

Evaluation Report for the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary, University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina"

By the Accreditation Expert Team (Site visit on July 10, 2015)

Members:

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There were altogether three programmes to be evaluated:

1. Public Health (M.Sc.)
2. Food Technology with Biotechnology (B.Sc.)
3. Veterinary Medicine (DVM)

Numbers according Self Evaluation Report (SER) 2014

1. Public Health - first accreditation

(Prof.dr.sc Zvonko Sobic, University of Zagreb, Medical Faculty, Andrija Stampar School of Public Health)

1. Academic Programme and Student Management

Study programme (M.Sc.) Public Health of the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary, University of Prishtina correspond entirely to the institution's mission statement and vision as it is declared on the page 6 of the self-evaluation report (SER) 2014.

"The mission of the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary, University of Prishtina is education, research and transfer of knowledge to the economy and public sector has its vision of long-term interest of fulfilling the mission and function, creating experts in these areas: Veterinary and Public Health focusing on aspect of protection of animal health, human and ecosystem in which humans and animals live as well as the environmental issues." have good chances to be realized by educational programme planned for first accreditation.

The proposed study programme consists of 2 semesters (one year) with altogether 1483 hours including eight modules. However, ECTS points (60) are not calculated correctly. For 60 ECTS points you need 1500 hours, so 17 hours are missing. Specifically, module 4 (Food Safety and Security) has 195 hours and eight ECTS points missing 5 hours (8 points=200 hours). Similarly, module 6 (Zoonotic and emerging diseases) for its nine ECTS points needs 225 hours, but has only 213, missing 17.

At the end of the study, students complete master thesis and achieve degree of master in Public Health. This degree corresponds with international standards. Methods of teaching are planned to be modern, interactive, problem solving and student centred.

Relating the programme, there is only one remark: for the course No. 7 “Ethics in Public Health” it is obvious that is basically designed for medical students. It is based mainly on modernized Hippocratic principles created for physicians treating patients, meaning sick individuals. In contrast, public health ethics, developed (relatively) recently, is dealing with interventions in the population, mostly healthy people, asking for different approaches. It is necessary to adopt this course to public health ethics.

2. Staff

According to SER 2014, the staff for the study programme Master in Public Health consist of 9 professors and 6 assistants employed in the University of Prishtina. Additionally, more than 30 teachers from the world participate part time in the study programme.

As conclusion: from SER 2014 it is clear that, according to KAA standards, “institution has at its disposal sufficient permanent academic, scientific staff on full-time employment contracts at least three persons for each study programme, and at least one of them should have the status of professor. This person should hold a higher scientific qualification.”

3. Research and International Cooperation

The Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary has established a research office that serves for liaison with all relevant funding international agencies and supports the preparation of applications. Teaching staff is involved in research activities what is visible from the list of publication (more than 250 scientific papers in last three years), as well as from the participation in national and international conferences.

The Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary has contracts with a certain number of national and international organizations and is involved in more than 10 scientific projects. As conclusion, it looks like that research and international cooperation in the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary is more than satisfactory.

4. Finances and Infrastructure / Space and Equipment

According to SER, finances planned would be sufficient for regular functioning although we received only global budget for the entire Faculty, but not for separate courses.

Facilities, as seen during the site visit, appear convenient for lectures and seminars with enough electronic devices for efficient lecturing. However, some laboratories, especially for basic topics are very modest. The premises and equipment in the Institute of Public Health of the Medical Faculty in Prishtina are modern and very well equipped.

5. Quality management

The quality assurance is very well planned for the study programme Master in Public Health and follows all standards and directives which come out of the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA). Based on the analysis of questionnaires for students, docents and administrative staff, the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary is going to hold regular meetings with Department Heads and the Research Committee of the Faculty together with student representatives for continuous improvement of the study programme.

Recommendations:

We recommend slight corrections in the study programme “Master in Public Health” as prerequisite to accept the application of the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary of the University of Prishtina ”Hasan Prishtina”.

1. The number of teaching hours and ETCS points has to be recalculated according to recommendations in the paragraph 1 of this report. Incorrect structure of hours and ETCS points is not acceptable.
2. Course No. 7 “Ethics in Public Health” has to be completed with content relating public health ethics

Final Recommendation:

With the strong precondition that the number of teaching hours and ETCS points has to be recalculated according to the recommendations given in paragraph 1 of this report the expert team recommends the Study Programme Master in Public Health at the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary of the University of Prishtina ”Hasan Prishtina” to be accepted for the first 3-year accreditation.

2. Food Technology with Biotechnology

(Prof. Dr. Joachim Müller, University of Hohenheim)

The B.Sc. programme “Food Technology and Biotechnology” was started in 2013 as a kind of copy of the B.Sc. programme “Food Science and Biotechnology” of the University of Hohenheim. In the self-evaluation report (SER) it is written: “For compilation of this study programme, as model programme has been taken programme from the University of Hohenheim-Germany, with 95% compatibility (SER p. 118)”. The study programme has been accredited in the past, but the evaluation report was not provided.

1. Academic Programme and Student Management

1.1 Conformity to institution’s mission statement

Mission of the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary of University of Prishtina is “...creating a new generation perspective, modernization and reform of the education system in Kosovo, regional and European integration in the field of agriculture and veterinary medicine“. Specific mission “...lies in the transmission of knowledge and competencies to future experts in ... processing of raw materials of plant and animal origin”. In this context the study programme, corresponds well with the institution’s mission statement. As the University of Prishtina is embedded in an agricultural dominated landscape, surrounded by a couple of agribusiness companies the focus of the study programme is addressing the societal requirements in terms of training experts for a growing labour market which is needed to increase the food self-sufficiency of the country.

1.2 Quality, range and appropriateness to the academic degree,

The programme’s quality regarding quantity and range of contents as well as learning environment is meeting the requirements of a B.Sc.-degree and corresponds to international standards.

1.3 Allocation of ECTS, work load and teaching methods

The allocation of ECTS is appropriate and the workload appears manageable, which was also confirmed in the interview with the students. The overall time of 150 hours per course is spend to 30% on lectures, to 30% on practical work like seminars and lab exercises, to 30% on individual work and to 10% on exams. Hence, sufficient opportunity for independent study is provided.

1.4 Overarching didactic concept

An overarching didactic concept was not explicitly described in the SER. However, the integration of practical elements complimentary to the lectures, making up 50% to the classroom time, can be seen as a principal concept. As a M.Sc. programme in Food Technology is not yet implemented, the graduates will enter the labour market directly after B.Sc.-degree. Therefore, a practise oriented education is highly important. Unfortunately, little information about the practical exercises was given in the SER. According the interview with lecturers there are classroom-, field- or laboratory practicals, depending on the subject of a course. Some laboratory working space or students is available at the visited facilities, but should be extended in future. In certain courses the exercises consists of excursions to food

processing companies, which is appropriate to introduce students to the future potential employers. A 4-weeks practical internship as described in the SER (p. 120) seems not yet been implemented. Up to now, students are spending only few days at a company for preparing a report. This should be extended to a full 4-weeks-8-hours/day working experience in future.

1.5 Structure of the programme, overlap

The descriptions of courses are partly superficial, which makes it difficult to decide about overlap of contents between various courses. The list of literature contains frequently books in English and German language and it is questionable whether this literature is accessible and understandable for students. The calculations of course hours in the SER are in many cases flawed (e.g. p. 130, 132, 133 etc.) and more accurateness is desirable for future accreditations.

The sequence of courses appears logic with fundamental subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology at the beginning and more specialized subjects in higher semesters. The specialized subjects are somehow hidden as “Professional I to V” in the SER and should be mentioned clearly by their full course names (e.g. Technology of Milk and Milk Products, Food Hygiene and Microbiology, etc.). To strengthen the practise orientation of the programme, it is recommended to even increase the number of those “Professionals” on cost of the fundamental subjects. Fundamental knowledge can also be by integrated in “Professionals”. Students would benefit by combining fundamental knowledge and its application in a practical context.

Until now, two elective subjects are foreseen in the programme. However, only two elective courses (beside the “Professionals”, which are no electives *de facto*) are mentioned in the SER. To offer a real choice, at least four elective courses have to be listed. To allow a certain specialisation of the students, the number of elective subjects should be extended gradually on the long run. As the capacity of the teaching staff is limited, it should be checked, whether courses of other programmes of the Faculty would be a suitable choice.

As the programme started only in 2013, B.Sc.-theses have not yet been written. In an interview, the responsible professors were sceptical about the value of a B.Sc.-thesis, mainly because it is considered to be a desk study. It is recommended to organize the thesis as supervised research of the students to generate and analyse own data. All involved docents should provide topics from their own research field. On the long run, topics could also be offered in cooperation with the food processing industry.

2. Staff

In total 19 docents are listed in the syllabus of the study programme. Docents of some of the “Professionals” are not mentioned in the SER. Eleven docents are listed in the SER as permanent staff(p. 151 ff), eight remaining docents are neither listed as permanent nor as external staff; their status has to be indicated. Considering 100 study places and three study years, the student/professor-ratio would be 16:1 at full capacity, which is a quite comfortable situation. All of the docents are holding a doctorate and are considered to have appropriate qualifications. However, only two of the professors are specialized in Food Technology. Their number should be increased by the Faculty on the long run.

3. Research activities of staff and students, international co-operation

The responsible professors of the study programme are involved in local research projects. However, only few peer-reviewed articles are to be found in international data bases like SCOPUS. Students are occasionally involved in those research activities, e.g. as student assistants. Structural research involvement of students should be stimulated by performing closely supervised empirical B.Sc.-theses.

International cooperation is limited to academic exchange programmes, like an ongoing 5-years programme with Minnesota funded by USAID and four recent TEMPUS projects that ended 2013 or before.

4. Finances and infrastructure/space and equipment

Lecture halls have not been visited. Some student laboratories are available, however they are quite small and the lab facilities are basic and could be improved.

5. Quality management

According to SER the courses are evaluated by the students via questionnaires. However, the students have not been aware of this during the interview.

Recommendations:

The expert team recommends the re-accreditation of the B.Sc. programme “Food Science and Biotechnology”.

It should be made clear to the Faculty that study programmes must not be copied from foreign universities without reflecting own targets, scopes and resources. The copied study programme of the University of Hohenheim is structured as a consecutive programme, i.e. most of the students will continue in a M.Sc.-programme. Therefore, the share of fundamental subjects is very high in the Hohenheim programme. As most of the B.Sc. graduates of Prishtina University will enter directly the labour market, the share of practise oriented courses should be increased. To extend the flexibility of the programme, the choice of elective courses should be increased on the long-run. It is recommended to organize the B.Sc.-thesis as supervised research project of the students to generate and analyse own data.

The SER is flawed and should be thoroughly revised. As the practical components are very prominent in the courses, their contents and teaching method should also be carefully described.

An advisory board of representatives from the labour market should be established to articulate the requirements of employers concerning knowledge and skills of the graduates.

Research of the docents should be intensified. Efforts should be made to cooperate on international level by joint project applications. The docents should use exchange programmes to spend research sabbaticals at leading Universities.

Final Recommendation:

The expert team recommends the re-accreditation of the B.Sc. programme “Food Science and Biotechnology” for 3 years.

3. Veterinary Medicine

(Prof. Dr. Reinhold Erben, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna)

The proposed study programme follows the EU regulation 2005/36 and is also in accordance with the statute of the University of Prishtina of 2004. As stated on p. 14 of the SER, 95% of the curriculum is derived from the Veterinary Faculty in Budapest, Hungary. The study programme is a 5-year programme with the DVM degree after successful completion of the study programme. Overall, the study programme is comprehensive, and contains all necessary elements for veterinary training. In addition, the study programme is supplemented by elective subjects beginning in the first year. The elective subjects would be an opportunity to introduce specific aspects of veterinary medicine in Kosovo, and to provide opportunities for specialization.

1. Academic Programme and Student Management

The mission of the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary of University of Prishtina is "...creating a new generation perspective, modernization and reform of the education system in Kosovo, regional and European integration in the field of agriculture and veterinary medicine". Thus, it is obvious that the Veterinary Medicine study programme corresponds to the institution's mission statement.

The programme contains all necessary elements for veterinary training. Therefore, the DVM degree basically meets international standards. However, in order to be internationally competitive, the clinical training of the Vet students needs to be improved.

It is difficult to judge whether there is an overarching didactic concept that has been adequately communicated to and adopted by the teaching staff. As mentioned below, didactic training of the staff is an area that needs attention and further development.

The time allocated to self-study appears under-represented in many courses.

There are many mistakes in the calculations of the ECTS points which need to be amended before accreditation, vide infra. Overall, the workload for the students appears manageable.

The teaching methods and content of teaching are generally sufficient for the successful achievement of the programme's goals and outcomes, albeit with the caveat that clinical training needs to be improved.

Based on the information provided in the SER, it is difficult to judge whether the overlap of academic content between the various parts of the curriculum is comprehensible and transparent. However, the sequence of courses is logical, and the students did not complain about lacking transparency of the study programme.

Based on the scant information provided by the SER, it cannot be answered if the admission criteria and admission procedures measure up to international standards. High drop-out rates suggest that admission criteria may not be adequate.

The ratio of academic staff to students is appropriate.

2. Staff

The SER mentions 11 permanent staff members (9 professors and 2 assistants) in the Dept. of Veterinary Medicine, and 5 external teachers (p. 150 – 154). The qualifications of the staff of the Dept. of Veterinary Medicine are certainly appropriate. However, didactic training of the staff should be improved.

3. Research and International Co-operation

In the absence of any more specific information provided in the SER, it cannot be answered whether the teaching staff is involved in research activities inside or outside the institution, and whether these research activities feed back into teaching. Many of the staff members received their training abroad. In addition, there are several international research and exchange programmes. Therefore, there is a very good potential to improve the international collaborations of the staff members. Overall, research needs to be intensified to provide adequate research topics for diploma theses. A research plan and a research profile need to be developed by the Faculty. Based on discussions of the expert team with the staff and the students, there is some involvement of students in current research projects.

4. Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment

Although the budget appears very modest, it may be adequate to cover the basic costs of the study programme. Although very basic, the infrastructure available for preclinical training appears adequate, but major investments are necessary to improve the clinical training of students.

5. Quality Management

Based on the comments of the students, there appears to be ample room for improvement in the quality management of the courses.

Recommendations:

It is stated on p. 17 of the SER that the students can either prepare a diploma thesis (20 ECTS) or do the state exam. The allocation of 20 ECTS to the state exam seems arbitrary and unacceptable to the experts. Preparation of a diploma thesis needs to be compulsory for all students in the Veterinary Medicine Programme. This is a strong precondition for accreditation. In their response to the draft report the Faculty already agreed that a diploma thesis (30 ECTS) will be compulsory for all students.

There are many examples for incorrect calculation of ECTS. For example, 150 hours of student work load is not 5 but 6 ECTS (e.g., p. 37 of the SER, but there many more mistakes in the calculations), because 25 hours are 1 ECTS (correctly described on p. 17). These mistakes have to be diligently corrected throughout the curriculum. Also, the time allocated to self-study seems inappropriately low in many courses. The experts recommend correct rounding of ECTS because there are many examples where rounding leads to hidden increases

in student and teaching workload (e.g., 90 hours are rounded down to 3 ECTS but are in reality 3.6 ECTS, p. 36 of the SER). The ECTS takes into account the total work load of the students. Therefore, the suggestion of the Faculty as outlined in their response to the draft report to calculate ECTS on the basis of active teaching only is not acceptable.

There does not seem to be a plan for systematic didactic training of the staff by the University of Prishtina. This needs to be implemented.

The SER lacks any information about the regulations regarding the diploma thesis. It is important to clearly define this.

Research needs to be intensified to provide adequate research topics for diploma theses. A research plan and a research profile need to be developed by the Faculty. The “Plan of the research” on page 18 of the SER is only rudimentary, and requires substantial improvement.

Efforts should be made to build state-of-the art teaching hospitals for large and small animals in the long run. Clinical training (farm and pet animals) of the veterinary students needs to be improved. This is an important issue. The expert team understands that this is a long-term goal which will require major efforts from the University to build up the infrastructure for teaching hospitals for large and small animals. A long-term strategy to improve clinical training needs to be developed. As an immediate action, exchange programmes with other universities abroad and collaborations with private clinics and practitioners need to be intensified.

Radiology and Anaesthesiology are now included in the Surgery course. However, because radiology as well as anaesthesiology and pain management are also needed for other disciplines such as internal medicine, these courses should be offered separately. Many modern curricula teach Radiology and Anaesthesiology in separate courses. Management of Veterinary emergency cases may also be considered in a future update of the curriculum.

Cell biology and molecular biology are missing as separate subjects in the curriculum. However, without a thorough understanding of cell and molecular biology it is difficult to understand modern diagnostic and therapeutic concepts.

Overall, the curriculum appears very conservative. It would definitely benefit from inclusion of some more modern elements, for example organ-based teaching of anatomy, histology, embryology and physiology in the first years, and inclusion of problem-based learning in the curriculum, just to mention a few examples which would be very easy to implement.

A long-term plan for European Accreditation should be developed.

The staff of the Faculty is to be commended for having set up exchange programmes with the Universities of Minnesota, Istanbul, Munich, Vienna, and Zurich. To improve the quality of the clinical training, exchange programmes with other Universities abroad and collaborations with private clinics and practitioners need to be intensified. In this context, the experts

recommend the acquisition of a transport mini-bus to improve clinical training of the students. The planned animal shelter programme should also be implemented ASAP.

Regular student evaluations of the teaching activities need to be implemented.

More opportunities for specialization should be provided. In the long run, a residency programme should be established.

The experts are concerned about the high student drop-out rates. This problem should be addressed by a more rigorous selection process.

Final Recommendation:

The experts recommend conditional accreditation of the study programme in Veterinary Medicine for three years, with the strong precondition that the Diploma thesis is made compulsory for all students, and that the many mistakes in the ECTS calculations are corrected.

4. Joint Programme during the Site Visit

Meeting with the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary (FAV)

At the beginning of our site visit, the Dean, Prof.Assoc.Dr. Badri Dragusha, explained to us the recent positive developments in Kosovo and at the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary. We have to stress the friendly hospitality we experienced during the site visit. The management of the Faculty had organized our visit in a very efficient way, including transportation to the different sites. During the entire visit we enjoyed the very helpful assistance of Prof.Assoc. Afrim Hamidi as well as Prof.Ass.Dr Fatgzim Latifi. The meetings with teaching staff, students and the management of the Faculty were very well organized, and we spent some pleasant time in open-minded and sincere discussions. For all their kindness and help we express our deep gratitude.

Visit to the Facilities of the Faculty

Lecture halls have not been visited, only some seminar rooms. Some student laboratories are available, however they are quite small and the lab facilities are basic and could be improved.

Visit of the Experimental Farm and the Pet Animal Clinic

During the site visit, the ET got the possibility to visit the experimental farm with laboratories and the facility for medical treatment of pet animals (dogs and cats). Based on the information given in the report of the ET 2012, there were some improvements especially in the building for pet animal treatment. For example, a few cages to keep dogs, cats or other small animals are now present. Also, there was an X-ray machine and anaesthesia equipment. As already mentioned by the ET in 2012, the small rooms in this building do not allow demonstrations for larger groups of students.

Meeting with the Teaching Staff

A mixed group (Professors and Assistants/Veterinary Medicine and Food Technology) of about 15 docents attended the "Meeting with Teaching Staff". A typical chair group is made up of one professor and one assistant, who is his Ph.D. student.

The perception of the work load distribution between teaching and research among the docents was initially 80:20%. After discussions it was corrected to 40:60%. Nevertheless, the professors complained about the teaching load of 6 hours/week (typical teaching load of a professor is 9 hours/week in Germany and 8 hours/week in Austria). Teaching in subjects outside the own specialization was felt as additional burden.

Online courses in didactics are available for continuing training of the docents. However, the courses are not followed.

In terms of international cooperation, mainly a 5-year project with Minnesota, funded by UDAID was mentioned. Each year two professors can be invited for three month.

Much of the discussion time was used by some of the docents of veterinary medicine to stress that the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary should be split into the two disciplines.

Meeting with the Students

At this meeting about 20 students of the two study programmes “Food technology” and “Veterinary Medicine” were present. There was a good mix between students at earlier and later stages of the two study programmes. All students gave a highly motivated and open-minded impression to the panel of experts. Although the workload for both study programmes was considered to be high by the students, it was generally felt feasible to study the programmes. All students were confident that they would find jobs immediately after graduation in Kosovo.

The following criticisms were raised.

Although the library has been further improved in recent years, there is still a great need for more modern books.

Currently, electronic documents such as lecture handouts are mainly distributed between the students via Facebook. A modern e-learning platform needs to be established.

Generally, more time for self-study is required.

The teachers of the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary are generally highly motivated, but lacking commitment was mentioned regarding some external professors from the University of Prishtina, Chemistry and Biomathematics were explicitly mentioned. Lectures are generally judged as good and the didactic tools appropriate.

Student evaluation of the teaching units is still a very underdeveloped and underused tool.

More lab space and better equipment is needed for the practicals. More work with live animals is a wish of the Vet students. In this context, the 4-week internship programme and the animal shelter programme need to be implemented rapidly. Contacts should be provided for the 2-week practical work on licensed farms.

The students recommend that more foreign professors should be hired.

More opportunities for student mobility should be provided.

The students felt that the University should provide more information about career opportunities.

The exams are now mainly focused on the time at the end of the semester. The students uttered the wish that the exams could be spread a little bit more to give them more time for preparation of the individual exams.

Vet students were concerned about the very high drop-out rates (about 70% after the first year was mentioned). In addition, some of them were concerned that they may not be able to reach

the required 300 ECTS points if they don't have the chance to prepare a diploma thesis (20 ECTS).