
**Assessment Report
concerning the application of Kadri Zeka University, Gjilan
for the accreditation of a
- Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
- Master of Science in Economy - Finance**

26.03.2015

Assessment expert team consisting of

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accompanied during the site visit by

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Information Basis of the Draft Assessment Report:

- **Self-Evaluation Report 2015, Universiteti Kadri Zeka, Gjilan, 29.10.2014 [henceforth quoted as SER]**
- **Lists of Academic Staff for the above programs (both University and KAA lists)**
- **External evaluation report, 2014**
- **Site Visit by the above-mentioned experts to Gjilan, 26.02.2015**
- **Additional material requested by the committee of experts after the site visit and received by mail on 06.03.2015**
- **Comments on the Draft Report [not the Final Report, as erroneously stated by UKZ] by Kadri Zeka University dated 20.03.2015 received by the experts via KAA on 21.03.2015**

Aims and Objectives:

- The purpose of this report is to enable the Kosovo Accreditation Agency and the Ministerial and/or Political Authorities concerned to come to a decision regarding the accreditation of the above-mentioned course programs newly to be offered by the University of Gjilan. The undersigned experts will assess the documentation mentioned above in the light of their experiences gained in the German, Estonian, English, and French university systems. References to benchmarks and good practices mainly refer to the German and Estonian university systems.

- This report will conclude with a number of recommendations concerning each of the course programmes proposed: they are the personal opinion of the authors and are formulated with the background experiences mentioned above in mind. They reflect what the authors regards as good or standard practices in a number of mainly Western European education systems, without wanting to prejudice the different boundary conditions of tertiary education in the Kosovo in any way. Therefore, the final decision on the University's application for accreditation of the programs mentioned above will have to be made by the relevant authorities concerned.

- This report could not have been written without the support of the staff of the KAA in the first place, and also of a number of helpful face-to-face contacts in Kadri Zeka University. While the authors are most grateful for the support thus received, they would like to stress that the arguments and conclusions of this report are their own responsibility exclusively.

NB (1): According to the usual international nomenclature, the designation of this degree course should rather read: Master of Science in Economics - Finance

NB (2): recommendations in the text are printed *in italics* or are contained in separate boxes.

I: Kadri Zeka University, Gjilan: GENERAL STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

I.0 Introduction, preliminary impressions

The Expert Team visited the University of Gjilan on February 26, 2015, and, after being given a brief introduction into the history of the institution, its evolutionary development, and its variety of programs, had some detailed discussions first of all with the Acting Rector, Prof. Dr. Naim Syla, and representatives of the Management, followed by members of the academic staff, responsible for the development of the academic programs mentioned initially. As these were not yet in operation, there were no meetings with the teaching staff and/or course program students.

Unfortunately, the comments on the Draft Report received by UKZ did not take up any of the points the experts made vis-à-vis the general structure and the organization of the institution; the experts therefore assume that the observations made under I were regarded by UKZ as adequate and fitting the situation. They will therefore not change them from the initial version contained in their draft report.

I.1 Mission Statement

The experts noted that the SER did not contain a general chapter on the mission and future development prospects of the University. Partly, this is replaced by brief remarks on the rationale of individual programs under the respective program headings [and will thus be dealt with *in situ* there]. The experts also noted that the University had received institutional accreditation in the autumn of 2013. This dispenses them from discussing a number of constitutional, institutional, financial, quality assessment, research, and staffing questions typically associated with an institutional accreditation demand.

However, a smaller number of points arose during the site visit which merited analysis and discussion; these will be mentioned below.

I.2 Organization, management, and planning; facilities, infrastructure, equipment

The experts had no initial problem with the way the University was administered nor, as a general rule, with the resources and facilities available for that task and for academic instruction.

However, they noted with a certain astonishment the lack of a proper quality assurance office (the SER speaks pp 82 et seq. of an office for international cooperation and quality, and mentions the work of a quality official without giving more than a very peremptory view of her/his duties). Also, there is a brief description of quality assurance procedures in the SER (pp 82 et seq.), but no formal rules and regulations regarding QA scope and

procedures are given. KAA should press on the University the need to drastically improve this situation at shorter notice.

Also debated was the empirical basis for the introduction of new study programs, in particular, whether the University followed a supply-driven or a demand-driven policy, to which extent local business, administration, and civil society interests were consulted by or even had a say in the planning process, and to which extent the new offers for which accreditation is being sought would fulfill the needs of the national labour market in Kosovo. As it transpired by the answers to the respective questions, the premises guiding the development of the new course systems were based on optimistic University assumptions rather than hard, market-researched local/national labour market facts; there was no reliable information as to the employability as well as to the employment chances of prospective course program graduates.

I.3 Staff

The experts took note of the minimalist information on academic and research staff as portrayed by the SER, pp 76 et seq. This also prevented a more detailed discussion of staffing policy as required by the KAA guidelines for experts. Furthermore, the information on staff given together with the SER, and the information on staff contained in the more recent KAA lists, did in a number of cases not dovetail: staff floated between part-time and full-time in Gjilan itself, while in a number of cases they held demanding full-time employment elsewhere which in principle would exclude further full-time employment at Gjilan – to wit: full-time professorship at UofPristina, Ambassador of Kosovo in Austria, Minister in the Government of Kosovo. In another case, a part-timer is supposed to offer a maximum of three courses/week and at the same time addresses himself to the important function of 3rd secretary at the Kosovo Embassy in Vienna. In their comment on the Draft report, the University might want to clarify these imprecisions and provide a final and reliable staff list in cooperation with KAA.

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

The list of academic staff which has been delivered to the expert team by KAA shows in both cases a relation of 3 full-time versus 11 or 12 part-time members of staff; moreover, part-timers teach up to three courses per week, while full-timers teach only two. The number of full-timers and their teaching load should therefore be substantially increased; the number of part-timers and their teaching load should correspondingly be reduced.

- Does the academic staff demonstrate proven ability at a high academic and didactic level and are their qualifications appropriate to the positions they hold within the institution according to the basic criteria?

Formally, at least in the Dept. of Economics, the staff is academically highly qualified; they all hold a PhD. In Politics, the number of PhDs is outrun by the Masters. The majority of staff members have good experience in academic teaching, if one can go by their CVs. The didactic methods being described in the curricula show an adequate level of didactic knowledge.

- Is there an equal proportion of women amongst the academic staff?

No – decidedly NOT. During the site visit, the experts met only two female academic staff at all and upon questioning the management as to equal employment opportunities the answer was that there were not enough qualified female PhDs in Kosova to improve that balance. *The experts would thus recommend to the University to start an equal opportunities/gender equality program straight away; if the Kosova labour market does*

indeed not provide the requisite number of qualified female PhDs, the University should substantially employ and support female Masters from its own resources, helping them to qualify themselves to PhD level as part & parcel of their employment.

- Does the institution have transparent, competitive and quality driven regulations for the selection and employment of staff?

The SER provides in the annex a typical work contract which seems to be fairly standard in Kosovo public institutions of tertiary education. However, this would not replace a detailed description of the selection process. *This description the University should briefly furnish in their answer to the Draft Assessment Report.*

- Does the institution have developed strategies to ensure that its academic staff maintains a continually high standard?

This question was only peremptorily mentioned during the visit; there is no info. on staff development in the SER. Given the status of the academic labour market in Kosovo, KAA should impress on the University the need for a generous in-house staff qualification, on the job-training, and advancement policy.

Recommendations:

1. *More strategies should be developed for the recruitment and/or development of young academic staff, and especially of women. We would recommend regular seminars of the “training the trainers” type.*
2. *The selection of academic staff should be based on clearly defined requirements, concerning academic degrees, didactic qualifications, teaching experience, publications, research results, etc.*
3. *In order to bring the selection procedure for professorial appointments up to international standards of comparability, the experts suggest that at least one member of any selection committee should come from the outside – i.e. either another Kosovar university or institution of tertiary education, or from a comparable institution abroad.*
4. *A consolidated, and continuously updated version of the Staff Development Policy should accompany each SER as an annex to give the sum total of information on staff development, so that experts can gain a more complete picture of the staff situation upon assessing the SER.*

1.4 Finance and Facilities, Infrastructure and Equipment

The experts addressed the following questions under this heading:

- Does the institution have an adequate budget and sufficient financial resources?

The guarded answer is yes – the University budget is part and parcel of the budget of the Government of Kosovo and as such subject to the general restraints and openings inherent in that financial exercise. As with all publicly budgeted institutions, medium-term expenditure planning did not show very prominently in the SER.

- Does the institution have adequate buildings and specialized infrastructure as regards the requirements of the academic program on offer and the research to be conducted (libraries, computers, laboratories)?

The answer again is yes, if one looks at the present downtown location of the University (though its atmosphere reminded one of a long-established grammar school rather). The only exceptions would be the Library and the number of offices/cabinets for the permanent academic staff; the latter number would certainly want to be increased !

I.5 Quality Management and ECTS administration

The College's quality and ECTS management mechanisms, very briefly described in the SER, did not meet with the satisfaction of experts [cf.1.2 above]. KAA should impress on the University the needs for a transparent, formalized, and effective quality management with sufficient staff and financial resources allocated. Quality Assessment and planning for the future should go hand in hand. In their answer to the Draft report, the University might therefore not only give a detailed exposition of its quality assessment approach, but also describe more generally its planning process.

1.6 Academic Programs and Student Management

The following questions were addressed by the experts during the site visit, and in the preparation of the draft report on the basis of the various submissions received from the University:

- Do the academic programs correspond to the institution's mission statement and principles of employability?
- Are the quality, range and academic aims of the curriculum appropriate to the academic degree awarded?
- Are the programs based on an overarching didactic concept that has been adequately communicated to and adopted by the teaching staff?
- Do the academic degrees correspond to international standards?
- Does the structure of the programs give sufficient opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis? (e.g. what is the proportion of independent study time compared to online/distance teaching and classroom units?).
- Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and comprehensible?
- Is the workload required for the academic program manageable for students?
- Are the teaching methods and content of teaching units sufficient for the successful achievement of the overall program's goals and outcomes (competences and qualifications, knowledge and skills)?
- Are the examination regulations appropriate?
- Is the overlap of academic content between the various curricula comprehensible and transparent?
- How do the admission criteria and admission procedures measure up to international standards?
- Is the ratio of academic/artistic staff to students appropriate?

As these questions can best be answered on the basis of the individual programs, they will form a skeleton for the individual program assessments. Answers to these questions can therefore be found under the headings for the individual programs up for accreditation.

I.7 Students

There was no meeting with students, as the programs up for accreditation were new ones

I.8 Research

The following points should have been discussed during the site visit and were briefly mentioned amongst the experts in the preparation of the draft report afterwards:

- What are the institution's research expectations, and how do these relate to the number and quality of its permanent staff?

Two possible research projects were mentioned in the SER; discernible progress so far does not seem to have been achieved.

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

No reliable information given in the SER enabling one to answer these questions; a full-blown analysis of each academic CV followed by exploratory interviews would have been necessary. The experts suggest that in the next SER there should be at least an informative overview table on individual staff research projects and their impact on teaching in Gjilan.

- Are students involved in research and in co-operation projects?

In principle cf. statement just above. To what extent this involvement has been fruitful can only be assessed on the basis of the material mentioned in the preceding paragraph. KAA should specifically ask the next team of experts to have an eye on this.

I.9 External contacts and international cooperation

In the additional material being sent by email, the University provided a list of roughly half a dozen regional cooperation partners, and also mentioned six cooperation projects predicated on an international scale. As these are still in progress, a closer estimate as to their success cannot yet be given. Future SERs should have a section on current and concluded research projects and their outcomes.

Further questions to be addressed are:

- Are the extent and the quality of international cooperation in research and teaching adequate?
- Are the strategies of internationalization and the involvement of staff and students in training co-operations and mobility programs adequate?
- How does the University define the level of adequacy in both cases ?

I.10 Particular problem items: Library

The experts visited the Library during their inspection of the premises and noted that it could do with some extra space; in particular so, if and when an extra 150 or so students will use it after a possible accreditation of new programs. Most of the library holdings accessible pertained to the fields of Education and Legal Studies (for which there is an explanation in the history of Gjilan University). The experts could not discern whether there was a clear division between a student textbook and a research library, and whether the latter would be organized according to a) bibliographies, b) works of reference, c) official publications, d) published secondary literature, e) scientific journals and periodicals, f) general reading material of a non-scientific character, g) material stored in

electronic form. The Library seems to operate still with a card-file index; the staff gave a friendly, approachable, and helpful impression. There was not enough time to take up a check on one suggestion from last year's expert report – i.e. that at least one copy of all the items of recommended reading mentioned by the course descriptions should be present in the Library. The University might want to address this question in their comments on the Draft report.

On the basis of their experience made during the site visit, and on the basis of their more general experiences gained during earlier visits to Kosovo institutions of tertiary education, the experts would recommend the following:

Initial Recommendations:

- to structure the Library as a textbook library more specifically geared to the needs of academic instruction in the University's subject areas
- to invest continuously in the acquisition of textbooks in cooperation with and according to the needs of the individual subject areas
- to make available major works (particularly works of reference, dictionaries, legal texts, and official document publications) on CD Rom

In other words:

- textbooks and research literature should be separated from each other; while the research literature could be kept in the locked glass cases provided, the textbooks should be freely accessible on shelves in the Library reading room, together with reference works, language dictionaries, bibliographies, and the like.
- If the shelving space in the reading room is not sufficient to store all the aforementioned items, divide the collection into a) arts and social sciences, b) law and economics, c) Education, d) Natural Sciences & Mathematics and allocate a separate reading room to each group.
- Textbooks – and eventually also the research literature – should be classified according to subjects and ordered on the basis of the pertinence principle: - i.e. books with related subjects should stand on the shelves in groups next to each other, so that e.g. the attention of a student of international private law would also be drawn to international public law textbooks, etc.

The committee of experts also wondered whether notable deficiencies of the print Library might not be alleviated or even overcome by building up an electronic Library. Particularly in the various sub-fields of Law and Economics a large number of texts are published in an electronic format; therefore, generous access to electronic media, an additional reference library, and a collection of current textbooks in law, economics, information science, politics and public administration, as well as in European Studies and International Relations, could be regarded as a more valuable basis for the University's work than the present print collection.

Further Recommendation: In the medium term, it might –metaphorically – pay if the University employs for some time two or three student research assistants whose job it would be to muster the Internet for reference websites (like the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy - <http://plato.stanford.edu/>), e-learning programmes, download pages of research institutes (like ARENA, Crisis Web, HSFK, Brookings Institute etc., etc.) and policy think tanks, and download web-pages of international governmental and nongovernmental organisations (from UNO via the EU to e.g. OXFAM) in order to construct a catalogue of links to specific documents, official and semi-official publications, and study material which would be available on a Faculty server to all

students and could also be copied on CD or stick in order to be taken home. This would not overcome the lack of printed textbooks, but at least alleviate it.

When being asked for recommended or even compulsory reading in the individual course templates, the University should confine itself to five or six titles – perhaps two or three of the most recent course-relevant textbooks and two or three introductions and/or helpful articles which allow the student to gain a bird’s eye view of the subject to be chosen. What the experts miss is an introductory section to all teaching programs containing a canon of recommended textbook literature which the students will need for the majority of courses (and therefore would not have to be mentioned time and again when discussing individual course reading requirements).

The Draft Report also contained a canon of mainly textbook literature which the experts regarded as indispensable for teaching in the Social and Political Sciences based on a larger number of Western European examples. For the sake of brevity, this list is omitted in the Final Report. Without the acquisition of those titles, however, the Library would not be in a state fit enough to warrant the start of a Bachelor Program in Political Science.

I.11 Particular problem items: progress from earlier assessment reports

Up to date information on the progress made by the University with regard to earlier expert recommendations (2014 Assessment Report), as received in UKZ’s comments on the Draft Report and corrected from the list contained in the 2015 SER pp 96 – 100 was rather meagre. Basically, UKZ claims that they have set up an Institute of Political Science till September 2014 [which was not shown to the experts on the occasion of the site visit as a physical entity, so the validity of this statement cannot be ascertained], that they have reorganized the Study Program according to international standards, that they have included a number of internationally engaged teaching staff in order to guarantee a high level of education, research, and international cooperation, and that they are in contact with international professor(s??) who will teach at Gjilan.

Unfortunately, with regard to the last two claims, neither the names of possible candidates willing to entertain cooperative teaching or research visits, nor their nationality and institutional affiliation, nor their individual academic subject areas were given in the comments on the Draft. The experts therefore have to conclude that these claims are of a salvatory character only, and that UKZ will have to travel a substantial length of road still before the 2014 recommendations can in any way be regarded as fulfilled.

II THE COURSES AND PROGRAMS UP FOR ACCREDITATION

II.1 Bachelor of Arts in Political Science

The University applies for accreditation of a standard three-year, six semester full-time 180 ECTS total, 60 ECTS/year Bachelor program in Political Science, providing 75 places of study per year at very moderate fees. Formally, this program fulfils the conditions of the Bologna agreement (in the 3+2+3 structure) and is therefore in principle comparable to similar course schemes in the Bologna area. The program description is informative, contains the usual standard points from structure of studies via teaching forms, ECTS

allocation and grading system, to student evaluation, examination procedures, and regulations for drafting the final Bachelor thesis. The program offers courses in the following areas (SER pp9 et seq.):

1. Political Philosophy
2. Methods of Social Research
3. Comparative Politics
4. Public Policy
5. International Relations and Diplomacy
6. International Political Economy
7. English

As can be seen by this and a closer analysis of the course syllabi SER pp 26 et seq., the division of subjects is a very conventional, traditional one, being far behind a modern Political Science which has left the overcome, static tripartite division into Political Theory, Comparative Government, and International Politics long ago, and has either changed over to a more process-orientated perspective on policies and politics in the framework of a polity, or has even bridged the classical boundaries between the three fields mentioned by the adoption of a multi-level governance perspective which not only allows to follow agenda setting, interest articulation, decision-making, and decision implementation freely from the bottom individual to the world global system level and vice versa, but also bridges the conceptual boundaries between Political Science proper, Political Sociology, Political Behaviour studies, and functional and normative aspects of human interaction and cooperation. Of course, UKZ has every right to claim that they cling to the traditional setup of Political Science BAs for didactical reasons – but then they will also cling to the didactics of the 1970s and the 1980s. That there are undergraduate textbooks (and consequently also course plans) which incorporate the more modern perspectives mentioned above is vividly demonstrated by Andrew Heywood (Politics, 2013; Global Politics; 2014; Political Theory, 2015).

The further general impression of the program is that it does not quite live up to the preponderant role the European Union plays for Kosovo in particular and the Western Balkans in general: there is one course on European integration in semester 5, and another one on Policy and Policy-Making in the EU in semester 6. What is decidedly missing are more intensive modules on

- **The institutions of the EU, their roles, competencies, manner of work, and outcomes**
- **Select EU policy areas (e.g. agricultural policy or consumer protection) and the respective forms of law-making in these areas – after all we have now over 40 different forms of EU law-making according to issue-area**
- **European Union law and the way it is formulated and administered**
- **Agenda setting and interest representation in Brussels and the role of third sector organisations**
- **The EU as an external actor, its Common Foreign and Security Policy, its Development Policy, and its role vis-à-vis the third world**
- **Europeanization of national policies (i.e. the influence of the EU on the policies of its member states) and vice versa – the influence of the member states on EU policy.**
- **Regional and Structural Policies, the importance and the workings of the Cohesion Fund, the role of Stabilization and Association Agreements, etc., etc.**

In view of the fact that a large proportion of Kosovo public expenditure is funded by EU donors of various descriptions, even local administrators should have a thorough knowledge of the way Brussels works, the options it offers, and the cards it provides for their game ! So the logical conclusion would be to increase the European content of the

BA program. That the two EU courses mentioned can cover all the above aspects in any meaningful detail, as UKZ claims in their comment on the Draft, is very much open to doubt. However, if you opt for a very conventional, state-based Politics program, then these subjects and problem areas lose their importance: if politics is what states make of it, to rephrase a constructivist tenet, you may afford to ignore much of the EU, albeit at your own peril.

The final general impression of the program conveys a lack of fit between its labour market rationale (SER p.16), the graduates it hopes to produce, and the subjects indeed on offer. The program aims to provide

- Professionals with high political and civic ethics and knowledge for the public service sectors like government institutions, foreign services, embassies and parliament
- Professionals with high political and civic ethics, knowledge and skills for the work in media
- Professionals with high political and civic ethics, knowledge and skills for the work with NGOs
- Professionals for the work with the private sectors; professionals for the work with international organizations
- Professionals with the aim to pursue an academic career.

N.B. – one misses local politics, local and regional administrations, and perhaps also local & regional public utilities in this list...

The catchword of much of this is administration; yet, for work with the media, NGOs, and private/semi-private third sector organizations the program has not much to offer. One would in this context expect modules on

- **Agenda setting, decision making, policy implementation, and (judicial) outcome control in multi-level governance settings**
- **Human resource management and leadership potential development**
- **Interest aggregation, lobbying, and public campaigning**
- **Public Finance, budgeting and auditing**
- **Constitutional and administrative law.**

The Draft Report contains an optional recommendation concerning a possible solution to the suggested BA program which in its present form tries to kill a too large number of labour-market birds with only a limited number of stones. However, in their comment on the Draft, UKZ prefers not to consider this, instead preferring a very broad tripartite catch-all organization of the course scheme. This will bring us to one of the very main points on which this assessment is finally based:

Particular problem area – staff:

The original overview of the BA program given by the SER pp24 et seq. was affected by a massive deficit in personnel: of 30 courses overall, nine were not accounted for in terms of teaching personnel. After having their attention drawn to this fact during the site visit, the program organizers produced, on request of the experts, an updated list of envisaged teaching staff which filled in a number of the blank spaces. To what extent this list now represents the true contractual state of things would have to be ascertained by KAA; during the site visit as well as e.g. annexes to their comment on the Draft no pre-contracts with future staff members were provided to the experts. A few puzzling observations and questions therefore remain:

a) proportion part-time/full-time staff: there are 10 part-time, three full-time, and three members of staff on which there was no further info altogether (amongst these, unfortunately, the person who is supposed to teach all EU courses). One of the three full-time teachers is listed as Ambassador of Kosovo in Austria, another one seems to hold

a full-time position in the Dept. of Economics (and teaches the two mandatory Economics courses in the Politics Dept.), and another one a full-time position teaching law at the UofPristina (teaching the two courses on Public International Law at Gjilan).

b) inordinate teaching load for part-timers: 4/5th of ALL courses in the Politics Dept. are taught by part-timers (in a number of cases up to three per part-time colleague!!). And: the colleague responsible for developing the program is a part-timer as well.

c) unequal opportunity employment: only a very, very limited number of the prospective teaching staff are female.

All this is not a very practical staffing situation, and the experts would have to recommend to KAA to investigate whether this is up to their contractual and staffing requirements or not.

Remarks on individual course modules:

In terms of content description, course objectives, and learning outcomes individual module descriptions were generally clear, comprehensible, and in order; in some cases, however, the set literature could do with some refreshing and updating. This applies in particular to

- Introduction to IR (add Baylis/Smith to set literature)
- Introduction to Comparative Politics
- Introduction to Economics
- Theories of Comparative Politics
- Transition and Democratization in the Balkans
- International Public Law
- EU Integration (Helen Wallace et al., Neill Nugent ??)
- Public Administration

Information on more recent pertinent publications was given in the Draft Report, section on the Library, cf. *ibid.* I.10.

Recommendation to KAA:

The University has made some progress since the 2014 Assessment Report. However, in Political Science there is still quite a way to go until it reaches the aim of a modern, internationally comparative, labour-market oriented B.A. program which can survive national and international competition. KAA should therefore invite the University to resubmit a worked-over application for the accreditation of such a program in a years' time taking into account the recommendations made in this report.

II.2 MSc in Economy – Finance

The proposed MSc program in Economy – Finance would be more or less a direct continuation from the established BA program *BA in banking, finance and accounting* and an indirect continuation from the established 1) *BA in marketing* and 2) *BA in management and informatics*. These programs were just opened this academic year under the University “Kadri Zeka” (UKZ). The programs were previously taught at the same premises as well, but before establishment of UKZ they were taught within the branches of the University of Pristina in Gjilan. Currently there are around 800 students (according to KAA the exact number is

782 students) studying at these three programs (*in banking, finance and accounting* 325 students, *in marketing* 155 students, *in management and informatics* 302 students).

The MSc curriculum tries to cover both economy and finance topics while offering to the students the possibility to continue their education on MSc level after getting their BA degree in similar fields. Still the focus of the program is not very clear. On one hand the program is focused on economy and finance, on the other hand the argumentation in self-evaluation report/meetings mostly pointed out the needs of businesses in Kosovo looking more towards classical MBA. Looking into the course syllabi most of the courses/reading materials are actually requiring rather well established pre-knowledge in the field (e.g. Advanced Macroeconomics). Currently the program is targeting the students with concrete previous knowledge in Economy, but it might be useful to open the program also for others. The academic personal pointed out that the pool for the potential students comes from a population of 300'000-400'000 (covering municipalities Gjilan, Kamenica, Vitia, Ferizaj, Bujanoc, Presheve and Medvegje).

It is also a bit confusing the whole statement about the program rationale for labor market (2.2.7, p.65), e.g. "Upon completion of this program, students will gain the skills necessary to become transformational leader in an Economy." At the same time there is stated (2.1) that the program is targeted to the students who are interested in further scientific research". Thus, it is not clear if the program tries to be closer to executive/applied program or to research based scientific one. Also the feedback from the professors during the interviews did not give a clear message which way they would like to see the program to be developed - what courses could be considered as the core courses of the curriculum, how could be the focus of the curriculum described or what could be the USP (unique selling proposition) of the program that no other similar programs around would have (unfortunately the person who was previously responsible for developing this curriculum could not be present at the meeting).

The program consists of 120 ECTS credits and the thesis itself gives 30 ECTS. Program's quality, range and aims are appropriate for such an academic degree (MSc). Even if the program is not based on an overarching didactic concept (there was not any concrete concept that the program would follow taking into account that most lectures are held to the large audience), the teachers are still aware of different possible approaches to teaching. According to the interviews with the academic staff the teachers are quite often using real life examples and case studies.

According to the international standards, the structure of the program seems to be appropriate. During the meeting it was not clear enough how much UKZ has paid attention to the question about how to decrease the overlap of academic content between the programs on BA and MSc. SER states (p. 65) that "students will build their existing management skills and knowledge in Economy to gain experience and to apply this in different environment, allowing to experience an immediate impact". First, the program does not include any internship and that is why it might be hard to experience "immediate impact". The expert is suggesting considering this aspect once more (including internship into curriculum). Second and even a more important aspect is the content of the curriculum/coverage of the courses – what knowledge, skills are the courses teaching. Currently there are no *soft* courses within the curriculum, e.g. courses

on leadership, innovation, human resource management, social responsibility, business ethics, marketing, etc. This is inadequate and it does not sufficiently take into account what skills and knowledge people would need in labor market while working for economy and finance. Half of the courses are having the same name as in BA studies but just including “no. 2” in the title, e.g. Public Finance 2, Management Accounting 2, Corporate Finance 2 etc.

The proportion of independent study compared to classroom units is not yet clear. The structure of the program might not give sufficient opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis. Still, it is too early to judge since the description of each course is rather general stating just the main “correct keywords” without giving an overview of what is really planned to happen during the course.

Looking at the current curriculum, the courses are extremely standardized. Almost all courses have the same evaluation methods (not just methods, but also the same percentage): one research paper (50%) and one exam (50%). It might leave an impression that the packaging of the curriculum is worked out without considering enough the real content/specifics of the courses/curriculum (different didactics, workload, evaluation criteria etc.). All mandatory courses would give 8 ECTS and all elective courses would give 6 ECTS. Looking at the current syllabi, course descriptions and the reading materials there is no clear link between the amount of reading materials/ home assignments/work hours and the credits given (even if in the documents it is clearly stated how much work each credit would cover, the course syllabi do not reflect it). Thus it is not clear why some courses will give more credits than others. This aspect should be brought out in a curriculum design in a much more clear way. The workload required for the academic program could be considered as manageable for students. Currently no course was planned to be taught in English. The expert is suggesting paying more attention to increasing the knowledge and usage of English in teaching process.

Recommendations:

The evaluation criteria of the courses, hours in the classroom, correlation between ECTS and work load should be presented in a more clear way. It is not advised to have such an extremely strongly standardized approach for all of the courses. Currently there are listed just textbooks as reading materials. It is suggested to consider also scientific articles from journals as required reading materials since the new and relevant/ up to date knowledge is often delivered more throughout the articles than in the books. It is also advised that some of the courses/some parts of the courses are delivered in English. The school should look for possibilities for local/international internships and local/ international applied research projects where students could take part and gain valuable practical experience. It is also suggested that guest lecturers from foreign countries will be invited to participate in the program.

ii. Staff

Currently there is no adequate proportion of permanent and external staff at UKZ planned for teaching this curriculum. On the paper all the courses are planned to be led/ supervised by PhDs or professors. Their qualifications are appropriate to the positions they hold within the institution according to the criteria. The teaching staff the expert managed to meet during the site visit was very competent and extremely motivated to start to implement the curriculum.

Based on the data given in SER there are 15 persons responsible for 15 courses. Out of these 15 professors only 3 are full time professors and all others are planned to have part time positions at UKZ. Based on the additional information received from KAA 8 listed professors work full time at University of Prishtina, 4 of them are additionally working part time at Iliria College and 2 for AAB College. Prof. Lufti Zharku who is listed as full time professor in SER is already working as Minister in Kosovo Government while having also two part time positions both at Riinvest College and University of Prishtina. No preliminary contracts have been made to most of the listed staff members.

Current human resource situation concerning the planned MSc curriculum does not give enough evidence of being implemented with enough academicians concentrating to build up a new fully competitive MSc curriculum.

Recommendations:

It would be advised to have bigger group of people working full time for UKZ and covering the core subjects of the new curriculum. It is also suggested to list other planned academic staff/lecturers who would give lecturers within the courses (not just the responsible person). It is strongly advised to support these young leaders the expert managed to meet during the site visit for additional development of the program.

iii. Research and International Cooperation

SER states (p.61) that “all courses are designed so as to reflect their importance in the context of relevant research program”. According to additional materials/information received from UKZ “they are working towards this direction, but not enough”. Thus, currently there is no research program yet. The teaching staff has not focused yet on research and there is not enough evidence of the academic research produced by the staff. Especially on MA level this requirement should get much more attention.

Recommendations:

The school's own research profile and research capabilities are important for sustainable institutional education and development especially at Master level. The participation and access on international research projects does not exist at the moment and it would be very much encouraged to initiate such applications/ common research projects more actively. Time should be allocated for preparing such applications and building international

Conclusion:

The program should have much more consideration and the staff would need more time for focusing on the program and on right audience/target group. Many aspects need to get much more attention and consideration before opening up the program. Further developments are needed to build upon research and international competencies. Based on this it is therefore recommended not to accredit the program this year.

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