

FINAL REPORT

UNIVERSITY of GJAKOVA

Institutional and Program Accreditation

17th-18th April 2017

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1. Executive Summary

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) is requested by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo to evaluate all institutions of Higher Education operating in the Republic of Kosovo. According to this request, the University of Gjakova “Fehmi Agani” underwent the accreditation process in April 2017. A full institutional review was undertaken, and three study programs were evaluated by an international expert team (ET). The members of the ET were:

- Prof. Dr. Milan Pol (Masaryk University, Czech Republic)
- Prof. Dr. Dhurata Shehri (University of Tirana, Albania)
- Ms. Rebecca Maxwell Stuart (European Students Union, EU)

The ET is grateful to the University of Gjakova “Fehmi Agani” for hosting their visit on the 18th of April 2017. The members of the ET are aware of the historical situation that continues to affect the contemporary social, cultural, political and economic environment in Kosovo. Therefore, the ET appreciates the continued efforts of the management, the academic staff and the students of the University of Gjakova to develop the quality of its resources and teaching programs in difficult local and national circumstances.

The University is taking steps to respond positively to earlier evaluations, and the most recent version of its *Self-Evaluation Report (2017)* contains detailed tables, diagrams, charts and statements outlining its commitment to positive development. This document was useful to the ET during the site visit and in preparing the current report.

The ET recognizes the University of Gjakova’s position in the market for providing third level education in Kosovo. The ET would like to stress that all comments offered in this report are intended to contribute to further improvements of the institution.

The members of the ET wish to thank the KAA and especially Ms. Furtuna Mehmeti and Mr. Fisnik Gashi for their support and cooperation during this accreditation procedure. Ms. Mehmeti and Mr. Gashi accompanied the ET on all stages of the site visit.

The review process was informed by the KAA policy document on Standards for Accreditation, which was provided to the ET in advance of the site visit. Relevant documents given to the review team included *Guidelines for Experts on Academic Programs*, *Guidelines for Experts on Institutional Programs* and a *Code of Good Practice for Site Visits*.

As mentioned above, before the site visit took place a comprehensive Self-Evaluation Report (SER) was provided by the University of Gjakova “Fehmi Agani”, which included an overview of the University’s Mission Statement, Organization, Management and Planning, Finance, as well as information about the University’s facilities, academic staff, study programs, students, and international links. The site visit and review included meetings with members of the University’s management team, individuals responsible for designing particular study programs, teaching staff and students, as well as a tour of the relevant facilities. This report has been compiled in response to all of the information presented to the ET during the visit and in materials provided subsequently on request.

In addition to the provision of written documents the management of the University gave detailed presentations that were conducted in a professional manner.

Review Process

On the evening of the 17th of April 2017, the members of the ET met with Ms. Furtuna Mehmeti, and Mr. Fisnik Gashi of the KAA for a preparatory meeting and working dinner. Hardbound copies of the SER were provided, and the committee was formed. Prof. Dr. Milan Pol agreed to be the Chairperson of the committee, and responsibilities for study programs were allocated as follows:

- i. BSc in Albanian Language and Literature (SHEHRI)
- ii. MSc in Albanian Language and Literature (SHEHRI)
- iii. BA in Early Childhood Education and Development (POL with contribution of MAXWELL STUART)

The initial discussion with the management of the University was held on the morning of the 18th of April 2017. The meeting focused on the following areas:

- Mission Statement
- Academic Freedom
- Organization and Management
- Staff
- Finance
- Development Plan
- Quality Management
- Internationalisation

After this initial meeting between the management of the University and the ET, a tour of the facilities and offices was given. Following lunch, during which the ET discussed the progress of the site visit with Ms. Mehmeti and Mr. Gashi, the members of the ET held meetings with staff responsible for the study programs under review. These meetings were followed by meetings with students and staff of the University from the different study programs. During these meetings the members of the ET had an opportunity to discuss curricular issues, teaching and research and also to meet students and other representatives of the teaching staff of the University.

The site visit concluded with a meeting between the members of the ET, the KAA representatives, and the management of the University. A timeline for the submission of the draft and final versions of this report was provided. This document represents the Expert Team’s evaluation for 2017.

2. Institutional Report

Mission statement

The expert team found the mission statement is principle satisfactory and acceptable. The representation of the mission statement clarifies the vision of the university for the besides standards of the institution. It seems evident the University of Gjakova strives for its own profile and ET believes this will gradually be reflected not only in the mission statement and in the vision statement, but also – and perhaps more persuasively – in the strategy of implementing the mission. Such a strategy has recently been developed for the period 2017-2021. Some of objectives of Strategic Plan 2017-2021 would deserve more precise formulations, and the same can be said about operationalisation of these objectives into the “objectives and targets” as stated on pages 11-13 of the self-evaluation report. There is a potential for innovation in the plans.

We recommend to continue to draft the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 of UGJFA and its objectives and targets, in close relation to further development of mission statement and vision statement (drafted with the aim to develop a specific, original profile of the University, as it was claimed by the University management).

Academic Freedom

The institution guarantees through its statute and its organizational structure to provide freedom in teaching and research (although research is still very underdeveloped area of the institution’s operation).

We recommend to link strategies of research development with a need to guarantee academic freedom in this activity.

Organization and Management

The creation the University of Gjakova is a significant step for the development of the higher education process in Kosovo. The recommendations that are given here, therefore, are intended to encourage the University of Gjakova to develop its own autonomy and identity.

The ET appreciates the University of Gjakova has developed a set of internal regulations and also the administrative structure for decision making, incl. organisational chart.

The organizational chart as described in the SER reflects the organogram of the university. In order to achieve appropriate efficiency of the institution management we recommend that the consideration of organization and planning should be evaluated with priority. We appreciate that particular attention was newly paid to drafting of concrete development strategies. Their further and realistic elaboration (not everything is possible to manage at once!) in relation to all main areas of university operation (teaching, research, internationalisation, staff, infrastructure, and more) is desirable.

New statute of the university is in the process of development and this should clarify and also strengthen some organisational aspects of the university operation with clearer regard to the up-to-date needs.

Some steps were undertaken to give more responsibilities to the deans of faculties which we consider to be a positive move – we recommend to continue on with decentralisation policies within the university and also within the whole HE system of Kosovo.

We recommend to continue in development of quality assurance processes at every level and main areas of the university operation.

Academic Staff

The situation of staffing is very specific not only due to a transition history of the very institution (University of Gjakova), but also due to a situation at the HE labour market in Kosovo. Since the links between the University of Pristina and University of Gjakova have been gradually releasing, the potentially and gradually more important group of staff needs to be recruited on the basis of public calls. It seems that strategies of recruitment of sufficiently qualified staff are not always successful. It was reported by the university management that while at the time of establishing University of Gjakova the plan was to have 101 staff members, currently the University of Gjakova has only 63 staff members (41 academics, 22 non-academics). Clearly, this does not seem to be easy to attract eligible staff which strongly complicates the situation.

In our understanding the existing staff is qualified for running the existing programmes, especially with regard to the teaching aspects. It should be pointed out, though, that research activity is vastly underdeveloped amongst the academic staff’s activity at the moment and this shortcoming should be in focus of improvement efforts. There are hopes as for the staff

qualification improvement related to those staff members who are about to complete their PhD studies, but real results will – hopefully – only be seen in the months/years to come.

Transparent, competitive and quality-driven regulations are supposed to be developed in coming months and later, we were assured by the university representatives. The same applies to the development strategies of the University of Gjakova to ensure that their academic staff maintains a continually high standard.

We recommend to explore new/innovative strategies of recruiting qualified staff, to improve research aspect of the work of all academic staff; and to clarify institutional guidelines on development of quality standards in research involvement of the staff.

Finance

The main resource of finance comes to the University of Gjakova from the state (ministry). The representatives of the university also pointed out that the municipality of Gjakova intends to get involved by supporting the infrastructures of the university to some extent (assistance with the university campus-like facility was mentioned). The cash-flow system is gradually being developed and implemented there, we recommend more decentralisation and more specific focus in this respect.

Also, we would see as needed more trust to be given to the very university from side of the ministry as for the financial management. Rather strict rules as for dealing with finances make it difficult for the university’s efforts to get involved in some international projects – this should be clarified and made easier by the ministry.

The institution has at its disposal several buildings for teaching activities; one of them has recently been reconstructed. These buildings seem to ensure basic needs for academic programs to be realised. Facilities for research activities are very modest.

Some other facilities for support of learning seem to be in a critical state – this is still definitely true for the library, which is below a minimum level standard. Moreover, there is limited availability of computer labs available to students. The University representatives pointed out that the Gjakova’s municipal library is serving its students as one of the sources, too. We have not been checking this aspect any further. Clearly, financial investment needs to be done here.

We recommend to complete development of cash-flow plan and consider further investment in facilities for research; to invest in a better university library as a matter of priority in the next phase of the university’s development; to relate explicitly funding also to research and motilities; to seek external funding and sponsorship where appropriate.

Development Plan

The University does have a sense of institutional development. As mentioned already, the development plan of the University of Gjakova “Fehmi Agani” has been drafted based on the

development principles of the university for the period 2017-2021. This document contains a number of valuable intentions; in some parts it would still benefit from more precise concretisation and from more balanced focus on main areas of university operation.

We recommend to specify and formulate more explicitly these strategies and plans with focus to key areas of university operation.

Quality Management

The University of Gjakova “Fehmi Agani” has established an Office for Academic Development and Quality Management with the aim of ensuring excellence, equality, transparency and efficiency. The university is also committed to high quality performance on the level of departments and programs and declares the improvement of quality as an individual and collective responsibility.

A well-developed structure for quality assurance processes is to be identified at the University of Gjakova.

As for teaching, it seems, several selected courses are under closer monitoring/evaluation at the moment.

At the University of Gjakova students are asked to fill in surveys twice a year to evaluate the academic personnel, courses that they take and the efficiency of the administrative services. The results of these surveys are disseminated to each academic staff and administrative department and the summaries are accessible to departments/centres at the university level for analysis and usage. The individual results are used as part of the personal evaluation process. However, only certain programmes per year (three in total) are considered in this gathering of online student feedback and it is not consistent across the board. Moreover, little incentive is provided to students to encourage participation of feedback mechanisms. The results are also presented in the meeting of the Senate and the Steering Committee and are incorporated in the action plans of the departments. Results of the surveys are not disseminated to students, but more informal discussions with student representatives, highlighting a lack of ‘closing the feedback loop’. There is also a complaint procedure for students, which can be utilized for pressing issues and concerns as cases arise.

Each department of the University of Gjakova “Fehmi Agani” also has an office for academic development which is managed by the coordinators. In addition to their responsibilities with ESC, they are also responsible for provision of advice in ECTS coordination for the lecturers. The coordinators are also responsible for management of student schedules in accordance with the syllabi provided by the lecturers. The coordinators also assist the students in transferring ECTS credits from and/or to other departments or universities.

We recommend still more to be done for co-ordination of QA processes across the university and for clear work with the data. More needs to be done to demonstrate and sustain quality in research and mobility, too. Again, all programs should participate in the end of semester online surveys, alongside a clear strategy of communicating to students the results of the

surveys and the actions being done so that students will be encouraged to participate in the surveys.

Internationalization

While this is still the area in which more needs to be done, some new developments are clearly in place and this needs to be appreciated. They relate to involvement of the university in some international projects, to more opportunities provided to the staff as for the international visits at the conferences, and more. This needs to be pointed out that still internationalization needs to be further developed, both for the study programs, teaching and research activity of the staff, and for student mobility.

We recommend for the university and its faculties, departments and individuals to seek further (institutionalized) collaborations related to staff as well as students. The university should continue in searching for more international exchange programs as soon as possible.

Student Experience

As there was a dedicated student expert, as part of the expert team a section has been created to consider the overall student experience at the University of Gjakova.

During the site visit, a meeting was held with nine students from the three faculties: education, philology and medicine. This session was chaired by the Student Expert, who asked the students to explain what they liked about studying at the University of Gjakova, and what they would like to see improved.

Student responses evidenced that there is strong collegiality and working partnership between teachers and students. Students felt that their Professors were approachable, enthusiastic, and communication was strong in helping support their learning experience. Moreover, students appreciated the exposure of practical experiences that were integrated in their course; this was evident for students in Education and Medicine.

In terms of areas for improvement, students' main concerns were related to the lack of facilities and physical resources. Students would appreciate having larger libraries, more computer labs and more informal study spaces.

As the vision and mission of the university mentions the integration of research alongside teaching, the Student Expert considered how students were accessing online electronic libraries such as EBSCO. Within the libraries there was an A4 piece of paper indicating the login details to access to the electronic libraries, as meetings with staff and management alluded to encouraging students to access the libraries. However, when the Student Expert mentioned the electronic databases, no students had accessed them; one student commented that they did not have access. This clearly highlights that the University must actively encourage students to utilise the electronic databases. This could be done by having dedicated training arranged by librarians, alongside a detailed information manual on how to use the electronic databases and how it can contribute to students' learning and formal assessment practices.

Another opportunity is to spare 15-mins at the beginning of each course, with the teacher demonstrating how to access the electronic database with a provided list of what journals students should review. This would strengthen the link between teaching and research, whilst reducing the need for physical up-to-date textbooks if they can access peer-reviewed articles.

We recommend that the University develops a strategy to improve student usage of electronic databases.

The Student Parliament has a dedicated office space, and students are elected into positions of office for a two-year term. During the site visit, students were commencing the election campaigns, where poster and sticker campaign material was visible around the university. Evidence during the SV and the SER highlights that students’ opinions are heard through the involvement of student parliament in the governance of the university.

Furthermore, the Student Expert would like to applaud the university for providing formalised exam feedback across the institution. This is a sign of good-practice that many universities across Europe strive to do, and the University of Gjakova has succeeded and its benefits are recognised by the students.

A small number of students have participated in short-term visits to international universities including the University of Turin. While the university is developing key relationships with international universities, there must be further consideration as to develop internationalisation of the curriculum. Students during the site visit emphasised having further opportunities to study abroad and develop international exposure. The Student Expert understands that while student mobility is an issue across the sector in Kosovo, the University of Gjakova could work alongside its international partners to develop online links between students at partnering universities, to participate in formative and summative assessments together. This would allow students exposure to international students with little financial support needed.

We recommend that the university builds its international partnerships to consider online linkages between students.

Final recommendation to KAA board: we recommend to accredit University of Gjakova for three (3) years.

3. Reports on Study Programs

Accreditation Procedure of the University of Gjakova “Fehmi Agani”

BA in Early Childhood Education and Development

(Milan Pol with contribution of Rebecca Maxwell Stuart)

Introduction

I had the opportunity to visit University of Gjakova twice before the review conducted in April 2017. First, I visited University of Gjakova “Fehmi Agani”, Faculty of Education in 2014 in connection with accreditation of the two bachelor programs: Preschool Education; and Primary Education. These programs were a kind of continuation of what was previously realised under the umbrella of University of Pristina, and I could recommend the accreditation in both cases.

Then I was invited to review the newly proposed program of Early Childhood Education (bachelor level) in 2015: this program was a brand new program in the portfolio of the University of Gjakova. In my evaluation, I have pointed out some positive aspects of the program proposed (clear structure and logically built study plan, new facility to be soon available after the reconstructions, and more), and I also made some recommendations for improvement (these related mostly to study resources, research and internationalisation). But the major objection and the main reason for my recommendation not to accredit the program was related to a critical situation as for the staff in 2015. There were simply not enough experts in the field available to guarantee this program at the University of Gjakova at that time.

In 2017, the proposal for bachelor program Early Childhood Education and Development (0-3 years) was submitted by the University of Gjakova to the evaluation. The program seems to be very similar, sometimes almost identical to the one that was submitted last year. Similarly, the program would fill the existing gap since it aims to prepare the specialists for their work with the youngest children (0-3), it is claimed in the proposal – and I can see this possibility.

Academic Program and Student Management

The program as described in the application seems to be in most part in line with the vision and also with the mission of the University of Gjakova, Faculty of Education, as indicated in the self-evaluation report (although both vision, and mission emphasise the place of research alongside education, yet there is very little focus on research in the program). The ambition is to prepare specialists (educators, teachers) for early childhood level.

The bachelor program Early Childhood Education and Development is planned as the 4-year one (240 ECTS – the credits are acceptably calculated), to be realised exclusively in a full-time form (it is planned to enrol about 80 students in the first year). The curriculum of the program is built in a logical way, and it has an internal graduation in some extent; it contains typical main elements of the program of such a profile and as a whole I find the study plan relevant.

The aims of the program are enlisted and the learning outcomes are formulated. Similarly to the previous evaluation, I would propose a little more attention to these formulations and

also to the compatibility of these two sets of formulations (aims – learning outcomes): in other words, more precise specifications are required in some cases.

Similarly to last year, in this case I find a total number of disciplines relatively high. I would recommend to build the program more visibly around a few “main stones”, with some optional possibilities linked to these “main stones”. Currently chosen (and yet legitimate!) system seems to be more in danger of fragmentation and a certain isolation of individual disciplines; consequently, the relations among the individual disciplines and also cross-disciplinary issues are much harder to deal with, in my view. Although the self-evaluation report states there are three groups of disciplines/subjects (“general, academic and didactic-methodological”), I propose to strengthen and perhaps to make more explicit integrative feature of the program curriculum. But it needs to be said that the chosen approach is acceptable, I am only proposing a possible alternative and point at some of its advantages.

Admission criteria are clearly described and they contain acceptable requirements. The leaving exam procedure is focused on the diploma thesis defence, there is no integrating final exam – I wonder whether this integration of knowledge, as such exams usually provide, should not be more in focus (this is a general feature of the education programs in Kosovo, I have noticed already earlier). System of evaluation of students’ achievements throughout the study program (individual disciplines) seems to be carefully thought over.

In my view, the schedule of the program indicates there is a relatively high number of direct teaching hours per week, throughout the whole study time of eight semesters. I can see main reasons for it, yet I would still advocate to consider possibilities of re-balancing the direct teaching–independent study proportions in the curricula. Presumably, the schedule is directly connected to the availability of sufficient study resources. I believe, however, higher education students deserve a chance to develop skills of independent academic work and they should have realistic possibilities to practice it.

There is a good proportion of theoretical and “practical” disciplines in the curriculum. Professional practice seems to be well organized and sufficient amount of time is allocated to it (22 weeks during 4 years of study, mostly under the guidance of mentors).

The teaching methods as described in the self-evaluation report are acceptable in a given context.

The study literature is sometimes (only) in English – I wonder, how realistic is this solution, also with regard to poor situation of the library and practically no use of relevant databases. Representatives of the university mentioned some extra supply of literature should become true very soon, but the state of art of the library as we have visited it during our site visit proved the library remains to be a problem (this is not the first mention about this problem in the past few years’ reports...). Moreover, it has been noted that for a number of courses the core literature is outdated, and does not align with contemporary studies. For example, the course, ‘ICT Basics’ includes the following books: Dika & Rodiqi (1999) Computers and Information; and Beqiri (1999) Basics of Informatics; Dika & Rodiqi (2000) Computer for All. Another example is from the course ‘Curriculum development and implementation’ which includes the following text: Karnes (1969), Research and Development Programme on PreSchool Disadvantaged Children: Final report.

Staff

In this section I can, in principle, repeat what I stated in the report last year. Staffing of the program is the biggest problem of the proposed program. I am well aware staffing seems to be one of the key issues in current higher education development in Kosovo. One can appreciate the effort of the University of Gjakova, Faculty of Education to attract new staff by means of public calls. So far, the results do not seem to be satisfactory, though. All three (3) leading staff members who were presented as guarantors of the program are profiled in other disciplines than educational sciences/psychology (Ilmi Hoxha in Mathematics; Januz Bunjaku in Technical sciences; Nexhmitje Kastrati in Literature). The official list of the staff that was confirmed by the KAA office also clearly indicates that in case of bachelor program Early Childhood Education and Development there are only three (3) people with PhD degree who are qualified in educational sciences or psychology (and only one of them has full-time contract); and similarly, there are only three (3) master degree staff members qualified in the field of educational sciences/psychology and again, only one of them has the full-time contract). I am afraid, this is not a sufficiently firm basis for the new program.

Research and International Co-operation

Similarly to what I wrote last year, I can write now: research is still a weak aspect of the whole arrangement. But I would not point this out too much for two reasons: (1) the program proposed relates to bachelor level; (2) research development takes time and one cannot expect huge differences in one year-time. In my belief, University of Gjakova needs to act in this area but also requires some patience from the side of external evaluators.

I am happy to inform I could hear, about some new initiatives that are in line of research development: some staff members participated at several international scientific events last year; and staff were offered methodological training (not obligatory for all, just available to those interested) recently. These are positive signs, although much needs to be done if the institution wants to proceed sufficiently further.

As for the research, some attention paid to it in the curriculum (disciplines such as Action research, Basics of research in early childhood – in connection to Education practice weeks) – I find this appropriately built in the program. Although the involvement of the staff in research activities is declared, with regard to the official list of the staff (see section Staff), this is rather poor record.

As for the international co-operation, some new plans started to be realised and this should be appreciated. Yet again, a lot needs to be done to establish effective international co-operation in teaching and research and international mobility of students as well as staff on the acceptable standard.

As I mentioned already last year, the program Early Childhood Education and Development claims to have similarities with some international programs, but an explicit and lively connection with the international world is still not very well seen in it so far.

Finances and Infrastructure

Finances are still centralised on the level of the university, the basic information about financing of the program was made available. The breakdown to the education-research-internationalization was not provided in a sufficient detail.

As for the infrastructure, the basic infrastructure (building, teaching rooms) is available in an acceptable state of art and it is in use. And according to the university management, the finances for new university campus have been approved which should make the conditions for the university life more comfortable in the period of next several years. My concern still remains as for the library and its resources. I find them very poor. Also, the databases are not in use (even those available prepaid by the ministry – EBSCO, for instance). A standard information system is not in use, students and the staff communicate via personal emails or some social networks. This is not enough anymore for the higher education institution with the ambitions to be an up-to-date higher education study opportunity, the leading one in the region of Gjakova or even beyond.

Quality Management

The Office for Academic Development and Quality Management is a part of the structure and it has taken some steps as for the quality assurance efforts at the University of Gjakova. Some measures, linked to the teaching/learning process in particular, were adopted (student evaluations, staff evaluations, closer look at selected courses). At the moment, several courses seem to be monitored and evaluated more closely. This is not clear what shall be the procedure of working with the data collected. The evaluation measures are not yet explicitly focused on research and internationalization.

Main Recommendation to the KAA Board

No doubt the University of Gjakova, Faculty of Education has again made some positive steps ahead, the very program seems to be reasonably built, the facilities are improving (the reconstructed building), and processes of management of quality are gradually developed, some initiatives were undertaken to support research and internationalisation. Still, mainly study resources, research, and internationalisation deserve more attention and improvement.

We propose to link the accreditation decision with the issue of staffing, though. And this issue seems to be the most critical issue in case of the new program, considering the official list of the staff. If this is so, then **we cannot recommend to accredit the bachelor program Early Childhood Education and Development now.**

Accreditation Procedure of the University of Gjakova “Fehmi Agani”

BA in Albanian Language and Literature

MA in Albanian Language and Literature

Dhurata Shehri (University of Tirana, Albania)

Introduction

I had the opportunity to visit University of Gjakova when I was invited to review the newly proposed program of Albanian Language and Literature (BA level) and the program of Albanian Language and Literature (Master level) in April 2017. The BA program in Albanian Language and Literature is a new program that seems to be related with the two separate BA programs of Albanian Language and Albanian Literature that were accredited in 2013.

I - Evaluation report on BA in Albanian Language and Literature Program

1. Academic Program and Student Management

The program as described in the application seems to be in most part in line with the vision and also with the mission of the University of Gjakova, Faculty of Philology, as indicated in the self-evaluation report (although both vision, and mission emphasise the place of research alongside education; research is not very much in focus in the program). The ambition is to prepare specialists for Albanian language and literature.

The bachelor program Albanian Language and Literature is planned as a three year degree (180 ECTS – the credits are acceptably calculated), to be realised exclusively in full-time form. The curriculum of the program is built in a logical way, and it has an internal graduation to some extent; it contains typical main elements of the program of such a profile and as a whole I find the study plan relevant.

The aims of the program are enlisted and the learning outcomes are formulated, but more precise specifications are required in some cases.

The three groups of literature study disciplines/subjects (theory, history of Albanian literature and history of world literature) in the BA program are not in the right proportions. For example, the World literature is taught only in two semesters, and the Albanian one in five semesters. Also, it is unacceptable that the Modern Albanian Literature, the most important period, has just one semester, and the Contemporary Albanian Literature has two semesters divided into prose and poetry. Some syllabus lack the literature, for example: Albanian Renaissance Literature; in some other cases in the overview of the program is mentioned as National Literature, but the syllabus is about Folk Literature.

Some other syllabus has problems with the literature, very old and very ideological (Estetika e folklorit, A. Uci), but the main problem is that the same books “migrate” usually from one subject to another, and in some cases the basic literature has nothing to do with the subject (for example, Fjalor enciklopedik i shkencave te ligjerimit, Dycro, Todorov – as basic literature in Albanian Literary Criticism and its History)

Some subjects cover the same topic, but I cannot see any difference in methodology, interpretation, so any reason to duplicate, for example, History of Albanian Literature Romanticism and Arberesh Romanticism). The linguistic subjects are appropriate, but I will suggest that subjects such as Phonetics and historical morphology and Stylistic must be obligatory.

I propose to strengthen and perhaps to make a more explicit, integrative feature of the program curriculum. But it needs to be said that the chosen approach is acceptable, I am only proposing possible alternatives and identifying some of its advantages.

Admission criteria are clearly described and they contain acceptable requirements. The leaving exam procedure is focused on the diploma thesis defence, there is no integrating final exam – I wonder whether this integration of knowledge, as such exams usually provide, should not be more in focus. System of evaluation of students’ achievements throughout the study program (individual disciplines) seems to be carefully thought over.

I would advocate to consider possibilities of re-balancing the direct teaching–independent study proportions in the curricula. Presumably, the schedule is directly connected to the availability of sufficient study resources. However, I believe higher education students deserve a chance to develop skills of independent academic work and they should have realistic possibilities to practice it.

2. Staff

In this section I can consider that staffing of the program does respond to the proposed program, but some problems must be mentioned:

1. One of the leading staff members (the Professor) who were presented as guarantors of the program is BA in Albanian Language and Literature profiled in other disciplines than Literature or Linguistic.
2. But the most problematic issue is that the same professor teaches five different subjects (for example: History of Old Albanian Literature, History of Albanian Renaissance – Romanticism, History of Modern Albanian Literature, History of Contemporary Albanian Literature (Poetry), History of Contemporary Albanian Literature (Prose)). The same problem in linguistic disciplines (Phonetics and Phonology of Albanian Language; Lexicology and Albanian Semantics, Morphology 1, Morphology 2, Dialectology, Sociolinguistics – six subjects taught by the same professor.

In my understanding the existing staff is qualified somehow for running the existing program, especially with regard to the teaching aspects. It should be pointed out, though, that research activity is vastly underdeveloped amongst the academic staff’s activity at the moment and this shortcoming should be a focus of improvement efforts.

Main recommendation to the KAA Board

I recommend to accredit the bachelor program in Albanian Language and Literature for three years that must be sufficient for the staff and management to improve the program and to be more focused in new human recourses, research and internationalisation.

II - Evaluation report on MA in Albanian Language and Literature Program

1. Academic Program and Student Management

The program as described in the application seems to be in most part in line with the vision and also with the mission of the University of Gjakova, Faculty of Philology, as indicated in the self-evaluation report (although both vision, and mission emphasise the place of research besides to education, and research is not very much in focus in the program). The aim is to deepen scientific knowledge, theoretical and methodological training in the constituent areas of the program.

The bachelor program Albanian Language and Literature is planned as a two year degree (120 ECTS – the credits are acceptably calculated), to be realised exclusively in full-time form. The curriculum of the program is built in a logical way and as a whole I find the study plan not bad. But a Master program of Albanian Language and Literature is unusual in these two fields together (it can be appropriate for a Bachelor degree). This “problem” is solved somehow in the program by separating the two fields of studying in defined four elective subjects in linguistic or literature and the Master thesis in linguistic or literature.

The aims of the program are enlisted and the learning outcomes are formulated, but more precise specifications are required in some cases.

The three groups of disciplines/subjects (theory, history of Albanian literature and history of world literature) in the MA program are not in the right proportions. For example, the World literature is not at all, the Albanian one in two semesters and none of the theoretical subjects relate with literature studies are obligatory. Some syllabus have quite the same literature as similar subjects in BA degree, some others have inappropriate literature for MA degree, for example: Introduction to theoretical linguistic, Introduction to the study of discourse, etc.

Some other syllabus has problems with the literature, very old and very ideological (Estetika e folklorit, A. Uci), but the main problem is that the same books “migrate” usually from one subject to another, and in some cases the basic literature has nothing to do with the subject. Some subjects cover the same topic as the similar in BA degree, but I cannot see any difference in methodology and interpretation between, for example, History of Albanian literature in BA and History of Albanian Literature in MA.

Admission criteria are clearly described and they contain acceptable requirements. I would advocate to consider possibilities of re-balancing the direct teaching–independent study proportions in the curricula.

2. Staff

In this section I can consider that staffing of the program does not respond to the proposed program.

The most problematic issue is that the same professor teaches 2-3 different subjects and are the same professors that teach 5-6 other subjects in BA in Albanian Language and Literature and only in very rare cases their research activity is related with the fields they cover in Master. In general, the research activity is vastly underdeveloped amongst the academic staff’s activity.

Main recommendation to the KAA Board

I have no doubt the University of Gjakova, Faculty of Philology has again made some positive steps ahead, the facilities are improving (the reconstructed building), and processes of

management of quality are gradually developed, some initiatives were undertaken to support research and internationalisation. Still, mainly study resources (library that lack the sufficient literature for these research disciplines), research, and internationalisation in the disciplines that MA Albanian Language and Literature covered deserve more attention and improvement. I recommend to link the accreditation decision with the issue of staffing, though. And this issue seems to be the most critical issue in case of the new program in MA in Albanian Language and Literature, considering the official list of the staff. If this is so, then **I cannot recommend to accredit the master program in Albanian Language and Literature now.**