

Final Report

The expert report has been written on the basis of the application document submitted by the applicant institution and findings collected during the on-site visit at the Faculty of Sport Science, University of Priština on May 24th 2016 as well as supplementary documents, which were sent per Email (6th of June 2016).

I. The expert's report on the Bachelor "Physical Education and Sport" (BA)

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

Considering all the aspects of the documents, the presented programme seems to comply with the mission statement of the Faculty of Sport Science "to become a recognized leader among public higher education institutions in the region in teaching and research having both local and international reach" (p. 4). Concerning the mission statement (p. 4/5) it is clear that the academic aims are ambitious and it will take some more activities and achievements in the future to reach them.

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

Considering the quality, range and academic aims, the Bachelor Programme in Physical Education and Sport submitted does meet the EU standards only with some limitations, which are described in the following:

- Guidelines for EU Bachelor and Master Programmes propose a 3+2 structure (3 years Bachelor and 2 years Master programme). This Bachelor is a four years programme with 240 ECTS. This means that a full cycle (BA and MA) takes 6 years, which is one year extra compared to most European Countries. However, as this is related to the overall situation in Kosovo for the teacher education programs, it's difficult to change for the faculty. It was mentioned during the staff meeting, that this will change in 2018.
- The overall outlined module structure is clear (e.g. decision of elective vs. mandatory subjects).

- The information sheets (Module outlines) on particular subjects do not have a unified structure. The objectives and outcomes are sometimes poorly described. Some of the textbooks and study literature recommended are rather outdated. Before the programme starts, a revision of the module descriptions has to be done and all missing information has to be added (as well as the proof of the references)!

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

As there is no overreaching didactic concept visible, it's difficult to answer. During the meeting with the students, it was obvious that theoretical knowledge is sometimes missing and the practical activity is more in the focus. Students stated that the level in practice (as well as in the exams) is quite high and of good quality. They also gave the feedback that the organisation of the classes is good, but some of the teachers are (sometimes) not motivated.

Does the academic degree correspond to international standards?

In general, the programme submitted would meet the international standard requirements for awarding of the Bachelor degree. But there are some amendments to make (as described in the other sections).

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 document submitted contains the contact hours and the self-study hours and the proportion of independent study time and classroom units seems to be acceptable. There is no information about online or distance learning!

Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and justified?

The description of the Credits (ECTS) and the hours is clear and the distinction between contact hours and self-study hours is fine!

In the original document, the Bachelor Thesis only contains 8 ECTS, which is more or less a workload of 240 hours (which is a working period of 6 weeks). The recommendation, which

was given already three years ago to increase it up to 3 months (360 hours), which relates to 12 ECTS is still not in practice!

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

Total teaching workload per year differs between 405 (1st year) and 660 (3rd year). This amount is manageable for the students.

The overall workload of 1 Credit (as described at page 20) is in alignment with the EU definitions (1 Credit = 25 - 30 working hours). The general ECTS calculation (table 2) is o.k., but each lecture should provide information about the contact hours and the amount of self-study hours, too.

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)?

As the teaching methods and content of the subjects is in some cases poorly defined, it is difficult to assess whether they create a basis for successful achievement of the programme goals. During the discussion with the students, they stated that the practical courses relate to the PE curriculum, which means that students are well prepared to become PE teachers.

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

The overall structure of the mandatory and elective subjects is clear and developed in a systematic way. If students can choose in the elective part in year 1, 2 and 3, there should be a distinction between theoretical and practical subjects (and each student has to choose one option of the theoretical and one of the practical subjects). This categorization of subjects will ensure, that students have the same amount of theory and practice in the Bachelor Programme.

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

The admission requirements and selection criteria are shortly described at page 23 of the document and they meet international standards. It is recommended to secure that the

qualifying test is in alignment with existing European tests (we did not receive exact information about the content of this test)!

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

The exact numbers are presented in table 12 (p. 112). The faculty has around 670 BA students and 160 MA students. The teaching staff is in total 39 (24 full time and 15 part-time, cf. Table 4,5, p. 105/106); the ratio seems to be acceptable.

2. Staff

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

Quantity of the staff, which is taking care of the programme, seems to be adequate. However, their involvement in research and publications, not only domestic, but also abroad in recognised scientific journals, has to be improved. Not only established professors, but young enthusiastic teachers have to be encouraged to publish, not only in domestic, but namely in international journals, to increase their scientific reputation.

Does 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 the criteria of the University of Pristina, the qualifications of the academic staff might be considered appropriate for the positions they hold within the faculty. However, from the international point of view, their ability to work at a high academic level has to be improved.

3. Research and International Co-operation

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

Based on evaluation of publication and facilities, the research activities at the Faculty hardly meet the European standards and they are not sufficiently transferred into teaching process.

There is no research plan/ strategy available and the new management should develop a three years activity plan with clear milestones in order to set common targets and develop a common strategy. Nevertheless, the list of publications and conferences is impressive (p. 118 – 124) compared to the situation three years ago.

Is the extent and the quality of international cooperation in research and teaching adequate?

The international cooperation has increased during the last three years, but it is still limited to a small number of partners in the region (such as University of Tirana, University of Vienna, University of Niksic etc.). Activities on these fields should be endorsed by providing more possibilities for cooperation with well recognized universities in Europe.

Are students involved in research and cooperation projects?

Documents submitted show a certain involvement of students in research activities (Module Research Methodology with Statistics in year 3 and the Bachelor Thesis in year 4). No other information concerning the involvement of the student in scientific activities was at disposal to the experts.

4. Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment

Does the institution have an adequate budget plan?

There was no budget plan included. The document gives only limited information about the financial issues (p. 125).

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

As already several times during the last visits stated, the infrastructure is one of the most problematic issues. There seems to be a disproportion between the total number of students (over 700) and facilities available (one artistic gymnastic hall, one sport games hall and one fitness gym, 3 middle size auditoriums and one small lab). It is hard to imagine how these facilities can accommodate groups of student of acceptable size, necessary for practical lessons. It seems that a great deal of the practical programme activities have to be

carried out outside and some facilities (e.g., sports hall, swimming pool) has to be rented. The management of the institution should try to find the possibilities of cooperation with sport associations, public sector etc. to increase their budget and to be more recognized by involving institutions. Some of the seminar rooms seemed to be adequate.

5. Quality Management

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

The existing internal quality assurance system is described at page 113 – 115 in the report. The evaluation of the quality of the programmes is also part of this process, but there are no results available. It was stated from the management team of the faculty that the university is responsible for the surveys (incl. the analysis of the data) and it seems that this process is still not successful established.

To sum up, the following recommendations have to be taken into account to guarantee the satisfactory level of education. The Faculty should:

- revise some of the module descriptions and the system of elective modules (theory and practice);
- work on an overall didactic concept and increase the possibilities for internships for students;
- work towards the 3+2 system in Kosovo and develop a 3 years BA as soon as the new structure is in place in Kosovo;
- develop a three years research activity plan with clear milestones in order to set common targets for the faculty as well as a common strategy;
- make better use of the expertise of international partners and establish a network of universities and professors in order to exchange knowledge and engage international partners as well to teach in the Bachelor Programme;
- make use of the young generation of enthusiastic teachers/ researchers and promote them to become professors with international reputation.

Conclusion: We recommend the Accreditation of the Bachelor Programme on Physical Education and Sport (BA) for three years.

II. The expert's report on the Master Programme in Physical Education and Sport

The expert's report has been written on the basis of the self-evaluation document submitted by the applicant institution, discussion with management, teaching staff and student and inspection of facilities during the on-site visit at the Faculty of Sport Science, University of Prishtina on May 23. – 25. 2016 as well as electronically provided supplementary documents.

1. Academic Programmes and Student Management

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

Mission of the faculty is to become a recognised higher educational institution dealing with physical education and sport in the region. Its aim in particular is to improve teaching and research activities to comply with the guidelines of European Union and produce the graduates with complex knowledge, skills and competences to be able to compete for jobs on the field of physical education, sports management and sport sciences. Despite of some deficiencies, as specified below the programme submitted does meet the mission statement of the Faculty.

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

Considering the composition of curriculum as well the content of particular subjects, the master programme in Physical Education and Sport does formally meet the EU standards.

There is acceptable balance between practical and theoretical subjects. Practical classes are supposed to facilitate the process of theoretical learning.

Nevertheless, it cannot be accepted that "Nutrition for Sport, Health and Wellbeing" remains as an elective subject. Knowledge of nutrition is important from both, health as well as performance point of view, is of such an importance that this subject must be a mandatory part of curriculum of master programme of physical education and sport.

Within the EU standards for master programmes, there is also a strong emphasis on master thesis based on a scientific project. This concept should be respected while implementing the programme submitted into the practice.

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

The programme offers a continuation of bachelor's degree education. Some of the theoretical subjects (e.g. Advance exercise Physiology, Advanced Biomechanics and Advanced Course in Theory of Training) represent an extension of a basic knowledge acquired in the bachelor's programme. However, distinction between their basic modules provided within bachelor's programme and advanced topics taught in master programme should more finely defined.

Does the academic degree correspond to international standards?

The academic degree to be awarded after finishing 2 year master programme based on 120 ECTS does correspond to international standards.

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?)

Documents submitted contain a number of hours to be spent for each subject in forms of lectures, seminars and practical demonstration teaching. There is enough time space for individual study. On-line or distance teaching are not foreseen in the accreditation document.

Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and justified?

ECTS allocation corresponds with the EU standards and can be considered as justified.

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

Total teaching workload of 360 hours/ 120 ECTS spread over 2 years (180 hours / 60 ECTS in each year) as well as the content of subjects offered corresponds with common practice and should be manageable by the students.

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)?

Formally the content and teaching methods, foreseen for particular subjects, corresponds with EU standards. Should they be implemented efficiently, they create a solid basis for the achievement of the programme goals.

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

Self-evaluation document shows the subject's overlap takes into account generally accepted didactic principles. Basic subjects are followed by their more advanced versions to extend knowledge of sport pedagogy and sport sciences. However, as mentioned above, advanced versions of some subjects taught in master programme should be more clearly distinguished from the basic modules offered within bachelor's programme.

Despite of this curriculum submitted can be considered as comprehensive and transparent.

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

Students to be enrolled are supposed to be the graduates of 4 year bachelor's programme, which is one year longer than a standard duration of bachelor programme in Europe. Not only duration, but also the content of bachelor programme (which is also a subject of evaluation) meets the usual European standards. So admission criteria for the Master programme can be considered acceptable.

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

The exact number of students to be enrolled in the master programme, which has been submitted for accreditation, cannot be found in the document submitted. However, considering that no more than 100 students will participate and additional external experts will be hired for theoretical biological subjects with so far no assigned teachers, permanent pedagogical staff of 24 (4 Prof. Dr., 10 Dr., 9 PhD and 1 Mr.Sc.) seems to be acceptable.

2. Staff

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

Quantity of the staff, which is supposed to take care of the programme, seems to be adequate. However, in the original self-evaluation document submitted, for too many, namely theoretical subjects, responsible teachers have not been identified. According to oral information management plans to hire external teachers from other faculties of the University of Prishtina, namely Faculty of Medicine. However, using external part-time teachers for most of the theoretical subjects cannot be seen as the best strategy. Though such an approach can be accepted for some of the subjects e.g. anatomy, for others, namely “Advanced Sport and Exercise Physiology” or “Exercise Testing and Prescription” it is much more problematic. These rather specialized subjects are far beyond the scope of topics offered by other faculties of the University of Prishtina and it is very unlikely they can provide experts with appropriate experience. It would be highly desirable to hire full time academics who will specialise him/herself in those particular subjects to guarantee high quality of education.

Does 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?

In the original documents submitted for the evaluation there were missing information on teaching staff for substantial number of subjects. This was the case namely for medical and biological subjects (e.g. exercise physiology), which are foreseen to be taught by external experts from Medical faculty of the University.

Missing information on teachers responsible for particular subjects have been submitted upon request as supplementary document. However, neither this document contains complete list of supposed to be responsible for the subjects of the programme. Missing in particular are still the names for the subjects “Health Wellness and Fitness Administration”, “Research Methods in Physical Education and Sports”, “Advanced Sport and Exercise Physiology”, “Exercise Testing and Prescription” and Physical Education and Sports Coaching

Psychology". Because of this, it is very difficult to make complete and qualified judgment of the staff.

Considering only staff listed, it seems to formally meet the criteria of the University of Pristina for the positions they hold within the Faculty. However, from the international point of view, their ability to work at a high academic level has to be substantially improved.

3. Research and International Co-operation

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

Based on the evaluation of publication listed in the staff's CVs and on-site visit of the facilities, the research activities at the Faculty do not fully meet the European standards. Some of the research topics, published mostly in domestic or regional journal or conference proceedings, deal with the very basic topics covering almost exclusively practical aspects of sports. Generally, research activities are limited within the institution itself. There are few exceptions (young teachers and students involved in the EU funded programme) having some international cooperation. This kind of activities should be strongly encouraged in the future.

Lack of knowledge of English language is one of the major limiting factors for international scientific cooperation for a great deal of staff. Management should try to find the means to encourage improvement of English skills among the teachers. One of the options might be offering an English course organised by the Faculty itself.

Is the extent and the quality of international cooperation in research and teaching adequate?

The international cooperation is currently limited to a small number of short visits of teachers and students at foreign institutions. Activities on this field should be endorsed by providing more possibilities for working visits of well recognized universities in Europe.

EU funded programme carried out during the past 5 years has offered an excellent opportunity to enhance knowledge and teaching experience for teaching staff.

In general extent and the quality of international cooperation in research and teaching is not satisfactory and should be improved.

Are students involved in research and cooperation projects?

Within the frame of the programme submitted, the students are supposed to be involved in research activities, which should create a basis for their master thesis. However, current facilities for research are still rather limited and have to be improved. As discussions with the students revealed, their access to existing laboratory facilities is limited. More extensive use of already available equipment should be encouraged not only by teachers, but students as well.

4. Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment

The faculty seems to have sufficient budget to cover the teaching staff and maintain the facilities. Infrastructure, though rather limited, if used efficiently would allow carrying on the master programme submitted. Exercise physiology laboratory with the equipment financed by European Union should be used extensively not only for research projects, but as well as for teaching.

Does the institution have an adequate budget plan?

Because of the limited detailed information it is difficult to make a qualified statement on this issue. However, as far as we could understand, there is no budget allocated specifically for research. This indicates one of the major drawbacks for future fostering of scientific activities, which are nowadays considered an important attribute of university type educational institutions. Budget allocation for research should be an integral part of the financial plan of the faculty.

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

The infrastructure remains to be one of the most problematic issues. There seems to be a disproportion between the total number of students (over 700) and facilities available (one artistic gymnastic hall, one sport games hall and one fitness gym, 3 middle size auditoriums and one small lab). It is hard to imagine how these facilities can accommodate groups of students of acceptable size, necessary for practical lessons. It seems that a great deal of the practical programme activities have to be carried out outside and some facilities (e.g., sport

hall, swimming pool) have to be rented. The management of the institution should try to find the possibilities of cooperation with sport associations, public sector etc. to increase their budget and to be more recognized by involving institutions.

5. Quality Management

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

In the draft submitted there is no information on the internal evaluation processes.

To sum up, following recommendations have to be taken into account:

1. The "Nutrition for Sport, Health and Wellbeing" should not be elective, but mandatory subject;
2. Qualified external experts have to be hired to teach subject with so far not specified responsible teacher;
3. To guarantee high quality of education it is strongly recommended to hire a full time academics who will specialize him/herself in crucial theoretical subjects as Exercise Physiology, Advanced Exercise Physiology, Biomechanics and Exercise Testing and Prescription;
4. Management should foster improvement of English skills of the staff by positive or even negative stimulation;
5. Management should encourage the staff to publish in international journals;
6. Existing laboratory facilities should be used more extensively;
7. Budget for the research should be adopted.

Conclusion: We recommend the Accreditation of the Master Programme on Physical Education and Sport (MA) for three years.

Bratislava, Cologne 23rd of June 2016

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