

External Evaluation Report

University of Pristina

Faculty of Education

1. Pedagogy (MA Sc) Accreditation
2. Early Childhood Development and Education (Age 0-3) (BA) Reaccreditation

Final Report

June 15th, 2017

1. Introduction

1.1. Context

The present document is the final evaluation report 2017 about two Study Programs at the Faculty of Education (FoE) of University of Pristina (UoP), Kosova: 1. Early Childhood Development and Education (Age 0-3) (BA). 2. Pedagogy (MA). The report is the result of the collegial work of an international team of two experts appointed by the Kosova Accreditation Agency (KAA) to evaluate the two named study programs of the Faculty of Education. The evaluation report is based on the self-evaluation report of the University of Pristina with special regard to the parts of the two study programs and the visit of the expert group at the University of Pristina on 16th of May 2017.

1.2. Experts

The team consisted of following experts:

- Prof. Dr. Volker Frederking, University Erlangen-Nürnberg (DE)
- Prof. Dr. Melita Kovacevic, University of Zagreb, (HR)

1.3. Abbreviations used

The following abbreviations are used in the present document:

BA ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development (BA)
MA P	Pedagogy (MA)
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ET	Experts team
FoE	Faculty of Education
KAA	Kosova Accreditation Agency
OSV	On-site visit
QA	Quality Assurance
SER	Self-evaluation report
UoP	University of Pristina

1.4. Procedure and evidence collection

1.4.1. Self-evaluation report (SER)

For both programs – 1. Early Childhood Development and Education (Age 0-3) (BA). 2. Pedagogy (MA) - Self-Evaluation Report (SER) has been the central document for the institutional accreditation. The SER enables ET to get a clear picture of the current situation at the Faculty and the aims and the structure of the two study programs of FoE.

1.4.2. On-site visit

On May 16th ET spent one day at the FoE, accompanied by Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring of KAA, Mr Shkelzen Gërxhaliu. The OSV took place as planned.

- The scheduled OSV started in the morning of 16th with an interview with the management of the institution (9.30-11.30).
 - Teuta Pustina- Vice-Rector for quality assurance
 - Besnik Loxha- Director for quality assurance
 - Deme Hoti- Vice dean for science
 - Majlinda Gjelij- vice dean for teaching
 - Arlinda Beka –Head of Preschool Department
 - Naser Zabeli- Head of Pedagogy Department
 - Rozafa Shala – quality assurance officer in FEdu
- Then the two members of the expert team had separate meetings with responsible persons for the two study programs (Curriculum, teaching, researches, recommendations) (9.30-11.30):
 - *Bachelor 'Early childhood development and education'
 1. Ganimete Kulinxha
 2. Ilir Muharremi
 - *Master_Pedagogy
 1. Jehona Ferizi Myftari
 2. Vlora Sylaj
- A visit to facilities followed (11.30-12.30).
- After a working lunch the ET had two interview sessions with academic staff (14.00-15.00) and students (15.00-16.00).
- The visit ended with short consultations of ET and KAA (16.00) and then a final meeting with the management of the institution (16.15).

ET like to express its gratefulness to UOP respectively the Faculty of Education for very good organization of the visit.

In addition, the experts warmly thank KAA and its main representatives for their outstanding support and cooperation before, during and after the visit.

1.4.3. Additional documents

After the interview sessions a list of names and functions were requested. It was sent immediately by management of the institution.

2. Study Programs

Both academic programs correspond to international standards. Quality, range and academic aims of the curriculum are according to the principles intended by the Bologna process.

2.1 Study program 'Pedagogy' (MAsc)

The study program Master of Pedagogy (BA GP) is conceived as a two-year program (SER p. 75). The allocation of ECTS is appropriate and comprehensible. The workload is manageable for the students. The orientation to the established structures at other universities - University of Bologna, University of Ljubljana, Texas University and Indiana University - is a clear signal of accepting and aiming at international standards.

The main function of study program 'Pedagogy' has been described very clearly in the beginning of the explanation: "The Pedagogy programme enables students to carry out professional, scientific and research work in various educational institutions." (SER 2017, p. 75) Furthermore: It should "prepare students to reflect critically on pedagogical issues, to implement qualitatively contemporary achievements in the educational institutions and to develop scientific research to advance current pedagogical practices in service of educational policies" (SER 2017, p. 79).

The *structure* of the modules allows students to choose between obligatory and selectable courses. With this structure professional knowledge and individual interests in teaching and learning have been combined in a convincing way.

The *contents* of many *obligatory courses* are close to scientific aspects of pedagogy – for example: Year I/1: Effective Teaching and Curriculum; Theories of Counselling; Professional Development of Teachers. Year I/2: Contemporary practice in inclusive education; Quality Assurance in educational institutions. Year II/1: Mentoring and Performance Evaluations; Assessment in Education; Leadership and educational change.

Three other obligatory courses make sure that the students of the master program will have a very solid basis of knowledge in empirical research: quantitative research methods (I/1); qualitative research methods (I/2); action research (II/1).

The *selectable courses* offer a wide spectrum of further themes and allow students to choose according to their own interests – for example: Year I/1: Psychology of Education; Inter-cultural Education; Year I/2: Ethical and Legal Basics; Cooperation with families, institutions and experts. Year II/1: Project Management; School Development Plan.

Generally convincing is the integration of practical aspects in the study program. On the one hand the descriptions of courses show a good balance between theory and practice. On the other hand two further obligatory courses - Practice I (6 weeks) and Practice II (8 weeks) - familiarize students with practical aspects of their later working field.

On the background of digital revolution, however, in my opinion one course should be added: Pedagogy of Digital Learning and Teaching. This can be realized as obligatory or selectable course.

2.1.2 Staff and Students

Academic staff policy of UoP respectively FuE seems to be on a good way. There are seven full time academics for the Master program:

1. Prof. Dr. Demë Hoti
2. Prof. Dr. Asoc. Naser Zabeli
3. Prof. Ass. Majlinda Gjelij
4. Prof. Ass. Vlora Sylaj
5. Prof. Ass. Blerim Saqipi
6. PhD Can. Linda Salihu
7. Ma. Valentina Nimonaj.

The number of staff in relation to the current number of students in the Program of Pedagogy is sufficient (2013-14: 77; 2014-15: 74; 2015-16: 45; 2016-17: 38; additional document 'Annex master program'). During the site visit students expressed that staff members are very supportive and available. Students also appreciated the study methods used by academic staff.

The lack of school textbooks in English and Albanian language, however, should be solved.

2.1.3 Research and Internationalization

Research outcomes of most of the staff members are partly already high, as the list of publications shows (some of them in international journals). Nevertheless it is desirable that the representatives of the program of pedagogy should take further steps to improve the research capacity of the institution. That includes external funding. Therefore it is necessary to improve the support of FuE respectively UoP. Some staff members already participate in international conferences. That should be intensified and supported by FoE, too.

Furthermore it is necessary to improve work in research groups. University should activate more international exchange programs as soon as possible. Also it should be possible for all staff members to have free access to international journals (for example about Scopus).

2.1.4 Recommendation

As the previous explanations should have shown: In the whole it can be assessed, that the Master of Pedagogy of the FuE is well structured and convincing. Only a few problems and questions had to be pointed out. With respect to these issues I formulate the following recommendations:

Recommendations:

- 1. On the background of digital revolution one course should be added to the course program: Pedagogy of Digital Learning and Teaching. This can be realized as obligatory or selectable course.*
- 2. Foresee annually budget for international conferences and other types of cooperation.*
- 3. Intensify working in research groups, to have strong practical orientation of the research and organise regular seminars where these groups can discuss their work.*
- 4. The lack of school textbooks in English and Albanian language should be solved.*
- 5. It should be possible for all staff members to have free access to international journals (Scopus).*

Conclusion:

With these recommendations I propose the Accreditation of the Master of Pedagogy at the Faculty of Education at University of Pristina for three years.

Nuernberg, 15th of June 2017

Prof. Dr. Volker Frederking (University of Erlangen-Nuernberg DE)

2.2 Study Program: Early Childhood Education and Development

The Faculty of Education, University of Pristina has applied to Kosovo Accreditation for a reaccreditation for Bachelor's program Early Childhood Education and Development (age 0-3). The program has been accredited for three years. This report is based on readings of the previous accreditation report done in June 2014, Site visit, Self-evaluation report of the Faculty of Education from March 2017.

2.2.1 Site Visit

The site visit gave an opportunity to meet with all the relevant stakeholders, from the institutional governing representatives, both on the University and Faculty level, teaching and research staff, students. Unfortunately, representatives selected to provide information on the evaluated Program were not involved directly in program development and did not hold any leading position within the program. This fact disabled them to provide some answers and/or to be able to further explain some particular issues being discussed during the site visit.

2.2.2 General Findings

The program is well fitted into the national needs, both considering the demographic situation and labor market as well as educational perspective. In addition, Faculty of Education is developing and strengthening its role in society recognizing educational needs as well as changed social context with new challenges: more young people, in particular young women being employed and child care system being developed.

2.2.3 Faculty Staff and Students

The staff of the Faculty is the core staff in the field on a national level, having a sufficient number of staff members both with PhD as well as being full time employed. At the same time, new young people are in the process of obtaining their doctoral degree with a perspective to join the academic staff. This situation is favorable for the ratio teacher-student although the number of enrolled students is still an issue that asks for attention.

In particular, 215 students is the total number of students in academic year 2016/2017, with 76 students in the first year and 97 in the second. For the third year, the drop out rate from the year they started their study was more than 50%. So, on one side, too big drop-out with the first generation of students, and on the other side still too big cohorts.

Another relevant issue is that although having a significant number of full time staff, very few have a higher position than the starting status of assistant professor. Regarding their research publications majority is published either in local journals or in an international with a very low impact. There is definitely a space for a further improvement.

Recommendations

- 1. International publications should gain a better recognition, both for the employment of teaching staff and for their promotions. There is a need for better transfer from research into teaching practice.*
- 2. The number of enrolled students should be better fitted with capacity.*

2.2.4 Quality Management

According to the available documents and reports it seems that the QM is fairly adequate. It appears that the institution pays attention to develop adequate procedures for providing a feed back to the students i.e. teachers.

2.2.5 Research and international Co-operation

The self-report does not provide sound information on this aspect of the program/teachers. In particular, the plan and strategy for research has been presented very modestly. But, as it has been noted, indirect measure of the established research profile and/or international cooperation could be observed via list of publications. Accordingly, this still requires a more efforts from both individual teachers and the institution itself.

It is evident that the part of the staff attends international conferences, which certainly opens possibility to establish connections with international colleagues. However, from the report is not clear what are the results of those possibilities.

It has been observed that there is no administrative support for performing research activities, namely research projects/grants. The Center that has been recently established it is still far away from fully functioning and the problem is that relies almost completely on academic staff. Potentially, the Center can provide a needed support for improving international cooperation, both in research and teaching.

Recommendation

- 3. More support for international cooperation and research should be provided by the institution, besides establishing new structures. Strategic documents should define the role of international cooperation and there is a need to develop the activities plan.*
- 4. Unfortunately accessibility to international scientific literature what is the prerequisite for developing research is still a serious obstacle. It should be approached as one of the institutional/program priorities.*

2.2.6 ECTS allocation

The ECTS are in principle well calculated, although some miscounting has been noticed. This requires corrections. It has been also observed, when checked across the semesters,

it seems that number of electives is rather limited (i.e. in order to collect enough ECTS, a student might not have too many choices), in particular in the first year.

On the other side, it is not evident and transparent the allocation of ECTS to particular courses, or in other words the distribution of ECTS across subjects is not transparent and does not follow some kind of discipline logic. For example, there is no explanation or reason to allocate 7 ECTS to Mathematical Games, moreover remembering that this is the program Age 0-3.

Recommendation

5. It is necessary to check the ECTS allocation once again, both in terms of a total number of ECTS per semester and allocation to particular courses.

2.2.7 Study Program Structure

(courses, literature, course description, course composition)

This Bachelor program is conceived as four-year program, with a first year more as a general introduction to the field, and the last semester being predominantly devoted to final work.

It has been recommended already in the previous evaluation that 'development' is not needed in the title of the program. Moreover, it is very unusual to have '(0 to 3)' as a part of the title. It is not necessary and it is very uncommon.

Many courses listed in the overview table have slightly different titles than given in other tables or course descriptions.

It is not transparent or there is no logic why most of the courses have this division of 60% of theoretical work and 40% of practical. The whole program is following the same scheme, with some slight changes. In particular this is very hard to understand in courses such as Theories of Education. Certainly, it is very good and needed to have some practice, but given in this way, it seems more as some kind of an overall, distant decision, followed regardless of the content of the course. And finally, there is no explanation what is meant by practical work for each course.

Bearing in mind that the whole program is aimed for children from age 0 to 3 (although this '0' as a starting point is also very questionable in terms of a professional work) a serious issue is why there are almost no courses related to health sciences. Very often and in many countries, with such young population, nurses are those who are responsible (nursery are the places for taking care).

However, the most serious concern is related to the description of the courses and the matched literature. Many courses with their content are not fitted to the target population at all (0 to 3), much of the topics and contents appeared as taken from the

other existing programs dealing with different population, there are too many programs dealing with language and skills of students not understanding the phenomenon of language development and acquisition, etc.

The given literature in majority of courses does not correspond at all, neither to the given courses and their contents nor at a target population. At the same time, for some courses there are long list of literature that is definitely overwork load for students.

As it has been reported in a previous evaluation, special concern is an access to a library and needed titles. Unfortunately, we have witnessed again that the library is not functioning, has very limited number of titles, no periodicals and not an adequate human resources. We have also learned that the local Faculty library is hardly used by students at all. Teachers provide majority of the literature and reading materials personally. This facts definitely put additional constrains on students.

Recommendation

- 6. To reconsider the title according to the given remarks*
- 7. To check the distribution of ECTS, to reconsider allocation of number of ECTS to given courses*
- 8. To check for the titles of courses accross all the documents*
- 9. To reconsider the distribution and division of theoretical vs. practical work accross courses*
- 10. To reconsider courses and their rationale to belong to the program*
- 11. To redefine the content of the courses in order to better fit for the purpose*
- 12. To check for the literature and to match it with the content of the courses*
- 13. Finally, to describe and present all the courses with the same components/style.*

Concluding Recommendation

The study program Early Childhood Education and Development (Age 0-3) should not be reaccredited for this year. The most serious objection is related to the structure of courses, their content and inadequate literature selection.

Considering the relevance of the whole institution as well as program per se, as well as fact that three generations of students have been already enrolled and that staff is in a continuous process of improving a program, the recommendation is to give the Faculty one year time to implement suggested changes.

15th of June 2017

Prof. Dr. Melita Kovacevic, University of Zagreb, (HR)