruction is **other than Albanian**, **actions** are taken to **ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff** are adequate for instruction



in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.

Standard 4.6. The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. **Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students** from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.

Standard 4.7. **Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes** programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with **flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.**

Standard 4.8. **Student assessment** mechanisms are conducted **fairly and objectively**, are **appropriate for the different forms of learning** sought and are **clearly communicated** to students at the beginning of courses.

Standard 4.9. Appropriate, valid and reliable **mechanisms** are used **for verifying standards of student achievement.** The standard of work required for different grades is **consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.**

Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include **actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.**

Standard 4.11. If the study program includes **practice stages**, the **intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes** are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages **are allocated ETCS credits** and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is **monitored through activity reports**; students during practice stages have **assigned tutors** among the academic staff in the study program.

Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs **cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.**

*To be inserted the overview of the program (with all areas to be filled out).



The Nursery BSc program is taught in Albanian and is modelled on the qualification of nurse, 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:

- *'understanding of the key concepts of the disciplines that underpin the education and training of all health care professionals, and detailed knowledge of some of these. The latter would include a broad understanding of:*
- *the structure and function of the human body, together with a knowledge of dysfunction and pathology;*
- *health and social care philosophy and policy, and its translation into ethical and evidenced based practice;*
- *the relevance of the social and psychological sciences to health and healthcare;*
- *the role of health care practitioners in the promotion of health and health education;*
- *the legislation and professional and statutory codes of conduct that affect health and social care practice.*
- *demonstrate an ability to gather and evaluate evidence and information from a wide range of sources;*
- *an ability to use methods of enquiry to collect and interpret data in order to provide information that would inform or benefit practice.*
- *Problem solving'*

Learning outcomes are explained to students in the beginning of the course and they feel they could make any suggestion about what they would like to study more or different and their request would be met with openness from the teachers. The latter 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. The ET could not find much evidence about adapting teaching strategies to the learning needs of the students, with the exception of the support offered to the student with dyslexia that successfully graduated from the program last year. Moreover, graduates suggested that the program could improve if more interactive teaching methods would be put in place. Inviting professionals or international teachers as guest lectures could help with this.



The flow of the disciplines could be reviewed in order to ensure they are offered in a logical sequence – for e.g. ‘Nursing in the intensive care unit’ could follow ‘Surgical Nursing with Surgery’ not come before. Moreover, 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 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.

Another aspect linked to the Bachelor thesis is that its planning is too late in the syllabus as students only receive their themes in the beginning of the sixth semester – when they are already stressed with final exams and clinical work. 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 two English-disciplines (out of which one is general and the other deals with specific medical terms). Moreover, learning materials are 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*’. As mentioned previously, there was a case of a student with dyslexia who benefited from this flexibility in order to successfully complete his/her studies.

Otherwise, written exams are organized on the computer in order to ensure they are objective and the oral exams have a grading scale. After the exam, the teacher organizes 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 through 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:

1. *Plan the work on the masters' thesis should that students have one year to prepare it;*
2. *In order to prevent plagiarism a software can be acquired and feedback should be offered on the way in order to ensure their quality. Moreover a public defence of the thesis could be organized and than the thesis should become publicly available (for e.g. within the library).*
3. **Eliminate attendance from the marking (grading) system of the courses** Reason: the evaluation (student assessment) should measure whether the student has developed the abilities and competencies as described in the learning outcomes, and 'attendance' is not one of these competencies.
4. *Both teaching strategies and assessment methods should be adapted to the needs of the students, therefore periodical review of these elements can be considered.*

2.5. Students

Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.

Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.

Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.

Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.

Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.



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Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.

Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.

Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.

Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.

Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.

Standard 5.11. Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.

The program has a clear and formally adopted admission procedure that includes verifying that the candidate has graduated from highschool and successfully promoted the Matura Exam and a written exam. In Kosovo there is still need for nurses and therefore the program enrolls annually approximately 100 students who than are divided in smaller groups of 6, 12 or 18 for the practical stages – only 6 groups and their mentor enter in contact with the patient. This grouping method helps the quality of the teaching-learning process as it allows students to directly individually participate in simulations and practical experiments. Feedback is offered to the students on the go during the practical stages as well as after the exam. Before the exams teachers offer group consultations making summaries of what is most difficult to prepare for the exam and students can also go for individual consultations during the consultations hours that the teacher offer obligatory (according to their contractual responsibilities).

The results obtained by the students are entered and visible to them through the e-platform. Data about the student completion rates are among the quality indicators followed by the university.

Students with special needs benefit of flexibility in order to successfully complete their studies - SER, page 130: *'The evaluation procedures take into account special circumstances of certain groups of students (modifying examination procedures to suit e.g. students with disabilities), while at the same time ensuring the achievement of intended learning outcomes'*.

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Even though the college has no specific software for checking for plagiarism efforts are done to monitor students work as mentors (teachers) are responsible to check this out. Moreover students are thought research methodologies and how to correctly cite a paper they refer to in their work as a prevention method against plagiarism. However, two case were identified by teachers before they reached the moment of public defence, and those two were asked to write new papers.

Students rights and responsibilities are published on the website of the college and also explained to the students in the first weeks of their studies. They include the right to appeal against grades that they believe were not given fairly or in an objective measure. However, students told the ET that they have to go to the Vicerector to appeal against their grades which seems rather difficult and discouraging.

According to the SER: *'Student transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is governed by the Statute and the Rules of College Studies (chapter: Transfers)'*.

Compliance level: Fully 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

Standard 6.1. The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the



research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.

Standard 6.2. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.

Standard 6.3. Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.

Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.

Standard 6.5. The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.

Standard 6.6. Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.

Standard 6.7. Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.

Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff.

Standard 6.8. Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.

Standard 6.9. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.

Standard 6.10. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.

According to the SER: ` The development of research activities in the Nursing Program follows the objectives set out in the College's strategic plan 2019-2023`. Until now research was not as much in the focus of the academic staff as much as teaching and developing strong study programs. Therefore, academics did not allocate enough time, research did not receive enough financial resources and thus academics publication activity fluctuated during the last three



years. According to the SER: *‘The academic staff of Nursing, for the period 2016-2018, has realized 14 publications, from which 4 publications in scientific journals, and 10 Abstract of works presented at scientific meetings. The average number of publications was 2.5 publications per academic staff. The smallest number of publications was during 2017, with an average of 0.7 publications per academic staff’*. However, the management of the college is committed to change this in the near future and has adopted a decision imposing each academic to have at least a publication per year, in an internationally recognized journal. This expectation of the academic staff was very clear for all of them and they were all aware of this increase in demands regarding their research activities, and thus the need to prioritize research more starting from autumn. Their efforts in these fields are supported by the institution who has helped several academic staff of the program to enrol in PhD programs abroad and follow them, and offers financial support to any of the academic staff who intends to participate in an international conference. Two such events were also organized by the academic unit on the topics Nursing Symposium: “Educate, Promote, and Maintain Population Health” and 5 Day Nursing Training: Advanced Course on Palliative Care, conducted by Hungarian trainers licensed by "ELNEC".

Academic staff is encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and to involve students in common research projects. At the moment of the external evaluation there was such a project including both students and teachers.

The ET is nevertheless concerned with the overload of the academic staff as most of them work full-time in the hospital or other jobs (aprox. 8h/day) and are also considered full-time staff in the Nursing BSc program. This is praisable - even though in the college they spend less than 40h/week so their job would rather be classified as part-time, it is very important for the development of the academic community and institution that they are part of. However, it also raises concerns regarding the workload and the potential imminent exhaustion of some of the teachers – especially with the new higher, more stricter, research standards.

Compliance level: Substantially 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;*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.

Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.

Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years:

- a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;
- b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;
- c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence;
- d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.

Standard 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.

Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:

- a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;
- b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;



c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years;

d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for;

e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.

Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.

The institution has several campuses and also a private hospital in which students benefit of the opportunity to undergo their practical stages. The lecture rooms and skills laboratories allocated to the Nursing BSc program are modern and comfortable and are equipped with last-minute technologies that support the learning process - e.g. simulators for different types of procedures specific to the nursing activity, as well as videoprojectors. There are also two computer labs that the students can use for accessing the online libraries, but are also used for the examination of the students (all written exams are taken on computer). The library does not have enough Albanian books, but it is nice and comfortable offering around 30 reading spaces. The finances of the institutions are organized in a centralized way, therefore the head of the program does not know what is the amount of money they will receive next year, nor for the next three years, but the Nursing BSc program benefits of the support of the Rectorate who has promised to fund this program in the future too.

The program has a consistent income from student fees, that are equal to 1000 euro/year. However, students don't receive scholarships, only some special disadvantaged students receive financial support.

According to the SER, page 130: *'In the case of students with disabilities, access to teaching materials and the organization and adaptation of exams must comply with specific rules, which depend on the type of disability. The same academic criteria are applied to these students as to all other students, but the teaching and examination methods are adapted to them if necessary. For example, students with learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dysgraphia, or dyscalculia) can receive adapted learning materials and take written exams'*. However, the infrastructure is not adequate to a potential student with physical disabilities.



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Kosovo Accreditation Agency

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.*

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program BSc Nursing offered by REZONANCE College is *Fully compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *to accredit* the study program for a duration of *5 years* with a number of *100* students to be enrolled in the program.



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Kosovo Accreditation Agency

Expert Team

Chair

	Prof. dr. Danica Železnik	9.7.2019
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	<i>Ms. Delia Gologan</i>	9.7.2019
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member
