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

University of Gjilan „Kadri Zeka"

Programs under evaluation:
Educational Mathematics/BSc

ACCREDITATION Evaluation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

8th May, Prishtina

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 7th May 2019

Expert Team (ET) members:

Prof. Dr. Vassilis Tsiantos - Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Institute of Technology
Ms. Delia Gologan – Student Expert

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

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

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-Evaluation report of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences;*
- *Site-visit information;*
- *Webpage of the university;*
- *Annexes to the SER;*
- *Complementary materials from the KAA (CVs, Syllabuses etc.)*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- National standards;
- European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2015;

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1.2. Site visit schedule

(6th May)

19.45	Meeting at the Reception of the Hotel
20.00	Working dinner

(7th May)

07.50   Meeting at the reception of the hotel

09.00 – 09.30   Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated *(no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion)*

09.35 – 10.35   Meeting with the head of the study programme

10.40 – 11.40   Meeting with quality assurance representatives

11.40 – 12.45   Lunch break

13.00 – 13.45   Meeting with involved teaching and administrative staff

13.50 – 14.20   Meeting with external stakeholders

14.20 – 14.40   Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure *(used for the implementation of the programme)*

14.40 – 14.55   Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program

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

The Public University "KADRI ZEKA" in Gjilan (UKZ) is a rather new Higher Education Institution as it was established in 2013. According to the SER: *'According to the statute of the "Kadri Zeka" University in Gjilan, the establishment of UKZ carries the idea of promotion and development of university higher education, scientific research, artistic creativity and qualification of faculty up to the doctoral degree.*

Likewise, the establishment of UKZ enabled the inclusion of the largest number of students from the Gjilan region, the Presheva Valley and other parts of Kosovo and abroad, in university higher education and creates opportunities for promotion of academic, scientific, artistic and cultural heritage of the region and beyond, becoming part of the overall international achievements.

Public University "Kadri Zeka" in Gjilan has been created to serve the knowledge, education and well-being of Kosovo society in general."

At the present, the University runs 9 programs (7 bachelor level programs and 2 master level programs) and has 6,333 students, 40 full-time professors and 112 part-time teachers.

- The university made an analysis of necessities and a study of the workforce market and it concluded that there is request for a new program to train future qualified Mathematics teachers for the primary and secondary education (later on referred to as `teachers` in this report);
- Due to the retirement of many teachers and the changes in the requirements for teaching (because the new legislation requires teachers to have Masters-level education);
- The proposed program combines two specialties: educational training and Mathematics and was entitled Education Mathematics;
- The university plans, on the long term, to further develop Masters' programs that the graduates of the Education Mathematics program can follow in order to fulfil their training and teach (they are required to gather 300 ECTS credits);

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

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

The mission and vision of the study program are in compliance with the overall mission of the institution.

The mission of the program is: *The vision of the Faculty of Applied Sciences (FAS) is: To prepare professionals who are ready to be involved in the labour market, in the service of the needs of a developed and prosperous society. The mission of the FAS is to promote continuous research of development and education to students, paying attention to human and civic values, universal values, as well as the acquisition of a broad academic culture in the way of judgment and response to contemporary and dynamic society situations.* [SER, p.18]
while the mission of the university:

According to the statute of the "Kadri Zeka" University in Gjilan, the establishment of UKZ carries the idea of promotion and development of university higher education, scientific research, artistic creativity and qualification of faculty up to the doctoral degree. + Public University "Kadri Zeka" in Gjilan has been created to serve the knowledge, education and well-being of Kosovo society in general [SER, p.3]

The ET has been convinced by the discussions with the members of the academic community and stakeholders that they trust in this mission, it publicly known by everyone and the day-to-day activity of the professors are in support of this mission.

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

The qualification resulting from the programme is clearly specified and refers to a clear level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. [SER, p. 37]

The pre-set learning outcomes of the evaluated study program were drafted by the professor who engaged in providing the program upon its accreditation without consultation.
The program consists of modules summing up to 180 ECTS and spattered along three years, in line with the EQF, belonging to the first cycle, Bachelor program equivalent of the 6th level of ISCED qualifications.
Observation: the SER, page 19, mentioned that the program is equivalent of level 5 ISCED, but the ET concluded that this was a factual mistake since during the interviews the head of the program and other stakeholders confirmed their program is suggested for the 6th level.

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

According to its mission, the study program aims to offer quality education to its students more than to offer a scientific program, but the organizers are committed to encourage and foster research in the field of Mathematics and Teaching.

The organizers propose this program as an alternative to the other one existed on the market – which is the traditional Mathematics course - and promise to use new teaching methods which is in compliance with the core idea of the program (so that they offer a model for their future students for when they will be teachers);

Recommendation: the University should try to mobilize resources towards supporting professors in their endeavour of permanent improvement of their teaching methods. For example a Center for Teaching and Learning can offer opportunities for further development of the teaching competencies even for experienced professors in order to keep up to date with the developments in the field of teaching.

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

The institution annexed to the SER examples of policies and internal regulations dealing with recurring procedural and academic issues such as the quality assurance system, the selection of the academic staff and the educational process. Moreover, during the site-visit the ET learnt about other policies and guidelines that are publicly available as they are posted on the university website (https://www.uni-gjilan.net/universiteti/dokumentet-e-rendesishme/; last checked by the ET on 07.05.2019);

Recommendation: for the evaluated program we recommend the organizers to develop, adopt and publish specific regulations based on the universities' framework and guidelines – for e.g. to include specific elements distinct from the other departments. This makes it easier for the future community of the program to follow these rules. For example, a regulation for the seminars could inform students about what is required from them in order to successfully promote them.

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

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It is not the case, since the code of ethics is not adopted yet.

Recommendation: use the opportunity of having the head of the program as the leader of the Ethics Committee in order to develop regulations for the program and train the members of the community to follow them.

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

N/A for a new program. Unfortunately the university doesn't have regulated this practice yet, though the reviewing of all procedures happens inevitably every time the institution prepares for the external evaluation of KAA.

Recommendation: consider reviewing all policies and regulations regularly based on the intermediate feedbacks on how they were implemented so far and what worked and what didn't go as expected (e.g. every four years).

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes, therefore everything from the program design up to the chosen evaluation method should be consistent with these (objectives and pre-set learning outcomes);*

2. *The university should try to mobilize resources towards supporting professors in their endeavour of permanent improvement of their teaching methods. For example, The Institute for Educational Research and Training, in accordance with its purpose, can offer opportunities for further development of the teaching competencies, even for experienced professors, in order to keep up to date with the developments in the field of teaching;*

3. *The organizers of the program should consider adapting all the regulations of the university to the specifics of the program, thus making it easier to be followed by the members of the community.*

4. *The newly established Ethics Committee should develop a Code of Ethics for the program and subsequent policies to implement it and monitor its implementation, in order to make sure that all staff and students comply with it. These regulations should include procedures of identifying potential situations of noncompliance and the procedure to respond to them. They should also consider including, in the code of ethics, instruments of reporting of any noncompliance in a manner that ensures the protection of the identity of the reporter. The code of ethics should also aim to prevent and combat the phenomenon of plagiarism, therefore the Ethics Committee could consider cooperating with all teachers and researchers in the university for establishing standards of quality for any paper elaborated within the university (by them or by students), promote them within the academic community and support students in following them.*

5. *The university should set a period/deadline for the foreseen revision of all policies and regulations mentioned in the Action Plan (for e.g. the review can be done every three/four years). As mentioned in the internal regulations of UKS, this review could take into account feedbacks from all those responsible for their implementation and should aim to permanently improve the regulations and policies of the institution, the faculty (academic unit) and the program.*

2.2. Quality management

General observation: the institution has a process for the design and approval of their programmes. It also includes periodical revision of the programmes, but without involving in this review process graduates or employers, which we highly recommend.

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

SER mentions at p. 21 and p. 22 that students, teachers and administrative staff are required to report different aspects of their activity, therefore one can conclude that all the members of the academic community will be involved in such processes as the teaching begins. For example: teachers are requested to report on the progress of their teaching in correspondence with the syllabus of their discipline [SER, p.23].

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

One can say that the evaluation process and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes since they are already designed even from this stage of the program design. For example, the Quality Action Plan is expected to be updated every year as a proof of the constant focus of the program management to improve its quality.

However, neither the SER, nor the discussions with the initiators of the program offer sufficient information in order to reveal whether there is a plan to make the results of the evaluations public. This is part of normal planning processes as such reports on the quality of the activity – both educational and research – of the programme is the ground for making decisions of future investments in the improvement of the program. This is not currently a practice of the university, therefore the ET is concerned if it will not be part of the practice of those responsible for this proposed program.

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

The quality assurance processes deal with the activity of the teachers (as mentioned in the SER, p. 22). Neither the SER nor the interviews conducted by the ET revealed relevant details about the evaluation of support services or available resources.

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

In order to evaluate the programs' outputs, students are invited to fill in an anonymous questionnaire in which they evaluate whether or not the modules they have attended have met their preset objectives [SER, p.23]. However, neither the SER, nor the interviews conducted by the ET revealed any relevant information about the evaluation of the outputs or the learning outcomes. Questions in the feedback form seemed to pay more attention to the inputs and the process – e.g. the questions referred to the attendance rate of the teacher, the syllabus etc.

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

There were insufficient information available to be able to evaluate whether the program initiators have some minimal quality assurance standards set and whether the way they

elaborated the quality assurance processes they were designed to grant a continuous improvement.

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

The program management intends to collect data from students and a survey has already been developed with this purpose [SER, p.22]. However, there is no information that such data is being collected from employers and since this is a new program there are no graduates to be questioned, nor plans to do so with future generations of graduates. However, during the discussion with the ET, the potential employers for the potential graduates declared that they are willing to respond positively to the invitation to contribute to the improvement of the program, if asked.

SER, p. 23 mentions: the Assessment Committee prepares the Report on Assessment in an open and public manner with the inclusion of all achievements and shortcomings.

However, during the site-visit, the discussions revealed that such reports are presented to the teachers individually and to their heads of departments or deans and to the rector, but they are not otherwise made public.

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

Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. However, they do not include investigation of the student workload, academic success or plans to include anything linked to the employment rate of graduates.

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

There are no plans referring the periodicity of the reporting on the overall quality of the program, however history shows that in practice this happens every two-three years with each external evaluation of the program by the KAA. Those are the moments when the persons responsible for the program initiate self-evaluation processes and identify its strengths and weaknesses.

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

As mentioned before (at point no. 1.6) there is no information about the regularity of the evaluation of the program.

Compliance level: Non-compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The program initiators should consider developing a unit responsible for Quality Assurance within the Department or the academic unit and allocate it the responsibility for building a Quality Culture. Part of their efforts in reaching this endeavour, this unit could consider organizing meetings and workshops for the members of the community in order to help them develop the skills and competencies and acquire the necessary knowledge in order to implement the quality assurance processes. These could also help motivate them to consider the issue of quality assurance in their everyday activity.*

2. *The framework of the evaluation process includes questionnaires regarding the services offered by the university and the (educational and not only) resources available. This should be implemented as soon as possible either as a separate form from those evaluating the teaching methods / courses or the same, or together with them, but they should definitely be part of the annual report on quality assurance.*

3. *The Quality Assurance unit should consider developing instruments for verifying whether there is a correlation between the pre-set learning outcomes, the teaching strategies used in the classrooms and the assessment methods used to evaluate students performance. Some of them are already included in the feedback form and some more data are collected about these aspects and the reach of the learning outcomes, in the students' perception (collected through the feedback form), thus constituting a solid base for constantly improving these components of the program. However, more can be done with regards this issue.*

4. *The QA unit should prepare and publish (for e.g. on the programs' website) the report of the quality assurance procedures (for e.g. the feedback forms filled in by students) as a basis for future plans of improvement. Making the process transparent up to this step will motivate the members of the community to relevantly contribute to the QA*

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processes, rather than transmitting them the idea that their feedback is irrelevant (as it is transmitted by not showing them these reports).

5. *The program initiators should consider including in the internal regulations the fact that a self evaluation process is mandatory every three years and that it includes questioning employers and graduates about their perception over the components of the program (inputs, process, outputs, services and resources).This should complement the efforts put up by the institution to develop and implement the E-Career Platform in SMU which is intended to collect data from graduates and employees.*

2.3. Academic staff

Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with **full position descriptions and conditions of employment**. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.
AND
Standard 3.2. **The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation**.

The SER included a table with the academic staff employed full-time and part-time. There were at least three PhD staff occupying full-time positions, thus complying with the regulation. KAA assured the ET that this aspect is also verified by their experts. Moreover, during the site-visit, the ET found out that the program initiators intended to open up competitions for further people to join the program as academic staff.

According to SER, p. 9 the selection of the academic staff will follow the university procedure and a public competition will be organized. From the stage of announcing the competition the description of the place of work and the necessary conditions to be fulfilled by the candidates are announced. There are also regulations preventing relative to be part of the selection process of their keen.

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

Academic staff do not cover more than two teaching positions within the program, however they are also involved in other study programs.

As in SER p.24 we have read `*Prof. Assoc. Dr. Xhevdet Thaqi will cover the subjects of Mathematical Education Philosophy, Didactics of Mathematics and subjects from the field of Geometry.*' Especially if the current personnel is also full-time employed in other study programs ([SER, p.28]: '*also charged with teaching subjects from other study programs.*') those responsible for the program should consider verifying the workload of the academic staff.

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

The academic staff are all full-time employees of the university, but it is not clear how many of them will manage to give up their positions in the other programs and dedicate full-time or part-time to this proposed program. The program initiators should have picked for this program academic staff that was not involved in more than one position. *The ET strongly recommends the program responsible person to closely monitor the issue of workload for the academic staff ensuring both that they spend enough time in the university dedicated to their work and that they have enough time to undergo qualitative work.*

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

The program is designed for 75 students, the activity is equivalent to 60 ECTS credits and there are more than three full time staff with PhD title. However, from the list of academic staff proposed for this program only four have specific training in the field of Mathematics and none in the field of Pedagogy/Psychology/Didactics, the allocated resources seem scarce. The ET understands that this issue can be solved only after the accreditation of the program – as only after that moment the university is allowed to hire new academic staff. However, at this point, the aim of enrolling 75 students seems to the ET not realistic in terms of capacity of ensuring a qualitative teaching – learning experience for them.

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

The university has a centre for teaching that can help the academic staff to improve their teaching skills, however neither the SER nor the site visit provided sufficient evidence that this centre was used in a manner that puts it to value.

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

All teaching staff are responsible of engaging in the academic community and providing consultations for students. The academic staff spoke and proved the ET that, for the other study programs they are involved in, they make publicly known their office hours so that they can be approached by students for consultations. Though this program is only at the beginning, they promised to proceed in the same way with regards to consultations.

The information in the SER and that collected during the site-visit indicated that there are staff offices shared by two or three academic staff. And in the same time, there are few students using the instrument of consultations. As small spaces and lack of privacy when addressing a teacher with questions might be discouraging, but in the same time difficult to solve without costly investments in new buildings with more offices, we recommend the university to consider organizing a room that can be used by the teachers when they are approached by students for consultations instead of receiving them in their shared offices.

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

SER mentions in p.13 that FAS management intends to consider the assessment of teachers done by students as a very important part of the teachers' evaluation. Both the SER and the site visit evidenced the commitment of the university leadership towards quality assurance. Academic staff evaluations are conducted yearly, and they are constantly improved. However, their results are not publicly available (as shown before in section 2.2).

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

Both the university and the program leadership expressed their commitment towards quality assurance and constantly improving their study programs. However, there is no strategy for improving teaching methods and learning materials though some efforts can be registered in this direction. For example: the University has developed a Moodle platform which academic staff use for sharing learning materials with students – this is extremely helpful especially when libraries are not equipped with enough books to be able to provide each student with its own manual.

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

Retired teachers lose the status of full-time teachers and are involved in academic activities as part-time staff.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1.   The program initiators should think, along with the QA unit, a system of checking the workload of each academic staff member in order to avoid them to overload by taking up more than two teaching positions. However, it is not sufficient to check this fact within the program, but also within the university as the academic staff registered for this proposed program is already involved in other programs.

Making sure that a teacher is not taking up more than one full-time and one part-time job, is equivalent to making sure that they have enough time to dedicate to ensuring the quality of their educational activity as well as research activity. These efforts should complement the initiative of the university to recruit new professors for the program.

2.   The ET strongly recommends the program responsible person to closely monitor the issue of workload for the academic staff ensuring both that they spend enough time in the university dedicated to their work and that they have enough time to undergo qualitative work. This monitoring should consider the elements of the competition for the recruitment of academic staff which is in the process, as it envisaged that the professors should only have the standard of lectures (6 classes per week) and consultations in order to have sufficient professional and research time.

3. *The ET recommends that the first group of students enrolled should not be larger than 30 students, so that the available human resources can ensure them a qualitative learning experience.*

4. *We recommend the Institute for Educational Research and Training to conduct surveys in order to identify training needs of the academic staff and provide them with training opportunities – either by sending them to courses (externalise this service) or by providing in-house development opportunities. This institute can facilitate the exchange of good-practices among teachers in terms of their teaching methods – which are already included in the projects designed by the university.*

   *This can especially help the academic staff to better understand what **student-centered learning** means and how they can address it in class.*

5. *We recommend the University to consider organizing a room that can be used by the teachers when they are approached by students for consultations instead of receiving them in their shared offices.*

6. *We recommend that the results of the academic staff evaluations are made public – even if they are not nominal thus not mention anyone by name – and accompanied with a plan to improve the results of the evaluation. Such plans could include professional development opportunities for the teachers. The Guidelines for the assessment of academic staff and the subjects by students and the usage of such results in the university "Kadri Zeka" should be permanently reviewed and consider the recommendation.*

2.4. Educational process content

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

The study program is modelled on qualification objectives as it aims to be attractive for candidates who intend to be employed by MEST and teach in schools.

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The qualification resulting from a programme is clearly specified and refers to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

However, it is not very clear at this point whether the graduates of this program will be able to immediately get a job as Mathematics teachers after graduation or whether they will be required to follow and successfully graduate a MA program.

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

The program complies with both the National Qualifications Framework and the EQF.

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

The disciplines/modules within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and were designed after a regional model (Faculty of Mathematics of the University of Ljubljana and mathematics program of the University of Science and Technology in Krakow, Poland):

In SER the program management enumerates the expected learning outcomes (p.35-36):

The evaluated study program sets learning outcomes both general/transversal and field-specific, such as:

- Abstraction skills and problems analysis, synthesis skills and critical solving of problems.

- Ability to cooperate

- Effective Teaching

- The ability to communicate professionally,

- Knowledge of basic mathematical disciplines (such as algebra, analysis, geometry)

- The logical thinking skills and the proof of light arguments,

- Ability to apply modern didactic knowledge,

However, the ET express their concern regarding the insufficient component of the pedagogical (didactics) part of the program. Since it is a program entitled `Educational Mathematics` and designed for training future teachers, the ET feels that it should have a more consistent component dedicated to developing teaching skills. Therefore we recommend the program initiators to consider including in the syllabus disciplines dealing with the pedagogy, psychology of teaching and learning, didactics, etc.

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

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

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

The program management has provided syllabuses for all disciplines and they all respected the minimal structure.

Standard 4.5. If the language of instruction is **other than Albanian**, **actions** are taken **to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff** are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.

Standard 4.5 The program will be offered in Albanian

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

The SER mentions at page 22: '*The syllabus is distributed to students (in electronic form, on the Internet, or as a paper copy'.* When students will be enrolled how will this happen? How do you plan to explain and discuss the learning outcomes with the students?

[SER, p.12] also mentions *'offering a range of activities: offering syllabi courses at the beginning of the semester, lectures and flexible exercises with the necessary materials, organization of periodic and continuous evaluations, use of IT and e-learning application, the application SMU (System for Managing University), regular consultations with teachers, etc.'*

This makes the ET confident that this aspect will be followed by the academic staff involved in developing and implementing the proposed program.

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

Many of the academic staff of the program are young teachers who have studied abroad, thus they have the desire of offering qualitative teaching experiences to their future students. However, the university could do more for supporting teachers endeavours in developing their teaching capacities in order to implement a student-centered learning process and thus answer to different learning needs.

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

Many of the academic staff of the program are young teachers who have studied abroad, thus they have the desire of offering qualitative teaching experiences to their future students. However, the university could do more for supporting teachers endeavours in developing their teaching capacities in order to implement a student-centered learning process and thus answer to different learning needs.

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

AND

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

The university and program initiators do not possess the mechanisms to ensure that the standards of student achievement are consistent over time and comparable among themselves, but the academic staff of the program are confident that this is easily achievable due to the characteristic of the program (evaluations in Mathematics being more easily designed in a way that ensures objectivity of assessment).

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

The practical stages are of two types according to the SER (p. 37): those conducted in specially designed labs inside the university and those conducted within other institutions (schools). For the second ones students are expected to: '*assisting in the learning process, preparing student learning sequences and collaborating with the teachers of the school institutions'.* Since they are part of the discipline structures, they don't have ECTS allocated to them, nor learning outcomes defined specifically for them, but rather for the entire discipline which consists of several hours of theoretical activity and some other hours of practical work.

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

NA (there are no such stages)

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *The study program, in order to be relevant to the international market should reflect the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe: preparation for sustainable employment; preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies;*

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personal development; the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base;
Though it was intended to be designed along with these four elements, we recommend the academic unit to work with the QA unit to develop instruments of checking whether the program manages to reach all these intended outcomes.

2. *The study program should be periodically revised so that it ensures smooth student progression.*

3. *Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach. Therefore internal regulations should clearly state that students are involved in planning the courses, distributing the ECTS to the disciplines (as they give feedback on the real workload), choosing the assessment methods and planning the exams* calendar, *but also on other decisions like investments, reviewing the regulations etc. Moreover, responsible units should check that this will become a reality and see whether there is anything the university can do to help and motivate students to get involved.*

4. *Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. This means careful consideration of the design and delivery of study programmes and the assessment of outcomes could help the program to set the goal of offering SCL. It can be translated in many small things that create the context for efficient and productive learning environments, for example: Internal regulations of the program should include Regular assessments (by students and not only) and adjustments of the teaching methods in order to improve them by changing them according to the needs of the student body;*

5. *All elements of the program (from the infrastructure, to the learning materials, to the teaching methods) take into account the diversity of the student population and the specific needs of small groups within this population. This should continue the efforts already done by the university, but at the program level For example: the students with disabilities or special education needs;*

6. *We recommend the program initiators to consider including in the syllabus disciplines dealing with the pedagogy, psychology of teaching and learning, didactics etc.*

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7. *The ET recommends that the program leadership develops mechanisms to ensure that these standards are met and that they have a developed procedure on intervening when it is not like this.*

2.5. Students

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

> The management of the program has described within the SER an admission procedure that will take into account all candidates which have graduated the … level of education and successfully promoted the Matura exam. They will have also to pass an admission exam.
> However, the SER mentions that admission for the first year of the program functioning will be more loose.

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

> In SER p.12 it was stated that '*UKZ students are almost all students who have completed upper secondary education (12 years) and Matura Exam*'. During the site visite the issue was clarified with the members of the community: only students who proove passing the Matura Exam are enrolled.
> To confirm their registration students have to go through the online registration form, bring diploma with transcript from high school, birth certificate, copy of ID, proof of payment, a receipt for the semester registration from the website.

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

> The program initiators proposed to enrol 75 students/year and group them in sub-groups of 25 students. We consider that the program has enough human and material resources to ensure a qualitative learning experience for a a 25 student group, therefore we recommend that the program only admits 25 students.

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

Students should be given feedback based on the assessment of their progress in achieving the intended learning outcomes. Linking the feedback to advice on how to proceed further can help the student to progress easier towards meeting the outcomes.

Standard 5.5 is met as the results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are **certified by the academic record.**

The studies rules (Annex to the SER) specifies in Art. 22 that exceptions can be made by the Council of Faculty for students in special situations, therefore the Standard 5.6 regarding '. **Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured** with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations' is met.

Standard 5.7. **Records** of student completion rates a**re kept for all courses**. Such records should also be kept for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators of the program.

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

Academic staff is responsible for making sure that the work submitted by students is original. Some of them have previously used a specific software for this task addressing help-requests to other HE institutions.

We recommend the university to buy such a software for checking the works of the students and teachers against plagiarism.

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

The regulation of the studies in FAS (annex to SER), which is published on the university website, mentions that students have the right to appeal at the entrance (admissions) exam. Students have the right to appeal any exam in 48 h from the results being announced and can require the exam to be reevaluated by the examiner or a commission.

Other rights: to pass from one year to another without gathering all the credits and to do that after the 3rd year, to transfer from other programs in the specific conditions laid down by the regulations, to not have more than 1 exam a day;

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

The Studies Regulations (Annex to SER) provides rules for transfer.

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

Academic staff is obliged by regulations to ensure scheduled times for consultations and advice to students. But at the moment, the program seems to lack the spaces for this to be implemented.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *We recommend that the program initiators take up the measures to ensure that the admission requirement are consistently and fairly applied for all students, continuing the practices of the UKZ for the other programs.*
2. *Records of student completion should also be kept for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators of the program and in annual reports.*

2.6. Research

Standard 6.1. The study program has defined s**cientific/applied research objectives** (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; s**ufficient financial, logistic and human resources** are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.

The program aims to prepare future Mathematical teachers for the available jobs in the primary and secondary educational level, therefore the program does not have a very well-defined scientific research objective. However, the university showed in the SER (page. 44) its efforts to identify resources and encourage academic staff members to participate in quality research activities that result in publishing results in prestigious journals.

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

Teaching staff is expected to get involved in research activities besides the scholarly activities and this is clear for them as resulted from the site visit. However, the ET noticed that there are very low standards for promotion towards the level of professor - e.g. a PhD with one published article can become a professor. The ET recommends the university to set up higher minimal standards for professors and to take into consideration the idea of introducing standards/criteria referring to the research activity within the annual/periodical performance evaluation of the academic staff.

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

The site visit revealed that the university has raised the standards regarding what is recognized as research, but effects are showing slowly.

Standard 6.4. The academic staff has proven a **track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity**, however this is not relevant for the reviewed study program as this is in a new field, different from the one in which the academic staff has had its teaching and research activity before. Such a track record has to be developed for the field of mathematics from now on and both the academic staff allocated to the program and the program initiators seem committed to this endeavour.

However, the ET has expressed their concerned about the easiness of transitioning between two fields for the academic staff, therefore recommends the university to support them in this efforts by: ensuring none of them is taking more than two positions and that they have the space and time required to develop research activities in the field.

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

In the SER there is a list of the published works of the academic staff.

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

The list provided in the SER proves that the research conducted until now by the academic staff allocated to the program - though not all in the field of Mathematics - was validated through publications, though maybe due to the specifics of the research field no technological transfer or patents were mentioned.

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

Some of the academic staff members produced at least one scientific research publication recently, but this aspect can definately be improved in the future after they fully dedicate to research in the field of Mathematics.

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

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

The SER did not include relevant information about this and during the site visit the academics mentioned they try to do this - include references about recent research activity in the field during their teaching activity - though it is not specifically recommended or imposed by the university. The ET recommends them to do this during the classes of the reviewed program, once it is launched and functioning.

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

Nor the SER, neither the site visit provided sufficient information to evaluate this. If there is no such policy, the ET suggests that one should be developed and implemented.

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

Not applicable since there are no student up to the moment of the review.

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Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The ET recommends the university to progressively set up higher minimal standards for professors and to take into consideration the idea of introducing standards/criteria referring to the research activity within the annual/periodical performance evaluation of the academic staff.*
    For example: internal regulations should mention the criteria for career advancement (for e.g. minimum 3 articles published in certain journals in order to obtain tenure, other 3-4 such articles in order to become an associate professor etc.) But these standards should be thought and set by the university and faculty.

2. *The ET recommends the university to provide support to their academic staff for changing their field of research (prevent them from taking up to more than two positions, offering the extra space and resources for undergoing research etc.);*

3. The ET recommends academic staff to include students in their research projects as a mean of transmitting to them the principles of research ethics and helping them develop research-specific competencies.

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

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

The SER mentions at page 29: '*Lack of spatial infrastructure for academic staff, administrative and complicated procedures for solving them.'* Among the weaknesses of the program.

In SER, p. 29 another weaknesses is identified: '*Lack of spatial infrastructure for academic staff, administrative and complicated procedures for solving them.'*

During the site visit, the ET inquired about the resources available to the program and found out that there are a few shortcomings (e.g. academic staff share their offices, the library has insufficient study-places or books), but that there are plans in progress to solve them. The university is renovating a floor of the building where it functions and has a construction site for another building. The academic staff supported by the IT department started using a Moodle Platform to share learning materials with students so that they can access them from home to

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compensate the lack of study places within the library, they have also participated in several international projects through which they managed to cover the subscription to several online libraries so that both academics and teachers can access up-to-date research results thus overcoming the insufficient number of books.

Standard 7.2. There is a **financial plan** at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the **sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years**. Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must **demonstrate** with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, **for the next at least three years:**
a) **owned or rented spaces** adequate for the educational process;
b) **owned or rented laboratories,** with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;
c) **adequate softwar**e for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, **with utilisation licence;**
d) **library** equipped with **reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock** according to the disciplines included in the curricula.

 Though the ET has not seen the financial plan there are predictors of sustainability of the program for the next three years: the program can use its own spaces and laboratories - all adequate for the educational process, the university has acquired some specialised software that can be used during the practice. Even though the library has a shortage in the number of seats in the reading room and of books on the stock, there are measures that the university is taken to overcome these shortcoming.

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

As discussed before, the ET recommended that the first years of functioning, the program only enrolls 25 students. Groups of this dimension can easily be accommodated by the lecture

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and seminar rooms owned by the university and available for the program. They are all adequate for the disciplines included in the curricula.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The SER mentions at page 20 among the weaknesses of the program that there is a `*Lack of contemporary mathematics literature in Albanian.*", but as shown before there are attempts to overcome these shortcomings.

Considering the ET's recommendation to only admit 25 students, the ET can conclude that there are enough seats in the reading room of the library, enough books in the library stock etc. to cover for at least 10% of the students in the study program, while also being used by the students from other programs.

Standard 7.6. **The infrastructure and facilities** dedicated to the implementation of the program is not **adapted to students with special needs.**

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. The development plans of the university and department should consider the potential rapid growth in student numbers that can accompany the proposal of new study

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programs like the one under review. The university should evaluate the overall capacity of the institution to host and provide qualitative resources to all its programs.

2. *The future development plans of the university infrastructure (including the new premise about which the interviewees told the ET that is supported by the Government of Kosovo, MEST and Municipality of Gjilan)should consider addressing the needs of the students with special needs, both in terms of accessible rooms and educational spaces, and adequate educational materials.*

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3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program **Mathematics Education** offered by **The Public University 'Kadri Zeka' Gjilan** is *Substantially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *to accredit* the study program for a duration of *3 years* with a number of *25* students to be enrolled in the program.

Expert Team

Chair

	Vassilis Tsiantos	**23.05.2019**
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	Gologan Delia	
23.05.2019		
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)