



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim
Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

***UNIVERSUM COLLEGE
MA DIPLOMACY***

ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

June, 11, 2019, Prishtina



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: June 11, 2019

Expert Team (ET) members:

- **Prof. Dr. Milan Pol**
- **Prof. Dr. Vlatko Cvrtila**



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Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

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

Sources of information for the Report:

- Self-Evaluation Report (SER) submitted by Universum College
- Information obtained during the site visit;
- Meetings conducted with the management of the institution and program, quality assurance representatives and administrative, teaching staff, students, graduates, employers of graduates and external stakeholders;
- Supplementary documents requested by the ET

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- KAA Accreditation Manual

1.2. Site visit schedule

11 June

08.15	Meeting at the KAA
09.00 – 10.30	Meeting with the management of the institution
10.30 – 11.30	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative services
11.30 – 13.00	Meeting with the heads of study programs

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13.00 – 13.50	Lunch break
13.50 – 14.20	Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure
14.20 – 15.00	Meeting with teaching staff
15.00 – 15.50	Meeting with students
15.50 – 16.30	Meeting with graduates
16.30 – 17.10	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders
17.10 – 17.25	Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA
17.25 – 17.40	Closing meeting with the management of the institution

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

Universum College was established in March 2005, in Prishtina and Ferizaj. Currently, Universum College offers four Bachelor level and one Master level program: BA in Business and Management, BA in Political Science, Bsc. in Computer Science, BA in English and MA in Management. The mission of Universum College is, according SER, to support students to become good citizens, successful & broad-minded leaders and thrive in the Revolution 4.0, the digital and globalized era. The Universum College mission is building upon the following strategic pillars:

- Student and Learning at the Center
- Quality Improvement
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Digital Transformation
- Internationalization.

Eduniversal ranked Universum College in Top 1000 of the best Business Schools in the world, an award seldom given to institutions younger than ten-years old. Eduniversal ranked Universum College MA in Management program in top 17 programs best management programs in southeast Europe.

According to SER, proposed MA program has aim to provide advanced university training in the broad academic field of international relations and diplomacy and to graduate highly specialized students and equip them with theoretical and practical training that will professionally prepare them for a multitude of career options, locally, regionally, and internationally.



2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The program aims to develop analytical capacities as well as ability to examine and critically evaluate the role of foreign policy, diplomacy and decision-making in relation to complex issues in the international arena. The program is intended to expose the role of diplomacy as a main vehicle and mechanism for systematically addressing both bilateral and multilateral issues. It includes independent learning and research to a level that demands an integrated and critical approach to diplomacy and other related disciplines.

In line with this, the program aims at achieving the following specific objectives:

- Develop skills of independent learning and enquiry;
- Critically apply academic knowledge across a range of different areas of diplomacy and foreign policy;
- Develop analytical and theoretical abilities to reflect autonomous and original thought;
- Form judgments in dealing with systematic and complex diplomatic issues in a creative manner;
- Engage constructively with creative and professional diplomacy practice to convey reasoning, results and conclusions;
- Advance knowledge and understanding in diplomacy and other related disciplines.

The leadership at UC consists of The Board of Trustees, (2) an Academic Council, (3) an Executive Board, (4) and other bodies as determined by the Statute. Academic Council delivers academic policies, implements them and controls the performance of academic components within the institution. The board of trustees is responsible for the overall strategy of Universum College and works closely with other responsible bodies to make sure the strategy of Universum College is implemented. Academic Council delivers academic policies, implements them, controls the performance and adopts study programs, issues guidelines, curricula and quality assurance. Additionally, it also authorizes the award of degrees, prescribes students' academic affairs, promotes academic staff and monitors the overall academic performance. The Council that is chaired by the Rector has nine members all serving a four-year term. It is composed of six members that come from study programs, one is nominated by the Student Union and the rest of two are appointed by the Board of Trustees. As a body, it authorizes the Rector to proceed the Council, represent it both



internally and externally, and report and monitor the implementation of academic normative acts.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

2.2. Quality management

Quality management is an integral part of Universum College strategy toward its goal of achieving long-term academic objectives. The quality management mechanism developed involve all stakeholders which ensures that the college is performing academically based on the highest standards. Quality management is perceived as a factor of a primary importance toward increasing the overall academic success. Different mechanisms and procedures are developed by the institution in order to uphold the mission and objectives of the institution and they also describe the mechanisms and practices that demonstrate Universum College follows the quality management standards as presented by the KAA Accreditation Manual. According to the KAA's Accreditation Manual, the quality assurance needs to have a process which deals with all aspects of program and delivery, and that Universum College provides an overview of the quality issues by measuring different components of the program. Universum College employs different aspects which ensure the quality of the program like:

- Academic Program Internal Report,
- External Review of Program by Academic Program Board,
- Site Visit by Academic Program Board,
- Programmatic meetings between Academic Program staff, Academic Program Board, and Universum Administration,
- Program Response to Review and Action Plan.
- Student surveys administered at the end of the semester,
- Students evaluation through dialogue/ focus groups
- Statistics from the annual periodic review
- Staff Evaluations/Assessments,
- Enforce recommendations from KAA accreditation reports.



Despite the fact that quality management system is established and most standards are implemented, there is not fully implemented system of evaluation of learning outcomes.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Make clear procedure for quality evaluation of program and other different components of program with focus to learning outcomes for students*

2.3. Academic staff

The composition of the staff engaged in delivering of the program is in the full accordance with the Administrative Direction for Accreditation and Required Standards for Academic Staff. The total number of academic staffs is 16, whereas 13 members are full-time staff members at Universum College. Subsequently, 81% of the staff accounts to full-time members. Also, the class coverage by full time staff accounts to more than 80%. Institution has clear recruitment procedures of its staff and the selection criteria, as well as clear criteria on staff promotion. All the teaching staff regardless of their employment status are obliged to allocate their work hours for exams, consultations with students and their colleagues, administrative work such as grading, reviews, publishing information about classes, attendance and research work. These hours are allocated based on regulations and UC policies depending on the needs and work required from various courses. Universum College developed international partnerships with other respective international educational institutes to create new opportunities for academic staff as well as students. International partnerships enable staff to share expertise in enriching teaching and learning, and staff development planning. Universum College has projects under the ERASMUS + K2 frame with aim at applying innovative methodologies in teaching and learning, that will enable academic staff to become familiar with the latest platforms in the field of education as well as enhance the quality of teaching materials, methodology and strategies as required by KAA standards. Universum College has established evaluation procedures within one academic year. Evaluation of academic staff is completed in three main ways.

1. Mid-semester and semester evaluation by students;
2. Evaluation by professional parties
3. Regular evaluation by the Head of Department

During visit of the institution, we have seen that most of standards regarding academic staff are fulfilled. There is lack of public availability of the results of the academic staff evaluation, but we have been informed that this information are available on internal e-platform.



Compliance level: Fully compliant

2.4. Educational process content

According to SER, the study programme consists of 120 ECTS and it is carried out through full-time studies lasting four semesters, with each semester counting for 30 credits. The MA thesis is completed during the last semester. The study program is designed to include the theoretical approach to diplomacy and foreign policy as universal concepts. However, the study program is offering concrete modules in exploring key challenges of Kosovo's foreign affairs and its diplomatic network since independence. Programme content and its composition is comparable to similar study programmes in the region and beyond. According to SER the intended learning outcomes for this programs, which are in line with the mission of the institution and the overall competencies required within the EHEA are:

1. Display a comprehensive understanding of diplomacy and international relations related knowledge and be critically aware of current issues relevant to diplomacy and other related disciplines.
2. Select and justify approaches to problem solving in diplomacy and international relations by involving recognition, articulation and critical evaluation of a range of relevant options.
3. Critically analyse and synthesize information and ideas in ways that demonstrate critical awareness resulting in the creation of knowledge.
4. Use theoretical constructs to critically analyse, evaluate and interpret evidence and apply them to complex problems.
5. Undertake critical analysis and evaluation to a range of diplomacy related problems.
6. Critically analyze a broad range of diplomacy and international relations problems by utilizing appropriate techniques.
7. Conduct an in-depth research project, demonstrating use of independent research skills, from a range of diplomacy sources and research methods.
8. Critically evaluate different theoretical aspects of diplomacy and their impact on everyday diplomatic practice.

This program is delivered in Albanian language.

The program lacks a subject that would deal with the analysis of foreign policy as a strategic concept of the state in an international environment carried out by the diplomatic service. By comparing the learning outcomes of the program and program content, the question arises as to which subjects they will acquire competences for a critical analysis of foreign policies. In



learning outcomes it is evident that the competencies for critical analysis will be developed, but diplomacy serves the state in the implementation of foreign policy and should not be intended to analyse "a broad range of diplomacy" but the foreign policies of the states. In electoral subjects, there is subject on foreign policy of major powers, so the question is whether they will be analysed it if there is no subject that would develop student's competencies to analyse foreign policy. Also, there is not presented connections between program learning outcomes and learning outcomes at the subject level which would be important tool for control of implementation of program learning outcomes. The study program includes practical work/internship which is not obliged for students. If students decided to opt for an internship, the institution will provide assistance. Students are required to spend two month of practical work (not more than 250 hours) and 50 hours for writing the report. There is no explanation of content of working report and how it is connected with program learning outcomes or student final competencies.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Include subject on foreign policy analyses or content on this issue in some other subject.*
2. *Make connection of program learning outcomes and subjects learning outcomes*
3. *Develop model for student internship which will connect programme learning outcomes and final student competencies and procedure for evaluation of student working report based on experience from BA level of studies.*
4. *Sign co-operation agreements with institutions and organizations which will offer internship for students.*

2.5. Students

The admission procedure is clear and transparent and applies to all students. According to SER Universum College employs a clear and formally adopted procedure of students' requirement for this study program. Minimum criteria for a student to be admitted to this master program, is that all students are expected to have successfully completed a bachelor's at an accredited national or international institution. Students must pass the Universum English language placement examination at the "pre- intermediate" level or higher. Universum College enables transfer of interested students from other accredited institutions. A transfer of students is enabled only if a previous academic program is relevant, includes



courses of similar nature and the relevant courses are acknowledged by the respective academic staff in consultancy hours dedicated to current, incoming and transfer students. Institution is flexible for part-time students and organise lecture afternoon to fulfil their needs. Students' rights are protected and their right to appeal for any academic or administrative process is encouraged.

After meeting with students, we have impression that they are very satisfied with the institution and delivering of study program.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

2.6. Research

Universum College has established the Institute for Social- Economic and Political Studies (ISEPS). The Institute is, according SER, devoted to research work and acts as a research Centre of Universum College. ISEPS actively conducts research and establishes partnerships for research projects and activities. ISEPS also provides advocacy, consultancy as well as policy recommendations for state and private institutions for various matters.

College Universum is first and foremost a teaching institution and is oriented toward study programs that offer well-developed degrees, based on the market demand. The institution is not obliged to have fundamental scientific research, but they have orientation toward applied research and business support to companies and organisations. They support student research and they publish student journal with student articles which are result of research activities. There is missing clear and defined scientific/applied research plan for study program and financial, logistic and human resources development plan for future research activities.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Develop clear criteria for supporting teachers in publishing articles and books.*
- 2. Make a research plan for the study program and determine the expectations for each teacher for a term of minimum three years*
- 3. Motivate academic staff to increase research production by considering research results as promotion criterion*



- 4. Create more conferences, seminars or summer schools to motivate teachers and students for more research and publish their work*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

Universum College continuously invests in increasing its capacities and facilities. This includes the library, as well as suitable classrooms for the group and individual work. Each classroom is equipped needed equipments. Institution has adequate financial and human resources, space, lecture rooms, software and library equipped with reading rooms, journals and books and with access to e-libraries. The number of seats in lecture and reading room are adequate regarding number of students. There is missing financial plan at the level of study program which will demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next three years.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Make financial plan at the level of study program*

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The site visit was efficient and during visit we have opportunity to give some answers that has not been included in SER. The institution has implemented previous recommendations from previous re-accreditations and has demonstrated efforts to improve the study program. One of the major challenges the institution has is to provide the appropriate teaching staff, which can make it difficult to perform teaching at a high level of educational standards. To address this challenge, a human resources development strategy has been prepared, which we consider to be a good tool for tackling the issue of appropriate teaching staff in the future.

Main additional recommendations:

- 1. After first year of delivering new program, we recommend evaluation of program using KAA standards, preparing SWOT analysis and discuss progress inside of institution in order to prepare and implement needed improvements*



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In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program MA in Diplomacy offered by Universum College is ***Substantially compliant*** with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommend accrediting the study program for a duration of *3 years* with a number of maximum 50 students to be enrolled in the programme.

Expert Team

Chair

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)