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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

UNIVERSITY OF PRIZREN “UKSHIN HOTI”

INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT/BA

REACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

May 2019, Prishtina

1



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1. Context	3
1.2. Site visit schedule	4
1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation.....	5
2. PROGRAM EVALUATION.....	5
2.1. Mission, objectives and administration	5
2.2. Quality management.....	7
2.3. Academic staff.....	9
2.4. Educational process content	11
2.5. Students	13
2.6. Research	15
2.7. Infrastructure and resources.....	16
3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET	17



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 14th - 15th of May 2019

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Prof. Dr. Kristiina Tõnnisson, University of Tartu (Estonia)

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- Avni Gashi, Acting Director of KAA
- Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation

Sources of information for the Report:

- Self-Evaluation Report (SER) submitted by University of Prizren “Ukshin Hoti”;
- Information obtained during the site visit;
- Meetings conducted with the management of the program, teaching and administrative staff, students, graduates, external stakeholders and employers of graduates;
- Supplementary documents requested by the ET.

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- Standards and performance indicators for external quality assurance (Re/accreditation of bachelor and masters study programs) set in the Accreditation Manual
- National Qualifications Framework



1.2. Site visit schedule

14th May

- 19.45** Meeting at the Reception of the Hotel
- 20.00** Working dinner

15th May

- 07.30** Meeting at the reception of the hotel
- 09.00 – 10.30** Meeting with the management of the institution
- 10.40 – 11.50** Meeting with the quality assurance representatives and administrative services
- 12.00 – 13.00** Meeting with the heads of study programs
- 13.00 – 13.50** Lunch break
- 13.50 – 14.50** Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure
- 14.50 – 15.40** Meeting with teaching staff
- 15.50 – 16.40** Meeting with students
- 16.50 – 17.40** Meeting with graduates
- 17.50 – 18.40** Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders
- 18.45 – 19.00** Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA



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19.00 – 19.15 Closing meeting with the management of the institution

1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation

The "International Management" study program is a three-year study program and includes 6 semesters with a total of 180 ECTS at the Faculty of Economics at the University of Prizren "Ukshin Hoti". The Faculty of Economics offers altogether 2 Bachelor Programs ("International Management" and "Business Administration") and 3 Master Programs. After graduation the students will obtain Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in International Management.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The mission of the International Management program is "to prepare students with the necessary practical managerial skills in the context of global enterprises, acquiring sufficient intellectual skills and capabilities for international business careers, and reach a productive leadership in the economic system based on the free market, private enterprises and on the spirit of managing a competitive entrepreneurship." Additionally it is stated in the SER "...this program enables students to recognize the complexity of local and international business organizations, interdependent business-to-business interactions and domestic and international legislation on which they develop business as well as difficulties faced in business management".

The mission statement of the university of Prizren "Ukshin Hoti" is stating: "The University of Prizren serves the region of Prizren and The Republic of Kosovo by recruiting, developing and educating students to be successful graduates in the labour market of Kosovo, the region and Europe". Another version of the mission of UPZ as stated in its statute (article 5 of UPZ statute) focuses on the following aims: "...to act as an institution and play a leading role in the development of education, science, culture, society and economy of Kosovo" as well as



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Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

”... fully cooperate and participate in all higher education activities at national, regional and international level”.

Taking into account both mission statements it is possible to conclude that the study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution. At the same time despite its compliance it is more important to notice that the study program mission is too ambitious and it is not related well enough to the real study situation and the outcome of the studies. Also the last evaluation report from 2015 (p.38) stated that “...a more application-oriented teaching philosophy based on close cooperation with industry and administration seems to be more adequate for the university”. Much more realistic and reliable aim is stated in SER p 125 “International Management as a program will prepare students for career in business, efficient management or areas related to management and leadership for the sole purpose of contributing to our society and to global management”.

Programs intended learning outcomes are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The intended learning outcomes have been worked out based on academic and professional advice. Mostly local interest groups are consulted – e.g. Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo, local academic community, international business agencies, but also the syllabi of foreign universities are looked at as well as copied. Then again – the intended learning outcomes are sometimes too ambitious and do not reflect fair enough the reality of the study process and real content of studies.

Currently the study program does not have a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept. Syllabi are updated constantly (also based on the feedback of the students) and teachers are using modern teaching methods, but officially there is not any overarching didactic or research concept. Currently the institution is focused on teaching and based on that research activities are obviously lacking behind.

Within universities there are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. They are available to all staff and students, but often students and teaching staff are just not aware of all existing rules. There are also ethical guidelines about how to conduct research, to do teaching and implement assessment in academic and administrative activities. In most cases they are also applied. There is a Council of Ethics within university that deals with critical issues. According to the interviews with the staff there has not been yet any case among the members of the Faculty of Economics that



has been discussed within this council. For academic papers the university is using fee software to detect plagiarism.

Most policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed from time to time and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances. Some of them are reviewed once every two years, but in most cases there is not any need to review the documents so often. More importantly more attention should be paid not to reviewing the documents, but to implementation gap – how well the regulations are implemented in practice.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. To reconsider the mission of the program while taking into account real resources and realistic aims of the program – to produce workforce for local market. The general aim would be to have a mission that is more compliant with Kosovos context, not just to have a mission that has all promising words that well established and well ranked international universities and programs have.
2. To focus more in improving implementation of all possible existing guidelines and ethical framework, not so much on updating the guidelines and/or framework themselves.
3. To start discussion about over-arching didactic and research concept followed by some concrete plans and frameworks. During this process the university should make clear how much research activities would be reasonable to pursue within the whole institution.

2.2. Quality management

Most of the staff has participated in self-evaluations and has cooperated with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity. Starting from 2012 there is Quality Assessment Office within the university and currently there is one person working within the office responsible for most quality issues and frameworks within the university (e.g. also fostering publishing activities among academic staff). According to the interview with the new Rector of the university there are plans to promote QA office into QA department. At the



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

same time there are no procedures or guidelines for QA unit itself leading to the situation where the office does everything. Secretary General himself is evaluating QA unit.

The person currently responsible for quality management is well prepared for the job and has a good overview of all relevant processes within the university. Moreover, he was the main person answering most of the questions the ET had to the whole management team of the university (including the Rector). Also the Vice Rector for the area of Quality Assessment has been appointed among the top leadership. The university had adopted the following documents: Committee's Work Regulation for Quality Assurance, Guidelines for Quality Assurance, and the Strategy for Quality Assurance. Based on the feedback from the top management, by now QA is already part of the general development strategy, not a separate document as it used to be. This step shows how QA is stepping closer to be naturally integrated in all other academic and administrative processes, not just being a separate area to deal with.

Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are mostly integrated into normal planning processes. E.g. there is a central committee for evaluating each subject based on the received students' feedback. Students are asked to evaluate each course they have been taking. The evaluations are taking place just on paper and the professors are now allowed to be in present while students are filling in questionnaires. Academic staff is officially evaluated just by the students (though also peer to peer review activities are sometimes implemented within the faculty), but the administrative staff is evaluated both by the students and the Secretary General. Survey data are currently collected just from the students. There are no official surveys for graduates and employers, they are mostly consulted informally and/on on ad hoc bases.

University's quality assurance processes deal with most of the aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution. If the feedback of the students about the courses is somehow exceptional (very good or very bad feedback to certain course), then there is also a meeting with the program management in order to discuss the situation and possible further steps. Students' feedback has also been taking into account while re-electing the academic staff at the Faculty of Economics.

Quality evaluations provide also an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it. E.g. there was a request from the students to have more students' services and by now the university is offering broader variety of the services.

8



Currently 2-3 persons in every faculty are offering student services. Existing processes are aiming to ensure that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance. Results of the different internal quality processes are taken into account for further development of the study program and various sub-reports on the different aspects of quality of the program are prepared. Altogether – different quality assurance arrangements need to have more time to be settled in within everyday academic and administrative processes, but even now continues small improvements are taking place in various levels.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. To promote quality assurance mentality among the staff and students. The aim is not to focus on producing and/or improving documents as such, but on everyday processes and activities.
2. To work out the suitable quality indicators for the whole institutions and for the program. Firstly, there is a need for common understanding what are quality indicators and second, what are suitable indicators for the current context and program.
3. To work out and agree on the aims of QA unit. Currently the aims are very broad leading to the situation where QA unit is kind of responsible for whole activities within university.
4. To involve also students while preparing the feedback questionnaires about the courses.
5. To involve graduates and employers in a more systematic way in program evaluation and improvement.

2.3. Academic staff

The employment rules are well in place at the university. The academic staff has been selected on the basis of open competition where job vacancies and employment conditions have been clearly described. Based on the previous experience there are on average 20 candidates per professorship at the Faculty of Economics.



Based on the working contracts and requirements from Kosovo's KAA all teaching staff comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation. Based on the information received from the university all academic staff responsible for delivering the courses within International Management program have maximum two teaching positions, not more.

So far, the Faculty of Economics has 2 Associate Professors, 9 Assistant Professors and 4 Assistants. Additionally, there are also 9 Adjunct Professors and 4 Regular Assistants delivering the courses in International Management program. In this program, 53% of Professors are full-time and the rest of the Professors are hired as adjunct staff. Full-time professors cover 67% of all lecturing hours. Adjunct professors cover the rest of the lectures. 4 regular assistants and 6 adjunct assistants cover exercises. There are 3 full time Assistant Professors responsible for the International Management Program: Prof. Ass. Dr. Artan Nimani, Prof. Ass. Dr. Drita Krasniqi and Prof. Ass. Dr. Florije Govori.

Faculty of Economics is offering some opportunities for additional professional development for teaching staff, but the need for these activities are higher than the possibilities. Currently the university is covering on average the attendance costs of one conference per year per academic person. There are also possibilities to apply for additional funding from the Ministry (1 person can apply once per 6 months). 5 years ago there was also a TEMPUS project about advancing teaching methodology among the academic staff, but there has not been any special professional trainings or projects lately.

Each Professor has announced the schedule for student consultations and in general students are very satisfied about availability and openness of the professors to communicate with them. Professors are also available to make other constituencies for the benefit of the community and society, but not many are actually involved in real life projects.

Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly each semester through students' feedback (sometimes also through peer to peer feedback). The minimum average feedback grade has to be 3 (on the scale from 1 to 5) in order to be able to continue with teaching.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:



1. To look for additional possibilities and funds for professional development of teachers, both in the form of in-house trainings as well as in the form of out-house activities (also international cooperation projects and conferences).
2. To try to offer continues and regular seminars on teaching methods and didactics, especially for newly appointed teachers. Based on the lack of resources it is suggested to consider also possibilities to implement “experience sharing seminars” where teachers can learn from each other. Another cost efficient method is to invite outside colleagues from other Kosovo universities to share their experience or to teach some concrete teaching method they are mastering at.
3. It is suggested to start to test some more online opportunities in order to enrich students study experience (e.g. to have some online quest lectures or to have some online classes within regular course).
4. Another critical area to focus on in the nearest future is the knowledge and skills of the English language among the academic staff. If the university is aiming to improve its international cooperation and publishing records, English language skills of all academic staff becomes a crucial factor.
5. To encourage teachers to be more involved in real life/ community service and consultation projects. It is suggested to include this aspect as one criteria to evaluation criteria of academic staff.

2.4. Educational process content

The study program of International Management is structured well including both subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as generic skills and competencies. It complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. In International Management Program studies last for 3 years, respectively 6 semesters, whereby each semester has 30 ECTS. Studies are completed after the collection of 180 ECTS.

The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and they meet the general and specific competencies to be expected from such a program. The International Management Program is comparable and similar to the program of studies organized at the University of Wien, the University of Applied Sciences in Würzburg-Schweinfurt in Germany, University of Applied Sciences in Poland, Kent University of Great Britain and Strayer University in the USA.



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

All courses have similarly structured syllabi that list the required information in clear way. Some parts leave the impression as copy-based syllabi (e.g. teaching and learning forms, assessment methods) without enough input from certain course teacher. Currently the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities are missing within the syllabi provided in English, also students' assessment system is too general. The course evaluation framework in general is extremely formal. All courses have to follow the same logic and evaluation criteria – 30% for the mid-term test and 70% for the final exam.

According to the interviews the student-teacher relationships are managed professionally and well. Both the content and challenges of certain classes are discussed with students openly. Most teachers apply from time to time variety of interactive teaching methods, though classical lecture format is still the most common teaching method. Teachers are free and flexible to choose the methods in order to meet the needs of different groups of students.

The program improvements and changes take place regularly – during recent years the program has included new courses (e.g. additional basic courses in Economy, English language, Turkish language). Currently Academic Writing is an optional course, but in most similar curricula it is a required course. The students have elective courses just during 4 semesters and the choice is very limited – they can choose just from the list of 2 different elective courses. It would be suggested to offer more choice to the students. Based on the feedback from the companies more attention should be paid to teamwork and practical communication skills throughout the curriculum.

Both according to students and graduates, student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses. No one raised the complaints about inappropriate or invalid mechanism of verifying student achievements. On the other hand, it might be the case, that they are just not aware or all other possible approaches and mechanisms. Within university there are also policies and procedures that include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed. The same standards apply also in the International Management Program.

International Management Program includes as well Internship for 4 ECTS. Internship is monitored both the work supervisors (but the feedback survey is voluntary) as well as through students self-evaluation report. On average ca100 students from International Management Program are doing their internship each year. In most case the school is offering the possible internship places, but quite often also students find possible internships based on their own

12



networks and contacts. In some cases also cooperation agreement with providing institution is signed, but not in all cases.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. To encourage all teachers to work more in their own syllabi in order to provide more course specific content. This way each course and syllabus will have its own distinctive character. Currently all syllabi in English look too similar, standardized and like “copy-based”.
2. To open discussion within the whole faculty/university about possible evaluation criteria. It is suggested that not all courses will follow the same logic – 30% for the test and 70% for the exam. There should be much more flexibility in choosing assessment methods and the weight of each method.
3. To encourage providing some English language quest lectures also within the courses (not just as separate talks).
4. To consider some additional changes within the curriculum:
 - to have a crucial course – Academic writing – as a required course;
 - to offer more elective courses;
 - to consider to have some current required courses as elective courses and some elective courses as required courses (e.g. E-marketing, German language, Tourism Management and Logistics could be selective courses, but Business Law could be a required course);
 - to combine Accounting Basic and Financial Accounting into one course;
 - to have separate courses/ special titles on Microeconomics and Macroeconomics within the curriculum. It could offer more clarity and compliance with other similar programs;
 - to offer more teamwork and practical communication skills/opportunities.
5. To look for additional possibilities to advance students’ foreign language skills, especially to look for possibilities for practicing their English.

2.5. Students

There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure for the prospective students for International Management Program. Admission requirements are consistently applied for all students. The criteria for student enrollment are foreseen by the Law of Higher Education in

13



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
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Kosovo, by the Statute of the University of Prizren and are stated in the public announcement for admission of new students. The announcement is posted on the UPZ website and is available in Albanian and Bosnian language. The announcement also indicates the terms and conditions of the application, the manner of application, the documents to be handed, information about holding the entrance exam, the deadline for complaints, etc. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study.

There are currently 462 active students in International Management Program. According to the decision of the Senate of the University of Prizren, there were 250 open places for regular students and 50 places for students with correspondence for International Management Program in the academic year 2018/2019. Based on previous statistics the Faculty has decided that each required course could have max 150 students, and each elective course min 20 and max 70 students. Taking into account the number of the students it might be a reasonable solution, but it is also challenging to ensure effective and interactive teaching within such big groups.

According to the students and alumni the feedback to students on their performance has been given in most cases promptly and it has been accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed. The professors hold consultations both before the exam and after the exam to assist and counsel the students. The final results achieved during the entire process of studies for each subject are certified in the transcript of records. Students also acknowledged that in case of some special situation, flexible treatment of students is also provided by the teachers.

Currently the Faculty does keep student completion rates for all courses separately, but they have statistics about general trends and completion rates about the programs. The university is applying a free anti-plagiarism software in order to ensure that work submitted by students is original. Since most of work is submitted in Albanian, the current software is not actually efficient enough.

The Faculty of Economics has a Regulation on the Determination of Undergraduate Studies Criteria that informs students of their rights and obligations and information on any other aspect related to undergraduate studies. This regulation is published online and is accessible by any student.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

14



ET recommendations:

1. To consider having smaller class sizes in order to offer more effective learning processes and experience to the students.
2. To start to collect more information/statistics about students drop-outs. To work out the general policy if International Management Program would like to accept as many students as possible taking into account also rather high drop-out rate or if the program would accept a smaller amount of the students while also ensuring higher graduation rate.

2.6. Research

Nor the faculty or the program has a concrete or separate research plan other than the general research framework of the university. On the other hand there was a Center for Innovation and Employment created within the faculty that is also responsible for promoting research activities, but currently it is too early to evaluate its outcomes. Until now the university has been a focused teaching institution, but step by step research activities are taking off as well. University has signed quite a few national and international agreements with various other universities in order to foster cooperation, mostly in mobility of academic staff and students, but also in research.

The expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly there and research is considered in staff evaluation, but there are not enough opportunities to support the staff in their plans (not enough time for research, very limited financial resources, very few international frameworks to be involved, limited experience in international publishing etc.). Until no one at the Faculty of Economics has been dismissed because of unsatisfactory publishing results, even if they haven't published one article per academic year.

There are certain guidelines directing to publish in recognized and indexed journals and platforms, but currently all possible publications count as publications. Considering the academic staff in the International Management Program they have track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity, but it is rather limited. Also the attendance at international conferences and symposiums is limited. The staff is not involved in any official consultation activities (but some of them are board members or consult



informally) or any applied research projects (but they do/guide some research activities within the framework of the courses), but real paid community service is still very far taking into account also current economic context of Kosovo. Based on that it is not possible to say that current research is internationally validated by international audience.

In most cases the research has been published under the name of the institution in Kosovo the staff is affiliated to as full time staff. Currently there are not yet clear policies about ownership of intellectual property or clear procedures set how to commercialize the ideas developed by staff and students because this stage is still a long way to go. Students are engaged in research projects mostly within the framework of the courses, but not in real research project that the research team is responsible for.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. To set reasonable aims for research activities while taking into account that most probably the core competence of the university will stay in teaching. Focus on applied research could be the most appropriate direction to take.
2. To look for additional local and foreign funding specially dedicated for (applied) research.
3. To start to develop relationships with business sector with focus on providing paid consultation by the experienced staff.
4. For international research the foreign language skills should be heavily raised among the staff.
5. To try cooperating with other local universities who have been more successful in research project and activities.
6. To increase students involvement in bigger research project in order to offer them guided applied research experience.

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

The Faculty of Economics possesses a suitable environment, sufficient human resources and technological equipment for teaching International Management Program. The Faculty of



Economics has its own building that guarantees the adequate teaching facilities of the program for the longer term. It has 11 halls including the Amphitheatre divided among 3 floors with an area of about 3500 m². The facility is also equipped with elevators to meet the needs of people with special needs or other people. The number of seats in the lecture rooms and seminar rooms are suitable for the academic activities, but the rooms could be updated (e.g. no plugs for students laptops, outdated projectors and furniture etc.). There are no financial plans at the level of the study program, because the resources are managed partly on faculty, but mostly on university level.

The faculty has also a separate library from the university main library where most management books are located. Library has some spaces for reading and working, but both the seating places and books are very limited. There are also no subscriptions to international journals and most students haven't used during their studies any international periodicals (not even any international book). There is very limited stock of both international as well as local books.

ET recommendations:

1. To increase the university budget for updating the stock/ accessibility of academic resources both in English and in Albanian.
2. While updating the study room, plugs for students' laptop could be one of the priorities.

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program International Management, BA offered by *University of Prizren* "UKSHIN HOTI" is *Substantially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends to *accredit* the study program for a duration of 3 years with a number of 200 (+ 50 for part-time studies) students to be enrolled in the program.

Expert Team



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Chair

	Kristiina Tõnnisson	22.05.2019
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)