

Assessment Report on the Application of UBT College for KAA Program  
Accreditation and Reaccreditation 2017

Draft Report 31<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Program Accreditation and Reaccreditation Procedure at UBT College  
Date of Site Visit: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2017. Pristina, Kosovo

### Experts' Team (ET)

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### Coordinators of KAA

- Prof. Dr. Blerim Rexha / State Quality Council - KAA
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Nr.	Study programmes	Experts
II.1	Architecture and Spatial Planning/ MA	Balint Bachmann
III.1	Psychology Management/ BA	Robert Masten

On the basis of UBT Self Evaluation Report 2017, KAA UBT Assessment Reports 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. Site Visit by the Experts' Team at UBT College, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Pristina and Lipjan. Additional documents presented to the Experts during the Site Visit. Additional documents requested by the Experts and sent via KAA on 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2017. Response by UBT to Draft Assessment Report, sent via KAA on June 6<sup>th</sup> 2017.

## **I. General Remarks**

### **I.1. Mission Statement, Organization, Management and Planning**

The Experts' Team (ET) was received by the President of UBT College (UBT) and a larger number of academic and administrative staff; a brief introduction on the mission, vision, strategic plans, and achievements of UBT was presented. Printouts of the particular programs were presented to the ET during the site visit by KAA staff. UBT offers a dynamic and innovative 21st century academic environment, a supportive and challenging opportunity for the students, faculty and staff. The institution is committed to enhance its participation as an active member of community by providing learning opportunities driven by teaching and research excellence, intellectual interaction and creativity.

According to earlier ET recommendations, UBT was advised to include more reflection on the dynamic review of programs for re-accreditation at Self Evolution Reports (SER). Analysis data gained in running the programs and changes made to the study portfolio were presented by UBT this time.

### **I.2. Academic Freedom and Quality Management**

The ET recognized the social inputs and economical influences by UBT on local and regional educational, scientific and innovation levels. This impact on the society is maintained through common projects involving business entities, as well as to the apply ISO 9001-based quality management procedures. UBT received Business Excellence as first higher education institution in the West-Balkans in 2014.

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

UBT faithfully to its name, introduces mainly business and technology driven courses. The facilities in particular the new building in Lipjan for the natural and health sciences, and for engineering and architecture programs are spacious and well-equipped. Future move of departments from Pristina's centre is planned into the newly developed faculty buildings. Students' housing in dormitories is among the ambitious plans of the institution on the new site. According to the declarations UBT is in a solid financial state, generating financial profit based on a rising number of students' fee income. Operating costs, capital expenses, wages are fully covered.

The students reported appropriate pedagogical skills of the staff. Teachers offer personal help if needed, exercise-oriented, problem solving learning methods are introduced instead of delivering static lectures. Student services at UBT are well organised and easy to access by students from the beginning of their studies. Support of the professors and administrative staff is permanent, personal and distance assistance is available of them.

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

The new campus outside the city centre in Lipjan is hosting the library with wide bigger assortment of books and periodicals as the library at the old campus. Bus transport maintained from the city centre to the new campus is rather a temporary solution. Students' housing or dormitories would create a campus-like atmosphere of the university campus

and result in a real university identity of UBT. The management stated, that dormitory is scheduled in the development plans of the site in Lipjan.

### **I.5. Staff**

The actual staff situation of human resource at UBT is satisfactory in terms of the total number of lecturers. The unstructured and non-coherent exel-listing of the human resources makes validation rather difficult. Lists of staff allocated to the different study programs would highlight the gap of competences in some fields. For the future development of such young higher education institution as UBT, good research policy, support for PhD/DLA candidates, staff development policy, participation in international cooperations are crucial for its success.

### **I.6. Students' Affairs**

The ET interviewed a group students during the site visit in an open and informative manner as usual in Kosovo. Students of UBT were open-minded towards the ET, well-informed about the accreditation procedure and showed willingness for critical thinking. Despite of the fact, that there are no Psychology student right now at UBT, the meeting was mainly attended by members of the Students' Representative Body and only 3 students of Architecture were present. However students of all disciplines were aware of their learning process and were able to express themselves in English well.

### **I.7. Finances and Fees**

UBT's tuition fees seem rather high to average wages and public institutions' fees, it doesn't support the accessibility of the institution from a wider social environment. However, there are funds and support for applicants from a disadvantaged background, allowing them to access higher education in a privat institution with the chance of good employability.

The drop-out rate at UBT varies among study programs. Especially students of Master level report reasons for dropping out because of working activity. The passing rates seem to become a problem not only for students, but for UBT too, considering the sustainability of the course with appropriate number of participants.

## **II. Architecture and Spatial Planning MA**

### **II.1. Preliminary Remarks**

UBT College applied successfully for accreditation of Master program in Architecture at the main campus in Pristina using the new facility outside the city center in 2014. This report refers about the finding of the Experts' Team (ET) after running the program for the third year.

This Report refers to the SER 2017, the Final Report on Programme Accreditation 2013 and the the Final Report on Programme Accreditation and Re-Accreditation 2014 and 2015.

In addition to the documents, the meeting during the Site Visit with the management and staff of UBT was most useful and effective. All of the accreditation ET's questions were answered in a confident, professional and at the same time collegial manner. This cooperation from UBT's side was a significant help and assistance in the accreditation process that was organized by KAA staff.

SER's Program Overview contains the mistaken name of the study program: BA Architecture. It is obviously the 4-semester, 120-ECTS Master program in Architecture to be reaccredited. More confusing is the name giving of Master of Art (MA), meanwhile the Site Visit Program of KAA describes it as Master of Science (MSc). It seems unimportant, but in Architecture both kind of study programmes are accepted and stated as equivalent, but there are significant differences as well. Knowing the content of the program and following the procedure of accreditation of both the Bachelor and the Master courses at UBT, it can be stated, that those are BA and MA. The main data-sheet of MA Architecture and Spatial Planning (SER 2017, 2.5.5., Page 105) doesn't contain the Branch of the program and the name of the responsible person. At the Site Visit it was stated, that the MA in Architecture is provided in Pristina and partly in Lipjan. The person in charge of the BA in Architecture is Dr. Lulzim Beqiri and for the MA in Architecture is Dr. Binak Beqaj.

## **II.2. Academic Program and Student Management**

The study program of the MA in Architecture is constructed upon the curricula of some recognized European schools of Architecture (TU Vienna, TU Delft, Univerisitate Mariboru). The link to those prestigious institutions mentions "Bakkalaurstudium, Bachelor of Science and Dipl. Ing. Arch.". Two of those are Bachelor-level study programs and the Maribor course is strongly engineering oriented. For sure there are better references to the Master of Art study plan of UBT than those.

UBT is following the earlier recommendations of the experts by fulfilling guidelines for Architecture education of the European Commission (EC). The program corresponds to the

points of studies balancing between theoretical and practical aspects of architectural training.

The content of the curriculum takes into consideration the Council Directive 85/384/EEC of 10 June 1985 on the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications in architecture, including measures to facilitate the effective exercise of the right of establishment and freedom to provide services.

Doing so, UBT ensures the later European recognition of diplomas in Architecture of Kosovo. The overall programme is a suitable architectural study plan, it fulfils European and international criteria of the Master level. According to the recognition of Professional Qualifications in the European Union (Directive EC/2005/36 Article 21/7) and its Modernisation of the Professional Qualifications Directive *“for architects, the revised Directive sets the training requirement to either five years of university training or to not less than 5 years instead of 4 years of full-time study at a university, supplemented by supervised professional traineeship of a minimum of two years. This solution offers the necessary flexibility to accommodate different approaches in the Member States (the duration of both the academic and practical components varies between Member States).”*

Following the EC guidelines, it is important to observe the 3 year-BA and the 2 year-MA curricula together, though the directive requires five years of university training. The curricula provided by UBT will meet the goals of the EC directive by offering a Master in Art in Architecture. Design studio work has now about 50% of all classroom hours of BA+MA which is appropriate.

The semester plan is scheduled for the end of the week, since most of the students work beside their studies. A seminar-like organizing of the curricula is common, but practice-oriented, advanced learning methods are required to allow students to be able to follow the semester-plans. Teachers reported about real-life projects of the design studio work, provided by the students. UBT cooperates with local authorities, working on their actual development projects with students. Such programs are complementary to lectures and make students' professional working experience during the studies possible. Annual students' exhibition is held during the Architecture Week. Cross border summer school takes place at summer, study tours are organized abroad. UBT Architecture Department organizes an Architecture Summer Academy on annual basis involving both local-regional and international staff and students.

The weekly hours of lectures and tutorials are between 22 and 24, which is manageable for MA studies in Architecture. Students' efforts to complete their design studio work outside lecturing hours would justify even lower (16) workload hours of contact hours a week. Students reported a high drop-out rate among the first year's (2014/15) participants, only 8 of them managed to follow the regular study plan till the 6<sup>th</sup> semester!

The idea and the topics of specializations: sustainable architecture, urban management, heritage protection and interior design of the MA program's profile are actual and highly needed in Kosovo. The number of ECTS for specialization of 120 ECTS of the 2-years study programme must be consolidated during the 5 years of the BA+MA programmes, not to step over the European Commission's (EC) recommendation of 10% of non-general architectural skills of the overall 300 ECTS study plan. A too early specialization, like during BSc is not wishful, specializations should be mentioned only in the final year of the 3+2 years programs of Architecture seeking for EC equivalence for full licencing in the EU.

The requirement of an all-in-all 5-years generalist education of Architects is essential,

meanwhile an early study-phase specialization/concentration is not welcome. According to the EC Directive – if taken in consideration – allows concentration/specialization during the study programme of Architecture - in the final, fifth year.

**Recommendations:**

The planned and rising number of enrolled students of 80 to 100 is rather high, but the demand of the labor market can justify it right now. A decrease of the number of applicants is predictable because of the changing of the labour market in building industry.

Therefor program profile specializations: sustainable architecture, urban management, heritage protection and interior design could earn more attention with time.

To ensure the quality of the MA from the beginning, it is recommended to examine the students' applications critically during the entrance procedure. Applicants with good design skills and practical experience can manage the study program well.

**II.3. Staff**

UBT improved its staff significantly in the last years (15 PhD, 12 candidates of PhD), which is impressive, since scientific degrees are rare among Architects. Young educators introduced themselves as highly motivated, competent members of a community led by Dean Dr. Binak Beqaj. During the site visit the experts met the staff members and earned a very good impression about them. Most of the young educators finished their doctoral studies abroad. They have local and international professional experience and good foreign language skills. Dr. Binak Beqaj is named as responsible person for the MA in Architecture, his capability and ambition secure the further development of the programme on a long term. Kujtim Elezi architect with PhD and Bujar Demjaha architect and spatial planner are mentioned as responsible persons too.

Student/staff ratio is rather high (BA:22, MA:11), although the high number of students of MA per semester can be difficult to manage in the weekend dominated timetable.

If UBT is intending to enroll further on 80 or more students, they must count with the high working load of staff especially in tutorial demanding subjects like Advanced Architectural Design or Interior Design.

**Recommendations:**

UBT shall keep on developing staff members, even the regulations of nomination for full professors in Kosovo doesn't allow to earn this title in colleges for now. Participation in research and international mobility programs can ensure the academic quality of the staff members.

Considering that the volume of the last years' applicants MA program with 80 or more, the plans for faculty teaching load should be monitored and reflected in staff development planning.

#### **II.4. Research and Internationalization**

The developing cities of Pristina and Ferizaj offer several urban, spatial and refurbishment topics of research and innovation. UBT is active in local and regional cooperation in many disciplines, the connections to other schools of Architecture especially in the region are established and to be developed. The competent and enthusiastic staff members can create a challenging atmosphere at UBT that is needed to have a recognized school of Architecture.

##### **Recommendations:**

Keep on involve local professionals and authorities at the design courses to establish research work in Architecture.

Connect research activities with actual topics of urban development, spatial design and building technology.

Raise the attractiveness of the program by hiring foreign visiting staff for short and middle terms.

#### **II.5. Finances and Infrastructure / Space and Equipment**

The main building and the new campus outside the city centre in Lipjan have specialized facilities and IT classroom needed for the basic courses of all disciplines.

For the studies in Architecture, special software (CAD) and hardware (plotter, scanner, 3D equipment) have been equipped. High-speed internet access is accessible for using internet databases. During the site visit, there was evidence of open wireless internet connection available at the classrooms. According to an interview during the site visit, Moodle and other tools are widely used by staff members and students.

For courses like Architectural Design, Construction or Modeling, special laboratory were established lately. These facilities are available on both campuses, more technological facilities are planned in Lipjan. Creating a new campus outside the centre of Pristina in Lipjan solved the concerns about need of space for architectural studies. The spaces of the new building are filled now by students' activities such as drawing room for independent work or storage of students' models/drawings. It produces a creative mood, which is needed for Architecture. Spaces of common activities like café or club could have a great impact on homelike atmosphere of the new site already.

There is a library on both campuses available for the students. The new library has received a large quantity of books from the US. Amongst the available books are Architecture-related items, even ones mentioned in the course descriptions, there are generally no up-to-date international periodicals of Architecture yet.

##### **Recommendations:**

Maintaining MA in Architecture will justify the investments of international cooperation in education development and research. It can ensure the academic career of the qualified staff.

Complete the library with more books and journals in Architecture.

Connect library books to the courses taught at the branch.

## **II.6. Overall Recommendation**

Based on the analysis points mentioned **it is recommended that the Architecture and Spatial Planning MA program of UBT at the Pristina/Lipjan branch should be accredited.**

We recommend to establish working space for students of Architecture at the new site and concentrate more on Design Studio work methods.

Cooperation with national and international universities in form of workshops, common projects can enhance students' activity and can raise quality of education.

Research in Architecture should be developed in terms of Sustainability, Urban and Spatial Design, Heritage Management and Experimental Issues.

## **II.7. Reflection on Comment by UBT**

UBT states, that a *“new building is being erected to accommodate the future demands”*.

## **III. Psychology Management BA**

### **III.1. Introduction**

Following evaluation of BA program in psychology is based on the basis of on-site-visit of UBT College in May 19<sup>th</sup> 2017 and SER of UBT 2017. UBT 2017 SER's are highly unclear, with many mistakes and missing informations (i.e. no information on number of students in BA Psychology, ratio staff/students and other). And especially, **KAA list of teaching staff is completely different than SER which solely makes evaluation highly problematic.**

### **III.2. Staff (Findings and recommendations)**

In SER 2017 it is stated that twenty (19) fully employed professors and one part time employed (according to CV's) represent teaching staff at UBT, Program Psychology BA. When reading CV's it can be found that out of these employees there are only two, conditionally three psychologists (Hana Salihu, PhD, Lecturer at State University Tetovo; Bujar Gallopeni, PhD Candidate). The third is Festina Balidemaj, with BA only in Psychology, but highly educated in Pharmacological Sciences.

Additionally, there are (according to KAA provided CV's) five medical doctors, one sociologist, one doctor of philosophy, two pharmacists, two leadership or system managements experts, one economist on the list.

Beside the fact that **educational structure of teaching staff is evidently inappropriate**, KAA list of teaching staff is almost completely different than SER list. On SER list of staff is inversely not included dr. Agim Pireva, who is included in KAA list.

On KAA list of BA Psychology employees there is only one psychologist, Bujar Gallopeni, who is PhD candidate. There are three doctors of science as full time employees as defined by law, but their education is not appropriate.

In KAA documents it is stated that Besnik Elshani (Medical Doctor, Neurological Sciences), Metush Sylejmani (Sociologist) and Agim Pireva (Medical Doctor) are persons responsible for study programs. As it is stated attached CV's of KAA, Dr. Agim Pireva finished doctoral studies in 2016 with a dissertation (Title: *Role of foetal programming and epigenetic mechanisms in the pathogenesis of Arterial Hypertension*), and it dr. Pireva was presented as a psychiatrist (it is stated in CV that he is on the level of Resident at the

Department of Psychiatry). Also, as understood at OSV dr. Pireva is probably living in Switzerland, so it is not possible to be employed for full time at UBT.

Two SER reports supplied by KAA are not identical than SER supplied by UBT at OSV. In one of SER's supplied by KAA (2.5.1., p. 23) it is stated that prof. Dr. Hana Salihu is a person responsible for a study program BA Psychology which is obviously different as information given by KAA. At OSV itself there was impression given that in reality Dr. Hana Salihu was probably really in position to present a study program. Since she was not on the KAA list of responsible persons she was introduced herself as translator, therefore allowed to take part in an evaluation.

### **III.3. Conclusions and recommendations on adequacy of academic staff**

It can be concluded that on the basis of different sources of information it was not possible to build a clear representation of basic facts which are crucial when evaluating programs. There is no doubt that materials themselves were not prepared to the phase which would allow clear impression and information about the program. Staff needed to run a program is not prepared yet to satisfied degree. A possibility for more clear evaluation on the basis of additional or corrected materials was not an option because of many reasons (highly unclear impression regarding staff, highly inconsistent information given by different reports and on the basis of discussion with persons responsible for a program). It is not an easy task to provide teaching staff to run a study program. Therefore it would make sense to put sound efforts on that issue.

### **III.4. Academic programmes and Student management – curricula (Findings and recommendations)**

Academic program itself covers different areas of psychology and it seems interesting for students. It is not clear why internship is primarily organized in University Clinical Centre since curriculum includes also other areas of psychology.

There are many inconsistencies in number in ECTS when comparing tables and syllabuses, i.e. Methodology in Psychology I – 5 or 6 ECTS; Practicum in Psychology I – 5 or 7; Introduction in Forensic Psychology – 3 or 4; Introduction to educational Psychology – 3 or 4 ECTS;

Some subjects do also not have same titles when comparing tables and syllabuses i.e., Introduction (to Health) and Clinical Psychology.

All subjects do have basic study literature which is often out of date and it is consistently in English, what could be a problem since not all students understand English sufficiently. There **are no syllabuses provided for “Concentrations” in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Semester**, which don't allow to evaluate contents of subjects.

### **III.5. Conclusions and recommendations**

Academic programs are relatively stronger aspect of a BA study of psychology. Anyway, also here are many mistakes and some inconsistencies done in presentation which makes evaluation difficult.

According to EuroPsy model it is not possible to work in real settings after BA, so although it is interesting, basic knowledge of Psychology is not sufficient yet to gain appropriate results on BA level. So it would make sense to introduce modules at MA level. Also in regards of academic programs the problem of teaching staff is included so it is not possible to have clear picture of this aspect of a study.

### III.6. Research (Findings and recommendations)

It was difficult to get clear impression also regarding research since this aspect is related to personnel issues. In complete SER (not only BA Psychology part) information on Psychology are not included.

### III.7. Space and equipment (Findings and recommendations)

In general, conditions for study are best side of impressions collected. There is really a good potential for satisfying work for students and teachers.

There were places for work in smaller groups of students presented which can't be seen as laboratories. Some psychological tests were seen, which are out of date, not adapted for Kosovo society. But development (adaptations, translations) of diagnostical instruments would make great sense in society.

### III.8. Concluding remarks and recommendations

Materials on which program is evaluated should be more carefully prepared. In present form materials don't give clear enough information which was not improved even with on-site evaluation. Most problematic aspect are information's given and situation regarding teaching staff. To accredit program this aspect should be of primary importance!

#### Final Recommendation:

**I suggest not to accredit UBT BA Psychology program.**

### III.9. Reflection on Comment by UBT

According to KAA guidelines, which experts are obliged to follow, EXPERTS do not have a freedom for re-evaluating new materials, particularly, new SER. According to KAA guidelines, it is grounded to take into consideration unclear or eventually missing information about subject of evaluation. Evaluating new materials should therefore be subject of new application.

Comments of UBT are also referring to KAA, namely - *"The inconsistencies noted in Staff Lists have resulted because of a change in the methodology of staff registration at the KAA"*. Experts stand on position that eventual unclearness in methodology is also beyond the scope of expert team evaluation.

As UBT representatives can understand, experts need "static" information at certain point, although we can understand that "The Staff Register of UBT at KAA is work in progress".

Anyway, experts can remain standing on the position, that **problems regarding staff at BA Psychology program are mainly problems, which are not "technical" by nature.**

The problem is that formally (according to SER) UBT has sufficient number of PhD's but not sufficient or adequate number of PhD's who are psychologists by education. I.e., according to expert's opinion, medical education, with specialisation in neuroscience doesn't deem compatible with scientific area of clinical psychology; also specialisation in medical field of psychiatry doesn't fit to any psychological subject (as it was clearly stated also during meeting with responsible persons for the study program of Psychology). Of course, it would be appropriate to teach psychopathology with specialisation in psychiatry. Than we come to initial problem again, namely, that information about "real staff list" was too far from "theoretical staff list". There could be "technical" and "processual" problems beside that, but as said, experts are not allowed to evaluate "different materials at same time", it is only allowed to evaluate materials as given for the evaluation, eventually expanded with additional explanations of unclear aspects.

In such cases, experts should rely on subjective evaluation, based on the context of information given in site visit. That information was, as written in the draft report, unclear (i.e. the role of translator was interwoven with the role of expert, responsible for the BA program of psychology itself).

As UBT staff responsible for the curriculum can understand, experts can't know which information is the correct one (i.e. that in Tables or in the text itself). But that's a relatively minor problem that experts could understand and take into consideration. Same stands for the study literature (although of high importance). It would be of help if information about the literature (as all information given) would be clearly presented (i.e. which books are translated etc.) and concordant with information given at the place.

Further, according to expert's opinion, it is not sufficient for the science and practice of psychology to become Psychology Practitioners after receiving 180 ECTS. But if the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo mandates that it is sufficient to become Psychology Practitioner and to enter labour market in the public sector, that is not the subject of evaluation of UBT program of Psychology and it doesn't affect the evaluation report.

**To conclude, regarding BA of Psychology, experts are remaining on the decision that we do not recommend to accredit BA Psychology at present cycle of evaluation of the application.** As mentioned, beside formal aspects, main reasons for the decision are related to the teaching staff, which is not recognised as sufficient. Also recommendations are based on same findings.

Pécs, June 7<sup>th</sup> 2017

For and on behalf of the Experts' Team:

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