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## ***COLLEGE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES “REZONANCA”***

*Programme: Biochemistry Laboratory (BSc)*

### ***REACCREDITATION***

### **REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*Slovenj Gradec, 19 of Yune, 2019*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit: 5 of Jun 2019**

**Expert Team (ET) members:**

- Prof. Dr. Melita Kovačević, University of Zagreb, Croatia
- Prof. Dr. Danica Železnik, Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia
- Prof. Dr. Prof. Dr. Zdravko Lacković, University of Zagreb, Croatia
- Adrian Tudor Stan student

**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
- Meeting with the Management of Faculty and extensive discussion between the responsibility persons of program and the expert team, and representatives of KAA
- The Code of good practice and guidelines for site-visit, provided by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency
- Site-visit of the facilities and equipment
- On-site visit 20 of May 2019 and discussion and observations during that visit

**Criteria used for program evaluation:**

- Health legislation in Kosovo



## 1.2. Site visit schedule

<b>08.40</b>	Meeting at the reception of the hotel and Meeting at KAA premises
<b>09.00 – 10.30</b>	Meeting with the management of the institution
<b>10.40 – 11.30</b>	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative services
<b>11.30 – 12.30</b>	Meeting with the heads of study programs
<b>12.30 – 13.30</b>	Lunch break
<b>13.40 – 14.30</b>	Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure
<b>14.30 – 15.20</b>	Meeting with teaching staff
<b>15.20 – 16.00</b>	Meeting with students
<b>16.00 – 16.40</b>	Meeting with graduates
<b>16.40 – 17.20</b>	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders
<b>17.20 – 17.30</b>	Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA
<b>17.30 – 17.45</b>	Closing meeting with the management of the institution

During the visit the experts discussed their impressions of the self-evaluation report. It was allocated of responsibilities within the expert team in a following way: Prof. dr. Melita Kovačević and Adrian Tudor Stan was responsabilited of Institutional Reaccreditation, Prof. dr. Zdravko Lacković was responsabilited of Pharmacy /MSc program, Prof. dr. Danica Železnik was responsabilited of *Diagnostic Radiology/BSc* program and *Biochemistry Laboratory/BSc* program. All professors met and discussed with heads of study programs. Expert team (ET) was involved in discussion with the management group of the institutions, the head of the study programme, quality assurance representatives and administrative staff, and stakeholder. Prof. dr. Melita Kovačević was chair of expert team. All members of the expert team agreed to conduct their work during the on-site visit together divided those responsibilities according to KAA's invitation. All work was done in close co-operation.



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

College of Medical Sciences “Rezonanca” was established in 2003. 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. The College of Medical Sciences "Rezonanca" offers bachelor studies in BSc Biochemistry Laboratory, BSc in Community Pharmacy, BSc in Physiotherapy, BSc in Nursing, BSc Sanitary Medicine, BSc in Diagnostic Radiology, Integrated Dentistry Program (300 ECTS Dr.stom.), and two master programs: MSc in Pharmacy and MSc in Nursing. The College of Medical Sciences “Rezonanca” offers high-level studies only for medical fields for the population of Kosovo. The College has a mission to organize university studies, based on European standards for higher education, professional and scientific research standards, which will contribute to overall regional development, as a precondition for equalizing with the developed area of Europe. The college currently has 1441 students of which 84 in the BSc Biomedical Laboratory program.

The programme of the Biochemistry Laboratory (BSc) well correspondent with the mission of the institution and it relates well to the principles of employability. Program is focused on preparation of the staff in health sector where a need for the staff clearly exists, both in Kosovo, and abroad.

## **2. PROGRAM EVALUATION**

### **2.1. Mission, objectives and administration**

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. The mission of the study programme *Biochemistry Laboratory BSc* are in line with the mission and strategic goals of the College of Medical Sciences



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“Rezonanca”. The program enables the advancement of knowledge and creative and scientific ideas in the field of Biochemistry Laboratory in accordance with European standards. The program aims at full integration into the European Higher Education Area as well as Scientific Research in the Biochemistry Laboratory field.

The purpose of study program is to satisfy the needs of public and private health institutions. The program aims at achieving sufficient knowledge and skills for the independent exercise of the Biochemistry Laboratory BSc profession responsible for primary, secondary and tertiary health care in Kosovo. Learning outcomes are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The intended learning outcomes clearly reflect the competencies required for employment, continuing education or other individual/society needs.

The study program Biochemistry Laboratory BSc has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.

The College of Medical Sciences “Rezonanca” guarantees the availability of the teaching, administrative and technical personnel needed to meet the goals and requirements of the study program. The essence of didactic and research concepts is to develop competencies in students using a student-centered approach. In the program are used various of didactic methods, which was said at the visit. Various teaching methods are used that encourage interactive and research-based learning, problem solving and creative and critical thinking, for example, individual and group projects, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, field work and other interactive methods.

Procedural and academic issues in the College of Medical Sciences “Rezonanca” are regulated by formal policies, guidelines and regulations, such as the Statute, the Rules of Study, the Regulation of Academies of Units, etc. All regulations and guidelines relating to procedural or academic matters in the College are made public for all staff and students on the College's website. All participants in the visit are familiar with this and according to their statements, they are all taken into account.

Teachers, associates, staff and students are obliged to comply with the provisions of the Code of Professional Ethics and Conduct at the basic ethical principles of the Code.

The College of Medical Sciences “Rezonanca” has been included in the Framework for Evaluation of Academic Programs, within the Quality Assurance Policies Framework, while the minimum review period is set to be every three years.



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The programme learning outcomes, content and teaching methods are designed on the basis of Kosovo Qualification Framework and modelled on the good practice suggested by the European Society of Biochemistry.

The Mission of the program Biochemistry Laboratory is to implement a European high-quality curriculum with qualified teachers and contemporary methodologies that enable the achievement of European standards for education of future health professionals by linking learning with research through the outcome of measurable and of quality knowledge skills and competences.

The expert team believes that the Mission Statement is satisfactory and acceptable. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of institution.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:** NO

## 2.2. Quality management

Based on the requirements of the Office of Quality Assurance, all College staff participates in personal assessments and is part of the reporting and quality improvement processes in learning and learning. 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”.

In the financial plan, the College of Medical Sciences “Rezonanca” has planned the allocation of some financial resources - 20.000 euros for the normal functioning allocated for the development of a new quality management system and the training of staff responsible for this process. The quality assurance processes are designed to enhance service and programme delivery and include: review of quality procedures, governance, teaching and research at the Faculty, student admission, progression and graduation, staff selection, recruitment and development, student support services, physical infrastructure and equipment and public information.

Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes. Survey data is collected by first year students, graduate students and college students. The student evaluation reports of 2018 are published on the College of Medical Sciences “Rezonanca” website.



During the site-visit in the meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders the participants emphasized that they want to employ graduates from “College of Medical Sciences “Rezonanca” because the quality of education and graduated competence. As well, the graduates presented the same argument keeping the quality of education very high and that gives to them chance to get job after graduation.

Quality management face all standard specified in the KAA accreditation manual.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:** NO

### 2.3. Academic staff

The selection of academic staff is done in a transparent way, based on the public competition, which is published by the College Senate. It was clearly indicated in the self-evaluation report on the table (according to standards of KAA accreditation manual) the name of academic staff, full time or part-time contract, academic title, qualifications, duration of contract and labour load. These all fulfill the standard specified by KAA accreditation manual. At the “College of Medical Sciences “Rezonanca” staff 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. Information and way they were presented in the SER were mainly meeting all the criterias specified in the KAA Accreditation manual. Some relevant additional information were also provided after the site visit.

Staff are competent and professional. The program also includes younger teachers of higher education, which is very good. On the visit they say that intergenerational cooperation is very good.

Teaching staff are appropriately qualified and experienced for their particular teaching responsibilities and, according to the meetings conducted by the ET, they use teaching strategies suitable for the different kinds of learning outcomes. In the future, the number of graduates of with an academic background should be strengthened. Addition to qualifications of academic staff there is enough full time teachers, with medical education, work load is divided in proper way, the work contracts are according to standard and responsibility of staff is presented well and according to standards. 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.

From the table to the SER and from the conversations with the head of the program Biochemistry Laboratory were informed about candidates for employment and collaboration in program. The staff group is highly academic. The academic staff is qualified with a Master's and Doctor's degree in science, and specialization for clinical courses, as well as with academic degree.

From the table to the SER (the table is in Albanian, it should be translated into English) there are 40 teachers with valid contracts by year 2021. The programme teaching staff is mainly full-time (academic staff with PhD (FTE) /are 20; academic staff with MSc degree (FTE) /are 10; number of Assistant (FTE) are 10. Number of part time teaching staff are 21, and the number of students are 84. For each group of students (defined by the statute of the College) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the BSc in Biochemistry Laboratory program, has employed at least one full time full-time teacher with a PhD degree in medical science.

Basic from SER the College of Medical Sciences “Rezonanca” has met the minimum requirements specified in the Administrative Instruction on Accreditation. The list of staff, their employment status and their qualifications have been approved by the National Quality Council.

According to self-evaluation report and discussion with academic staff was also emphasized that College of Medical Sciences “Rezonanca” offers continuous professional development opportunities according to development plan including among others, to improve teachers pedagogical competences and as well as support to do research and learn more methodology. Academic staff fulfill all standards indicated by KAA accreditation manual.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. In the future it should be assured to have more permanent staff of Biochemistry Laboratory with PhD degree.*
- 2. To continue in staff development strategy with its two-fold focus: teaching and research.*

#### **2.4. Educational process content**

The study program in Biochemistry Laboratory BSc is in compliance with the National Qualifications Framework and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher



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Education Area. The curriculums fulfil all standards presented in KAA accreditation manual. The program has analytical syllabuses according to standards. 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 the international standards.

An academic year corresponds to 60 points of ECTS credits. An academic year has 1800 lessons. The program is in compliance with Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Committee for Health Professions. As such, the program is comparable to the programs of the European Union countries. The program is designed in accordance with the Bologna Process, the first cycle of higher professional education, level 6 under the NQF / KEC (EQF). The individual components of the program are combined in a best way to achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.

The program BSc in Biochemistry Laboratory is divided into six semesters (each with 30 ECTS) and the duration of study is three academic years, equivalent with 180 ECTS. All courses carrying ECTS points and 1 ECTS is equivalent with 30 hours. There is proper number of ECTS of elective studies according to the European Directive and its amendment mentioned above. The structure of curriculum provides a space for independent study, reflections and analysis, and the workload seems to be well manageable by students. Curriculum is written comprehensible. Learning outcomes and core competences are logically connected to aim of the program.

The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise the following: Course Objectives; Course Content; Learning Outcomes of the Course; *Intellectual skills*; *Professional practical skills*; *Transferable skills*; *Attitudes and behaviour*; Distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities; Resources; Evaluation System; and ECTS – student workload.

Teaching at the College of Medical Sciences “Rezonanca” is conducted only in Albanian. If the language of the student is different from the one in Albanian, a training course for Albanian language is organized prior to the start of the study, the head of the program told us about the visit.

Student-teacher relationship are on a level of full-scale teaching where each one takes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students within the lectures and exercises. Teaching and assessment strategies are appropriate for the BSc Biochemistry Laboratory program and enable achievement of intended learning outcomes. Teaching and evaluation strategies are followed with flexibility to

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meet the needs of different student groups. Assessment in all forms of learning is based on predetermined criteria that are consistent with the student's expected results.

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. Student numerical grading is based on a national scale from 5-10 and harmonised with ECTS. Student numerical grading is based on a national scale from 5-10 and harmonised with ECTS.

The BSc in Biochemistry Laboratory program also includes internships in clinical settings. Expected student learning outcomes are clearly specified. Clinical practical work has been set up with adequate ECTS credits and the work of students in practical training organizations is monitored by clinical mentors and is evidenced in Clinical Practice Logbooks. To facilitate the stages of the internship, the College has signed a cooperation agreement with the University Clinical Center of Kosovo.

The program is divided into six semesters (each with 30 ECTS) and the duration of study is three academic years, equivalent with 180 ECTS. All courses carrying ECTS points and 1 ECTS is equivalent with 30 hours. There is proper number of ECTS of elective studies according to the European Directive and its amendment mentioned above. The structure of curriculum provides a space for independent study, reflections and analysis, and the workload seems to be well manageable by students. Curriculum is written comprehensible. Learning outcomes and core competences are logically connected to aim of the program. All courses carrying at least 3 ECTS.

The curriculum consists 31 obligatory subjects, the program also offers 9 elective subjects, and a bachelor thesis. Under the curriculum table, a legend must be written. In the content of the Curriculum there should also be presented an individual student's work.

The syllabuses of the study programmes present a short description of the course, the learning outcomes, curriculum, evaluation methods, student workload, ECTS number etc.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1.) *Under the curriculum table, a legend must be written.*
- 2.) *In the content of the Curriculum there should also be presented an individual student's work.*



## 2.5. Students

There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at the institutions and in program Biochemistry Laboratory BSc is followed that procedure. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students. All students who are interested in studying at the BSc level Biochemistry Laboratory et College of medical sciences “Rezonanca” before the enrollment, they should obtain a certificate of their state of health. This is the recommendation of the ET.

Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed. Assessments (formative exam, summative exam, quizzes, etc.) made on Moodle platform generate instant feedback. The Moodle platform is also used for communicating online feedback. Feedback also contains recommendations for improving performance.

For teaching and learning purposes the students are divided into smaller groups when needed to assure students learning. There is lecture halls where is seats enough but there is also proper rooms for smaller groups. As mentioned earlier the assessment procedure is clear and it is used different types of evaluation methods depending on learning outcomes. It is controlled and try to make sure that work submitted by students is original and they have done it. However, it is not used any plagiarism program which would help teachers work and is more effective to recognize plagiarism. The students have electronic databases and books what they need for their studies. Their workload is divided in proper way and it is under control. The rights and obligations of students, defined by the Kosovo Higher Education Law, the Statute of the College, the Rules of Study and the Code of Ethics, are made public on the College's website. According the students the academic staff have time enough for students. They are professional, helpful and understand students needs and support them in all ways. Based on discussion with students and teachers the relationship between them seems to be open and honest.

All issues in area of students face well the standards of KAA manual.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1.) *It would be necessary to obtain a medical certificate from the students about their state of health*
- 2.) *To continue in developing the internationalisation opportunities to students and to the staff.*

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## 2.6. Research

The development of research activities in the Biochemistry Laboratory Program follows the objectives set out in the College's strategic plan 2019-2023 and is based on academic competence, modern infrastructure and internal and external co-operation. 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. The office provide supervision and guidance for all the research conducted under college affiliations. The office has close collaboration with responsibility person of study programs to aim to identify the needs of research. The study program has defined scientific research objectives which reflect in the research development plan of institution. There is clear research policy.

The College implements a policy of supporting the scientific development of young scientists in several ways. Supports writing articles for international scientific meetings and covers all costs of participating and publishing articles. In addition, the College has recently supported the membership of young scientists in international scientific and professional associations and enrolling them in doctoral programs at universities abroad.

To achieve the proposed research objectives in the field of Biochemistry Laboratory, sufficient financial, logistical and human resources have been allocated. In 2019, an amount of 16,000 Euro was allocated for the realization of the research activity for the Biochemistry Laboratory program.

The expectations of the involvement of College Academic staff in research and academic activities for Biochemistry Laboratory BSc program are clearly specified and are considered in the performance evaluation and promotion criteria. As indicators and performance parameters related to the involvement of academic staff in research, the College has determined that every regular member of the academic staff should publish at least one scientific paper per year for the last three years.

The academic staff, for the period 2016-2018, has realized 136 publications, from which 46 publications in scientific journals, and 90 Abstract of works presented at scientific meetings. The average number of publications was 3.4 publications per academic staff. The smallest number of publications was during 2017, with an average of 0.98 publications per academic staff.



To increase the involvement of staff and students in research activities. The College will periodically organizes scientific sessions, symposiums, conferences, roundtables with the involvement of academic staff, and so on.

Teaching staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scientific activities that are relevant to the courses they teach, along with other relevant field research developments. Students, in the Research Methodology subject are required to make a review of the published works.

On discussion with responsibility persons of program it was argued that students' thesis will be involved in these research topics. If quality is high the thesis is planned to publish as a scientific article. Generally speaking an aim is to publish high impact factor journals. It was also supposed to get money for research.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1.) *To continue linking student research and staff research.*
- 2.) *To continue at developing the internationalisation opportunities to students and to the staff.*

## 2.7. Infrastructure and resources

The College of Medical Sciences "Rezonanca" has provided sufficient physical resources, human resources and sufficient and contemporary equipment that enable the long-term realization of the BSc in Biochemistry Laboratory program.

The infrastructures for the teaching are in a place and in a good condition. There is also proper financial plan to maintain high quality education and resources. All other resources, for example such like rooms for group works, library, IT-technology and softwares, rooms for staff and students, are good.

Laboratories are modern, proper to practice basic studies of medical program, what we saw during the visit. A new hospital is under construction and it is supposed to be ready at end of this year. ET visited in new hospital construction area. It is built a modern hospital where students will perform clinical training, will be students of all programs.



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The students said to be satisfied with library and computer lab services. All rooms are equipped with modern teaching equipment and are easily adaptable to various modes of teaching. Infrastructure and resources face all standards according to accreditation manual by KAA.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:** NO

### 3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program of the Biochemistry Laboratory Bsc offered by College of Medical Sciences “Rezonanca” is *Fully compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *to reaccredit* the study program for a duration of *3 years* with a number of *50* students to be enrolled in the program.

#### Expert Team

##### Chair

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(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

##### Member

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(Signature)

**Prof.dr.DanicaŽeleznik**

(Print Name)

**20.6.2019**

(Date)

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