

**UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES  
IN FERIZAJ**

**MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION IN TOURISM /MSc**

**EVALUATION REPORT**

15/04/2019 Ferizaj

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## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1Context:**

KAA (Kosovo Accreditation Agency) has received a request from University of Ferizaj to undergo program evaluation for Management and Innovation in Tourism /MSc. KAA has invited me as an expert to participate in this process.

### **Date of site visit:**

We arrived in Prishtina at 14.05. 2019 and on 15.05 2019 morning started our evaluation by visiting the site of the institution in Ferizaj.

### **Expert Team:**

- A. Prof. Dr. Alexander Petuttschnigg MSc - for Interior Architecture and Design/
- B. Prof. Dr. Hilmi Ibar- for Management and Innovation in Tourism /MSc
- C. Prof. Dr. Tauno Otto- for Industrial Management/BSc (Via Skype).

### **Coordinator from Kosovo Accreditation Agency:**

- 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:**

- A. Self Assessment Report, University of Applied Sciences- Ferizaj
- B. Accreditation manual, Kosovo accreditation Agency
- C. Standards for Accreditation, New England Commission for Higher Education

## **Criteria used for Program Evaluation**

### **1.2 Site visit schedule**

14 may

Working dinner. Arrived late did not attend working dinner.

15 May

7:40 Meeting at the reception of the hotel

09:00 – 09:30 Meeting with the management of the Faculty where the program is integrated. (No slide is allowed; the meeting is intended as a free discussion).

09:35 – 10:35 Meeting with the Head of study program.

10:40 – 11:40 Meeting with the quality assurance representative.

11:40 – 12:45 Lunch Break

13:00 – 13:45 Meeting with involved teaching and administrative staff.

13:50 – 14:30 Meeting with external stakeholders.

14:30 – 14:50 Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure. (used for the implementation of the program).

14:50 – 15:00 Closing meeting with the management of the faculty.

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

University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj was established at 2016. The history of University dates from 1976 when was established as a Higher Education Center and involved section of machinery and wood industry sections. In 2002/2003 new curricula of Bologna system was approved for Bachelors and the High Technical School (SHLT) department of Machinery and Wood Industry department were opened. In 2005 this was transformed into Faculty of Applied Technical Science (FATS) with the same department and profile, (Artificial Materials Processing and Wood Processing). This change gave possibility to Faculty to open and develop new programs. In 2013 bachelor study program Management in Tourism and Hospitality was open and in 2015 it passes as a program within the Faculty of Tourism and Environment. This year the Faculty will give first graduates.

The program Master in Management and Innovation in Tourism is intended to be open as a continuation of the study program of Faculty of Tourism and Environment with the aim to give more qualified staff in the field of tourism.

## **2. PROGRAM EVALUATION**

### **2.1 Mission, objectives and administration.**

In the self-Assessment Report of the Universities of Applied Sciences –Ferizaj Faculty Mission is described with one sentence, but later formulations of the objectives for Management and Innovation in Tourism program has been improved.

The mission and purposes are appropriate to higher education and implemented in a manner that complies with the standards of the Ministry of Higher education of Kosovo. The institutions mission gives direction to its activities and provides basis for the assessments and enhancement of the institutions effectiveness.

For the mission of the program, it is stressed that Faculty wants to develop specialized professionals in the field of innovation management in tourism and hotels in order to influence the development and advancement of this field in Kosovo, as well as to prepare qualified professionals that can be integrated in labor market abroad. A strong point for education of this type of professionals is that they will be prepared not only for employment in tourism sector but also for taking the responsibility of being themselves entrepreneurs.

During our visit at UASF it was organized a meeting with the representatives of businesses from Ferizaj, representative from Hotel Rubin, a 4-star hotel in Ferizaj as well as some touristic operator representatives who were part of Industrial board. The purpose of this meeting was to define competences that graduate should have in line with their requirements as well as to advise faculty in many aspects including the curricula or modification of academic curricula.

Also it has been stressed that in developing of this program UASF will engaged all academic staff at the Faculty of Tourism and Environment. The program is developed with the good structured flow of courses and based on the experience of the University of Applied Science in Salzburg, Austria. The teaching and learning will be done using modern teaching technologies, smart boards and IT labs, complemented by problem solving and scientific approaches, both theoretical (via case study analysis) and practical (in the University Innovation Centre and Laboratories) as well as with hotels and tourist enterprises with whom the university has a cooperation agreement.

The Institution (UASF) supports teaching and learning through faculty and academic staff, who in structure and processes appropriate to the institution, collectively ensure the quality of instruction and support for student learning.

The University operations are supported by administration that is managed by the General Secretary. There is one adequate number of faculty staff i.e librarians, advisors, instructors, technicians etc. whose time commitment to the institution is sufficient to assure the accomplishment of classes and out of class responsibilities essential for the fulfillment of institutional mission and purposes.

They are at present 7 employed administration staff at UASF. The qualification of all faculty staff is appropriate to the nature of their assignments. 4 of them hold master degree and have professional experience. Some more staff will be recruited this year. New university staff when they join university participates in the workshop where they are introduced to the university regulations and procedures. Completion of each exam, statistical data for student assessment and distribution of estimates are generated and analyzed by the administration and shared with the management of the University.

### **Compliance Level:**

Fully Compliant

### **Recommendations:**

In the context of country with rapid and changing evolution, the institution feels the responsibility to provide professionals whose qualifications meet the development and changing demands in the field of tourism and hospitality. Also Master studies are important to ensure graduates which can undertake scientific and applied research addressing the tourism industry needs and to sustain regional development.

Though there are also some difficulties which can be overcome with the time i.e. difficulties in employing a qualified English and German teaching staff, the appropriate language learning is one of the most important issues for graduates.

## **2.2 Quality management**



University plans to develop and introduce many tasks, procedures and criteria for quality management implementation. This year they plan to expand and digitalize the self-evaluation system, test the staff peer evaluation, the manager's assessment, and self-evaluation of academic staff. These criteria's are not apply yet as they will be accomplished for the first time. However, the questionnaires, evaluation of programs, university services and administration, academic staff show that there are basic procedures for quality management implementation.

### **Compliance Level:**

Compliant in paper – no proof provided since this program is offered for the first time.

### **Recommendation:**

All the information planned and collected during 2019 -2020 should be used for the development and planning of the university staff, evaluation of student's workload as there will be new subjects that did not exist in the past. Also with the help of planned questionnaires the future report should provide some data which will help to make proper evaluations of student lecturers, program, administration and other infrastructural aspects. In this case the institution will have a demonstrable record of success in implementing results of planning.

### **2.3 Academic Staff:**

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Nr	FT PT	Name and Surname	Qualification	Acad. Title	Duration Of Contract	No of courses Per sem.	No of lesons Per sem.
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1	FT	Alberta Tahiri	Dr.	As. Prof.	30/09/22	3	12
2	FT	Hysen Sogojeva	Dr.	As Prof.	30/09/22	3	12
3	FT	Idriz Kovaçi	Dr.	As Prof.	30/09/22	3	12
4	FT	Bashkim Musliu	Dr.	As Prof.	30/09/22	1	4
5	FT	Mimoza Zhubi	Dr.	As Prof.	30/09/22	3	12
6	PT	Afrim Loku	Dr.	As Prof.	30/09/21	2	8
7	FT	Aziz Rexhepi	Dr.	.As. Prof	30/09/22	2	8
8	FT	Sokol Krasniçi	Dr.	As. Prof.	30/09/22	2	8
9	FT	Ismail Mehmeti	Dr.	As Prof.	30/09/22	1	4
10	FT	Melihate Aliu	Dr.	As. Prof.	30/09/22	1	4
11	VT	Burbuçe Bucaliu	MSc.	Lec.	30/09/20	1	4
12	VT	Etleva Blakaj	MSc.	Lec.	30/09/20	1	4

Academic staff that will be engaged in the program of Msc in Management and Innovation in Tourism is given in a table. Most of the Academic staff in the study program are full time employees and account much more than 50% of the classes of study program, which is in harmony with requirement and criteria's set out by KAA. According to the information's collecting during our site visit at UASF for the program in accreditation process there are two full time staff with PhD (Alberta Tahiri and Hysen Sogojeva) and most of others from the list are staff from Faculty of Tourism and Environment as well as other Faculties from University. According to regulations of KAA for each student group and for every 60 ECTS credits in study program the institution should employed at list one full time staff with PhD title. The institution also declares that their regular academic staff has not a teaching engagement in more than one regular University and if they have they have it as a part time engagement. This enables teaching staff to have more engagement in the faculty, and availability for consultation with students and community service. From the given table it can be seen that with exception of one part time staff and the language lecturers, all other academic staff have full time contracts with UASF.

During our meeting with the academics at UASF we noticed that much of the employees where young academicians. This means that institution has a good opportunity to build good staff from the beginning of universities development, as well as young academics are more able in using computer skills, use of technological achievement in teaching and digital teaching tools.

**Compliance level:**

Fully compliant.

**Recommendation:**

There is an adequate number of academic staff whose time commitment to institution is sufficient to assure the accomplishment of class and out of class responsibilities which are essential for the fulfillment of faculties purpose. As all academic staffs are required to be in the university for 40 hours at which 6-10 hour are required for teaching, additional duties can be given i.e. student advisement, academic planning, research, ensure practical work at various companies etc. As the offered program for Msc. is new and only one in Kosovo and requires specific methods, academic staff should be aware of developing of courses and curricular development.

Faculty and academic staff should be provided with substantial opportunities for continued professional development throughout their careers.

#### **2.4 Educational process content:**

The program is designed to give student a mixture of a complex fields of study in professional area. Research oriented master degree program is designed to prepare students to generate new knowledge they emphasize the acquisition, organization, utilization and generation of knowledge. In the case of UASF, consultations has been done with industrial sector businesses, part of the Industrial Board, which clearly defined the competences and skills required by them, which program should be considered.

According to Self Evaluation Report of UASF the curriculum is designed to build additional skills and competences over those of bachelor studies. One of the main reasons for opening this program is that it offers possibility for the students who will successively complete three-year bachelor's studies with 180 ECTS in faculty of tourism and environment at the same university as well as faculty of management, economy and other relevant departments to advance in profession.

The graduates will be able to work in the following industries and type of engagements i.e. State institution, travel and touristic agency, public and private companies, self-employed and entrepreneurs as the master diploma is preparing students for a management positions within the hospitality industry. The University has signed more than 50 agreements of cooperation with various enterprises of different field of industry, among them there are businesses in the field of Tourism and hospitality.

The information table of the study program is given where we see that the program contains 13 mandatory and 7 elective courses. Elective courses are offered in second and third semester. The language of program is Albanian language.

### **Compliance level:**

Substantially compliant.

### **Recommendation:**

Proposed program should be focused on the latest developments in the field which will help graduates to:

Develop professional hospitality management's competences and learn the principles behind important management concepts, such as operational strategies, performance and control systems and effective marketing approaches.

Achieve good customer services through successful leadership and team work, as well as appreciate and understand the role of the manager within the hospitality and tourism industry.

In the presented table of study program which contains 13 mandatory and 7 elective courses 12 programs are various management programs. This presents the risk that several courses/modules will deal with the same issues. In order to avoid the overlapping, and as a means to increase the quality of teaching, interlinked modules should be discussed by respective teachers.

We are proposing Catering, Food and Beverage Managements or Operation can be included in program and also elements of communication techniques that are very important for a manager. Food and Beverage Operations and managements examines the ways to maximize service efficiency and productivity to satisfy demands of today's guest. Topics also include organization of food and beverage operations, marketing, nutrition, cost and pricing strategies and equipment.

The main teaching language is Albanian. The study program includes 4 lesson /week of English language in 2 semester and German language in 3 rd semester. In my opinion this is not enough as good knowledge of language is vital for management. An intensive study language module should be applied.

Addition of new modules and their contents may be discussed in small groups by the respective lecturers and decided if they can be applied and if the qualified academic staff can be found. Also it is planed that according to University expectations that any staff who joins university and who have no experience will be trained for teaching in the short term. Periodically university will provide training to advance teaching with elements that arise from student evaluation reports, colleague and manager. Good point is that much of the present staff is a part of studies taken at international universities.

As mentioned above UASF has signed more than 50 agreement of cooperation with various enterprises of different fields of industry. But only 8 enterprises are and few universities are in common with the program of tourism and hospitality. Those agreements are signed to create opportunity for businesses to offer students access to conduct research or any practical work that will go towards their master thesis. Appropriate business sectors for students in tourism are hotels, restaurants, clubs, resorts etc. University needs to sign with more enterprises of this type to place their student for practical work or research.

In this master study programs last semester is proposed for Master Theme with 30 ECTS supervised by Mentor. Students are not required to do any work placement. It is stated that students will be engaged in analysis of various aspects of an existing enterprise as a part of their obligation in certain subjects as well as in the master work.

It is not clear what the student will work or study for master theme. This topic can be a discussed once again. Work placement is a part of educational development. This enables theoretical learning in the classroom to be applied to practical learning situation and encourages application of theory and knowledge in appropriate context.

## **2.5 Students:**

Self evaluation report starts with describing admission of students to the program Msc in Management and Innovation in Tourism. As mentioned, the program it is offered for the first time in this academic year and there are no students so far. The institution provides students with information are regarding admission, opportunities and programs. Admission of students will be done by public announcements in daily newspapers in Kosovo and requirements will be fairly applied for all applicants. Students recruitments will be done mainly from department of Management of Tourism and Hospitality where there are currently 417 active students. Up to date 40 student has been graduate from Department of Tourism and Environment, but this year another 77 are expected to graduate. (Date given by UASF). As it has been previously stated student will be also admitted from the departments of management, economy and other relevant departments.

The UASF ensures a systematic approach for providing accessible and effective programs and services designed to provide opportunities for enrolled students to be successful in achieving their educational goals. The Faculty will try to identify the characteristics and needs of its student population. It is planned that Dean of the respective faculty follows the student performances and take action as needed to address students difficulties.

It has been claimed that university possesses a library where solid literature is available to meet basic needs of the students with literature. Also University plans to offer electronic access to online resources. If for a specific subject is no adequate basic literature in Albanian language, the lecturer is responsible to provide adequate materials in Albanian.

**Compliance level:**

Fully compliant

**Recommendation:**

While the program will be newly opened, newly enrolled students should be provided with an orientation that includes information's on academic opportunities, expectations and support services. UASF wrote in self evaluation report that intends to provide faculty and academic staff with substantial opportunities for continued professional development. Institution is claiming that has a small number of administrations staff to meet students needs. Before the program starts Institution has to ensure that individuals responsible for student services are qualified by formal training and work experience and organizationally placed to represent and address the needs of students effectively.

Policies on student rights and responsibilities, including student conduct and grievance procedures should be clearly stated, well publicized, readily available and fairly administrated.

Literatures are described in the course description part of the report where it can be seen that big majority of books are in English and only small part literature is in Albanian language, most of them books from Albania some of them old dated. This means that student should have good knowledge of English language, especially Lecturers, as we mentioned, to be able to provide an adequate handout with the basic materials to students.

**2.6 Research:**



Institution has made research development plan. As this study is first one in Kosovo and intended to be open this year, clear policies are not yet established what is recognized as research in this field. The University plans to open one Institute of Applied Sciences where Academic staff and students will take part in various workshops, use research laboratories in various fields and involved in commercial projects.

At this stage Institution is validating research through scientific publications and presentations at International conferences. A table is presented where the lecturers of Msc. in management and innovation in tourism have published their papers and took part at various international conferences. Last three years (2016-2018) 21 papers were published in various journals and 8 conferences were attended. It is a modest number but University budget is also modest. University plans to generate its own credits to increase this type of activities. For the advancement of university staff, considerable number of academic and research activities are foreseen. In 2019, the University plans to organize a scientific conference, supported by the HERAS project and in cooperation with the University of Applied Science in Salzburg where staff and students will be encouraged to publish their papers in conference.

### **Compliance level:**

Compliant.

### **Recommendations:**

The Institution admits that university staff has limited knowledge of English language for publication and research. Therefore intensive English language courses for academic staff as well as Msc. student should be applied.

Opportunities offered by Erasmus + should be used for attending international projects as well as organizing joint conferences and symposiums. Cooperation with University of Salzburg is good example. This can be extended with Turkish Universities as well. Turkey is very developed touristic Country and host around 30 million tourists per year in various touristic engagements. As there is a big barrier for Kosovo citizens to obtain visas for European countries approach to Turkish Universities is much easier. Also some of the staff at UASF are graduates from Turkish Universities and can easily make contacts. This cooperation's can be carried out also with Croatian Universities as they have a big experience in Tourism and Hospitality.

UASF has cooperation agreements with several enterprises and tourism companies whit whom they can combine practical work as well as research activities.

## **2.7 Infrastructure and resources:**

Teaching at the University is organized in an area of 7.000 m<sup>2</sup> and contain: 15 Teaching classrooms, 20 offices for teaching stuff, 10 administration offices, 4 labs, 2 workshop areas, 2 theatres and 1 each, IT classroom, student's parliament offices, Archive, office for financial services, security office, maintenance office and warehouse.

The university also has two amphitheaters with 150 and 350 seats. The institution has sufficient and appropriate physical and technological resources necessary for the achievement of proposed program.

Being a public institution of higher education, institution depend on financial support from a state as a sponsoring entity. The institution is financially stable; its financial sustainability is guaranteed for the next 3 years. The institutions 3-year planning is realistic and reflects the capacity of the institution to depend on identified financial sources. The university has appointed the Vice-Rector for budget, finance and infrastructure which is responsible for developing of infrastructure policies. The institution preserves and enhances available financial resources (offering commercial services to industry) to support its mission.

The institution provides access to library and information resources. It has different type of publications.

### **Compliance level:**

Substantially Compliant.

### **Recommendation:**

For the offered program specialized infrastructure is required. I.e. The institution should create physical, electronic and technological atmosphere conducive to study and research. Requirements are:

Sufficient number of computers for classroom activities and for library based individual or group work.

High quality web access services.

Qualified staff sufficient to support its teaching and learning environment and its research as appropriate.

The books that form the basis of each module should be available at the library to be borrowed by students.

The lack of books and literatures will encourage the photocopy and will hamper the quality of teaching process.

### **OVERAL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET**

The program “Master in Management and Innovation in Tourism” is intended to be open at the UASF with the aim to give qualified professionals in Tourism.

Master studies are important to ensure graduates which can undertake scientific and applied research and to sustain regional development.

There is an adequate number of academic staff whose time commitment to institution is sufficient to assure the accomplishment of class and out of class responsibilities to faculty.

Research oriented master degree programs are designed to prepare students to generate new knowledge.

UASF has signed more than 50 agreements of cooperation with various enterprises.

The UASF ensures systematic approach for providing accessible and effective programs and services designed to provide opportunities for enrolled students to be successful in achieving their educational goals.

Policies on student rights and responsibilities, including student conduct and grievance procedures should be clearly stated well publicized and fairly administrated.

Opportunities offered by Erasmus+ should be used for attending international projects as well as organizing joint conference and symposiums.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation:**

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that study program “Management and Innovation in Tourism/MSc.” offered by University of Applied Sciences-Ferizaj is Compliant with the standards included in KAA Accreditation manual and therefore, recommends to accredit the study program for a duration of 3 years with a number of 50 students to be enrolled in program.

