

Evaluation Report  
External Expert Team  
University “KADRI ZEKA” (UKZ) Gjilan  
2017

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**Evaluation Report**

**University “KADRI ZEKA” (UKZ) Gjilan**

**by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency**

**June 8th, 2017**

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## 1. Preamble

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) is requested by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo to evaluate all institutions of higher education which operate in Kosovo.

The following experts were appointed to the team:

- Prof. Dr. Milan Pol/ Masaryk University (CZ)
- Prof. Dr. Peter Parycek/ Danube University Krems (AT)
- Prof. Dr. Dietmar Paier/ University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna (AT)
- Prof. Dr. Frederic Mertens de Wilmars/ University of Valencia (ES)
- Luca Ciubotaru - European Students' Union / National School of Political and Administrative Studies, Bucharest (RO)

Milan Pol was asked to be chairman of the team.

The University "Kadri Zeka" Gjilan was established by the decision of the Government of Kosovo 2013 and got accredited by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) 2014. The accreditation report covers the institutional evaluation and the evaluation of the following study programs:

- Banks, finance and accounting, BSc (Reaccreditation), Dietmar Paier
- Marketing, BSc (Reaccreditation), Dietmar Paier
- Special Education, MSc (Accreditation), Milan Pol
- E-Governance, MSc (Accreditation), Peter Parycek
- Local Governance and Democratic Society, MA (Accreditation), Frederic Mertens de Willmars

This report could not have been written without the support of the staff of the KAA in the first place, and also without a number of helpful face-to-face contacts at the University.

The acronyms the expert team used to develop this report are the following:

- ET – expert team
- SV – site-visit
- SER – Self-evaluation report
- UKZ – University "KADRI ZEKA" Gjilan
- QA - Quality Assurance

The current report was written taking into consideration the self-evaluation report, the site-visit and the additional documents sent by the University „Kadri Zeka” Gjilan.

## 2. Institutional Accreditation

### 2.1 Mission Statement

The University “Kadri Zeka” Gjilan was established by the decision of the Government of Kosovo 2013 in the region of Gjilan and the Presevo Valley and got accredited by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) 2014. On the founding documents, UKZ is defined as Public University and has students from Republic of Serbia, Macedonia and Albania. Gjilan with more than 130.000 inhabitants is an important industrial city in Kosovo, nevertheless the general government policy of establishing universities in relatively small cities should be reflected; especially under the current legal framework, which “forces” the universities to build up and run five faculties. A modern approach would be specialist universities with different focus areas in the different locations. The need of 5 faculties also forces the private universities to build up five faculties and to offer similar programs in Kosovo.

UKZ as local university well developed under the circumstances and financial limitations. Their mission statement hasn't changed since the last institutional accreditation:

*Education of students with most modern achievements of science, technology, cultivation of entrepreneurial and creative spirit, of the sense of legality and justice, as well as enabling them to cope with future challenges in a dynamic and ever changing world.*

The mission statement is still valid and well formulated, nevertheless the regional aspect could be discussed to be included, which leads to one of the main recommendations:

*Establish Advisory Council composed by members of the University as well as members representing the Local Government, Industry and other Social actors. This Advisory Council must be in charge to make a realistic approach to all elements of the strategic plan, redefining, if needed, and adjusting actions in order to the goals can be carried out.*

Based on the SER (p. 223) and the SV discussions this recommendation is not fully implemented (status ongoing), which is not appropriate. This activity is important for building up local pillars, which could lead to income-streams; for this activity only minimal resources are necessary; and the time frame of 3 years seems to be quite realistic for implementing such an important activity.

The second recommendation,

*Focus on a multidisciplinary approach as a goal to differentiate teaching and research, and make a distinction among other education institutions in Kosovo. This approach can be a focus of attraction in the near future for students coming from other regions.*

is still ongoing, but substantial activities have been achieved, like the inter-disciplinary E-Governance programme.

The developed strategy plan is too general and includes almost no local aspects, SER p. 14. The table on p. 17 offers a good overview, but the measuring instrument has not been established. The management team presented the new development plan, which seems to be more concrete, but was not part of the SER.

### **Recommendation:**

- Strong short term recommendation: Finalizing the foundation of the Local Advisory Council .
- Strong mid term recommendation: Defining joint activities with the local stakeholders, which are coordinated by the Local Advisory Council.
- Mid term recommendation: Improve the strategy development plan, which was presented during the SV; and develop indicators for measuring the progress, on the top level and also on the project level. Quality management could be responsible to monitor the status and report the progress to rectorat and the University Board.
- Minor recommendation, discussion and if necessary the adoption of the mission.

## **2.2 Academic Freedom**

The university bodies are in line with the law and offer the faculties the respective academic freedom (SER p. 20). Nevertheless, as primarily teaching driven university, the research resources are limited, which indirectly restricts the research possibility and academic freedom. The experts of the last report recommended to develop a realistic development plan for research groups and to develop regulations and indicators for teaching and research. In the SER, UKZ lists several activities which are linked to the recommendations (SER, p. 225), which is progress, especially under the circumstances. Nevertheless there is still room for improvement.

### **Recommendation:**

- Develop a new research plan, which could especially foster: cross faculty interdisciplinary projects; applied research projects with industry and government; internal calls for internal (interdisciplinary) research grants; transdisciplinary student projects;

## **2.3 Academic Programmes and Student Management**

UKZ has currently four faculties comprising seven bachelor study programs accredited or proposed for reaccreditation and three master programs proposed for their first accreditation. **The academic programs correspond to the institution's mission statement**, the one to provide "Education of students with most modern achievements of science, technology, cultivation of entrepreneurial and creative spirit, of the sense of legality and justice, as well as enabling them to cope with future challenges in a dynamic and ever changing world."

**As related to employability criteria**, Kosovo's unemployment has been decreasing since 2014 but it still remains over 30%, especially for young people. The designed academic programs are in accordance with the principles of employability, given the national context and the progress. Until now, **only one generation** from the Faculty of Economics **graduated**, as the UKZ started functioning in the academic year 2013/2014. During the SV, the ET did not meet alumni of UKZ or employers in order to develop this aspect.

The academic degrees correspond to the international standards. The quality, range and academic aims of the curriculum is appropriate to the academic degree awarded, as it is developed in the study program section of the current report. The **learning outcomes** are mentioned in the SER. However, it is doubtful that they are familiar to students.

The structure of the programmes give sufficient opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis and the allocation of ECTS is appropriate. However, the programs should develop overarching didactic concepts at least for each faculty and communicate these concepts adequately to students.

UKZ experienced a continuous increasing in the number of students. According to the SER, the current total number of students is **5691** and for the academic year 2016/2017, the number of students that enrolled at a university is **1350**.

**The workload** required for the academic programme varies depending on the faculty where the student is enrolled but it is manageable for students and is reflected as well in ECTS. The university has a **template form** regarding students' workload, but it is not certain if this form is filled for every subject and, more important, if this workload reflects the situation in practice. Faculties such as Computer Sciences have a more practical approach given the specific of the programme and involve students in teamwork activities. At the same time, some of the students manage to work as part-time or even full-time employees. As for the **overlap** between the various curricula, the process should be more comprehensible and transparent, in order to avoid repetitions.

**The teaching methods** have improved since the last evaluation in 2014. However, there is a strong need for improvement of teaching quality through academic staff development. The university has a **student course and teaching evaluation questionnaire**. However, this questionnaire is only applied in some cases and the results are not followed up by specific actions related to the issues underlined by the questionnaire.

**The regulation on student evaluation** and their progress in studies is organized according to point 9 in the regulation for studies of UKZ. Also, each faculty has its own regulation regarding the studies, admission and examination of students. The exams are organized during three periods: January, June and September. The forms of examination consist in written examination, oral examination, practical test and mid-term exams.

**The examination regulations** are appropriate, according to the students. At the same time, we can notice that the passing rate of students is not very high in the last three years. For the academic year 2015/2016, the passing rate is **38.94 %**. The examination procedures are specified clearly at the beginning of the semester and the calendar is also published on the university website. The results are published usually in a few days, depending on the number of students that attended that exam, as well as on the university's webpage. There is a **complaint procedure** stated in the regulations, but it seems it was not needed so far.

**The ratio of full-time academic staff / student** seems to be a real challenge. This ratio varies from 1:50 (Faculty of Computer Sciences) to 1:213 (for Faculty of Economics). The growing number of students should be correlated with the academic staff and the plan of development for the staff.

Regarding the **admission criteria**, all the faculties require the completion of secondary school and the passage of the maturity state exam. The admission is made through an open competition, as stated in the SER.

**Student participation** represents another element related to student-centred learning. Based on the Statute of the University, two representatives of students are members with the right of vote in the **University Senate** and the Steering Committee (composed of three external members appointed by MEST, four internal elected members elected) and one **student observer**. At the same time, in the

**Commission for studies** one student participates with the right of vote. In faculty Councils students' representatives participate with the right of vote and they are nominated according to the results obtained at the elections. **UKZ had student election** for the Student Parliament on **15th of May 2017** and UKZ provided its support by providing the necessary space and other necessary logistics. However, **the recommendation from the evaluation report of 2014** regarding an institutional involvement of the students in the preparation of the curricula, recruitment of academic staff and other management issues **is still ongoing**.

The budget allocated for the **scholarships** is about **10.000 Euro** and the procedures are clear for the students. For the current semester a number of approximately 30 students obtained a scholarship.

Last but not least, UKZ increased its **student support activities**, including the development internship opportunities for the students. In the last years, students were more involved in practical projects and teamwork activities, developments that were recognised by them as being very useful. However, **career guidance is needed** to be conducted in an organised way.

#### **Recommendations:**

- involve students and other stakeholders (alumni, employers, academic staff) in the work of designing and adapting the programmes;
- develop the teaching methods considering and using different modes of delivery, where appropriate and develop flexible learning paths;
- provide the students with the evaluation questionnaire after each semester for the subjects they studied, present them the results and ensure that there are follow-up measures as a result of the measurement of students' satisfaction;
- ensure a better coordination between the staff when designing the curricula, in order to avoid overlaps or, if there are, ensure enough communication on these overlaps for the students;
- ensure the participation of students in all the commissions of the UZK Senate, not only in the Commission for studies and ensure the representation of students from all the faculties, if possible.
- continue to develop internship opportunities for students and enable a procedure for measuring the quality of the internships, with the involvement of the mentoring teachers;
- increase the focus on career-guidance activities;

## **2.4 Research**

The institutional research expectations seem to be high, considering the University of Gjilan's mission. So far, this does not always get a projection is a current composition of permanent staff and its research activity, although some improvements are visible. Yet it still needs to be said research at higher education sector is not a sufficiently developed and cared for area at most higher education institutions in Kosovo, including University of Gjilan. Not only can it be seen in the very research activities and results. It is also clearly seen in the way of budgeting (budget breakdowns), in poorly developed national granting opportunities of funding for the basic/applied research at higher education institutions, and more. It seems higher education institutions have more or less accepted this reality and – despite to declarations and plans – they are not actively and effectively fighting for more finance and for more opportunities to realise the research next to the teaching, neither have they developed its own policies to improve the situation internally within the limits of possible.

Consequently, in positive cases the teaching staff is only partially and sometimes almost “in a private way” involved in research activities inside or outside the institutions, and these activities often somehow unclearly feed back into their teaching (courses they provide). This is also in some extent the case at UKZ, although the situation at different faculties differs and one can also see more positive practice examples, too.

As a result, student involvement in research and in co-operation projects is limited (but existing in some cases).

#### **Recommendations:**

- Develop clear and very concrete research development plan with clear indicators and timelines;
- Invest part of the budget in research;
- Support the staff in their research skills development;
- Define clearly and put into the practice a teaching – research annex for individual categories of the staff;
- Support the links between teaching and student research;
- Relate quality assurance procedures also to research development;

## **2.5 International Cooperation**

Respect to the previous Final Report, the University has improved significantly the number of **international relations contacts** (34) and its involving in international projects/programs (8 showed).

The majority of the 21 universities pending to confirm the agreements with the University of Gjilan, is from European Union. The objectives of the relations with foreign universities include exchanges of professors and students.

However, we observe **2 important lacks**:

1. Among the relations with foreign universities, only 13 are confirmed. In this group, only 3 universities are European and 1 from USA. It's necessary to extend the cooperation with European and American universities.
2. The strategic plan of international relations doesn't appear in the documents received, neither during the meeting with the Vice-Rector for International Relations: no information about the (geographical) priorities, financial resources, organization, and international relations office.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Establish a detailed plan of internationalization including: priorities, organizational and financial resources.;
- Conclude the pending agreements with foreign universities;
- Concrete an international relations office for the coordination of internationalization activities

## 2.6 Staff

Staffing has been a complicated issue for practically all higher education institutions in Kosovo at the moment. The same applies to UKZ. As in some other universities, UKZ has tried to attract new staff by public calls and in other ways. These strategies proved to be relatively successful in case of UKZ. According to the figures given by the rector during the meeting of reviewers with UKZ leadership team, recently **a significant number of new staff members have been recruited** to the UKZ. This needs to be acknowledged as a successful step, we believe.

Since the **UKZ strives to consolidate existing programs** and to get accreditation for the new programs of master level, and medium-term plans are even explicitly stating the ambition for doctoral school(s), one needs to ask about strategies how to reach it. These strategies are not elaborated in a sufficient details and persuasiveness at the moment.

The UKZ is still searching for the permanent as well as well qualified part-time staff. One has to appreciate there is a group of 12 PhD candidates who might soon become a promising and well qualified force for further development. It clearly indicates that one of possible strategies how to improve staffing situation could be to support PhD studies of well-chosen group of people, according to the program orientation/focus/university priorities. Such people would need, however, a **significant support** so that they can obtain relevant research-driven qualification and gradually become pillars of newly intended levels of the study programs (for instance Special Education, to mention one example). This is surprising why current PhD candidates do not get more explicit support from the UKZ or even from the state – they are the future of higher education in Kosovo!

Also, **training of the staff as for teaching and research needs to be strengthened**. There have been some activities developed in this direction at UKZ but more systematic support is needed.

### **Recommendations:**

- Continue an enrolment policy with focus on specific staff categories;
- Develop staff development strategies with a specific focus on individual categories of the staff;
- Identify individual for PhD studies and provide them with a sufficient support;
- Relate quality assurance procedures also to staff development;

## 2.7 Organization, Management and Planning

In terms of organization, management and planning, the university has adopted the previous report's recommendations establishing a protocol in order to monitor the operation of all the governing bodies of the University.

The **decision-making structure** and its control system are clearly explained. For the strategic and financial policies, a steering committee is implemented and the academic policies are established by the senate and councils of faculties. The Executive body is represented by the Rector and his office with the Faculty Deans.

The **external supervising system** includes the MEST, AKA and the Education Committee of the Assembly of Republic of Kosovo. The internal supervising implies the Rector and the Quality Office of

the University. The government is collegial and the responsibilities are shared in a transparent process.

The **participation of the students** in the governance of the university is established in each unit of the organizational structure with a right to vote, except in the Managing Council where only they are observer members. As detailed in the student management section, it is important that the Student Parliament be able to discuss and present all the issues that require attention from the managing bodies of UKZ.

Respect to the **selection procedures of personnel**, the process is transparent and objective in the **Review Committee**. No one can be a member of this committee if someone from the candidates for appointment is a spouse, partner or member of his/her close family.

We think that the Review committee has to be composed by a minimum of members from others university or external institutions in order to guarantee more objectivity in the analysis of the candidatures, in the process. Respect to the **Development Plan**, despite the fact that the presentation is very succinct, we observe that the priorities are very ambitious for 5 years. Maybe, it would be necessary to establish the priorities of development strategy, considering that a big part of these ones depend on the Government's grants.

In addition, if the Development Plan is focused on the period 2017-2022, the Budget projections of the University only cover two years (2017-2019).

#### **Questions/Recommendations:**

- Could you explain the reason(s) of the observer member statute for the students in the Managing Council?
- Could you detail the Development Plan, regarding the Budget projections?
- In the process of staff selection, the Review committee has to be composed by a minimum of members (1/3) from others university or external institutions (foreigner or not).
- A “ranking” of the priorities would help UKZ better follow the progress on different areas.

## **2.8 Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment**

**The current status of UKZ** involves a certain degree of dependence on the budget decided by the Ministry of Education from Kosovo, as UKZ is not allowed to have other forms of financing. For example, at present, the income from student taxes is directed to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) of Kosovo.

**The framework for the financial operations** is governed by Law No. 03/L-048 for the Management of Public Finances and Responsibilities (LMFPP) and the Medium-term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). UKZ has an ambitious projection for the next 3 years, until 2019. As stated in the SER, **the projection of the budget** for 2017 is 1.8 million of Euro, for 2018 - 2.6 milion Euro and for 2019 - 4.7 million Euro.

In 2017, the **approved budget** was **1.556.553 Euro** and from it, about 60% is was represented by the wages. The capital investment is situated at 500.000 Euro, including 200.000 Euro for the renovation of the library. Even though this is an ambitious projection, we can observe that the main difference is given by the amount allocated to the investments in infrastructure and facilities, the sum of 2.5 million of Euro in 2019 being projected for a new campus. In the end, MEST and the Ministry of Finance will

decide the exact sum allocated.

UKZ hopes that in the close future the new Parliament will vote for the statute of UKZ, which will change their regime and allow UKZ to have also other sources of income such as donations, student taxes or resources from public-private partnerships. However, this increased independence of the university must be made only **after the operational capacity** of UKZ to deal and run all the financial and administrative procedures **is ensured**.

**Regarding the facilities,** UKZ has at present 22 teaching rooms, 22 administration offices and 22 professor offices, as well as 5 labs, 1 library and 3 reading rooms<sup>1</sup>. The total space counts 6100 m<sup>2</sup>. We must take into account the fact that the total number of students is 5691. The maximum number of students that can circulate at the same time is 1700, divided in the two entrances.

The management of UKZ recognizes that the space is still a problem and as the student also acknowledge this constant need, the management of UKZ is seeking for solutions for a new campus. However, at present, the resources allocated for such an investment depend completely on the Ministry of Education. **The labs** are adequately equipped, one of the IT labs being recently renovated. The total number of computers is 105 and there are 4 computers available for projects.

**The library** has about **40.000 books**, according to the management of UKZ, but many of them are outdated and there is still a need to complete and diversify the collection. For the total number of over 5600 students, the space reserved for the library is a small one.

#### **Recommendations:**

- ensure a realistic projection of the UKZ budget and correlate the budgetary projection with the strategic plan of development of UKZ.
- increase the number of books available in the library and ensure a minimum bibliography for every subject and continue the efforts of digitalisation of the resources available at the library;

## **2.9 Quality Management**

In the SER, UKZ states that an Office for Quality Assurance and International Cooperation has been established which has defined the guiding principles of the strategy of quality assurance and has developed a continuous model for reporting on teaching and professional activities.

From the information received in the management meeting during the SV, the experts got the impression that there is a serious ambition to implement a comprehensive quality assurance (QA) system. However, UKZ is only at the beginning of implementation at the moment.

This also becomes clear when examining the additional document on “Quality Assurance in ‘Kadri Zeka University’ in Gjilan” which was submitted by UKZ upon request of the experts. In this document, it says that due to budget restrictions and missing permissions for competitions, UKZ currently is “in the process of applying for a staff of quality assurance and other necessary staff” (slide 8). Therefore, no regular operative unit for quality assurance seems to exist at the moment. For this reason, the rectorate commissioned an “ad-hoc commission for quality assurance” to resolve the issue and it is

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<sup>1</sup> The SER mentioned only one reading room.

reported that “two evaluation processes” in December 2016 and one in March 2017 were done (slide 9).

At the **system level**, UKZ has, as is stated in the SER (p. 192), „drafted“ regulations, standards and strategies for quality assurance of the study programs which are said to be based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Regarding the strategies, regulations and standards, the description of the QA system in the SER focusses on teaching quality and the quality of study programs. These dimensions of quality are a must in every academic QA system and, therefore, are well chosen.

However, it has to be noticed that the proposed QA system does not follow the quality standards as stated in the ESG in the detailed manner as depicted in the SER. For instance, standards such as student-centered learning, teaching and assessment (ESG-standard 1.3) would entail specification of objectives and criteria of goal achievement for all three activities - firstly - in a more detailed way, and - secondly - in advance. Only if objectives and criteria are communicated to the target groups in advance, a fair process of assessment is ensured. Here, regulations for communication of goals (communication in advance) and results of the QA processes must be implemented as elements of the QA system. Implementing a QA system means ex post-assessment, but ex ante-communication of what is going to be assessed. With regard to this, UKZ is highly recommended to communicate its system to all relevant employees on the basis of a regular communication plan. This also includes professional training of the staff in QA matters.

Regarding the **level of objectives**, the proposed QA system lacks of well-defined objectives and criteria for measuring and/or observing goal achievement in general. Experts acknowledge that the system contains many important procedures in a detailed manner, such as the procedures for the review of study programs (SER, pp. 194). However, most “aims” presented here are vague. For instance, one aim is called the “realization of aims of study programs”. This, as a superior aim, is self-evident. This example shows what is lacking in the QA system at the current stage of development, namely, the systematic concretization of what are the particular aims of “study programs” and how these aims can be operationalized. The same is true for other superior aims such as “modernization of the study programs”. The vagueness of such formulations can be reduced by adding the modes of their realization and concretization of the scope of implementation, e.g. modernization of study programs through continuous integration of innovative teaching methods in all courses.

Strategic aims are not self-explanatory and they need concretization and differentiation in order to make them measurable and ascertainable. In concrete, this means that criteria respectively indicators for the specific objectives have to be developed following proven schemes such as the SMART-scheme.

At the **operational level**, a considerable number of procedures and processes of the proposed QS system is outlined in the SER, with a focus on procedures and regulations for reviews of the study programs, in particular (SER, pp. 193). In the additional document, further “activities” of quality assurance are enumerated. Among them, there are activities referring to academic staff development (“Creating conditions for continuous excellence of full time and part time academic staff”, slide 22).

Experts highly acknowledge the attention which is dedicated to the revision of study programs in the SER (p. 193). Revision of study programs is reported to be a task of a revision group activated by the dean of the respective faculty. This represents an encompassing approach which is very promising. With regard to revision of the “didactic base” of study programs, it is necessary to concretize what is

meant by “didactic base”. Here, experts recommend thinking about two dimensions of teaching quality: (1) making use of appropriate, modern teaching concepts and methods (e.g. problem-based learning, self-directed learning, blended learning, community learning/service learning); and (2) elaborating the particular teaching skills of the academic staff needed for further development of the “didactic base”. The latter issue would complement a quality instrument, which is said to be a part of the QA system already, i.e. the quality report which the teachers have to write at the end of the academic year. These reports could become a very important instrument of self-evaluation of the teaching quality and is strongly supported by the experts. It is hoped that these reports follow a predefined structure which also contains questions about the adoption and actual use of innovative teaching methods in the classroom.

As can be learned from the SER and the additional document, implementation of the proposed QA system involves a rather large number of committees whose responsibilities and tasks are not clearly elaborated. For instance, there are three committees which are said to be involved in the selection and evaluation of quality of academic staff: Review Committee, Study Committee, and Senate. However, there is a lack of information how the work of these Committees is interlinked and how the different tasks are coordinated along the several stages of the evaluation process. In addition, the relevant section of the additional document is entitled “Criteria for the selection and evaluation of quality of academic staff”, but no criteria are mentioned at all (slide 24).

In general, **the proposed QA system** involves many actors which are highly relevant for quality assurance at different levels. Experts strongly support the idea of involving as many relevant organizational units in the procedures of quality assessment as possible, but it must be stressed that the success of this approach depends on three conditions: (1) clarification of the objectives related to the quality standards including clarification of criteria and indicators for goal achievement; (2) clarification of responsibilities and tasks of the various committees and councils and other actors involved in QA activities; (3) clarification of the interplay of the various committees and councils, the Commission for Quality Assurance, “revision groups” at faculty level, deans, rectors and other agents relevant for QA activities.

One approach that could help systematizing the QA system and its components (standards, objectives and criteria/indicators, procedures and actors) and making it productive for targeted improvement is the PDCA-cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) which is widely used in universities.

At the **instrument-level** of the proposed QA system, UKZ has already developed instruments to gather information on teaching quality, such as the questionnaire for course evaluation which is supposed to be filled out by students for each course. This is an important step towards a solid foundation for creating a knowledge base on teaching quality. It is self-evident that these instruments should be improved continuously. In addition, there are other instruments for qualitative and quantitative gathering of data such as interviews, monitoring, assessment schemes and self-assessment reports (SER, p. 194). It can be assumed that some of these instruments are still under development at present.

With regard to services, the proposed QA system includes the assessment of students’ services, too.

What is entirely **missing in the QA system**, are provisions on the quality assurance of research activities although “scientific research” is mentioned as a relevant area of quality. Here, the system fully lacks information on procedures, objectives and criteria. If UKZ wants to proceed in extending its research

activities, the setup of the research-related parts of the QA system is a major task to be started as soon as possible.

The SER does not contain information on **self-evaluation**. From the additional document it can be learned that the Rector elected the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs as chairman of the self-evaluation commission and assigned to her the tasks of planning, organizing and coordinating the work of the commission's work. Since it seems that the commission is starting its work by now, no regular self-evaluations could be carried out so far.

Also, as explained above, the annual self-assessment of teachers is a very promising instrument of self-evaluation, since it involves teachers actively in highly relevant QA activities and it creates a very important information base for the entire QA system. Here, it is important that these reports follow a well-considered structure, and that the results are used not only to "highlight problems and suggesting solutions" but are used for developing measures for improvement.

Since the QA system is in its early stage of implementation, no information about its concrete utilization is available. No information was provided on **criteria for the award of academic honours** and honorary academic degrees. Therefore, it cannot be assessed.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- The Office for Quality Assurance should be set up on a regular basis and equipped with sufficient manpower immediately.
- Develop appropriate and clear objectives for the quality standards including appropriate criteria and indicators for assessing goal achievement.
- Clarify the responsibilities and tasks of the various committees and councils and other actors involved in QA activities.
- Clarify the linkages, interplay and division of labour between all committees and agents relevant to QA activities.
- Elaborate the objectives for enhancement of teaching quality and the corresponding criteria.
- Link the self-evaluation and evaluation of teaching quality with measures of academic staff development.
- Start training of all relevant agents of QA in order to support their full and targeted participation in QA processes and activities.

## **2.10 Final Recommendation**

UKZ is a young university with important potential for the educational system in Kosovo. Taking into consideration all the above we recommend the **accreditation of the institution for 3 years** together with all the recommendations mentioned at each section of the current report, some of which request serious and immediate attention.

### **3. Banks, finance and accounting, BSc (Reaccreditation)**

#### **3.1 Academic program and student management**

On the basis of documents provided and the meetings with responsible persons for the study programme, it can be assumed that there are solid links between the study programme and the University's strategy. There is a strong ambition to establish the study program as "excellent basis" (SER, p. 28) for careers in financial services industry, accounting and in public institutions. The efficacy of the program with regard to employability of its graduates has to be assessed precisely beginning with the first graduates. Overall, the program corresponds to the mission of UKZ. With regard to its fit with the principles of employability, the program could use a more detailed elaboration of the skills and competences to be imparted to students. The employability of graduates of bachelor programs in economics should be well supported by integrating particular skills such as project management, and social skills such as the ability to work in teams, since skills like these are becoming more important in modern work environments.

The overall quality of the curriculum as well as 1st range are appropriate and corresponds to the bachelor cycle. It corresponds to international standards, too.

The SER provides no information on an overarching didactic concept nor was there further information about the relevance of this issue in the personal meetings. Learning outcomes, one of the first elements of every didactic concept, can be found in the course descriptions. Here, there are many - and often identical - descriptions of teaching methods in the various courses but no hints if they are related to an overarching concept. There are serious differences in the quality of definition of learning outcomes, which have been reported to be more the manifestation of „subjective” perspectives of teachers, but do not seem to be the outcome of a systematic development process. Several learning objectives are of good or high quality, while others clearly lack in-depth consideration. The latter is the case with several courses, where learning outcomes are formulated only superficially: Business Law, Financial Mathematics, Economy of Kosovo, Introduction to Business, Finance, Risk Management, Ethics in Business. Here, an internal review of the study program following strictly the recommendations of the ECTS User's Guide and making use of one of the popular learning taxonomies and the Dublin Descriptors is highly recommended.

Within the framework of the curriculum, students do have sufficient opportunities for independent study.

The allocation of ECTS is overall appropriate, since the duration of some courses have been expanded from one to two hours (obligatory), especially in the third and fifth semester. Regarding the workload, there were no complaints from students and it appears to be manageable for students.

The admission criteria of the admission process seem to be pretty low and should be elaborated in greater detail.

The ratio of the academic/artistic staff and the students cannot be assessed, since no breakdown of staff assigned to the study program was provided.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- Develop sector-specific and realistic learning outcomes based on evidence from labour market research and expertise of stakeholders.

- Use learning taxonomies to improve the quality of learning outcomes.
- Based on revised and detailed learning outcomes, develop an overarching didactic concept and implement it as well as monitor it continuously as a cooperative effort involving the entire teaching staff.
- Survey the experiences of the first cohorts of graduates in the labour market and ask employees about their experiences with graduates, too.

### **3.2 Staff**

In the list of academic staff received from KAA, 31 staff members could have been assigned to the Faculty of Economics, from which 11 were full time and 22 were part time. At first glance, this seems to be a reasonable ratio, but it should be noticed that, as mentioned in section 2.3 in this report, the student-teacher-ratio at the Faculty of Economics is about 1:213 , which is a real challenge.

Regarding the further development of teaching skills of the academic staff, it was interesting to learn in the meeting with the persons responsible for the study program that the teaching staff has established mutual visits in the classroom. This sort of teaching internship can be highly recommended, since it is a very practical approach for improving teaching skills and reflecting over didactic approaches and concepts. ET acknowledges these efforts very much and recommends teaching staff to continue it and also to start documenting the outcomes of these mutual classroom visits in order to enlarge the internal knowledge base on good teaching practices and on teaching that needs to be improved.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- More full-time teaching staff is required, especially with regard to the plans of establishing research activities in the future.
- The teaching staff should be strongly supported in their initiative for internal classroom visits as well as in documentation and internal transfer of good practices in teaching.

### **3.3 Research and International Cooperation**

As could be learned in the meetings, there is no significant involvement of staff in research activities except for some activities with students in few courses.

In the SER (p. 33), a “group of economists” consisting of 28 distinguished students is mentioned which is supposed to lead to the establishment of a research institute within the Faculty of Economics of UKZ in the near future. This development is, as it says in the SER, „quite obvious“. Here, it must be said that the idea of establishing a research institute through student activities is not realistic. If the study program wants to start research activities which lead to the establishment of a research institute, this must be managed actively by the faculty in cooperation with the rectorate.

There is no international cooperation in research. Since it is the strategy of the university to attract PhD students, important progress has been made in getting PhD students to UKZ. This is a very promising strategy for the program, too.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- UKZ should actively manage the establishment of research activities at the national and international level with broad participation of the staff of the program.
- The program is highly recommended to participate in the UKZ's strategy of hiring PhD students.

### **3.4 Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment**

No information on the specific budget for the study program was provided.

The classroom facilities are part of an old building, which is in need for renovation. There are no facilities for online or distance learning available on a large scale at the moment. Moodle, as an e-learning platform seems to be in its initial stage with some use for providing teaching materials. The library facilities are very poor. There is urgent need to update books and digital resources (e-books, e-journals, scientific databases).

#### **Recommendation:**

- The program is strongly advised to improve its library stock as soon as possible.

### **3.5 Quality Management**

The review of study programs is one of the most ambitious parts of the QA system of UKZ. In the study program, there have been activities in developing further the structure and the allocation of ECTS which brought forth improvements.

A good opportunity for improving the data base for quality assurance and review of study programmes could be realized as a cooperation of the program with the Office for Quality Assurance in pooling information from course evaluation and documentation of internal teaching visits. The Office for Quality Assurance could provide a standardized scheme as well as guidance for the teaching staff in formulating learning outcomes. Within the PDCA cycle, teaching staff and rectorate should meet on a regular basis for workshops, where they develop plans for continuous improvement of teaching methods, particularly with regard to interactive teaching methods.

#### **Recommendations:**

- The study programme should seek collaboration with the Office for Quality Assurance to set up a scheme for developing learning outcomes which is then used for improvement of course descriptions where necessary.
- A PDCA cycle should be established where the review of study program is linked to academic staff development with a focus on teaching skills.

### **3.6 Final recommendation**

The ET recommends the program Banking, Finance and Accounting for accreditation for three more years. The recommendations for improvement should be taken up immediately by the persons responsible for the program.

## 4. Marketing, BSc (Reaccreditation)

### 4.1 Academic program and student management

According the information provided in the SER and the information received in the meeting with persons responsible for the study program, the bachelor program Marketing is in line with the mission statement of UKZ and it reflects in good detail the various requirements for graduates in the different fields of marketing.

The aims of the curriculum are defined according to the academic degree and the academic degree corresponds to international standards.

The curriculum of the program in is the same like the one of the bachelor program in BFA in semesters 1 and 2. The persons in charge of the program argued that this is necessary to improve the basic knowledge of new students in various economic subjects, since the initial knowledge on business issues is poor. This is a comprehensible argument, but – as a consequence – the students of the program Marketing have their first course on marketing not until the third semester. It is also necessary to point out that many courses which address key skills in marketing are very late in the fifth semester and, in particular, in the sixth semester. Examples are courses such as Customer Behaviour, Promotion (fifth semester) and - in the sixth semester – Marketing Strategies, Marketing Research, Industrial Marketing and International Marketing (all of them obligatory courses), and Data Analysis for Business Research (elective course). This means that students acquire important knowledge and key competencies in marketing only late in the study cycle. Instead, it would be better to give students more opportunities to accumulate practical knowledge over the study cycle and to establish thematic linkages across the subjects.

It appears to the expert team, that, on the programmatic level, the curriculum corresponds to labour market needs, but that it does not do so at the curriculum level. Here, changes are needed to make it an authentic marketing program. In particular, the mere business and economy courses in semester one and two should be condensed and the resulting space in the curriculum should be filled with introductory courses on marketing and other basic marketing courses. It is not clear, why students in marketing are supposed to have courses such as business law in the first semester and financial mathematics in the second semester as obligatory course, but no courses where they learn about marketing. It also should be noticed that the first introductory course in marketing is as late as in the third semester, and here, this is the only course related to marketing. This means, key courses in marketing should be shifted from semester 5 and 6 to earlier semesters. Thus, the curriculum heavily needs rearrangement in terms of shifting marketing courses from later semesters to earlier semesters and some business courses in later semesters.

Also, it is not comprehensible why the the elective course „Data Analysis for Business Research“ was made an elective (!) course in the sixth semester, since in the rationale of the program for the labour market, data analysis was highlighted as an important skill for graduates.

As does the bachelor program BFA, the program Marketing lacks of an overarching didactic concept. This is a structural deficit in both programs.

The curriculum should give students more opportunity for independent study, reflecting and analysis

with focus on marketing courses. This can be achieved by rearranging the structure of the curriculum as outlined above. The overall allocation of ECTS is appropriate in terms of workload for students which seems to be manageable.

In the SER, the descriptions of teaching methods are often very repetitive. Here, the persons responsible for the program should elaborate in greater detail the particular didactic approaches and methods and make visible the variety of teaching approaches.

Regarding the teaching contents, there are several shortcomings across the curriculum. In some courses, learning outcomes and learning contents need updates. In particular, this refers to the following courses: Product Design Policy, E-Marketing, Marketing Research, Industrial Marketing, International Marketing.

Furthermore, some courses need to be revised, since there are discrepancies between title and content of the course. A striking example is „Data Analysis for Business Research“ with a heavy focus on database management, while no data analysis skills are mentioned at all in the learning outcomes. Another example is „Informatics“, which suggests contents like information processing, engineering of information systems, and information science. In reality, the course is on office software applications. This course should be renamed, e.g. “Office Applications”.

One more problem is the lack of statistics programs which are needed in some courses. When examining the availability of these programs in the computer lab during the site visit, ET had to realize that they are not available.

Also, English as a course language seems to be seldom the case. ET strongly recommends to hold at least one course per semester entirely in English language, which is a must for marketing professionals.

In general, learning outcomes should be formulated as recommended in the ECTS User’s Guide, i.e. defining, what a student „knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process“. This means to use active verbs to describe these outcomes and less so general phrases such as knowing, recognizing etc.

As a conclusion from the explanations given above, the identical academic content of the curricula of the program BFA and the program Marketing in semesters 1 and 2 is not really conclusive.

The admission criteria of the admission process of the marketing program cannot be assessed, since in the SER, it is described as being “merit based as per total points accumulation” (p. 78). Here, a scheme explicitly corresponding to international standards should be developed.

From the list of academic staff received from KAA ET learned, that 31 staff members are assigned to the Faculty of Economics, from which 11 were full time and 22 were part time. At first glance, this seems to be a reasonable ratio, but it should be noticed that, as mentioned in section 2.3 in this report, the student/teacher-ratio at the Faculty of Economics is about 1:213, which is a real challenge.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Rearrange the curriculum in terms of an authentic bachelor program in Marketing to give students the opportunity to acquire marketing knowledge and skills from the beginning of their studies and continuously throughout the study cycle.

- Develop sector-specific and realistic learning outcomes based on evidence from labour market research and expertise of stakeholders.
- Use learning taxonomies to improve the quality of learning outcomes in the courses mentioned.
- Based on revised and detailed learning outcomes, develop an overarching didactic concept and implement it as well as monitor it continuously as a cooperative effort involving the entire teaching staff.
- Improve teaching contents in the courses mentioned.
- Rename the courses mentioned according to their actual teaching contents.
- Improve the availability of software for data collection and data analysis and ensure that the respective courses can be taught as described.
- Deliver one course per semester entirely in English.
- Survey the experiences of the first cohorts of graduates in the labour market and ask employees about their experiences with graduates, too, and use the findings for systematic review of the study program.

## 4.2 Staff

As was mentioned in the section on the BFA program, the student-teacher-ratio at the Faculty of Economics is about 1:213, which is too high.

Persons in charge of the program portray the staff as very motivated, being willing to participate in organized meetings of colleagues to learn from each other about teaching methods. Also, it is intended to transfer the knowledge produced in these meetings to other staff members. ET highly acknowledges these efforts. Also here, documentation is highly recommended.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- More full-time teaching staff is required, especially with regard to the plans of establishing research activities in the future.
- Teaching staff should be strongly supported in their initiative for mutual learning in teaching methods as well as in documentation and internal transfer of good practices in teaching.

## 4.3 Research and International Cooperation

A “group of economists” consisting of 28 distinguished students is supposed to lead to the establishment of a research institute within the Faculty of Economics in the near future. Here, it is also necessary to realize that students are a very „transitory“ entity, which poses the difficulty to establish research teams at a stable basis. In general, persons in charge of the program should set up research activities as soon as possible through cooperation with external institutes and internal cooperation with other study programs of UKZ. The core of the research staff should be regular staff members.

There is no international cooperation in research. UKZ made important progress in getting PhD students to UKZ. Also the marketing program should be actively involved in this promising strategy in order to enhance its research capacities.

### **Recommendations:**

- Manage the establishment of research activities at the national and international level with broad participation of the staff of the program actively.
- The program is highly recommended to participate in UKZ's strategy of hiring PhD students to improve teaching quality and to increase research activities.

## **4.4 Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment**

No information on the specific budget for the study program was provided. The situation is the same as for the BFA program.

There is urgent need to update books and digital resources (e-books, e-journals, scientific databases) and, particularly for the program Marketing, there is strong need to provide budget for software for marketing research. This includes software for quantitative and qualitative market research and data analysis.

### **Recommendation:**

- The program is strongly advised to improve its library stock and software for marketing research and data analysis as soon as possible.

## **4.5 Quality Management**

The review of study programs is one of the most ambitious parts of the QA system of UKZ. The curriculum proposed in the SER shows that immediate action is necessary in reviewing and rearranging the program.

As was recommended for the university in general and for the program BFA in particular, program review and academic staff development should be implemented following the PDCA cycle.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- The study programme should seek collaboration with the Office for Quality Assurance to set up a scheme for developing learning outcomes which is then used for improvement of course descriptions where necessary.
- A PDCA cycle should be implemented where the review of study program is linked to academic staff development with a focus on teaching skills.

## **4.6 Final recommendation**

The ET recommends the program Marketing for accreditation for three more years. The persons in charge of the program should take up immediate action to resolve the weaknesses of the program.

## 5. Special Education, MA (Accreditation)

To launch the program of Special Education is a very good idea and there is no doubt this would meet the needs at schools and beyond since it is increasingly important to work appropriately with young people with special educational needs and there is not sufficient provision for this in Kosovo at the moment. This is why I believe the program Special Education has a promising perspective to become a very helpful for the market as well as for the University "Kadri Zeka" (UKZ). To achieve this, the program needs to be well prepared in order to meet the expectations.

### 5.1 Academic programmes and student management

**The program corresponds with the institution's mission statement** and principles of operation. The University of Gjilan has an ambitious mission and the program is an ambitious step towards this end.

The very title of the program needs more attention, it seems. The concept is not laid out as a generally defined/focused Special Education (covering all age categories across all sectors of special education reality). In fact, it seems to be more focused on a specific level of the school and work with children in need of special education treatment. This is perfectly acceptable, yet then the title would perhaps deserve little more specification in an indicated direction - I suggest this for possible consideration. In other words, I cannot see the title Special Education to be self-explanatory in a given context.

**The rationale of the program** is written acceptably, to reach a close interlink between aims and learning outcomes would still require little more specification.

The very program is suggested as a three-semester study program (90 ECTS – the credits are appropriately calculated) with first two semesters organized as direct teaching, and third semester fully devoted to master thesis. This is, in principle, possible and acceptable.

Yet some more detailed explanations are advisable here. First, it needs a more detailed explanation why the program is composed as master level program and not analogically to already existing educational programs currently run by the Faculty of Education, UKZ (Preschool Education, Primary School Program) as bachelor level program.

**The form of study** needs to be formulated attentively in the proposal („regular“ is not the term officially used). I assume the authors meant full-time form.

Duration of the study is also put in a wrong way in the proposal („1 year 3 semesters semi-“) – it appeared during the discussion with the persons responsible for the program and also from the syllabus that 3-semester program is meant.

It is stated that the very **concept/curriculum** of the program has some analogies to the Special Education programs offered at the University of Maribor and at the University of Boston. While this can be a truth, local specifics need more attention and also more space for clarification in the program proposal.

It is assumed graduates of 240 ECTS bachelor programs (enlisted in the proposal) will be eligible to enter the program. Enrolment requirements are not stated in detail. Since the newly accepted students

will perhaps have different level of knowledge and skills, I would recommend to think of some "compensatory" course as an extra offer of the program. Final requirements will also need more specification.

The very **curriculum** contains obligatory and elective courses (each term two courses out of four are elective). In my view, since there is not much room for many courses during only one year (two semesters), a careful decisions need to be made as for what is most important for the students to go through. With regards to this, I would advocate for shifting some courses from the group of electives to the group of obligatory courses (for instance, Individual treatment of children with disabilities; Psychology of children with special needs; Practice in resource centres). Similarly, maybe some obligatory courses could be moved into the elective courses' group (for instance Difficulties in learning mathematics; Difficulties in literacy and interpretation). Without at least a basic course of special education-related psychology and without practical experience it is hard to accept the curriculum, in my view.

**The proportion between theory and practice** in individual courses is not always clear – while it is usually stated as 60 % to 40 %, this needs an explanation and some reflection how this can be achieved.

Since the whole third semester is devoted to master theses, I would advocate for **more attention to the preparation of students for their research project**, especially by means of more elaborated course Research methodology in special education. This course is in my view elaborated rather generally. There is not a mention about the process of supervisions to the students conducting their research, neither there is a mention about specifics of thesis defence process. Also, the fact that students select the topics is not sufficient information – out of which offer?

**The literature stated for each course** often contains a mixture of English and Albanian written texts (it is not clear whether all students will master English sufficiently, though). In some cases the literature is only in English (Difficulties in learning mathematics; IT in special education, Management of inclusive classroom). And in several courses the same few titles of the literature are being recommended repeatedly. Since the library is not functioning well and databases are not used at all, as it seems, this is insufficient for master level studies.

One more issue deserves to be mentioned: special education is typically open to those with special education needs on both sides of the spectrum. Is there some attention paid also to the special educational needs of talented students in the program concerned? I could not find it specified explicitly.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Improve the curriculum with regards to above mentioned comments, namely: title of the program; clearer interlink between aims and learning outcomes; some changes in curriculum structure (obligatory and elective courses, proportion between theory and practice);
- Pay more attention to supervision processes and to study resources.

## **5.2 Staff**

**Staffing of the newly proposed program is a critical**, and perhaps most problematic aspect. Among permanent academic staff enlisted in the self-evaluation report (p. 116) there is nobody with Special

Education background, and only two full-time staff members with Education/Pedagogy background (assoc. prof. Januz Dervodeli, assistant Mensur Neziri). All the other staff members have their background in very different areas of expertise (Literature/Journalism/Media, Mathematics, Philology, Physics, and Fine Arts). On the top of it, among three persons responsible for the program there is nobody with Special Education background, one member has background in Education/Pedagogy (Januz Dervodeli), other two in Philology (Merxhan Avdyli) and Physics (Bashkim Dalipi). With regard to the rules of KAA, I cannot see it as sufficient.

**Recommendation:**

- View the development of Special Education program on master level as a strategic issue and give it few years for development.
- Invest into PhD candidates or new adepts of PhD studies – select a group of several people who would be eligible to study PhD in Special Education, provide them with sufficient support for their studies and research, and offer them a solid working opportunity (teaching- and research-balanced one). If successful, these human resources can in few years become a very promising basis for the new program and its further development.
- Find promising reflective practitioners in Special Education who could in time complement a newly emerging body of PhD graduates in Special Education.

### 5.3 Research and International Cooperation

At the moment, there is no research in Special Education at the Faculty of Education, UKZ. This needs to be gradually developed, maybe most realistically via PhD graduates.

Some developments in internationalisation are to be seen. Faculty of Education has finally become a part of the team that is proposing ERASMUS+ project, some partial cooperation initiatives appeared. This needs to be appreciated, although still more is to be done for instance by making use of a potential of already existing international agreements and some other contracts. More specific plans closely related to a newly prepared program are not mentioned in the proposal.

**Recommendations:**

- Develop and gradually realise the plan for research in Special Education.
- Develop a strategy of internationalisation clearly linked to the program Special Education.

### 5.4 Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment

Finances are strongly centralized at the university (HE sector in general) and this relates to the newly proposed program, too. There is very little finance planned for research and the same relates to internationalisation, consequently, finances are not explicitly linked in a sufficient way to the newly proposed program. While buildings are still acceptable for teaching process (although new campus would be desirable), the library needs a dramatic and rapid change. Its current state of art is hard to accept. There are no other special infrastructures for Special Education available.

**Recommendations:**

- Make all the effort to develop explicit financial plan for the newly proposed program and its teaching and research activities, and also its internationalisation;
- Improve library significantly.

## 5.5 Quality Management

There is a plan to assess regularly teaching aspects of the program (as in cases of other programs), there is not much attention paid to regular assessment of research and services linked to the newly proposed program. This also needs to be envisaged.

**Recommendation:**

- Elaborate more complex plan of QA focused on teaching, research and services in relation to newly proposed program.

## 5.6 Final recommendation

- **With regard to problems with staffing I cannot recommend the program for accreditation at the moment.**

## 6. E-Governance, MSc (Accreditation)

A cooperation programme between three faculties, which is lead by the computer science faculty. The programme is interdisciplinary and innovative and is a very positive development in the balkan region. The deans of computer science, law faculty and business faculty created the program. One of the goals is to create impact through close collaboration with external stakeholders.

### 6.1 Academic programmes and student management

The academic programme MSc E-Governance corresponds to the institution's **mission statement** with an innovative interdisciplinary curriculum, which is provided in cooperation by three faculties. The specialisation in the domain E-Governance is unique in the whole balkan region and could provide high qualified graduates, who are able to help regional government in building e-government solutions. As digitalization is a main issue for all governments on the federal and local level, the program is an important contribution to society.

The **curriculum** has been developed by analyzing two of the leading e-governance programs - University of Koblenz and University of Technology Tallinn. The comparison of the programs proves the high quality of the curriculum conception (p. 139 SER). The main focus of the program is technology, therefore the faculty of computer science is responsible, which coordinates the program. The **academic aims** focus on enabling the graduates to combine the interdisciplinary elements for

implementing e-government solutions. The described goals (p. 141 SER) and expected learning outcomes (p. 142 SER) are appropriate for master level programs.

The overarching **didactic concept** is missing, the SER only offers vague intentions: "*Teaching and work methodology: all these three faculties will use a wide and coherent range of teaching methods, learning activities and evaluation forms that include interaction between the learning theory, practice and experience in solving concrete problems.*" Especially for an interdisciplinary study programme the three faculties need to develop a common didactic concept, which could and should be a combination of the different teaching methods; but all in all it needs to be incorporated into one didactic framework. Otherwise neither teaching staff nor students will be guided through the teaching and learning processes.

The **academic degree** Master of Science in E-Governance would correspond to international standards, but the SER offers different master's degrees: chapter title MA (p. 137), in the table master in E-Governance and MSc Egov.

The first year is focused on content; third semester includes 3 research projects which offer the opportunity for **independent study** and space for self driven innovation. Teaching is classroom and laboratory focused and offer a mixture of theoretical and practical aspects; in the table they propose 300 hours of contact per year for theory and practice in the lab (p. 143).

The credits allocation (**ECTS**) is appropriate, comprehensible and comparable with other international programs: 120 credits, 4500 classroom hours. A detailed calculation is provided on page 143 and 144. The **workload** is manageable for full time students, for part time it's critical.

The **syllabi** offer an overview about the different courses. The interdisciplinary program also offers courses which are taught in bachelor programs, some of the course description seem to be "copy pasted" from the existing bachelor programs, which is not appropriate, because especially the aim of the courses and the learning outcomes need to be adapted.

The **overall concept of the program and the academic content** is compelling, students with different backgrounds have different obligatory courses, which offers them a clear path for developing the necessary knowledge. On the other hand it leads to almost no overlapping courses.

As an interdisciplinary program it offers students with different background the possibility to apply, bachelor graduates in the field of legal sciences, public administration, computer science, economic sciences or similar programs are eligible to apply. The SER offers no details about **admission criteria** or about the admission process. The added value will be created by students with different backgrounds, therefore a balanced student group of law business and computer science should be achieved. Special awareness building is necessary for motivating law and business graduates to apply.

The ratio of **academic staff** (10) and **students** (max. 25) would be perfect.

This is one of the first interdisciplinary study programmes which involves three faculties, which is promising development, but these kind of programmes need **strong coordination** and defined decision bodies and processes. These organisational aspects are not mentioned at all.

Students need to work on **projects** in the third semester, which offers a lot of opportunities. During the SV discussion, ET realized that the projects should not be interdisciplinary; which is okay, but the

potential of mixed student projects should be considered, because it offers the possibility of great results. mutual learning from each other, etc.

### **Recommendations**

- Governance framework for decision bodies and processes needs to be developed.
- Didactic concepts needs to be developed by the whole faculty, which includes the different approaches from the different disciplines.
- Clarify the academic degree. ET recommends using Master of Science, because of the strong computer science focus.
- Syllabi need to be improved significantly; some of the courses offer aim of the courses and/ or learning outcomes, which are appropriate for bachelor programs but not for master programs. Some of the courses offer no learning outcomes.
- Admission criteria and admission process needs to be defined more clearly.
- Special awareness building is necessary for motivating law and business graduates to apply. Basis of allocation with clear minimum limits should be defined.
- Provide interdisciplinary projects for the students.

## **6.2 Staff**

The cooperation of the three faculties guarantees high quality of the programme faculty. Prof. Asoc. Dr. Xhevdet Thaqi, Dean of the computer science faculty, takes over the responsibility for the whole programme and another 9 assistant professors cover the courses; only one of them is part time, all other are full time at employed by UKZ. The faculty provides high quality in the respective fields.

The critical issue, which the ET discussed with the representatives from the faculty during SV, is the missing E-Governance expert. This must be solved by building up capacity through staff development, could be done by inviting experts from the compared programs from Germany or Estland for internal training and or combined invited lectures.

The second development potential is forming a interdisciplinary team. Currently it is a well designed interdisciplinary curriculum, which has been developed by the deans of the three faculties. For fruitful exchange and development a interdisciplinary teams needs to be formed, therefore the faculty needs to organize a kick off workshops and following up workshops for creating a team spirit, ensuring organic development, discussing research questions, defining potential student projects and master thesis, developing a common picture of the whole programme, etc.

### **Recommendations:**

- The ET highly recommends organizing workshops and invited lectures for staff capacity building.
- The ET highly recommends to form an interdisciplinary team for teaching and research.

## **6.3 Research and International Cooperation**

The main focus of the university is teaching, like in most other universities, this leads to limited

resources for teaching. Nevertheless Prof. Ass. Dr. Gëzim Tosuni established small group of economic research groups and they provide services for municipality or region or the university itself. Currently he offers together with his students small surveys studies. Missing is .a structured process for research, research activities usually are driven by personal commitment to science. Prof. Ass. Dr. Artan Dermaku mentioned that he offers small projects for the project and it is planned to extend to business and administration. A research vision and development path with links to the programme is unfortunately missing. Most of the publishing resources are needed for producing and updating the teaching textbooks. A positive development is a trend of co-authored paper in the faculties.

The interdisciplinary study programme offers the chance for applied research and to include the resources of the students. A research plan needs to be developed, which includes the students and which ensures interdisciplinary approaches.

**Recommendation:**

- The ET highly recommends developing a research plan, which includes interdisciplinary elements and includes the resources of the students through projects and master theses.

## 6.4 Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment

The financial resources are very limited, but one possibility could be applied directly financed projects by local or federal government. Please read the general chapter. No further specific recommendations, for the programme

**Recommendation:**

- Create cooperation for applied student research projects and generate an income stream.

## 6.5 Quality Management

No further comments. Please check the general comments.

## 6.6 Final recommendation

The ET recommends the recommendation of the MSc E-Governance study programme.

## 7. Local Governance and Democratic Society, MSc (Accreditation)

### 7.1 General findings

The meeting with the delegates of the 3 universities involved in the Master (University of Gjilan, Prizren and Pëje) was direct, honest and friendly in a mutual understanding in order to emphasize the academic program's positive and negative aspects.

The support material in the meeting was the academic program's descriptive Master in "Local Government and Democratic Society" included in the SER and it was discussed about next: program's goals and its organization, teaching methodology, student's practical, methodology and research's line, the teaching staff profile and the academic program content.

The evaluation and the recommendations relative to the study program are based on the analysis of the documents transmitted by the agency KAA, the interviews, the site visit, and the partnership agreement between the 3 universities.

On basis of the documents and the meeting, the first and main observation indicates the Master seems to be directed by the University of Gjilan, even though the agreement gives some – succinct - indications about the sharing of responsibilities. The documents and the information received during the visit don't indicate clearly how the master will be managed.

#### **Recommendation:**

- It is necessary to establish a detailed plan of organization and not just an agreement. The plan has to detail all the questions of management of the master:
  - Organization;
  - Human, material and financial resources (budget);
  - Agenda of reunions;
  - Coordination reunions;
  - Etc.

### 7.2 Academic programmes and student management

**7.2.1. The student management** seems to be right related to the student's join conditions in the Master. The number of students admitted (60) is reasonable because allows an intensively training development as well as a close student's assistance by the teachers.

In this way, students have an important – and stronger - role because of the reduced pupil number, the teachers become into a mentor or "coaches". They will be not only training in theoretical and practical lessons but also on the career opportunity preparation.

It would be interesting to add in the program the concept of *Career Orientation* as an evaluable activity because, by this way, the students will be forced to take charge of their responsibilities for a professional future.

## **Recommendations**

- Provision should be made for tutorial system: every student must get a mentor/coach from the master admission to the end. The mentor must support, motivate and help to the student during its career. The mentor should deal with two students' tops and the mentorship frequency once a week (for example 1 hour/student).
- Establish an „internship and Career Orientation” at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Year. It's the right moment for the student to do a “balance” of his studies and consider the future perspective in professional terms but overall in choice terms about the Master-core disciplines.

### **7.2.2 Subjects of the academic program**

In general terms, all the subjects correspond with this type of master. However, the SER and the meeting reveal several lacks have been detected:

1. The title of the Master is “Local Governance and Democratic Society” but the contents of the Program talks about the governance local than the democratic society. In addition, the title could generate confusion because we don't know if there are two branches (“Local Governance” and “Democratic Society”), if it's “Local Governance” included in “Democratic Society” or the opposite. In this sense, respect to the obligatory and elective subjects, the choices of the optional subjects have to reflect the reality of the title of the master.
2. It's necessary to insert 2 subjects in the program: “Mechanisms for tackling the International and Local corruption”, and “Local management of environment”.

### **7.2.3 Teaching Methodology – practical works**

Regarding the **teaching methodology**, the SER and the meetings have not given precision in concrete terms about didactic and pedagogic methods and means that will be in use. The SER and the meeting show nevertheless that the master focuses more on the theoretical part than the practical aspects of the Master (60% - 40%). Even though it is stated that every master subject will have several practical elements that the student must complete, it is not shown exactly the kind of practices the students will do.

In addition, in terms of skills, the students have to develop general and specific skills for this Master. Maybe the Italian and Austrian references (as universities) can help in establishing these competences.

## **Recommendations:**

- Detail more the learning outcomes and specify the general and specific competences the student will develop and gain during the Master.
- Draw up a “Teaching Guide” for every subject, showing next points clearly:
  - Course Summary
  - Results expected (learning)
  - Description of contents (with precision)
  - The workload (classroom activities and non-attending activities)
  - Teaching Methodology with more description
  - An **assessment process common** in all subjects of the program
  - recent (after 2005) - **bibliographic references (basic and additional)** and minimum three references in english.

- In every “teaching guide”, indicate with precision the content of the practical part of the study with the elements mentioned above.
- Through the university, make an effort to find some resources in order to offer any grant for the best students and let them make some practices outside Kosovo.

### **7.3 Staff**

At present, as the SER describes, the staff will be covered entirely by the three universities involved in this master degree. However, the agreement allows the university to bring external staff if there is a need that has to be covered.

**Recommendations:**

- Start an active collective political publication.
- Start an active woman inclusion in master program as teachers, researchers and students.

### **7.4 Research and International Cooperation**

The SER doesn't include research strategy neither international cooperation.

**Recommendations:**

- Draw up – with the external expert help – an own research plan able to indicate the research's lines, goals, expected implementations, human and material resources, planning, etc.
- Establish connections - for this master - with others research centers of the 3 universities, but also with others Kosovo's Universities and European Union, in order to treat the research subjects deeply.
- Take stock of every publication and the master scientific academic staff activities. Encourage the scientific academic participation in publications and international activities.
- Establish an English international and national electronic review.

### **7.5 Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment**

The visit of the facilities indicates that the classrooms are well equipped for the theoretical activities but the library is too modest to be a convenient place for research and studies activities.

**Recommendations**

- Acquire reviews, as well as international law and European books.
- Acquire an electronic database and access to legal international and European sources.
- Connect Kosovo's libraries each other (create a network).
- Get in touch with foreign documents centers of international and European documents in order to achieve an English quality documental collection.

### **7.6 Final recommendation**

Base on this this report, we recommend the accreditation for three years but it's necessary to detail the effective organization of the Master.