

**PUBLIC UNIVERSITY PRISHTINA „HASAN PRISHTINA“
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS
PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION REPORT, AUGUST 2015**

Final Report

**Site visit 2015
August, 2nd-3rd**

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The Faculty of Economics of the University of Prishtina applied for programme accreditation conforming to the national legal requirements in all three cycles of the European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. The following report is therefore structured according to the levels of qualifications being assessed.

Part 1

1. Common Issues

1.1. Basic Data

Members of the Expert Panel, Assessed Programmes and Levels

Expert	University	Assessed Programmes	Levels
Gehmlich, Volker	Osnabrueck University of Applied Sciences, DE, Chair	Business Management and Entrepreneurship; Accounting; Applied Economics and Management; Economics;	Bachelor
Cavlek, Nevenka	University of Zagreb, HR		Master
			PhD

The panel was accompanied by key staff of KAA: Furtuna Mehmeti, Fisnik Gashi.

The assessment for the purpose of accreditation and reaccreditation comprises the following study programmes of the Univeresity of Prishtina, Faculty of Economics in Prishtina, their level and mode:

Programme	Level	Mode
Business Management and Entrepreneurship	Bachelor	Full-time
Applied Economics and Management	Bachelor	Full-time
Accounting	Master	Full-time
Economics	PhD	Full-time

The site visit was scheduled according to the following programme:

2nd August 2015

19.45 Meeting in the Reception of the Hotel
20.00 Working dinner

3rd August 2015

08.30 Meeting in the Reception of the Hotel
09.00 – 09.30 Meeting with the management of the Institution
09.30 – 11.30 Meeting with responsible persons for the study programs (Curriculum, teaching, researches, recommendations)
11.30 – 12.30 Visit to facilities
12.30 – 12.45 ET and Co., KAA consultation
12.45 – 13.00 Closing meeting with the management of the Institution
13.00 Lunch and discussion of ET and Co. KAA

The experts had received the following downloadable materials (Dropbox) prior to the site visit:

- Guidelines for experts (programmes)
- KAA Standards
- KAA Regulation for doctoral studies
- Code of Good Practice
- Site visit programme
- Self-evaluation report of the University of Prishtina, Faculty of Economics (2014) (also in paper format)
- An annex as separate electronic file containing
 - CV of staff according to position
 - Syllabi of educational components

The experts did not ask for any additional materials at the end of the site visit.

1.2. Meeting with the Management of the Institution

The meeting was used to explain the recommendations made by the Expert Team (ET) to the Board of the KAA as result of the site visit on July 5th/6th this year. It was very useful to clarify misunderstandings, e.g. the relationship between an “Arts” and a “Science” degree. The ET is convinced that this is a national issue which the KAA Board and the Ministry will look at. The ET also pointed out that the coordinator of the report may hint at some differing opinions of expert but finally the opinion of the individual expert is respected.

As regards the programmes submitted by the Faculty for accreditation the general remarks of the first report are valid as well, concerning credit allocation, assessment and grading. The experts stress that the new ECTS User’s Guide is available, also online, and accompanying video material supports the understanding of the text.

Part 2 Programme Assessments

1.1. Bachelor Programmes

2.1.1. Business Management and Entrepreneurship

(1.) Academic Programmes and Student Management

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

A study-programme in Business Management and Entrepreneurship could very well fit into the mission of the university and in particular the faculty as it is directed towards the business development in the region. Considering the high rate of employment, the demographic figures, Kosovo is in need of graduates who are encouraged and have the knowledge, skills and competence to found start-ups or develop and manage existing SMEs. This could be expected of any graduate in Business Management but – may be – a special focus could strengthen this potential even more.

For the experts the criteria applied to structure the business management programmes in the Faculty of Economics are not clear, and therefore it is difficult to identify a specific profile of all programmes. On the one hand a division of programmes is based on business functions, such as Marketing, Finance, on the other hand on institutions, e.g. Banking, or disciplines, e.g. Informatics. The headline in the programme Business Management and Entrepreneurship indicates a further structural element, a type of management. All programmes are typical management programmes and could therefore be merged under the parent programme Business Management with the various options, operating up to now as separate study-programmes.

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

As in the first round of the applications of the Faculty of Economics, only the full-time mode of the programme will be considered as there is no detailed information about a part-time version mentioned in the „Data on study program“ (SER 2.1. 15p). In contrast to the first round, though, this programme is being submitted for accreditation for the first time.

To assess the quality the programme is first of all analysed from the viewpoint of its profile. The profile is characterised by its learning outcomes, listed as 2.7 of the SER (17p). Most of them are teacher-centred and rather general, not really learning outcomes. Some could fit into any study-programme as they are more general statements, not specific at all. A detailed analysis of the course components will reveal to which extent the more general outcomes are specified. Reference to the National/European Qualifications Framework is not given; this would have been helpful for the institution when designing the programme.

A further element of assessment is top 2.6 of the SER: „Goal and profile of the program“, in which the objectives of the programme are listed. They are formulated in the form of learning outcomes and therefore the distinction between 2.6 and 2.7 „Learning Outcomes“ is not clear. They are also partly written from a student’s and partly from a teacher’s viewpoint. They do not refer to business objectives at all although the programme is called Business Management and Entrepreneurship. In the modules it is often the other way round: more reference is given to business areas than to particular entrepreneurial issues (except the headlines). By and large the programme’s direction and general contents can be identified and range and academic aim appear to be adequate to a bachelor’s degree.

The programme consists of 42 modules out of which 20 are obligatory and 22 are electives. All the modules, obligatory and the electives of the first year, are identical with all course components of bachelor programmes in Business in the Faculty of Economics assessed for reaccreditation in July this year. In terms of credits the 20 obligatory modules carry 126 credits out of 180. A student has to study all the obligatory components, 4-8, most times 6 credits, and has to select as electives 8 or 9 modules carrying 4-6 credits, in total 54 credits to arrive at 180 credits, required for achieving the bachelor degree. Only 30% of the programme is left for choice; the programme is very prescriptive when comparing it with other business programmes in the EHEA, in particular in the EU (see TUNING project). Also, the programme designers obviously overlooked that by allocating the credits they failed to match the number of credits to be achievable with the number necessary. Thus they limit the choice even more.

Examples: In semester four the student has to get 12 credits from electives. However, according to the electives offered the student can only achieve this number when taking two of the three offered electives carrying 6 credits each. The student cannot select any of the other two unless he wants to overload or fall short of the number of credits required. The situation is worse when it comes to the sixth semester when 4 components, including the Bachelor thesis (the name Diploma thesis may not be adequate any more), ask for a workload represented by 24 credits but the electives on offer carry only 4 credits each; i.e. the student is asked to work for 32 credits in this semester or does not achieve the 30 credits required.

When identifying the major characteristics of the programme it appears that not more than two of the 20 obligatory components are really independent from the other bachelor programmes offered by the Faculty, this means that just 10% of the course components are profile specific, namely Corporate Entrepreneurship and the Entrepreneurial Project. This surely is not sufficient for an independent programme, even less than in the programmes assessed so far in the Faculty of Economics.

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

As in the programmes assessed in the first site visit for the purpose of reaccreditation, the descriptions of content, goals, teaching and learning, assessment methods, capture tools, theoretical/practical study differ mostly significantly between the electronic version submitted by the Faculty and the printed version in the SER. It can only be suspected that the cooperation between the working group writing the SER and the individual authors of the specific modules not enough communication took place. Therefore the overarching didactic concept – identical for the whole Faculty can only be outlined in general terms: the programmes are more teacher than student centred, an applied orientation is intended, the „internship“ referred to is, in fact, a seminar focused on case studies and other practice oriented teaching approaches. Not included is an internship in an enterprise or any other form of student’s engagement with regional or international enterprises to which credits are allocated. A Mobility Window is not foreseen.

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

This can be assumed on the basis of the Faculty’s success in running bachelor programmes in these areas and whose graduates have been successfully integrated into the labour market according to the figures taken and interpreted from the SER. As all programmes are also planned to be in line with the criteria of the EHEA, a correspondence with international standards is most likely achievable. It would have been helpful, if reference was given to the respective level of the National / European Qualifications Framework. The degree awarded though does not reflect the contents and learning outcomes of the programme. The programme is a typical Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Business Management and not a Bachelor of Science (BSc).

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

This is difficult to judge as respective details are not always given neither in the SER nor in the syllabi annexed electronically. Most likely the situation is similar to those programmes investigated in the first round, i.e. that the programme designers should more carefully check whether time is allocated and respected by the teachers.

Very useful is the „Program’s research plan“ as it stipulates the activities related to a course component for a whole semester of 15 weeks.

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

Prima facie credits seem to have been allocated according to the principles of ECTS. A closer look, however, reveals several shortcomings: no consistent break-down of the workload in the modules; not always does the number of credits add to 30 per semester unless it is accepted that several choices are not possible; the ECTS-grading system referred to does not exist in

this form since 2009; the allocation of the number seems to be based on simple „mathematics“ according to the form of teaching (lecture, exercises, no other forms are listed in the data sheet). In addition the statements in the SER are not correct (18p): „Compulsory courses have 6 credits, while the electives 5 or 4.....“ According to the data sheet course components carry 8, 6, 5 or 4 credits. Only from semester 3 onwards all compulsory modules have an identical workload corresponding to 6 credits. No explanation is given for this. Hopefully a misprint is the statement that the number of credits, 5 or 4 for electives, are dependent on the area of specialisation and student’s interest. The allocation of credits has definitely nothing to do with any of these two. The internship described as 2.10. in the SER is neither included in the data sheet nor have any credits been allocated to it.

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

As the workload is not always broken down the assessment of the workload can only be done in general terms. The shortcomings have already been mentioned above, in particular the issue of inconsistencies as regards the workload corresponding to 30 credits per semester. In some course components it is at least doubtful whether students will be able to study the literature listed unless students are required to read only parts of the various literature sources. Again, quite helpful are the research plans which give a detailed overview about the topics being dealt with over the period of a semester, 15 weeks. „Evaluations“ are foreseen twice; obviously student assessments are referred to, i.e. after week 6 and 12 respectively students may be assessed in some modules. It is also said that „practical work [is assessed] through all this process“ – No further details are given.

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

The teaching methods are more or less identical in most of the modules. Knowledge acquisition is definitely at the forefront. However, as the programme prides itself for being applied oriented, case studies have to be analysed and results presented so that competence and other skills of students will be developed. It is said that a third of the workload of the programme is practice focused.

From the contents’ viewpoint it surely can be said that it is a business programme, but the special orientation of entrepreneurship is not reflected in the course components although potential relationship is indicated in the name of the subject area. It is somewhat surprising – like in all programmes of the Faculty – that Basic Management, an obligatory module, is planned for the 3rd semester although it is an adequate introduction to management. On the other hand, a course component Introduction to Business exists in the first year but it is indicated as an elective only. Similarly it is surprising that Business Environment is only an

elective although the environment in the Kosovo plays a very important role when planning to set up a new business. Also, Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship are listed in semester 4 but only as an elective. Why this module is headed as Leadership for Entrepreneurship in the descriptions of the course components cannot be explained.

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

As it was pointed out above, the programme lacks independent course components, i.e. 18 out of 20 obligatory modules are also taught in other programmes offered by the Faculty. The conclusion of having analysed four bachelor programmes in the first batch in July has been confirmed by this application for accreditation although the programme has been submitted for the first time: This programme is not a programme on its own, it is more a collection of course components from other programmes of the Faculty of Economics.

This is substantiated by the analysis of the obligatory modules of the programme Business Management and Entrepreneurship

First year:

Identical platform for all business programmes in the faculty. However, the subject names are not consistent: Business Informatics in this programme is identical with Informatics in the others; Principles of Accounting is called Accounting I in other programmes; Basic Statistics is otherwise Statistics. Albeit these differences, all modules are identical although the names are sometimes different (not only from the other programmes but also from those listed in the data sheet and the descriptions sent electronically).

Second year (obligatory components):

Business Finance: identical with Finance.

Entrepreneurial Marketing: identical with Marketing with the exception of some sub-headlines.

Basic Management 3rd semester: The basics are laid down after one year of studying! Identical with Management.

Management of SMEs (this is the name given in the data sheet; in the description it is referred to as SME Management and Entrepreneurship): More or less identical with SME Management and also Entrepreneurship in Marketing e.g.

Human Resource Management: identical with HRM in all other programmes

Accounting for Managers: identical with the module in Banking, Finance, Accounting

Third year:

Corporate Entrepreneurship: seems to be the only module specifically designed for this programme – together with Entrepreneurial Project see below.

SME Strategic Management: identical with Strategic Management in the programme Management and Informatics.

Knowledge Management and Innovations: identical with Knowledge Management in Management and Informatics. However, in this programme it is an elective carrying 4 credits whereas in the programme Business Management and Entrepreneurship it is an obligatory course component with 6 credits.

Managerial Decision Making: identical with the elective in Management and Informatics

Entrepreneurial Project – the only other course component which appears to be programme specific.

Operations Management: identical with the module in Management and Informatics.

- **How do the admission criteria and admission procedures measure up to international standard**

The admission criteria and admission procedures follow the national rules and follow basically the principles applied in other countries in which a high school student having passed the requirements successfully may apply for any programme in the Faculty of Economics of the University of Prishtina. However, a competitive entrance test has to be passed successfully and the Faculty will assure equal opportunities.

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

It is difficult to judge whether the listed names of teaching staff are adequate. The sheer number seems to be, 8 tenured professors, 12 associated and 12 assistant professors for 150 students. However, there is no information about how many teaching capacity each professor offers to this programme.

Recommendation:

The Faculty is advised to

- Develop this programme as an elective within the merged business management programmes of the Faculty (see Option 1 of the first site visit report in July this year).
- Sharpen the profile of the course components towards entrepreneurial learning outcomes

- Rethink the positioning of course components like Introduction to Business, Basic Management, Business Environment
- Allocate credits to all components of the study-programme, including internships (work-placements in a business organisations over a period of time)
- Check and re-allocate credits to be in line with ECTS and its latest User's Guide
- Design mobility windows for study periods or work placements abroad
- Write more precise learning outcomes
- Select forms of examinations which are suitable to check whether students have achieved the learning outcomes planned
- Evaluate regularly the student's workload and assure sufficient time for independent work

2. Staff

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

As outlined above the number of staff as such, 32, could be sufficient for 150 students. However, there are no details as regards how many teaching and learning hours these professors are available for the student of this programme. Most likely, the staff resources are rather tight and the Faculty should not stretch the resources to the extreme by offering more and more study-programmes, in particular not as they claim to be applied oriented with intensive monitoring of students through excercises, case studies, presentations and the like. The danger of the Faculty is to become if not is already too fragmented and therefore the resources might not be available to the extent wanted. This also is an indicator for the recommendation to merge the business and management programmes of the Faculty of Economics (option 1).

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

The qualification of staff is out of question. According to the CV submitted all professors are adequately trained and dispose of knowledge, skills and competence required at bachelor level education in higher education, level 6.

3. Research and International Co-operation

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

Teaching staff is involved in research activities inside or outside the instition – see report of the prior site visit in July but as the programme has not started yet it cannot be assessed

to which extent these research activities feed back into teaching/course contents or rather the learning of students.

- **Is the extent and the quality of international cooperation in research and teaching adequate? and**
- **Are students involved in research and cooperation projects?**

As the programme has applied to be accredited these two questions have to be followed up at the time of reaccreditation. However, the links to other universities at home and abroad, the full engagement in several European programmes, in particular TEMPUS, the attendance of international conferences and the publications submitted indicate that the extent and quality in research and teaching is and will be adequate. To which extent students will be involved in any of these activities is recommended but has to be seen whether it can be realised.

4. Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipmen

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

The institution has an adequate budget plan. Details per programme are not revealed. It is very much decided at central level of the institution.

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

The buildings were not revisited in the second site visit as this was done intensively during the first site visit in July and management had confirmed that no new parts of the infrastructure had been changed.

5. Quality Management

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

The intentions are expressed and will be evaluated in the first reaccreditation.

Recommendations:

The Faculty is advised to

- Feed-back their experience in international cooperation in learning and teaching to students
- Allow students to participate in international learning and research

2.1.2. Applied Economics and Management

(1) Academic Programmes and Student Management

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

The Bachelor programme of Applied Economics and Management fully complies with the mission of the Faculty of Economics and the University of Prishtina. The programme is offered in English language and therefore represents the first ever Bachelor Programme in this field at the University of Prishtina offered by the Kosovar professors. This is in line with its mission statement since the Faculty of Economics and the UP are streaming to “become a leading regional center for the advancement of knowledge, thought and education in the field of economics, through participation in regional and international community in higher education field” (SER. P 6-7). This would not be possible to achieve without offering a programme in English language which represents a major prerequisite for students' mobility, especially for incoming mobility, and for a reasonably faster integration into the European Higher Education Area. In this way the FE and the UP are taking responsibility to offer their students to contribute even better to economic progress and social development of Kosovo and wider region.

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

The offered programme is more than appropriate to the academic degree it aims to offer. Actually, it should be seen as a “forrunner of changes” necessary to be taken at the bachelor level at the Faculty of Economics. The structure of the proposed programme should be implemented on a bachelor level offered in Albanian language at the Faculty.

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

The didactic concept is described well and adopted by the teaching staff. The staff is using combination of traditional lecturing, case studies, seminar work and presentations, data analysis, and practical research, complemented also by lectures delivered by invited lecturers/experts from the practical field.

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

All the analyzed materials strongly imply to the conclusion that academic degrees correspond to international standards. As stated in SER (p. 67), and by the management of the programme, the curriculum of the programme has been developed to match the study programme at the Faculty of Economics of Johannes Kepler University of Linz (Austria) and is

comparable to study programmes at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana, and Faculty of Economics & Business, University of Zagreb. The programme is not 100% copied from the benchmarking institutions, but is successfully tailored to the Kosovar context.

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

One cannot precisely distinguish the independent study time, reflection and analysis students devote to each course. There are no online courses offered so far.

A missing part in most of the courses' syllabi is a distinction between obligatory and recommended literature. Some courses offer 3 -4 books as the literature for the course. For sure students will be asked to prepare for the exams just certain chapters from each book, but this should be clearly marked in course descriptions.

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

Yes. ECTS's are defined for each course. However, there is one elective course (Taxes and Public Expenditures) offered in the IV and in the V semester. This could be done to offer students more choices to take the course either in the second or in the third year of their studies, but the course should still carry the same number of credits, and not as now suggested (3 ECTS in IV semester and 4 ECTS if the course is taken in the V semester).

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

Yes it is, according to all provided materials.

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

Yes. The teaching methods differ according to suitability for each particular course. They seem to be in line with each course contents and its goals. The programme foresees to enrol maximum of 50 students. Students' competencies, qualifications and skill will especially be enhanced by making internship as their compulsory engagement during their third year of study in duration of at least one month. They should benefit mostly from it since an internship is linked with the development of their bachelor diploma thesis and carries ECTS points, outside of a classroom environment. Furthermore, such approach to teaching and learning experience offers students' better opportunity in finding their future work. This could be a win-win situation for the students, for the companies/institutions in which students are taking their internships, and also for the Faculty of Economics of the Prishtina University.

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

In most cases it is. However, it is recommended to check once again the course content of Mathematics for Economists and Mathematics, since there seems to be some content overlappings. In general the intended learning outcomes at the course level should be better explained.

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

They follow the national rules and are comparable to international standards.

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

At the programme level the ratio seems to be appropriate. There are 21 permanent academic staff forseen for the programme. What is especially encouraging is a decision of the Faculty of economics to engage professors from the other units of the UP to teach at the programme. (For example, for the course Law in Business and Economics - professor from the Faculty of Law; for Economics Sociology – professor from the Faculty of Philosophy). This proves that the UP uses its strenghts as a well integrated university and gives a good example to other of its units how to create synergy among them.

However, thinking of the other engagements that professors have in different programmes at the Faculty and on different levels offered in Albanian language, this might be a real challenge. This again, should by no means be the reason to stop the initiative to start the bachelor programme in English. It rather presents the right moment for the Faculty of economics to reconsider its policy of developing so many bachelor programmes without significant differentiation, and to strengthen its forces in the long-term strategic areas, concerning its necessary internationalization.

Recommendations:

The Faculty of Economics is advised to

- break down the workload to identify independent study-time
- distinguish between obligatory reading and supplementary literature
- revise the credits for Taxes and Expenditures
- revise the course content of Mathematics for Economists and Mathematics so that there is no overlapping
- develop the same programme also in Albanian
- reconsider its policy of developing so many bachelor programmes without significant differentiation

(2) Staff

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

Please, refer to the above comments!

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

YES! The academic staff chosen to teach at the programme has been chosen according to several important criteria:

- a) the knowledge of English language
- b) adequate support by the young staff
- c) competences
- d) dedication to the programme

According to their CV's and their engagements/working experience in particular fields, their knowledge of English, and with teaching experience abroad (in some cases) they all have appropriate qualifications for the positions.

(3) Research and International Co-operation

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

All the teaching staff would like to be involved more in research activities. Unfortunately, they are missing adequate research funds. The situation might change in the future with the establishment of a Research Institute. Many of them are engaged in consultancy work for the government or for the leading companies/institutions in Kosovo which for sure will bring benefits to the students of this programme.

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

YES, there are.

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

The students will be very much involved in practical research since it is made a part of their thesis development and completion.

Recommendation:

It is recommended to increase opportunities for teaching staff to get involved in research activities.

(4) Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment

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

For the whole institution an adequate budget plan has been developed but not for the programme yet.

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

They are the same as for all the other programmes.

Recommendation

The Faculty is advised to design budget plans which indicate the allocation of funds to the various study-programmes

(5) Quality Management

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

Yes! They follow the procedures defined for the whole institution and for the University.

Recommendations:

The Faculty of Economics is advised to

- break down the workload to identify independent study-time
- distinguish between obligatory reading and supplementary literature
- revise the credits for Taxes and Expenditures
- revise the course content of Mathematics for Economists and Mathematics so that they do not overlap
- develop the same programme also in Albanian
- reconsider its policy of developing so many bachelor programmes without significant differentiation
- support staff in participating in international learning, teaching and research meetings
- design budget plans which indicate the allocation of funds to the various study-programmes

2.2. Master Programm

2.2.1. Accounting

1. Academic Programme and Student Management

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

The newly created Master programme corresponds to the Mission Statement of the university, highlighting its intended service for the region. A bachelor programme Accounting of the Faculty of Economics was recently submitted for reaccreditation, having been launched in 2012. Taking into account other business programmes in Prishtina and other cities, provided by state and private „suppliers“ of business programmes, a potential for recruiting students successfully exists. Accounting could also be useful for part-time students although – quite in contrast to other programmes submitted – this is not applied for. This is somewhat surprising as such programme could also be offered module by module to employees who may not even need the degree but the knowledge, skills and competence linked to the various educational components. The Faculty might consider this potential to be fully in line with the mission statement of the University. This issue is supported by the fact that according to the latest news passed on within the session the Master programme has been accepted by the professional body to be equivalent to the professional Certificate (the bachelor degree being accepted as a technician in the professional career of an accountant/auditor).

Albeit this perspective there is another potential setback: the Faculty also offers a programme at Bachelor and Master level in Banking, Finance and Accounting and the Faculty should ensure that they do not cannibalise their own products and also do not offer a too much fragmented programme portfolio. To substantiate this statement the Faculty itself stresses that it offers a „high degree of concentration in financial and managerial accounting, auditing and systems....[and]...a specialisation in generally accepted accounting principles and auditing standards, product costing trends and issues and familiarisation with computer information systems...“

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

The responsible persons of the programme see the academic degree not endangered by the professional comparison with a Certificate (Certified Accountant). It might be helpful to test where both qualifications can be aligned with the National and/or European Qualifications Framework.

The programme designers used the University of Arizona as their benchmark. It might have been useful to include a typical accounting programmes of a university in the EHEA as well,

confirming their compliance with the International Accounting Standards, International Financial Reporting Standards and International Standards on Auditing.

It is rather frustrating that for further details concerning the international comparability, the „Program's drive by institutions' leading principles“ and even the „Goal and profile of the programme“ the designers „copy and paste“ the text they devised for the bachelor programme in Accounting to a large extent. A difference and therefore a higher level, i.e. the second cycle, cannot therefore not be supported. The colleagues present at the site visit were not really in the position to clarify this convincingly; it was said that the level was more advanced. Unfortunately the paper version does not confirm the statement.

The learning outcomes (4.7. of the SER) are analysed to identify the Master level. They focus on „understand, recognise, use, apply, implement, describe, work individually and in groups“ but nowhere is a critical approach identifiable and nowhere is there any research orientation, i.e. the description of the Master programme does not distinguish itself significantly from the one at Bachelor level. The paper format does not support the Master level of the programme and in the session with those being responsible for the programme this insight was put forward and discussed. Again, it was proven that the standard of the University staff is without any question but they are not aware of the text and – mostly - the European context. It is obvious again, that the authors of the SER, the teachers and the responsible staff have not communicated sufficiently.

Also, when referring to the „proportion of theoretical and /practical/experimental study“ the specific profile of the Master is not revealed. Again, the claimed Master programme is not reflected in the descriptive part of the programme.

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

Following from what has been identified above it really seems that there has been a lack of communication. However, throughout the Faculty a basic overarching concept seems to be in place: an applied rather than a research orientation of the programmes. The ratio stated in the SER is much too rough to clarify the profile as it compares lectures and exercises only to state that the relationship between theory and practice is 2:1. This is not adequate at all and does not reflect what is meant by research or application orientation.

An overarching agreement as regards an element of the curricula seems to be the „internship“. However, as stated within the context of the other programmes, the internships described in the other programmes do not deserve the name of an internship. In this programme it appears that students spend some time in companies or other organisations. No further details are outlined. As „internships“ do neither appear in the data sheet nor in the

module description they obviously do not carry any credits and do not belong to the curriculum as such.

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

As in the description of the SER only item 4.12. is really different from the description of the bachelor programme in Accounting there is not enough evidence to support the intended Master level at international level. The reference to the University of Arizona is not enough, it is just a statement which is not supported by any evidence.

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

The two-year programme comprises 9 obligatory modules plus the Master thesis and 6 electives out of which the students have to choose 3, one for each semester. Whereas in semester one and two students can select one elective out of two, this is not really the case in semester 3, as the obligatory modules amount to 22 credits, so that the student has to select the elective carrying 8 credits to arrive at 30 credits corresponding to the workload of a semester. Semester 4 is taken by the Master thesis on its own, carrying 30 credits.

The breakdown of the workload is mosttimes filled in (see electronic supplementary material). If so, most course components expect the students to study independently for an average of 2 hours per week (deviation in two cases: 3). Considering the obligatory modules only this refers to 6 modules out of 9; for 3 there is no information. Even if only the 6 modules were considered, 26 hours are covered by teacher led lectures and exercises plus these 12 means already 38 hours per week without any elective and the three missing obligatory ones. It might be useful to monitor the workload closely, in particular the time foreseen for independent study.

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

The allocation of credits is described identically in all programme and therefore the same or similar inconsistencies can be identified:

All obligatory modules carry 8 credits with the exception of Internal Control and Auditing in semester 3 to which only 6 credits have been allocated. No explanation is given. The consequence is that in semester 3 the selection is restricted and non-existent on the condition that not more than 30 credits should be the planned workload. Overall, the allocation seems to be done rather on mathematical grounds. A justification is not outlined.

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

The analysis has already revealed that the workload of students has to be monitored closely. The intended breakdown may not be realistic at all. Students should be asked to evaluate their workload right from the beginning.

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

The teaching methods are listed and appear to be very often identical. However, having interviewed teachers in the first site visit individual lecturers use also other methods than those listed in the SER. The teaching methods appear to be suitable for achieving the goals and outcomes of the programme. Doubts are voiced as regards the examinations set. Most of them are not suitable for checking whether learning outcomes others than knowledge based are tested. Further variations have to be developed and offered by teaching staff to prove that students have acquired the learning outcomes stated. To this extent also the learning outcomes have to be revised as they are much too much „knowledge“ and „applying knowledge“ oriented.

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

The analysis of the descriptions of the course components reveal considerable overlaps. In detail the following could be identified, referring to the obligatory components only:

First semester

Research in Accounting and Auditing – identical with all Master Programmes (Research Methodology – no objections)

Advanced Financial Accounting – identical with Banking, Finance Accounting

Public Sector and NGO Accounting – to a large extent identical with Bachelor programme in Accounting (!), module Public Sector Accounting (also partly the literature).

Second semester

Advanced Cost Accounting – same as above, description largely taken from the Bachelor programme in Accounting (!), also literature (partly)

Advanced Financial Analysis – identical with Financial Analysis in the programme Banking, Finance and Accounting

Financial Institutions Accounting 2 – The first part is not taught in this programme; therefore such denomination is inadequate. The course component is identical with the module of the same name in Banking, Finance and Accounting.

Third semester

Advanced Auditing – identical with the module Auditing and Insurance Services in the programme Banking, Finance and Accounting.

Advanced Financial Reporting – appears to be course specific only

Internal Control and Auditing - appears to be course specific as well.

This means that out of 9 obligatory educational components of the Master programme in Accounting only two in the third semester are programme specific! Because of the significant overlap with the Master programme in Banking, Finance and Accounting it might not be suitable to offer a second Master programme in Accounting.

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

„Student enrollment and admission terms“ (4.12 SER) are different from those at Bachelor level. GPA is the major criterion for the selection of students to be admitted. The number of students being accepted is decided upon at University level and publicly announced.

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

The data sheet of the programme specifies 1 professor, 5 associate professors and 4 assistant professors for 50 students per semester. Although also 4 assistants are foreseen the staff/student ratio is quite strained when the programme runs at full speed (about 200 students). Also, it is not specified whether all 50 students are grouped together or whether two groups are formed of 25 students each. This is particularly important as the course descriptions highlight as forms of learning and teaching discourses, presentations, etc., forms which are more difficult to pursue with larger groups.

Recommendations:

The Faculty is advised to

- avoid cannibalisation of the study-programmes (significant overlaps with Master programme in Banking, Finance, Accounting)
- copy texts and even modules from the Bachelor programme
- highlight clearly the difference between Bachelor and Master level; revise the learning outcomes to substantiate the difference
- clarify the relationship to the Certified Accountant by referencing it to National/European Qualifications Framework
- exploit opportunities to offer course components/programmes to business organisations
- integrate internships into the programme, describe the learning outcomes, select adequate forms to assess them and allocate credits
- integrate a mobility window to allow for studies abroad/work placements

- allocate credits adequately and ensure that students can achieve exactly 30 credits per semester
- Monitor the student workload closely so that students have ample time for independent learning

2. Staff

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

According to the figures outlined above the number could just be sufficient if the course were run in one group which is not recommended. Also, it is not revealed how many hours the staff is really available for this programme.

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

The submitted CVs and the meetings with staff confirm a high standard. However, it seems that the Faculty does not take accreditation procedures very seriously as the written SER demonstrates several weaknesses as outlined above. Communication between the various groups of staff involved seems to be of utmost importance.

3. Research and International Co-operation

- **Are the teaching staff involved in research activities inside or outside the institution, and do these research activities feed back into teaching/course contents?**
- **Is the extent and the quality of international cooperation in research and teaching adequate?**

Some of the activities are outlined within 4.11 of the SER and demonstrate a wide range of international activities. It can only be assumed that a large share of experience gained will be fed back into the programme, in its design, syllabi and learning and teaching, including examining.

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

The programme has not started yet. However, it can be assumed that students will be included in particular through project and their Master theses.

4. Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment

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

A budget plan for 2015-2017 is documented in the annex of the SER. The Faculty stresses that they are totally funded by the University's budget which means funding from the state and from own revenues. The Faculty of Economics intends to raise more funds of their own, in particular through research. The Research Institute which has been recently revived may be one initiative to support their additional funds.

- **Does the institution have adequate buildings and specialized infrastructure fo**

This was part of the first site visit and has not been checked again, only 4 weeks after the first visit took place. According to the management no significant changes have taken place in that short period of time.

5. Quality Management

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

It is the intention of the management to do so. However, this programme has not started yet.

Recommendations:

The Faculty is advised to

- Monitor the student/staff ratio closely and to continue to fix internal ceilings
- Widen the criteria in the selection process to get students with differing backgrounds
- Improve communication between Faculty members in particular as regards the design, implementation, evaluation and (re-)(accreditation of programmes
- Take seriously the accreditation / reaccreditation process or voice at least reasons why they believe accreditation / reaccreditation processes to be necessary.

2.3. PhD Programme

2.3.1. Economics

(1) Academic Programmes and Student Management

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

The proposed PhD programme in English language demonstrates a very strong alignment with the institution's and the UP's mission since it is developed as part of the TEMPUS project entitled "Modernizing the 3rd cycle at the University of Prishtina and Developing a PhD Programme at the Faculty of Economics" and is financed by the European Commission. This is the first ever offered PhD programme in Economics taught in English at the UP. Thus it does not only support internationalization of the PhD Programme, but it contributes to advances in educational activities at the highest academic study level, offers reforms regarding curricula, teaching methodology, foresees improvements in research capacities, and is streaming to help the institution to become a leading regional center for PhD studies.

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

Doctoral programme is developed with very clear goals and academic aims and thus is considered as appropriate to the academic degree.

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

The didactic concept could be improved at this level of studies. However, this is expected to happen before its beginning since the programme foresees: **co-teaching** (integration of professors from partner institution in teaching and research at the FE); **co-mentorship** (each student will be mentored by a professor from the FE and by one from the international partner institution); **mobility of students** (mobility of up to two months in one of the project partner universities which will enhance students' research work). The teaching staff uses combination of interactive lectures, case studies, workshops, projects – learning by doing, seminar work, group work, group discussions, and students' presentations. The use of an electronic learning platform is strongly advisable.

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

Yes - the academic degree corresponds to international standards. As stated in SER, and by the management of the programme, the curriculum of the programme is in line with the

requirements of the Bologna Process and has been developed on the experiences of the universities that are part of the TEMPUS project and follow the standards of Bologna process.

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

YES! The students will be full time students, carefully coached by their mentors and controlled in fulfillment of their required tasks at each stage of their study programme. The teaching/learning process is strongly supported by interactive discussions, independent study time which requires reading and comprehending certain academic journal articles and reflection and analysis afterwards. Lecture based learning does not exceed 20% of the total work load described by the study programme and thus allows enough time for independent study time.

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

Yes. ECTS points are defined for each course. There are 3 obligatory courses in the first semester which carry 10 ECTS points and 5 electives in the second semester (out of 11 electives offered), all with 6 ECTS points. In the third semester students earn 30 ECTS's after positive evaluation and ratification of the doctorate project proposal. The remaining 90 ECTS points students accumulate through at least one scientific publication in international peer reviewed indexed journal in the relevant field (20 ECTS); at least two presentations at scientific conferences (one domestic and one international) – 10 ECTS; and finally completion of PhD dissertation and public defence (60 ECTS).

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

Yes it is.

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

Definitely YES. Transfer of knowledge and skills are not only assured by local professors who have international experience in teaching abroad, or who completed their studies at the European or American universities, or have gained international experience through their other academic activities, but are complemented by international professors who are part of doctoral study programmes in the Tempus project.

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

Yes, it is. However, it is recommended that the course titles are adjusted in a way that they correspond more to the PhD level and that they cannot be associated with the course titles at master or even bachelor level. It is expected that with the closer cooperation among the international faculty this challenge might be easily solved. Furthermore, the literature for each course should be updated. The management of the programme is already aware of the shortcomings of the proposed literature and promises to update it before the start of the programme, as soon as the co-course coordinators from the institutions abroad are named. The same applies to the intended learning outcomes which are not clearly described and in some cases are not properly mentioned. It is also recommended that the programme curricula includes, beside quantitative, also qualitative research methods.

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

They follow the national rules and are comparable to international standards. The challenge might be to achieve the targeted number of students prepared to work hard on their research and publications. The programme enables enrolment of students from other areas, like mathematics, or even other profiles, which is the right programme policy.

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

There are 21 professors assigned to the programme and the same number of academic staff from the partner institutions in the TEMPUS project will share academic commitments with Kosovar professors. This seems to be an appropriate number for the delivery of high quality programme.

Recommendations:

The Faculty of Economics is advised to

- Promote English speaking programmes. The partnerships with European universities, partners in the TEMPUS project, and the participation of the Faculty of Economics and the UP in the programme which develops PhD in Economics in English language is of high strategic importance for the development of staff at the FE
- Improve the didactical approach
- Revise the titles of the course components so that they reflect better the level, contents and learning outcomes of the course components

(1) Staff

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

YES!

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

According to their CV's and their engagements/working experience in particular fields, as well as with teaching experience abroad (in some cases) they all have appropriate qualifications for the positions they hold. However, in most cases their research output and research publications in international journals are rather limited and should be substantially improved. Many professors have not published any academic articles in the last 3 – 4 years. This should be changed in the future, and become one of the requirements for them to be considered as competent mentors to doctoral candidates. Being elected to a position of a full time professor does not mean that their activity in research and publishing has finished! If they intend to be engaged in the PhD programme they have to change their attitude in this respect!

(3) **Research and International Co-operation**

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

Please, refer to the comments above. However, it is necessary to mention that some teaching staff would like to be involved more in research activities. Unfortunately, they are missing adequate research funds. The situation might change in the future with the establishment of a Research Institute. At the moment there is a very limited number of refereed journal publications as well as presentations at international conferences. This should significantly improve and the FE should establish some funds to support these activities. Fortunately, the TEMPUS project has secured funds for buying required academic books and some electronic journals. This will help researchers in their research efforts.

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

International connections and relationships are developing in the right direction, and offer the possibility for significant improvement of student exchanges, research projects and publications.

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

YES – since this is their major task. Although students might have problems in getting adequate literature for their research and access to relevant data bases, this challenge is solved with the students obligation to spend 1-2 months at one of the partner institutions abroad which have free access to the relevant data bases.

(3) Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment

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

Yes it does and the TEMPUS PhD programme has developed its own budget plan, according to the rules and standards of the European Commission.

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

Yes and with the funds from the TEMPUS project technical equipment for the programme will be improved. The faculty library is very modest, and this is connected with overall financial constraints at the Faculty and the University level. However, the PhD programme developed through the TEMPUS project will assign 20,000 Euros for purchasing necessary new books for professors and students and thus help improve the literature fund at the Faculty of Economics.

(4) Quality Management

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

Yes! They follow the procedures defined for the whole institution, but also comply with the quality control within the TEMPUS project.

Recommendations:

The Faculty is advised to

- Improve the opportunities for staff to participate in research
- Support staff to publish their research work in adequate journals etc.

Part 3

3 Conclusions and Proposals

In relation to the proposed **Bachelor programme in Business and Management and Entrepreneurship** the Faculty is advised to

- Develop this programme as an elective within the merged business management programmes of the Faculty (see Option 1 of the first site visit report in July this year).
- Sharpen the profile of the course components towards entrepreneurial learning outcomes
- Rethink the positioning of course components like Introduction to Business, Basic Management, Business Environment
- Allocate credits to all components of the study-programme, including internships (work-placements in a business organisations over a In of time)
- Check and re-allocate credits to be in line with ECTS and its latest User's Guide
- Design mobility windows for study periods or work placements abroad
- Write more precise learning outcomes
- Select forms of examinations which are suitable to check whether students have achieved the learning outcomes planned
- Evaluate regularly the student's workload and assure sufficient time for independent work
- Feed-back their experience in international cooperation in learning and teaching to students
- Allow students to participate in international learning and research

In relation to the proposed **Bachelor programme in Applied Economics and Management** the Faculty of Economics is advised to

- break down the workload to identify independent study-time
- distinguish between obligatory reading and supplementary literature
- revise the credits for Taxes and Expenditures
- revise the course content of Mathematics for Economists and Mathematics so that they do not overlap
- develop the same programme also in Albanian
- reconsider its policy of developing so many bachelor programmes without significant differentiation
- support staff in participating in international learning, teaching and research meetings
- design budget plans which indicate the allocation of funds to the various study-programmes

In relation to the proposed **Master programme in Accounting** the Faculty is advised to

- avoid cannibalisation of the study-programmes (significant overlaps with Master programme in Banking, Finance, Accounting)
- copy texts and even modules from the Bachelor programme
- highlight clearly the difference between Bachelor and Master level; revise the learning outcomes to substantiate the difference
- clarify the relationship to the Certified Accountant by referencing it to National/European Qualifications Framework
- exploit opportunities to offer course components/programmes to business organisations
- integrate internships into the programme, describe the learning outcomes, select adequate forms to assess them and allocate credits
- integrate a mobility window to allow for studies abroad/work placements
- allocate credits adequately and ensure that students can achieve exactly 30 credits per semester
- Monitor the student/staff ratio closely and to continue to fix internal ceilings
- Widen the criteria in the selection process to get students with differing backgrounds
- Improve communication between Faculty members in particular as regards the design, implementation, evaluation and (re-)(accreditation of programmes
- Take seriously the accreditation / reaccreditation process or voice at least reasons why they believe accreditation / reaccreditation processes to be necessary.

In relation to the PhD programme in Economics the Faculty of Economics is advised to

- Promote English speaking programmes. The partnerships with European universities, partners in the TEMPUS project, and the participation of the Faculty of Economics and the UP in the programme which develops PhD in Economics in English language is of high strategic importance for the development of staff at the FE
- Improve the didactical approach
- Revise the titles of the course components so that they reflect better the level, contents and learning outcomes of the course components
- Improve the opportunities for staff to participate in research
- Support staff to publish their research work in adequate journals etc.

Proposal to the Board of KAA:

- **Not to accredit** the Bachelor programme **Business Management and Entrepreneurship**.

The Bachelor programme Business Management and Entrepreneurship is not yet ready for accreditation as an independent programme. As the areas potentially covered could be very useful for Kosova's future it is recommended to merge the programme with the other business and management programmes of the Faculty and offer core elements of entrepreneurship within an elective of the general programme in business and management (see also report of the site visit in July 2015).

- **To accredit** the Bachelor programme in **Applied Economics and Management** in English language **as BSc in Applied Economics and Management –for 3 years**.
- **Not to accredit** the Master programme in **Accounting**
There is a significant overlap with the Master programme in Banking, Finance and Accounting; the Master level is not demonstrated clearly
- **To accredit** the PhD programme in **Economics** in English language – for 3 years

