

RIINVEST College

Institutional and Programme Accreditation  
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Final Report (Draft)

Expert Team (ET)

Juergen Bruns (Germany), Alexander Buchheister (Germany), Peeter Nomak (Estonia),  
Heinz-Ulrich Schmidt (Germany)

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## Context

The following report is based on the Self Evaluation Report (SER) of the RIINVEST College, submitted to the KAA in October 2014, a site visit on April 8, 2015, and additional documents delivered after the visit by mail.

Obviously, several authors have composed the SER. A final revision by one responsible person is missing. Otherwise so many orthographical mistakes and the missing translations into English language could have been avoided. More carefulness is needed regarding the next version.

The team of experts and their respective areas:

Expert	University	Special expertise	Programme Riinvest
Juergen Bruns	University of applied sciences Niederrhein, Germany	Business, Economics	MA in Management
Alexander Buchheister	RWTH Aachen University, Germany ESU	Economics, Engineering	BSc Computer Science-Software Engineering MSc Software Engineering
Peeter Normak	Tallin University, Estonia	Computer Science	Chair
Heinz-Ulrich Schmidt	Foundation for Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA), Bonn, Germany	Business, Economics, Quality Assurance	BA in Business Management

RIINVEST applied for *institutional* accreditation and for re-accreditation / accreditation respectively for some study-programmes. Furthermore, RIINVEST applied for a PhD programme in the area of Managerial Economics. Due to KAA advice this request was not considered within this process.

The assessment report is following the respective KAA Guidelines for Experts regarding Institutional procedures and for Academic Programmes as well.

## Part I: Institutional Accreditation

## 1. Mission Statement

### **Assessment of the aims and objectives of research and teaching (Mission statement)**

The mission of RIINVEST College is to become a benchmark university in the region offering quality study programmes of high international standards in Albanian and English language. Based on a selected target group of students study programmes, staff and organizational structure of RIINVEST have to be in accordance to achieve these objectives.

RIINVEST College aims to be upgraded to become a university College and a university by about 2020.

This mission statement was based on a market survey, which showed that the academic landscape in Kosovo passed a rapid structural change within the last years. Six new public universities have been founded offering bachelor and master programmes. As consequence competition between public and private universities has increased.

In such an environment RIINVEST College concentrates on a market niche. RIINVEST is targeting on students coming from the middle class society in Kosovo who are able and willing to pay for a quality education that improves the chances for future employment. The objective of RIINVEST College is to avoid price competition with public universities on the one side, and to keep a competitive advantage vis á vis high priced private universities such as the American University of Kosovo (AUK) on the other side.

The competitive advantage shall be maintained e.g. by

- offering quality study programmes with close links to research offered at RIINVEST Institute,
- know-how transfer from Staffordshire University,
- collaboration with the Public University of Pristina and foreign universities,
- securing that 85% students finish their studies in time,
- high employability of graduates (70% of graduates shall be employed 6-12 months after graduation),
- securing that students will get bank loans,
- offering a scholarship programme,
- strengthening its research activities and its international profile.

RIINVEST College offers bachelor and master programmes in economy and computer sciences in Albanian language. RIINVEST also offers bachelor and MBA programmes in English on a franchise basis from Staffordshire University UK.

New master and PhD programmes shall be launched after 2018 and the focus of study programmes shall be broadened (e.g. institutional economics, macroeconomic

governance, corporate governance, EU economics and governing institutions).

### **Assessment of the potential for innovation**

The cultivation of creativity, critical thinking and innovation are values enumerated in the mission.

This potential for innovation is guaranteed by the close cooperation with RIINVEST institute. Staff and students are involved mainly by projects and internships, but also by research projects carried out for external companies, institutes or ministries.

The design of the study programmes also reflects the idea of innovation in teaching and learning. Supervisors monitor teacher's methods; the results are internally compared and continuously improved. Training programmes for interactive teaching, student motivation and student assessment will assure that there is sufficient potential for innovation. Thus the international standard level shall be reached and kept.

Student-centred learning that shifts the student into the centre of the learning process will in addition change the students' learning environment. The role of students will turn from more inactive listeners to more active, responsible, self-organized students. In a situation as in Kosovo where many students have to work, while they are studying, such an innovative concept would give more flexibility, skills and motivation to the students and should improve the final results.

A large potential for innovation in digitalized learning, teaching and for the development of the administrative infrastructure could be based on the newly implemented Information and Computer Technology (ICT).

### **Is the mission statement appropriate as regards the resources available and is it communicated in an adequate way?**

The resources available concerning staff, students, facilities (buildings, classrooms, library, and computer labs) are in line with the present needs to execute successfully the offered study programmes.

There is a broad variety of communication channels used to distribute information about RIINVEST College and the study programmes, e.g.

- advertisements in classical printed press media,
- press releases,
- direct marketing, open days
- social media (facebook, twitter, you tube),
- RIINVEST College web page.

Furthermore RIINVEST College presents its study programmes to the public. Graduates working in companies or banks can act as multipliers by word-of-mouth communication.

### **Conclusions**

The mission statement seems to be communicated in an adequate and effective way.

The mission statement is logic and convincing. It is however based on the assumption that the target group is large enough, stable in the future and that RIINVEST will keep competitiveness in the selected segment.

The mission is based on an ambitious forecast concerning the intake of students. In an additional document submitted to the expert team it was convincingly explained how this increase of students shall be achieved. Main factors are communicating the bank loan agreements for students, marketing campaigns, the Informatics Club – a network of 200 high schools -, the announcement of the scholarship campaign. The realization of the student intake figure is a cornerstone of the budget and the financial plan.

The chances to become a university College and a university depend apart from offering the required study programmes also on external factors that cannot be influenced by RIINVEST e.g. legal regulations.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that RIINVEST pursues its mission and objectives. Market developments and students intake have to be carefully monitored.

It is recommended to investigate to which extend programmes in computer sciences could be added to or integrated in programmes concerning business applications (e.g. E-Business, computer-based Human Resource Management, Logistics). This could lead to synergies and strengthen the position of RIINVEST College in the education market.

RIINVEST should aim at making sure that courses, exams or other assessments awarded at RIINVEST College are recognised at other institutions and vice versa according to the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (2004).

The internal decision structure with Academic Council, Academic Management and Departments, Quality Office and Committees (e.g. Programme Committee) should be kept in line with the growth of RIINVEST College.

It is recommended to strengthen the alumni organisation. A growing number of satisfied alumni can be a strong support for communicating RIINVEST's mission.

## **2. Academic Freedom**

Although the expression "Academic Freedom" is not quoted explicitly in the Self Evaluation Report it can be assumed that Academic Freedom is part of RIINVEST's philosophy - guaranteed by the Academic Council and its composition (academics have the majority).

Academic Freedom has a large variety of aspects. Academic freedom concerning staff members refers e.g. to

- content of the modules including recommended literature,
- the teaching methods,
- changing actual modules and introducing new modules ,
- research.

Academic freedom of students is e.g. guaranteed by

- assessing teachers in questionnaires,
- the right of getting information ,
- the right of getting feed-back (e.g. concerning marks, complains).

### **Conclusion**

The respective article in the RIINVEST College's statute and the atmosphere at RIINVEST College between management, staff and students gave the impression to the expert team that academic freedom is respected and realized.

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

### **Do the academic programmes correspond to the institution's mission statement and the principles of employability?**

The Mission Statement specifies Economics, Business, ICT and Governance as the scope of the College. Therefore, the academic programmes clearly correspond to the institution's mission statement. The departments of the college have relatively good relations with the various institutions – mainly through their part-time teachers – and continuously enhance the study programmes in order to meet the needs of the society and to guarantee high employability of the graduates.

### **Are the quality, range and academic aims of the curriculum appropriate to the academic degree awarded?**

The curricula are developed by examples – and sometimes in cooperation with – of some well-known universities in Europe and base on widely accepted principles. All parts of the academic programmes – the whole programme, specializations and single modules - are learning outcomes based. However, some important topics are underrepresented in the study programmes or are presented not explicitly enough – concrete examples are presented in the reports of separate study programmes.

### **Conclusion:**

The programmes' quality, range and academic aims are appropriate to the academic degree awarded.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended to pay special attention to the emerging and important areas in further development of the academic programmes.

### **Are the programmes based on an overarching didactic concept that has been adequately communicated to and accepted by the teaching staff?**

The SER does not reveal any overarching didactic concept the programmes should base on. Also the teachers, e.g. in department of computer science, had difficulties in explaining the overarching didactic concept. On the other hand, learning and teaching methods (lectures; exercises; discussions; presentations, demonstrations; simulations/group work etc) are described in the module descriptions. The students confirmed that they are sufficiently informed about the learning and teaching methods and that these are student centered. However, although the classroom teaching is mainly conducted in traditional mode, it came out during the discussions that the learning and teaching is based in general on sound principles: discussions and case studies during the lectures and analyses during the exercises, accompanied by a systematic treatment of home assignments.

### **Do the academic degrees correspond to international standards?**

The programmes in general and the teachers as well seem to put more emphasis on students' knowledge rather than development of their skills. The need to put more emphasis on skills' development was repeatedly stressed by students during the meeting with the Expert Team. They even proposed some concrete measures: introduce industrial placement, involve teaching assistants from the industry, organize summer schools, set up an incubator etc. Nevertheless, although it is also not stated explicitly that the curricula recommendations of international professional organizations and frameworks are considered in the development of the programmes, the academic degrees correspond to the international standards.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended to increase the share of skills' development in the further development and delivery of the academic programmes.

### **Does the structure of the programmes give sufficient opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis? (e.g., what is the proportion of independent study time compared to online/distance teaching or classroom units?)**

All modules foresee more hours for independent studies compared to the contact hours in classes. For example, for a module of the size of 6 ECTS, there normally are 45 or 60 contact hours and 105 or 90 hours for independent studies, respectively. This gives the students' enough opportunity for independent studies, reflection and analysis.

### **Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and comprehensible?**

The allocation of the ECTS credits is distributed evenly between semesters. 1 ECTS equals 25 hours of studies (although 27 hours was calculated in few cases). While the calculation of hours spent in classes is very precise, the calculations of hours for independent studies varies a lot and is sometimes difficult to retrace or even completely missing in syllabi.

### **Is the workload required for the academic programme manageable for students?**

The number of hours spent in classes is adequate. However, the proportion of exercises is relatively low in some modules, especially where emphasis is on skills' development



(this concerns mainly bachelor level study programmes). For a 6 credit module, students are supposed to do 90 hours individual studies for most modules. This makes altogether about  $5 \times 90 = 450$  hours for a whole semester, or  $450/15 = 30$  hours a week. The students rated that they spend about 20 hours weekly on average to independent studies. Therefore, the actual amount of independent work is adequate (some extra work will be done during the examination period). However, it was explained during the meeting with the teaching staff that part-time teachers are normally present during the classes only. This complicates tutoring and individual supervision of students during their individual studies.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended to set up regular consultation times for part-time teachers.

### **Are the teaching methods and the content of teaching units sufficient for the successful achievement of the overall programmes' goals and outcomes (competences and qualifications, knowledge and skills)?**

The SER uses standard formulations of teaching and learning methods in most cases: "Lectures; exercises; discussion; Presentation, demonstration; Simulation / group work; Video / Visit; laboratory; practice" without any further explanation. Due to a relatively limited number of hours for exercises, discussion of home assignments and feedback to the students is sometimes insufficient. The content of teaching units is sufficient for the successful achievement of the overall programmes' goals and outcomes especially in terms of knowledge.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended to increase the total number of hours for exercises, especially for bachelor studies.

### **Are the examination regulations appropriate?**

There are three regular and two additional examination terms each year; all exams are organised in a written form. Assessment methods for each module are specified in the syllabi. The college follows internationally widely accepted grading system (however, having different marks: 10 for "A", 9 for "B" etc).

### **Is the overlap of the academic content between the various curricula comprehensible and transparent?**

The content of the curricula corresponds well to their titles, and there is no considerable overlap between the various curricula. In few cases when this issue was raised during the site visit, the overlap was convincingly explained.

### **How do the admission criteria and admission processes measure up to international standards?**

There are no admission tests in the college. For bachelor programmes, students are admitted by the documents submitted: application form, one photo, National Test Certificate, high school diploma and transcripts. For master and programmes, additionally two references, Certificate of English Language and CV are needed. The fact that no admission tests are conducted is understandable, because it is not required by

the legal framework, and it is justified as well due to the fact that there is a lack of applicants and other higher educational institutions use similar admission procedures.

### **Is the ratio of academic/artistic staff to students appropriate?**

According to the SER, there were 316 students and 26 full-time teachers in the departments of Economy and Computer Science combined. The ratio  $316/26 = 12$  is completely acceptable. Even more, there is some room for more students.

## **4. Research**

### **What are the institution's research expectations, and how do these relate to the number and quality of its permanent staff?**

Research activities at the RIINVEST College are developed in three directions:

- Research activities developed by staff within their post graduate studies and research with partner universities or international projects
- Research activities of master level students
- Research activities conducted within RIINVEST Institute

According to the SER, RIINVEST staff is specialised in the following research fields: Privatization and ownership transformation, Taxation policy, Impact of International Monetary Funds in economic development, Innovation and development, Corporate Governance, Human Development and Education, Marketing and entrepreneurship, Competition in banking system, Human Capital and Foreign Direct Investment, SME and Entrepreneurship, Efficiency in Banking sector, Trade Policy, Migration and remittances, Human Resources Management, Strategic Management, Development Economics, Transition and Industrial Economics, Operations management, Agro Business. The long list demonstrates the huge involvement of the permanent staff in respective research activities and further qualifications.

There is also an impressive list of with publications of the full-time academic personnel and students in the last three years in national and international scientific journals, which contains 20 authors, most of them with more than one contribution. Last but not least, a striking number of the full-time academic staff has participated in scientific conferences, symposiums and seminars in the last three years, most of them presenting papers.

A number of staff members that have completed PhD abroad have been trained for supervision. Student and staff use databases that are useful resources for research and research based teaching. These (more than 30) data sets were created through research, in which RIINVEST staff and students were engaged in cooperation with other organisations.

Staff and students have been engaged in particular in research activities within the RIINVEST Institute, and this has been demonstrated by both of the groups, staff and students as well, during the site visit.

### **Conclusion**

The experts noticed a remarkable commitment and involvement of RIINVEST College, its staff and its students, in research activities, which are in accordance with its statute and its mission " to offer ... research to provide experts in the benefit of Kosovo development

with capacities to compete at a global level" (art. 8, statute). The extent of research activities is adequate compared to the number and quality of the permanent staff. Research may become one of the profile elements of RIINVEST College, benefitting from its familiar neighbourhood to RIINVEST institute. The recommendation of the former assessment report have been realized so far.

### **Are teaching staff involved in research activities inside or outside the institution, and do these research activities feed back into teaching/course content?**

Staff is obviously committed and involved in such activities, but to a different extent. As already mentioned, many are participating and in most cases contributing to national or international conferences. Some are participating in international exchange measures. Students are also involved to a certain extent in research activities, e.g. via contributions to research projects and via internships at the end of their study (5th semester). Staff confirmed and students agreed that there is in many cases a certain feedback from research activities into teaching.

But it seems that the college has not yet set up a proper support system for conducting research. The majority of complaints the academic staff made during the meeting with the Expert Team concerned research: not enough time for conducting research, although 40% of their workload should be devoted to research according to the contracts, not enough financial support for participating in international conferences, no financial incentives for introduction of academic papers etc.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended to allocate beyond the already calculated financing plan of research at the level of unit additional funds for supporting research and development activities of academic staff.

## **5. International Co-operation**

### **Is the extent and the quality of international cooperation in research and teaching adequate?**

The strategy of internationalization as described in the SER and its appendices first seemed to be a little bit erratic, but has been convincingly clarified by additional explication during the site visit and in an additional document regarding internationalization-strategy. RIINVEST College will be a sustainable international partner that will offer to staff, student and other members of the college and its partners possibilities for academic, professional and research exchange. The internationalization strategy is based on the three principles of the RIINVEST College Strategic Plan 2015-2018:

- 1. Partnerships:** RIINVEST College enlarges the already existing and will create additionally new relationships with selected foreign institutions, keeping firmly in mind the brand and reputation of the RIINVEST. These relationships will be long-term and involve more than one aspect of its international activities.
- 2. Innovative pedagogy:** RIINVEST College continues working with international

partner universities to jointly implement its curricula, as well as business and teaching models using digital technologies and social media.

**3. International experience:** RIINVEST College will facilitate international experiences for its students and staff and add value to the education it offers.

**Running Bilateral Agreements:**

- Staffordshire University, UK
- Luarasi University, AL
- Dokuz Eylul University- Graduate School of Social Sciences, Turkey (Mevlana Exchange Protocol)
- Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Turkey (Mevlana Exchange Protocol approved, MOU is being finalised)

**New Applications:**

- University of Dubrovnik
- Technical University of Vienna

**Areas of Cooperation:**

- Delivering English Programmes
- Innovative Pedagogy and Sustainable Development
- E-learning and distance learning
- Mobility for Students (BA, MA)
- Mobility for Staff (PhD, Post Doc, Exchange)

In addition, there are two international projects currently running (Erasmus, TEMPUS) and some more international applications, e.g. Entrepreneurial Universities for Industry Alliances (EUFORIA), Quality Assurance and Qualification Framework at Institutional Level in Albania and Kosovo (QABAL), EU Integration Horizon 2020 Project: State of the Art and Beyond.

According to its strategic plan 2015-2018 RIINVEST College is aiming at the following objectives:

1. The partnerships with Staffordshire University and their international partners will provide opportunities for RIINVEST staff and students to thrive in a new era of globalized higher education, research, industry and innovation.
2. RIINVEST College will pursue innovative packaged offers to attract students, including scholarships in RIINVEST College, intensive English language courses; work integrated learning and post-graduation employment opportunities at RIINVEST College and RIINVEST Institute.
3. By 2018 at least 10-15% of its graduating students will have an international experience that includes industry-based study tours, work integrated learning, intensive language and culture programs, and for-credit study at partner institutions.
4. RIINVEST College will establish at least one premier partnership with a foreign institution each year. In addition, it will establish a larger number of international partnerships focused on specific courses or cohorts.

5. Partnership with Staffordshire University in delivering franchised programmes at BA and MBA level, in staff exchange and mobility, in its staff development through master, PhD and DBA programmes will continue and expand;
6. Partnership with European University of Tirana, Dokuz Eylul University- Graduate School of Social Sciences, Ismir, Turkey and Eskişehir Osmangazi University will include cooperation in staff exchange, student mobility, mutual support in delivering especially master, MBA and PhD programmes, publications and joint research projects;
7. Partnerships will be focused also in building networks with HE institutions in Kosovo, in the region and in the EU along Erasmus + scheme.

## **Conclusion**

The experts are convinced that the commitment and involvement of RIINVEST College to strengthen its international profile is really strong and intensive and will be successful, at least to a certain extent. The extent and the quality of international cooperation in research activities and teaching activities as well seem to be systematically and adequately organised and to a certain extent have already been accomplished by incoming and outgoing students as well as by international students participating in the franchised programmes.

The recommendations of the former assessment report have been realized so far. A “mobility window” up to now couldn’t be realized due to circumstances which are convincingly explained.

The experts appreciate the efforts and the already achieved status. RIINVEST College is making its way. It is desired and hopefully will happen that all these numbers will increase in the near future.

## **Are the strategies of internationalization and the involvement of staff and students in training co-operations and mobility programmes adequate?**

The overall strategy of internationalization with its various elements is adequate and to a certain extent ambitious, but due to the involvement and commitment of the staff it will be feasible and realistic. Once being re-accredited, the growing reputation of RIINVEST College will facilitate the realisation and strengthen its international profile, awareness and attractiveness.

## **6. Staff**

### **Does the institution have an adequate proportion of permanent staff and appropriate portions of permanent and external visiting professors?**

The SER shows for all programmes 26 staff members with full-time and 30 staff members with part time contracts. The ratio in the department of economy was 22/15 and in the department of computer science 4/18.

The average student teacher ratio in economic programmes is 1/6. In the computer science department the ratio is 1/4.

**Do the academic staff demonstrate proven ability at a high academic and didactic level and are their qualifications appropriate to the positions they hold within the institution according to the basic criteria?**

The basic criteria for academic titles, which RIINVEST can award for its academic staff, are regulated in the law on higher education (2011) and in the Labour Law (2010). The laws refer to full-time professor, associate professor, assistant professor, lecturer and assistant.

Any additional, specific requirements will be defined in the job description and in the job advertisements.

**Conclusion**

The expert team takes it for sure that the staff's qualifications meet the requirements of the positions they hold.

**Is there an equal portion of women amongst the academic/artistic staff?**

The full-time academic staff table shows 20 male and 8 female staff members. In the part time academic staff there are 37 male and 3 female part timers. The proportion is not all equal, but depends on opportunities to recruit qualified staff.

**Does the institution have transparent, competitive and quality driven regulations for the selection and employment of staff?**

The selection of academic staff is based on the recruitment regulations (job description with selection criteria). An evaluation panel will interview the best candidates. After a trial period teaching personal receives a 3 year contract. There are no criteria or processes indicated how to assess the academic staff at the end of the trial period.

In future the recruitment of staff will also be based on the success in obtaining research income.

**Does the institution have development strategies to ensure that its academic staff maintains a continually high standard?**

There are several ways applied to keep a high standard of the academic staff. There is a supervision of one teacher by another one (peer evaluation) on a regular basis. This applies for all teachers. Findings are laid down in a report and result in a staff development plan as a basis for discussions concerning what and how to improve. Staffordshire University also provides opportunities for the transformation of better education methods, research and innovation. The assessment of lecturers by students can also initiate improving the teaching quality.

Based on the findings training programmes will help to implement new interactive teaching methods and to improve the curricula.

As 40% of the capacity of full-time staff members is dedicated to research – individual research, research in study projects, research for RIINVEST institute – research does also contribute and give an input to maintain a high standard of the academic staff.

## **Conclusion**

The staff members of RIINVEST College are highly committed. They are satisfied with the organisation, the study programmes and their workload. Although the Endowment Fund provides support, staff members are asking for additional support –mainly financially - concerning research and publications.

In the departments economy and computer science the number of staff exceeds the average international student/staff ratio. In so far RIINVEST is in a comfortable situation. Depending on countries, on institutions or on disciplines this ratio is between 10 to 30 to 1. In near future staff capacity is sufficient for coping with more students.

Although many of RIINVEST's intentions are still plans e.g. increasing staff exchange and mobility, developing tools for teachers' performance, intensifying research publications, increasing the number of international textbooks, the budget for the next years foresees more than doubling of training and development expenditures.

## **Recommendations**

A key factor for RIINVEST's future success will be not only to recruit the appropriate academic staff but to develop their intellectual capacity and to keep them.

The execution of bachelor and master programmes require a certain number of full-time employed professors. At present RIINVEST College has not the right to award these titles. The expert teams therefore refrains from appraising these requirements. Because solving the problem by recruiting professors from public universities seem to be unrealistic. They will not be prepared to give up their safe position in a public administration.

Because of this situation, teachers at RIINVEST College on the other hand those who finished their PhD studies might be attracted by public universities to be promoted.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that RIINVEST develops strategies and incentive programmes beyond the present staff development plan to motivate staff members to stay with RIINVEST College. A questionnaire asking for the needs of the staff members could be a basis.

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

### **Does the institution have transparent decision-making structures for governance, management and administration matters?**

The administrative structure of the college is presented in the form of a block-scheme. However, these do not contain the academic departments. Therefore, the relations between the academic and non-academic units remain partly unclear.

### **Does the institution have transparent decision-making structures for academic matters?**

The decision-making structures for academic matters are thoroughly enough described

in the SER where the roles of the Academic Council, of the director for academic planning, the heads of departments, heads of programmes, of the programme committees, and of the students' representatives are outlined.

**If the applicant institution is part of a foreign educational institution or if it intends to establish additional branch campuses,**

**does it have an appropriate share of responsibility and decision-making competence as compared to its parent institution and its branch campus?**

**does it have organizational structures which guarantee that the quality of the academic programmes (offered by the parent institution) corresponds to that of the branch campus (es)?**

The college is not a part of a foreign educational institution and it does not have any intentions to establish additional branch campuses. However, it offers some franchised programmes of Staffordshire University, according to the mutual agreement signed between these institutions.

**Is there a development strategy and how is it internally communicated?**

The college has a thorough Strategic Plan 2015-2018 and a Business Plan 2015-2017. The latter states also the objectives to be achieved during these years and includes a SWOT analysis. Both documents have been internally discussed and communicated.

**How well does the development strategy correspond to the institution's overall aims and funding plans?**

The most important strategic goals both of the Strategic Plan and of the Business Plan are to: 1) increase the number of students, 2) increase the graduation rate and employment rate of the graduates, 3) achieve full financial stability. Therefore, the Business Plan corresponds to the institution's overall aims and funding plans.

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

**Does the institution have an adequate budget and sufficient financial resources?**

The Business Plan 2015-2017 is based upon revenues as follows:

- Payments from students
- Research projects
- Other projects.

The budget calculation seems to be consistent and coherent. Whether it is realistic and feasible, depends mainly on the number of enrolled students. The prognosis to attract 50 new students annually to the programme seems to be rather optimistic, since due to various circumstances the number of first year students has been decreasing last years. Thus, RIINVEST College has already developed a strategy, which consists of the following five elements in order to increase the enrollments sustainably:

- 1) The campaign for "Student Loan with 0% interest, 36 months grace period" exclusive agreements with the commercial banks in Kosovo (Raiffeisen Bank &



NLB Bank).

- 2) The feedback from the surveys realized by the Marketing & Recruitment Office
- 3) The Informatics Clubs (The Informatics Club is a project of RIINVEST College, which consists of 200 high school students mainly coming from High schools in Prishtina. The students that are members of this club/association are students who are willing to study software engineering and computer sciences.
- 4) The scholarship schemes
- 5) The good reputation and tradition of RIINVEST in the Kosovo society

### **Conclusion**

As these five elements have carefully been explained in the additional document and since they are accompanied by a special marketing strategy, the experts are ready to believe that the budget will be realistic and feasible. The infrastructure is sufficient and appropriate.

### **Does the institution have adequate buildings and specialized infrastructure as regards the requirements of the academic programmes on offer and the research to be conducted (libraries, computers, laboratories)?**

In general, RIINVEST basically has modern and appropriate neuter resources for adequate implementation of the programmes, as observed during the site visit.

The offer of the library has been updated and expanded since the last assessment in 2012. However, there are some areas, with a low stock of books that is referenced in the module descriptions of the study-programmes. In addition, students are increasingly using databases, which can be use anywhere and outside the buildings. This should be further strengthened. In the field of traditional print media, they should be gradually updated.

The library also serves as a learning space for the students and is also open on weekends. Also seminar rooms and computer rooms are available to students outside school hours for self-study.

Most software products are strongly oriented towards Microsoft's products on behalf of the cooperation between RIINVEST and Microsoft. This seems appropriate, in perspective the alternatives should be more different. In the next years, RIINVEST College needs a greater modernization of software and Hardware. For this point, it is necessary to plan and had an sufficient budget.

RIINVEST also has a specially own-developed teaching and learning platform. This allows not only the student management and the provision of documents, it gives also the opportunity to realise blended-learning.

### **Conclusion**

The experts appraise this and hope that the RIINVEST College will further develop this area. The infrastructure is sufficient and appropriate.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the amount for new books and library needs should be raised in order to provide at least the literature mentioned in the module descriptions and in more than only one copy. The same is true for equipment in particular in computer science. Then the budget plan will be likely adequate and RIINVEST College may achieve full financial stability and durability for further development.

## **9. Quality Management**

### **Does the institution have a quality assurance system for teaching, research and services?**

A Quality Assurance system is already described in the Statute of the RIINVEST College: The Quality Assurance Commission Is responsible for the implementing and monitoring the evaluation procedures in accordance to the statute and institutions' regulations. The commission provides the implementation of international standards as well as the standards of Kosovo Accreditation agency and proposes the academic council certain recommendations. The commission approves the evaluation terms; the content of the evaluation teams and encourages the quality culture. At the beginning of each academic year the commission at the first meeting appoints the commission. The head is elected by majority votes of the commission members. The duties of the head are to organize the commission's work. The commission for quality assurance has five members:

- three members of teaching staff
- one students' representative
- one representative from the administration

The quality assurance commission also has three ex-officio members

- director for academic planning and international partnerships
- director for administration
- head of quality assurance office.

Although the regulations mentioned below focus on quality assurance regarding teaching, it is obvious that the Statute includes in the quality assurance system research and services as well. It is the duty of the quality assurance office' director to prepare " the semester and annual report which includes the statistics and analyses from the research evaluation of modules, organization, faculties, college and services" (art. 25.3).

Regarding the quality assurance for teaching and studies the RIINVEST College applies the PDCA cycle (plan, do, check, act), as already regulated in the Quality Assurance Handbook and as confirmed by staff and students during the site visit. Every three years programmes are reviewed. The following issues are taken into consideration:

1. "Aims and learning outcomes of the programme. Has something changed in the aims of the programme, its orientation and management?
2. The study programme: Has something changed in the structure of the programe and its obligatory and elective subjects?
3. Assessment: Are assessment methods adequate with learning outcomes. Has soemthing changed in standards or in evaluation methods?

4. Quality of Programmes (teaching and learning). Is the teaching strategy adequate for achieving intended learning outcomes. What is the balance between contact hours, independent learning and student support. Do modules contain formative and summative assessment? Are interactive methods and technology used in the teaching and learning methods? How is research integrated in the teaching process?
5. Recruitment, progress and achievement  
Procedures for recruitment are described
6. Learning resources and staff development needs."

### **Conclusion**

The regulation and the procedures are in compliance with the ESG requirements and they meet international standards. The recommendations of the former assessment report have been realized so far.

### **Recommendation**

Quality assurance with regard to research and services is covered by the statute, but should be more visibly included and, indeed, should be explicitly described in the quality assurance regulations, taking in particular into account their own specifics.

### **What methods of communication, implementation and documentation are used by the quality management system?**

According to the SER and as confirmed during the site visit by staff and students, the instruments for evaluation of programmes are mainly surveys by students and staff on a regular basis (at the end of each semester). In addition the evaluation instruments include focus groups in order to discuss the results of evaluation, and **observation**.

With student questionnaires, the college intends to survey student satisfaction with the modules and the teaching and learning process. The questionnaire addresses eight aspects of module evaluation and five aspects of teacher performance.

The aspects/questions of module evaluation are:

1. Overall I am satisfied with the module
2. The subject is in the right level    2a. If not, was it: a) difficult; b) easy
3. The module aims were clear
4. I have been provided with clear instructions on how I am being assessed
5. The material has been structured in a way that helps me to understand the module?
6. I was instructed on expectations for independent learning
7. The reading and other learning resources were adequate
8. The class activities were helpful for understanding the module

Students are requested to mark what best represents their views by giving a grade from 1 to 6, where 1 is the lowest and represents "strongly disagree" and 6 is the highest and represents "strongly agree". This quantitative measurement of satisfaction with the module is complemented with open questions and individual assessment for teachers of the module.

The teacher performance includes the following elements:

1. The teacher organises and presents well the material
2. The teacher has dedicated enough time to explain complex concepts

3. The teacher has provided practical examples
4. The teacher has provided possibilities for students to interact
5. The teacher has stimulated active participation and critical debate among students

For these elements, too, students are requested to mark what best represents their views by giving a grade from 1 to 6. In addition students are requested to give comments for strengths, weaknesses and suggestions for improvement.

### **Recommendation**

The students' feedback questionnaire should be completed concerning the feedback in particular to ECTS allocation.

**Observation** means that a colleague is participating as observer in a lecture. This measure intends to improve quality through peer advice, individual reflection and staff development. For each department observers are selected and the observation schedule is set. Heads of programmes, who are responsible to organise the delivery, set the observation schedule. The report, based on a template (observation guide), is used for staff development purposes. As the staff unanimously agreed and confirmed, this tool works very well and successful and that it doesn't create any harm among the colleagues. The experts appraise this kind of procedure as innovative and very useful. It is a source of evidence that RIINVEST College has really internalised quality assurance and development.

In accordance with the Quality Assurance Handbook (as described in the SER,) the monitoring and evaluation procedures are done on three levels:

- Module monitoring and evaluation,
- Programme monitoring and evaluation
- Annual Monitoring and evaluation.

### **Does the institution carry out regular self-evaluations?**

Yes, it does, as already mentioned.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended to take in particular care of homogeneous module descriptions regarding

- more precise descriptions of intended learning outcomes, avoiding general verbs,
- description of assessments, which are appropriate to really measure the achieved learning outcomes,
- precise calculating ECTS numbers,
- updating of (obligatory and recommended) literature

### **Are the results of evaluation put to use and included in the institution's development planning?**

The follow up procedures for improvement and use of outcomes from previous evaluations are explicitly regulated. The Academic Council approves annual report, special report and improvement plan. Improvement plans are developed at the department/programme level and are submitted for approval to the Academic Council. The Board decides on the budget based on the recommendation for improvement and

the development strategy. The Quality Assurance Office is responsible for preparing an implementation strategy based on the recommendation of the Academic Council.

**Are the criteria for the award of academic honours and honorary academic degrees adequate?**

Up to now, there is no specific information available, whether RIINVEST College is authorized to award academic honours, and if yes, how and to what extent it does.

**Conclusion and recommendation:**

RIINVEST College meets the quality standards of KAA. Its institutional re-accreditation is unanimously recommended.

## **Part II: Programme accreditation**

According to the KAA-Standards, the assessment reports are written on the basis of the following materials:

- The application document submitted by RIINVEST College
- Findings collected during the site-visit (evaluation with site-visit) on 8th of April, 2015
- Further materials on request:
  1. Examples of Module Descriptions from Franchise Modules
  2. Examples of Syllabuses showing Assignment Descriptions
  3. Statement about Internationalization
  4. Arguments for student numbers
  5. Description for the MA programme Management
  6. Minutes
  7. Presentation of Bachelor Programme Business Management
  8. RIINVEST College Institutional Presentation
  9. Real detailed expenses for 2014

## **Ila Bachelor in Business Management**

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

#### **Does the academic programme correspond to the institution's mission statement and principles of operation?**

According to the self evaluation report 2014 and according to the strategic plan 2015-2018 of RIINVEST College, its "mission is to offer high quality studies and research in order to provide experts for the benefit of Kosovo development needs with capacity to compete at global level". RIINVEST College's values are:

- Cultivate critical thinking
- Tolerance
- High ethics and honesty
- Academic freedom
- Partnership, transparency toward stakeholders, institutions and public opinion
- Identification and ownership of staff and students to its mission, vision and values.

The Bachelor programme in Business Management and its specializations correspond, as far as the experts could explore in limited period of time, to these objectives and principles. Convincing sources of evidence are the programme description in the SER as well as the module descriptions, which both obviously demonstrate that they are following the principle of fitness of purpose (why does the HEI offer this programme) and the principle for purpose (how does the HEI deliver this programme) as well.

#### **Are the programme's quality, range and academic aims appropriate to the academic degree?**

The Bachelor's degree usually consists of a general education including moderate specialisation(s). The programme structure and its specializations

- Economic analysis for business
- Management and marketing
- Banking, finance and accounting

and the content as well as the intended learning outcomes meet according to the module descriptions the academic requests with regard to quality, range and degree.

#### **Is the programme based on an overarching didactic concept that has been adequately communicated to and adopted by the teaching staff?**

The overarching didactic concept is not mentioned in the SER, but is revealed within each module description. The described teaching and learning methods e.g. lectures, tutorials, discussions, presentations, demonstrations, simulations, group works, practice are obviously student centered. Students have confirmed this observation during the site visit. The didactic concept had been explained to the students and its adoption by the staff is evaluated on a regular basis by the students. It seems to be sufficient.

#### **Does the academic degree correspond to international standards?**

The academic degree awarded represents the Bachelor's qualification according to the National Qualifications Framework and is in compliance with the QF-EHEA. Thus, the

degree corresponds to international standards. But it has to be mentioned that the programme does not foresee a final thesis, although Bachelor's programme usually do. On request the RIINVEST College demonstrated that the internship in the fifth semester already covers the objectives of a final thesis with regard to qualifications, knowledge, research and skills and that the respective stakeholders on the employers' side had strongly voted for such a solution with regard to employability. As explained by the KAA coordinator during the site visit, there is no legal requirement for a final thesis at the end of a Bachelor's programme in Kosovo.

### **Conclusion**

The academic degree corresponds to international standards.

### **Recommendation**

RIINVEST College may take into consideration, whether the missing final thesis will raise inconvenience for those of its graduates, who will apply for a master's programme at a foreign university.

### **Does the structure of the programme give sufficient opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis? (E.g. what is the proportion of independent study time compared to online/distance teaching and classroom units?)**

When checking the ECTS calculation according to the syllabus template in appendix 1 to the SER and according to the ECTS calculation form in appendix 9 it became obvious that on average there will be enough opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis compared e.g. to other student workload elements regarding the structure and organisation of delivering the curriculum.

### **Recommendation**

The calculation of ECTS needs to be arithmetically done more carefully; the examples mentioned don't exactly sum up to the requested workload.

### **Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and justified?**

Beyond some already mentioned arithmetic weaknesses generally the calculation of ECTS according to the very elaborate ECTS template looks good. Regarding distribution RIINVEST College follows the ECTS user's guide recommendation of distribution ECTS top down.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended to include a respective item in the students feedback questionnaire regarding the appropriate distribution of ECTS and, as necessary follow up, the re-examination of the calculations and distribution (see below).

### **Is the workload required for the academic programme manageable for students?**

The distribution of ECTS is well balanced among all the semesters; it is in compliance with international standards and the ECTS users' guide. The programme is manageable in due time, as confirmed by the students during the site visit. On average they spend



25-30 hours per week for self-studies; nearly the same amount of hours they spend in classroom.

In case the student couldn't finish in planned period of time, according to the explanation during the site visit the reason may rather be individually caused. Since the student target group includes employed students as well, who usually work during the week, the aim to finish in planned time for those may become difficult. The experts appreciate that RIINVEST College is undertaking some measures to reduce the respective drop out rate.

### **Are the teaching methods and content of teaching units sufficient for the successful achievement of the programme's goals and outcomes (competences and qualifications, knowledge and skills)?**

The intended learning outcomes like competences, qualifications, knowledge and skills are explained in the SER on generic level (p. 44) and on subject specific levels as well. The descriptions are completed in the respective module descriptions on module level. The described teaching methods as well as the content, both are appropriate to successfully achieve the intended learning outcomes, as additionally agreed by the students during the site visit.

Nevertheless, there is room for improvement with regard to the module descriptions.

### **Recommendation**

It is strongly recommended that the respective responsible unit in RIINVEST College takes care about these quality requirements, which have been discussed during the site visit and agreed by RIINVEST College representatives. The experts suggest that there should be a responsible person, who will have a final look through the SER before delivery.

It is additionally recommended to take into account the following weaknesses in order to meet the internal quality assurance regulations:

- Although there is a template available, the module descriptions are rather inhomogeneous and are partly lacking important information, e.g. the required description of the assessments.
- Sometimes it is not observable, whether the assessment is appropriate to really measure the achievement of intended learning outcomes. This is true in particular for the modules in semester V, which are in addition marked as electives (p. 50), although they are common and obligatory for all.
- The descriptions of learning outcomes are rather general and should be more precisely described.
- Sometimes the literature is superannuated; sometimes it is a large amount.
- There is no differentiation between "obligatory" and "recommended" literature.

### **Is the overlap of academic content between the various parts of the curriculum comprehensible and transparent?**

There is, indeed, an overlap to a certain extent between the Bachelor's programmes. But it is reasonable and has been convincingly explained during the site visit. In particular, the experts examined, whether there is an overlap, e.g. by translation, between the franchised programme BA Business Management offered by Staffordshire University and the Bachelor's programme Business Management at RIINVEST College. As far as possible to prove, these programmes have their own profiles and module descriptions.

There is no simple translation or overlapping observable.

### **How do the admission criteria and admission procedures measure up to international standards?**

Documents required for Admission to the programme are:

- National Test Certificate of High school diploma or equivalent. Minimum 12 years of prior education
- Individuals with relevant experience will be evaluated based on the academic merits. (This refers to those who have completed high schools when National Test was not in force).

Students may take advantage of early application at [www.riinvest.net](http://www.riinvest.net). They will then be tested in three fields:

- Albanian Language,
- Mathematics
- English Language.

The purpose of this test is to award scholarships to students with the highest points and develop pre-semester programme for students who need.

### **Conclusion**

The admission criteria for the programme are in line with the national requirements (level 6 NQF) and meet international standards.

### **Is the ratio of academic/artistic staff to students appropriate?**

According to the self-evaluation report and the explanations during the site visit the current number of students enrolled in the department of economy is 235. The number of teachers (full-time) is 22, part-time is 15, together 37. Thus, the number of student per teacher is 11 respective 16, over all it is 6.

### **Conclusion**

The ratio of academic staff/students is very comfortable. There is room for more students!

## **2. Staff**

### **Does the institution have an adequate proportion of permanent staff and appropriate proportions of permanent and external staff?**

With regard to the economic department the ratio looks fine. The question to be answered is, to what extent the core modules are taught by full-time professors, as recommended by the experts in the former accreditation report. When appraising, it has to be taken into account that RIINVEST College up to now doesn't have the right to award respective titles.

### **Conclusion**

The experts agree to postpone the fulfillment of the former recommendation, since RIINVEST College depends on external decisions (see recommendation at the end of the report).

**Does the academic staff demonstrate proven ability at a high academic and didactic level and are their qualifications appropriate to the positions they hold within the institution according to the basic criteria?**

According to the requirements of KAA and based on the CVs of KAA-accepted programme's staff the qualifications are appropriate. During the site visit it has been confirmed by students that they are satisfied with the academic and didactic levels of the respective staff. Even so the meeting with the staff was convincing in that respect.

**3. Research and International Co-operation**

**Is the teaching staff involved in research activities inside or outside the institution, and do these research activities feed back into teaching/course contents?**

According to the SER, besides regular lectures and tutorials held at RIINVEST College building the programme offers typical opportunities and encourages students and the staff members for continuous research development. The programme requires and encourages staff members to continually carry out research in their respective fields. The programme encourages staff members to publish their research papers and participate in conferences whether national or international and the college provides financial support. As explained and clarified during the site visit the research activities of RIINVEST College focus on three lines:

- personal research activities of the staff
- postgraduate qualifications (e.g. PhD)
- RIINVEST College research agenda (needs of industrial society...)

Staff is obviously committed and involved in these activities, but to a different extent.

Many are participating and in most cases contributing to national or international conferences. Some are participating in international exchange measures.

As already described, students are involved to a certain extent in research activities, e.g. via contributions to research projects and via internships at the end of their study (5th semester). Staff confirmed and students agreed that there is a certain feedback from research activities into teaching.

**Is the extent and the quality of international cooperation in research and teaching adequate?**

The strategy of internationalization as described in the SER and its appendices first seemed to be a little bit erratic, but has been convincingly clarified by additional explication during the site visit and an additional statement regarding internationalization-strategy.

RIINVEST College will be a sustainable international partner that will offer to staff, students and other members of the college and its partners possibilities for academic, professional and research exchange.

The internationalization strategy is based on three principles of the RIINVEST College Strategic Plan 205-2018:

**1. Partnerships:** RIINVEST College will enlarge the already existing and will create additionally new relationships with selected foreign institutions, keeping firmly in mind the

brand and reputation of the RIINVEST. These relationships will be long-term and involve more than one aspect of its international activities.

**2. Innovative pedagogy:** RIINVEST College will work with international partner universities to jointly implement its curricula, as well as business and teaching models using digital technologies and social media.

**3. International experience:** RIINVEST College will facilitate international experiences for its students and staff and add value to the education it offers.

**Running Bilateral Agreements:**

- Staffordshire University, UK
- Luarasi University, AL
- Dokuz Eylul University- Graduate School of Social Sciences, Turkey (Mevlana Exchange Protocol)
- Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Turkey (Mevlana Exchange Protocol approved, MOU is being finalised)
- 

**New Applications:**

- University of Dubrovnik
- Technical University of Vienna

**Areas of Cooperation:**

- Delivering English Programmes
- Innovative Pedagogy and Sustainable Development
- E-learning and distance learning
- Mobility for Students ( BA, MA)
- Mobility for Staff ( PhD, Post Doc, Exchange)

**Conclusion**

The experts are convinced that the commitment and involvement of RIINVEST College to strengthen its international profile is really strong and intensive and will be successful, at least to a certain extent. The extent and the quality of international cooperation in research activities and teaching activities as well seem to be systematically and adequately organized and have already been accomplished to a certain extent by incoming and outgoing students as well as by international students participating in the franchised programmes. The experts appreciate the efforts and the already achieved status. It is desired and hopefully will happen that all these numbers will increase in the near future.

**Are students involved in research and cooperation projects?**

The programme requires students to prepare projects, seminars and presentations and that is the way students are involved in academic research making use of academic textbooks, journals, reports, magazines and newspapers. The students themselves have confirmed this kind and their extent of involvement during the site visit. Some are also involved in cooperation projects with other institutions, e.g. the institute "Democracy for development".

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

##### **Does the institution have an adequate budget plan?**

The institution has a budget plan included in the business plan 2015 – 2017. The plan gives an overview on the expected various sources of income (student fees, research) and expenditures salaries, rents, promotion contracted services, endowments, taxes). The separate figures for the Bachelor programme "Business Management" are in accordance and are based on the same assumptions as already mentioned above.

##### **Does the institution have adequate buildings and specialized infrastructure for the requirements of the programme?**

Beyond the already mentioned weakness regarding respective literature there is no special additional need to be taken into account, as also agreed by the students during the site visit.

##### **Conclusion**

The equipment in the computer labs to that respect is sufficient.

#### **5. Quality Management**

##### **Are the institution's programmes assessed regularly within the context of internal evaluation processes?**

Regarding the quality assurance aspects the RIINVEST College applies the PDCA cycle (plan, do, check, act), as already regulated and as confirmed by staff and students during the site visit. The BA-programme is reviewed every three years according to the quality assurance regulations of RIINVEST College.

##### **Conclusion**

The regulation is in compliance with the ESG requirements and meets international standards.

##### **Recommendation**

The students' feedback questionnaire should be completed concerning the feedback in particular with regard to ECTS distribution.

**Conclusion:** The expert team unanimously recommends the re-accreditation of the programme.

## **Part IIb: Programme accreditation - Master in Management**

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

#### **Does the academic programme correspond the institution's mission statement and principle of operations?**

The master programme for Management corresponds with the mission statement in the Self Evaluation Report (SER) 2014 und with the objects laid down in the Strategic Plan 2015 – 2018.

The mission statement is offering quality study programmes of high international standards to meet the needs of the region. The needs of the region were identified in a research study conducted by RIINVEST (2000 – 2014) about the economic situation of enterprises in Kosovo. This survey showed a lack of qualified managers in small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and in large companies mainly in middle management. The lack of people with managerial skills, leadership competencies and marketing and ICT know-how might become a critical factor for the survival of many companies.

#### **Conclusion**

The MA Management shall help to fill that gap.

#### **Are the programme's quality, range and academic aims appropriate to the academic degree?**

The master programme Management is offered with 5 specializations: General Management, Banking and Finance, Agrobusiness, Marketing, Information System for Management. The first two semesters are identical for all profiles – compulsory and elective modules are the same. In the third semester "Research Methods II" is compulsory for all specializations.

#### **Conclusion**

Concerning quality, range and academic aims the programme is in accordance with the academic degree.

#### **Is the programme based on an overarching didactic concept that has been adequately communicated and adopted by the teaching staff?**

The overarching concept is reflected in the module descriptions and in the more extensive syllabuses (two examples were submitted to the expert team). Students confirmed to be sufficiently informed about the didactic concept.

#### **Conclusion**

The various teaching and learning methods seem to be student centred.

#### **Does the academic degree correspond to international standards?**

A master degree with 300 ECTS in total corresponds to international standards. The

master "Management" 120 ECTS requires a Bachelor Degree as admission criteria with 180 ECTS.

**Does the structure of the programme give sufficient opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis? (E.g. what is the proportion of independent study time compared to online/distance teaching in the classroom units?)**

According to the workload in the module descriptions there is sufficient time for independent studies. Students also confirmed this during the site visit.

**Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and justified?**

The allocation with 30 ECTS/semester for 4 semesters is appropriate and justified. The calculation of the ECTS based on the workload is however difficult to retrace. The "ECTS calculation form from the system" appendix 7 is in Albanian language and could not be translated.

**Is the workload required for the academic programme manageable for students?**

1 ECTS is equivalent to 25 hours/workload that means 30 ECTS correspond to 750 hours/workload. As one semester corresponds to 15 weeks, the workload for a student would be 50 hours/week, thereof 50% are for class attendance and 50% for homework.

Many students are working in enterprises. Nevertheless they are able to cope with the workload of a full-time study programme, because classes are in the afternoon and evening and participants have sufficient flexibility in their work.

**Recommendation**

It should be observed, whether these students run into time problems, when 85% of the studies should be finished in time

**Are the teaching methods and content of teaching units sufficient for the successful achievement of the programme's goals and outcomes (competences and qualifications, knowledge and skills)?**

The teaching methods and content are sufficient for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Students' assessments and continuous staff training secure that the levels will be kept and improved.

**Is the overlap of academic content between the various parts of the curriculum comprehensible and transparent?**

There is no overlap in the master programme offered by RIINVEST or in the MBA programme offered as franchise by Staffordshire University.

**How do the admission criteria and admission procedures measure up to international standards?**

Admission criteria are a Bachelor's Degree (3-4 years/180 ECTS). Applicants that are already employed will be considered based on their relevant experience and individual

merits.

## **Conclusion**

The admission criteria meet international standards.

### **Is the ratio of academic/artistic staff to students appropriate?**

The average student teacher ratio in economic programmes is 1/6. In the computer science department the ratio is 1/4. Depending on countries, on institutions or on disciplines this ratio is typically between 10 to 30 to 1.

Staff is in a comfortable situation to run the master programme Management with 51 enrolled students in year II and 41 students in year I. The ratio will still be very good when the intake of students for the MA "Management" increases to 60 students next year.

## **2. Staff**

### **Does the institution have an adequate proportion of permanent staff and appropriate proportions of permanent and external staff?**

In the programme there are 2 PhD full professors, 4 PhD and 5 PhD candidates involved. The person in charge of the MA programme is PhD candidate.

The SER shows for all economic programmes 26 staff members with full-time and 30 staff members with part time contracts. The ratio in the department of economy was 22/15 and in the department of computer science 4/18.

The ratio cannot be shown separately for bachelor and master programmes.

### **Does the academic staff shows proven ability at high academic and didactic level and are their qualifications appropriate to the positions they hold within the institution according to the basic criteria?**

The CVs validate that the academic staff is on a high academic and didactic level. Meeting with the staff confirmed this impression. Also the students expressed their satisfaction with the academic and didactic level of the staff.

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

### **Is the teaching staff involved in research activities inside or outside the institution, and do these research activities feed back into teaching course content?**

Research is an important competitive advantage for RIINVEST College. The close relation between the RIINVEST College and RIINVEST Institute ensures that staff and students are involved in research activities via projects, internships and especially master students are engaged with their thesis.

This intensive research relation leads nearly automatically to a feedback into the teaching courses content.

### **Is the extend and the quality of international cooperation in research and**



### **teaching adequate?**

Apart from University of Staffordshire RIINVEST College has an increasing number of international cooperation e.g. with NLB Bank, ProCredit Bank, National Bank of Trade (BKT), Centre for Advance Performance in Education (QAPA), University of Graz, Dokuz Eylul University, Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Universitetin Luarasi, National and University Library of Kosovo, The Academy for European and Global Strategy, The British Council Kosovo, Association of Certified Accountants of Kosovo Dardania College, European College Juridica.

The objective of these cooperation is the exchange of teaching and learning methods, the support concerning projects and theses. Furthermore these cooperation shall contribute to increase the outgoing teacher and student mobility. The short and intensive master programme will however offer only few chances for students (who are often employed) to follow programmes at foreign universities. There will be only limited interest for foreign master students to come to RIINVEST College because the programme is in Albanian language.

The cooperation will be more attractive to teachers who can gain experience in foreign programmes, teaching methods and different cultural behaviour.

### **Conclusion**

Overall the expert team confirms adequate and ambitious international cooperation, of which the Master's programme is benefitting.

### **Are Students involved in research and cooperation?**

Staff and students themselves confirmed that they are involved in research and cooperation for projects and master theses.

## **4. Finances and infrastructure/Space and Equipment**

### **Does the institution have an adequate budget plan?**

The institution has a budget plan based on the business plan 2015 – 2017. The plan gives an overview on the expected various sources of income (student fees, research) and expenditures salaries, rents, promotion contracted services, endowments, taxes).

The figures are coherent. Whether they are realistic depends to large extend on the assumption about the intake of future students. The steps RIINVEST College wants to take to achieve this goal and to keep an competitive advantage look promising (see: 1.1 Mission Statement).

The separate figures for the master programme “Management” are in accordance and are based on the same assumptions as already mentioned above.

### **Does the institution have adequate buildings and specialized infrastructure for the requirements of the programme?**

There is no special infrastructure used exclusively by master students. The current infrastructure is sufficient for all students. Only the library should be equipped with more

new English literature.

## **5. Quality Management**

The master “Management” is part of the quality assurance system described in the Statute of RIINVEST College. The programme is reviewed every three years according to the RIINVEST regulations. These regulations meet international standards.

**Conclusion and recommendation:** The expert team unanimously recommends the re-accreditation of the master programme “Management”.

## Part IIc: Programme accreditation - Bachelor in Computer Sciences – Software Engineering

The following bases on the documents presented to the expert team, on the site visit and on discussion with some academic staff members: Arben Damoni, Astrit Desku, Naim Hoxha, Nysret Musliu, Mensur Osmani, Jeton Siqeca, Naim Sulejmani. Discussions with A. Damoni, N.Hoxha, N.Musliu and J.Siqeca were devoted specifically to the SE programme while with A.Desku, M.Osmani and N.Sulejmani to the general aspects of academic activities in the college.

The bachelor level study programme Computer Science – *Software Engineering* has been accredited in May 2012. *The following recommendations of improvement were proposed (grouped by the sections of the report of 2012):*

- 1. Academic Program: The programme should be stabilized first. It is recommendable to reduce the large amount of dropouts by leveling students' competences. Make sure to ensure all required resources (staff, IT, internships, projects) before drastic increase of volume • The duration of study for part-time students has to be clarified based on national regulations. The part-time program should be implemented formally • Give more weight to security related topics.  
The situation in 2015: the recommendations are taken into account.*
- 2. Teaching: A Learning Management System (preferably an open source product like Moodle) should be implemented to allow for a blended learning approach • An eLearning concept should be developed specifically targeting – but not restricted to – the needs of part-time students • Teacher training should be offered to ensure that eLearning principles are being applied properly.  
The situation in 2015: the college adapted Moodle to their specific needs and started to use it. There is a Staff Development Plan that is updated annually and a training program that includes interactive teaching related topics.*
- 3. Research: Gradually transfer project activities to RIINVEST • The school should set up a more formal cooperation on an institutional level with software engineering companies in order to gain closer connection directly to the job market. Collecting project work topics could work as a good platform for this.  
The situation in 2015: some research is conducted under the RIINVEST Institute. Although there were no evidences presented about formal agreements with software engineering companies, links to these companies were evident, mainly through the part-time teaching staff employed by these companies.*
- 4. Staff: Establish a clear plan on staff recruitment and balance it with the students' intake.  
The situation in 2015: as the initial plan to increase the number of students has not been realized, the student/teacher ratio is on acceptable level.*
- 5. Facilities: The program could consider more extensive use of open source tools • Get the Learning Management System Moodle up and running in a timely manner.  
The situation in 2015: the recommendations are taken into account.*

## Conclusion

The recommendations of the 2012 accreditation report are taken into account.

**The main findings concerning Computer Sciences - *Software Engineering* bachelor programme:**

**1. Academic Programmes and Student Management**

**Does the academic programme correspond to the institution's mission statement and principles of operation?**

The mission statement of the University emphasizes high quality of studies and specifies Economics, Business, ICT and governance as the subject areas. Therefore, the academic programme corresponds to the mission statement of the institution.

**Are the programme's quality, range and academic aims appropriate to the academic degree?**

As a number of teachers have graduated from well-known foreign universities, experience of these universities has been used in composing the programme. The main strength of the study programme is that it covers the whole life cycle of software development. First three semesters are the same for all students; students can select a profile (out of four: INSOF – Software Engineering, MOBCL – Programming for mobile devices and cloud, DBM – Database Management, NETMN – Network Management) on the fourth semester. The aims of each profile are described and the expected learning outcomes adequately presented. Although the module descriptions are in general adequate, there are still some problems that makes understanding the actual content of the module difficult, or even impossible. The major deficiencies and remarks are outlined below:

1. Software used by teachers during teaching is listed under the title "Concretization Means". The role of this software remains unclear. For example, what is the purpose to list standard office software (MS Word, MS Excel etc) in each module description?
2. The module descriptions are translated partly incompetently. Some terms used in the description of the content of a module (for example, COMP204 *Discrete Mathematics*) are just wrong.
3. The module KOMP601 *Project Management* is scheduled to the last semester, after students already have had modules KOMP404 *IT Project 1* and KOMP504 *IT Project 2*.
4. The lists of literature in the course descriptions are partly inadequate, incomplete and partly not accessible by the students.
5. Description of some courses is presented in such a general terms that does not allow to decide about the actual content of the course; assignments are described thoroughly in some cases and not described at all in some cases.
6. Some important topics are underrepresented in the study programme or are presented not explicitly enough:
  - a. research methods and composition of academic texts,
  - b. legal aspects of software engineering like IPR and licensing,

- c. some topics that have gained importance during last years (for example Internet of things and robotics).

Concerning the structure of learning: most of the modules have 2+2 structure - 30 hours are foreseen for lectures and 30 hours for exercises (all modules have 6 credits). All modules are compulsory, as soon a student has selected the profile. Only those students selecting INSOF profile have some freedom to choose the modules. The fact that there are no elective courses should be considered as a deficiency.

### **Conclusion**

The programme's quality, range and academic aims are appropriate to the academic degree.

### **Recommendations**

1. Pay special attention to the emerging and important areas in further development of the academic programme (for example, device-to-device communication, i.e. Internet of things, robotics, IPR, licensing).
2. Bring the *Project Management* module to an earlier semester.

### **Is the programme based on an overarching didactic concept that has been adequately communicated to and adopted by the teaching staff?**

The teachers had difficulties in explaining the overarching didactic concept. However, it came out during the discussions that the learning and teaching is based in general on sound principles: discussions and case studies during the lectures and analyses during the exercises, accompanied by a systematic treatment of home assignments.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended to widen the usage of methods of modern pedagogy (for example, the *flipped classroom* method) accompanied with adequate student support.

### **Does the academic degree correspond to international standards?**

As it was already mentioned, similar study programmes of some well-known foreign universities were taken as examples in developing the programme. As a whole, the academic degree corresponds to the international standards, although the curricula recommendations of international professional organizations and frameworks (ACM, SWEBOK of IEEE) are not been considered in the development of the programme.

### **Does the structure of the programme give sufficient opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis? (E.g. what is the proportion of independent study time compared to online/distance teaching and classroom units?)**

All modules have the size of 6 ECTS and weekly 2+2 hours learning in the classes except few that have 3+2 or 2+1 structure. Therefore, the number of hours for independent work of the students during a course is in majority of cases supposed to be 90; that gives the students' enough opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis. Students are provided mostly with electronic copies of the textbooks. There are also hard copies of textbooks for on-site reading in the library.

### **Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and justified?**

Yes. Moreover, the fact that all modules have the same size allows establishment of a uniform rhythm of teaching and learning.

### **Is the workload required for the academic programme manageable for students?**

The number of hours spent in classes is adequate, especially when 5 hours in a week are allocated for lectures and exercises. However, the proportion of exercises is relatively low in some modules, especially where emphasis is on skills' development (in fact all software engineering related modules belong to this category). As already mentioned above, students are supposed to do 90 hours individual studies for most modules. This makes altogether about  $5 \times 90 = 450$  hours for a whole semester, or  $450/15 = 30$  hours a week. The students (of all specialties) rated that they spend about 20 hours weekly in average to independent studies. Therefore, the actual amount of independent work is adequate (some extra work will be done during the examination period). However, it was explained during the meeting with the teaching staff that part-time teachers are normally present during the classes only. This complicates tutoring and individual supervision of students during their individual studies.

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended to set up regular consultation times for part-time teachers.

### **Are the teaching methods and content of teaching units sufficient for the successful achievement of the programme's goals and outcomes (competences and qualifications, knowledge and skills)?**

The SER uses standard formulations of teaching and learning methods in most cases: "Lectures; exercises; discussion; Presentation, demonstration; Simulation / group work; Video / Visit; laboratory; practice" without any further explanation. Due to a relatively limited number of hours for exercises, discussion of home assignments and feedback to the students is sometimes insufficient.

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended to increase the total number of hours for exercises.

### **Is the overlap of academic content between the various parts of the curriculum comprehensible and transparent?**

There is no other division into parts of the curricula as division to semesters. Some variation is foreseen during last three semesters only when each student will select a profile (three modules). There seems to be no considerable overlap between the different courses.

### **How do the admission criteria and admission procedures measure up to international standards?**

The admission criteria are the same as for other bachelor programmes, no specific conditions or requirements will be applied – the National Test Certificate is required,

without any additional admission test.

### **Is the ratio of academic/artistic staff to students appropriate?**

According to the table on page 297, there are in total 81 students for 5 full-time teachers in the Department of Computer Science. The ratio 1:16 is acceptable (the ratio is even higher if part-time teachers are taken into account).

## **2. Staff**

### **Does the institution have an adequate proportion of permanent staff and appropriate proportions of permanent and external staff?**

According to the documents provided, there are 5 permanent (full-time) academic staff members: Arben Damoni, Astrit Rexhepi, Mensur Osmani, Naim Hoxha, Naim Sulejmani. Also according to the SER, there are also 18 part-time teachers involved in teaching (as part-time teachers continuously change, the names are not indicated here).

The share 1:3,6 between the total numbers of full-time and part-time teachers is relatively low, especially considering the fact that these teachers cover two study programmes – bachelor and master programme (altogether 3+2 = 5 study groups).

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended to make efforts for increasing the share of full-time academic staff.

### **Does the academic staff demonstrate proven ability at a high academic and didactic level and are their qualifications appropriate to the positions they hold within the institution according to the basic criteria?**

The formal qualification of the academic staff is relatively low – only 2 (out of 5) full-time teachers have a doctoral degree (A.Damoni, A.Rexhepi). According to the SER, the share of teachers with a PhD is almost the same in the case of part-time teachers (7 out of 18). However, students mentioned during the meeting that they are satisfied with the quality of the staff.

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

### **Is the teaching staff involved in research activities inside or outside the institution, and do these research activities feed back into teaching/course contents?**

The following research achievements are taken from Google Scholar in 7.04.2015: 1) the number of research publications, 2) the number of citations to the publications, 3) h-index. The results were the following: A. Damoni – 2, 0, 0; A. Rexhepi – 7, 7, 1; M. Osmani – 0, 0, 0; N. Hoxha – 11, 1, 1; N. Sulejmani – 0, 0, 0. Therefore, only A. Rexhepi and N.Hoxha are the only internationally visible teachers. Note also that there were no research contracts with the local industry in the list of projects conducted during last three years.

### **Is the extent and the quality of international cooperation in research and teaching adequate?**

No evidences of institutional international cooperation in research were presented. Moreover, the Internationalization Strategy of the RIINVEST College does not explicitly contain any plans for international cooperation in computer science in coming three years.

#### **Are students involved in research and cooperation projects?**

No evidences about student involvement in research projects were presented. On the other hand, students are involved in development projects proposed by the industry.

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

#### **Does the institution have an adequate budget plan?**

The expert team was given the budget (expected income and expenses) for three years (2015-2017), and the actual expenses for 2014. According to this, the Telecommunication and IT costs were 2668 euro in 2014, and planned in the amount of 7000, 7500 and 8000 euro for 2015, 2016 and 2017, respectively. Although – as it was explained during the site visit – the university is benefitting from cheap Microsoft software and otherwise using mostly freeware, this sum is extraordinary small.

#### **Does the institution have adequate buildings and specialized infrastructure for the requirements of the programme?**

The number and size of rooms for lecturing is adequate. However, there were not enough small rooms for seminars and group work. The university has two computer labs, with 20 and 25 PC computers, respectively. Taking into account the current structure of studies where there are only about 80 students studying in software engineering department, this is satisfactory. The computers in the labs are outdated and should be replaced before 2018.

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended to revise the budget for 2016 and 2017 of the college and allocate enough funds for upgrading the computer labs.

### **5. Quality Management**

#### **Are the institution's programmes assessed regularly within the context of internal evaluation processes?**

The college has an elaborated internal quality management system and adequate procedures. The programme was previously internationally accredited in 2012. Concerning internal evaluation process, no additional procedures on top of the general university procedures were demonstrated.

**Conclusion and recommendation:** The expert team unanimously recommends an accreditation of the bachelor level study programme **Computer Sciences – Software Engineering** as it stands.



## Part IId: Programme accreditation - Master in Software Engineering

The following bases on the documents presented to the expert team, on the site visit and on discussion with some academic staff members: Arben Damoni, Astrit Desku, Naim Hoxha, Nysret Musliu, Mensur Osmani, Jeton Siqeca, Naim Sulejmani. Discussions with A. Damoni, N.Hoxha, N.Musliu and J.Siqeca were devoted specifically to the SE programme while with A.Desku, M.Osmani and N.Sulejmani to the general aspects of academic activities in the college.

The MSc programme *Software Engineering* (SE) has been accredited in May 2012. *The following recommendations of improvement were proposed (grouped by the sections of the report of 2012):*

6. Academic Program: • *Initiate a programme with a moderate level of students and do not plan immediate increase in volumes* • *Offer the programme also in part-time mode.*  
*The situation in 2015: the number of students was not increased; on the contrary, the number of students could be bigger. The programme is not offered in part-time mode.*
7. Research: *The institute should set objectives for research and encourage staff to publish work under the name of RIINVEST.*  
*The situation in 2015: some research is conducted under the RIINVEST Institute. Although there were no evidences presented about the institute-level research objectives, some staff members are conducting some – mainly applied – research. The general amount and level on research is relatively low.*
8. Staff: The institute should establish clear targets for resourcing and recruitment.  
*The situation in 2015: the college has a detailed budgets and Staff Development Plan. The latter includes aspects of recruitment as well.*
9. *Facilities:* Provide eLearning for all master students.  
*The situation in 2015: LMS Moodle is implemented and used.*

### Conclusion

The recommendations of the 2012 accreditation report are taken into account except the one that recommended offering a part-time programme.

### The main findings concerning *Software Engineering* MSc programme:

Note that as the teaching staff for *Software Engineering* bachelor and master programmes has a big common part and these study programmes were discussed during the same meeting, the assessments about these programmes coincide in many aspects.

## 1. Academic Programmes and Student Management

### Does the academic programme correspond to the institution's mission statement and principles of operation?

The mission statement of the University emphasizes high quality of studies and specifies Economics, Business, ICT and governance as the subject areas. Therefore, the academic programme corresponds to the mission statement of the institution.

### Are the programme's quality, range and academic aims appropriate to the academic degree?

The programme can be considered as a follow-up of the Software Engineering bachelor programme, on a clearly higher level. Each module has 6 credits except two modules and a Master Thesis. The study programme consists of 12 obligatory modules and 11 electives from which each student has to take 5. Although the programme as a whole and module descriptions in general are adequate, there are still some problems:

- The programme does not contain any industry placement (internship). A natural question arises, how the achievement of the expected learning outcome *Design and implement software systems which find applications in business, industry, and other relevant fields* will be secured?
- The module KOMM202 *Managing Software Projects* is in fact about general project management – neither the content nor objectives and learning outcomes give any indication to software projects. Moreover, all literature items are about general project management as well. The module description is almost identical with the description of the module KOMP601 Project Management (an obligatory module in the bachelor programme)!
- Achievement of the learning outcome *Apply agile software engineering methodologies for development complex software systems* is questionable in the course KOMM203 *Agile Software Engineering* – the description of the module allows to conclude that no complex software systems are developed during the course.
- The descriptions of some modules are very short and do not reflect adequately the actual content of the module. Example: KOMM307 *Software Engineering Based on Research Methods*.
- Some important topics are underrepresented in the study programme or are presented not explicitly enough (Human-Computer Interaction (or Interaction Design, Legal aspects of software engineering like IPR and licensing).

Concerning the structure of learning: most of the modules have 1,5 + 1,5 structure – in total 22,5 hours are foreseen for lectures and 22,5 hours for exercises.

### Conclusion

The programme's quality, range and academic aims are appropriate to the academic degree.

### Recommendations

- Pay special attention to the emerging and important areas in further development of the academic programme (for example, human-computer

interaction, IPR, licensing, codes of ethics, software maintenance, etc).

- Revise the content of the module KOMM202 *Managing Software Projects*.
- Include industrial placement (Internship) into the study programme.

### **Is the programme based on an overarching didactic concept that has been adequately communicated to and adopted by the teaching staff?**

The teachers had difficulties in explaining the overarching didactic concept. However, it came out during the discussions that the learning and teaching is based in general on sound principles: discussions and case studies during the lectures and analyses during the exercises, accompanied by a systematic treatment of home assignments.

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended to widen the usage of methods of modern pedagogy (for example, the *flipped classroom* method) accompanied with adequate student support.

### **Does the academic degree correspond to international standards?**

All modules in the study programme are relevant, the content of the programme harmonizes well with the name of the programme. As a whole, academic degree corresponds to the international standards, although some topics recommended by international professional organizations and frameworks (ACM, SWEBOK of IEEE) are not sufficiently been covered.

### **Does the structure of the programme give sufficient opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis? (E.g. what is the proportion of independent study time compared to online/distance teaching and classroom units?)**

Almost all modules have the size of 6 ECTS and weekly 1,5 + 1,5 hours. Therefore, the number of hours for independent work of the students during a course is normally supposed to be 105. That gives the students' enough opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis. Students are provided mostly with electronic copies of the textbooks. There are also hard copies of textbooks for on-site reading in the library.

### **Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and justified?**

Yes. Moreover, the fact that all modules have the same size allows establishment of a uniform rhythm of teaching and learning.

### **Is the workload required for the academic programme manageable for students?**

The number of hours spent in classes is adequate. As already mentioned above, students are supposed to do 105 hours individual studies for most modules. This means that special attention should be paid to supervising and individual tutoring of students. However, it was explained during the meeting with the teaching staff that part-time teachers are normally present during the classes only. This complicates tutoring and individual supervision of students during their individual studies.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended to set up regular consultation times for part-time teachers.

### **Are the teaching methods and content of teaching units sufficient for the successful achievement of the programme's goals and outcomes (competences and qualifications, knowledge and skills)?**

The SER uses standard formulations of teaching and learning methods in most cases: "Lectures; exercises; laboratory; discussions; simulations /team work" with small variations in some cases, without any further explanation. Due to a relatively limited number of contact hours, discussion of home assignments and feedback to the students seems sometimes insufficient.

### **Is the overlap of academic content between the various parts of the curriculum comprehensible and transparent?**

There is no other division into parts of the curricula as division to semesters. There seems to be no considerable overlap between the different courses.

### **How do the admission criteria and admission procedures measure up to international standards?**

There is no admission test. Instead, two references are required. This is somehow unusual, but acceptable, especially if taken into account the relatively low number of applicants to the master programme.

### **Is the ratio of academic/artistic staff to students appropriate?**

According to the table on page 297, there are in total 81 students for 5 full-time teachers in the Department of Computer Science. No division between bachelor and master programme is given. The ratio 1:16 is acceptable (the ratio is even higher if part-time teachers are taken into account).

## **2. Staff**

### **Does the institution have an adequate proportion of permanent staff and appropriate proportions of permanent and external staff?**

According to the documents provided, there are 3 permanent (full-time) academic staff members (Arben Damoni, Astrit Rexhepi, Naim Hoxha) teaching on the programme. According to the SER, there are also 12 part-time teachers involved in teaching (as part-time teachers continuously change, the names are not indicated here).

The share 1:4 between the total numbers of full-time and part-time teachers is relatively low. Taken into account the fact that part-time teachers have short-term work contracts only, raises the question of sustainability of the programme.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended to make efforts for increasing the share of full-time academic staff.

### **Does the academic staff demonstrate proven ability at a high academic and**

### **didactic level and are their qualifications appropriate to the positions they hold within the institution according to the basic criteria?**

The formal qualification of the academic staff is relatively low: while 2 (out of 3) full-time teachers have doctoral degrees (A.Damoni, A.Rexhepi), less than half of part-time teachers have PhD (5 out of 12). Moreover, workload between the teachers is distributed extremely unevenly: for example, a full-time teacher A.Rexhepi has only two modules to teach while a part-time teacher I.Smaili has 5 modules and is also listed in the list of master theses supervisors (where A.Rexhepi is not present).

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

#### **Is the teaching staff involved in research activities inside or outside the institution, and do these research activities feed back into teaching/course contents?**

The research achievements are taken from Google Scholar in 7.04.2015: 1) the number of research publications, 2) the number of publications, 3) h-index. The results for full-time teachers were the following: A. Damoni – 2, 0, 0; A. Rexhepi – 7, 7, 1; N. Hoxha – 4, 1, 1. Therefore, only A. Rexhepi and N.Hoxha are the only internationally visible teachers. Note also that there were no research contracts with the local industry in the list of projects conducted during last three years.

#### **Is the extent and the quality of international cooperation in research and teaching adequate?**

No evidences of institutional international cooperation in research were presented. Moreover, the Internationalization Strategy of the RIINVEST College does not explicitly contain any plans for international cooperation in computer science in coming three years.

#### **Are students involved in research and cooperation projects?**

No evidences about student involvement in research projects were presented. On the other hand, students are involved in development projects proposed by the industry.

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

#### **Does the institution have an adequate budget plan?**

The expert committee was given the budget (expected income and expenses) for three years (2015-2017), and the actual expenses for 2014. According to this, the Telecommunication and IT costs were 2668 euro in 2014, and planned in the amount of 7000, 7500 and 8000 euro for 2015, 2016 and 2017, respectively. Although – as it was explained during the site visit – the university is benefitting from cheap Microsoft software and otherwise using mostly freeware, this sum is extraordinary small.

#### **Does the institution have adequate buildings and specialized infrastructure for the requirements of the programme?**

The number and size of rooms for lecturing is adequate. However, there were not enough small rooms for seminars and group work. The university has two computer labs, with 20 and 25 PC computers, respectively. Taking into account the current structure of

studies where there are only about 80 students studying in software engineering department, this is satisfactory. The computers in the labs are outdated and should be replaced before 2018.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended to revise the budget for 2016 and 2017 of the college and allocate enough funds for upgrading the computer labs.

## **5. Quality Management**

### **Are the institution's programmes assessed regularly within the context of internal evaluation processes?**

The college has an elaborated internal quality management system and adequate procedures. The programme was previously internationally accredited in 2012. Concerning internal evaluation process, no additional procedures on top of the general university procedures were demonstrated.

**Conclusion and recommendation:** The expert team [unanimously](#) recommends an accreditation of the MSc programme **Software Engineering** as it stands.

## **Additional recommendations (to whom it may concern)**

### **Recommendations to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology**

1. The fact that the higher education institutions can conclude short-time work contracts with part-time academic staff does not motivate the staff to devote themselves enough to the teaching and to the development of course materials. Therefore, it is recommended
  - ***to allow concluding long-term work contracts with the part-time teachers as well.***
2. The fact that college is not eligible provide the title “professor” creation of conditions/opportunity to provide the title "professor" increases their possibilities to hire high level experts. Therefore, it is recommended
  - ***to allow providing the title “professor” to eminent academics.***
3. Study programmes are relatively rigid from the point of view of students. In a small country like Kosovo there should be a certain division of work between higher education institutions. There should be possible to take into account the courses taken from other institutions (both domestic and international) as a part of their study programme. Therefore, it is recommended
  - ***to join the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region.***

### **Recommendation to the KAA**

Meeting with the students should preferably be in different groups – by study areas. This would give an opportunity to take into account specific aspects of the study programme in discussion with the students. Therefore, it is recommended

- ***to advice the assessed institutions to plan meetings with the students by study areas.***