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## ***FAMA COLLEGE***

### **INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION**

### **REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*June 8, 2020*



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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Context**

Institutional Reaccreditation Procedure at FAMA College

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2020

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#### Coordinators of KAA

- Naim Gashi, Executive 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**

- SER
- On-line interviews

### **Criteria used for insitutional evaluation**

- Standards and guidelines of KAA

### **Sources of information**

- Information obtained during the on-line visit;
- Meetings conducted with the management of the institution, teaching and administrative staff, students, graduates, external stakeholders and employers of graduates;
- Additional documents requested by the ET



### 1.2. Site-visit schedule (on-line)

09.00 – 10.20	Meeting with the management of the institution ( <i>no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion</i> )
10.30 – 11.10	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative services
11.10 – 12.00	Lunch break ( <i>to be provided at the site visit place</i> )
12.10 – 13.00	Meeting with the heads of study programs
13.00 – 14.00	Meeting with teaching staff
14.00 – 14.40	Meeting with students
14.40 – 14.55	Short break
14.55 – 15.40	Meeting with graduates
15.40 – 16.20	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders
16.20 – 16.30	Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA
16.30 – 16.40	Closing meeting with the management of the institution

### 1.3. A brief overview of the institution

FAMA College is a private HE institution in Kosovo and it was established in 2003., by the Decision No. 03/0503 of the FAMA College Board and by the Decision No. 213767 of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The institution offers programmes on bachelor and master level: FAMA College currently offers the following study programs: BA - Economics with Management and Banking Specialization, Finance and Accounting; LLB - Law with Specialization in Criminal Law - Criminalistics and Civil - Commercial Law; BA - Psychology; BSc-Nursing; BSc - Midwifery; BSc - Senior Laboratory Dental technician; BSc - Medical Technologist; Doctor of Dentistry - Dentistry, integrated program (5 years); as well as at Master level in MA - Management.

Presently it has more than 1300 students. The college operates and delivers programmes on four locations in Kosovo: Prishtina, where is the central campus, Prizren, Gjilan and Mitrovica.



## 2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

*The institutional evaluation consists of 11 sub headings through which the administration, organisation and management of the institution, as well as teaching and research are assessed.*

*ET performed the evaluation following the fulfillment of each indicator from the KAA standards at the time of the evaluation, according to the KAA Quality Manual.*

### 2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives

The institution has defined its mission stating that the mission is to contribute to the development of the Kosovo society and knowledge, through research, quality education, international cooperation and community service and this way including three main pillars teaching, research and community service. According to the SER the process of developing mission resulted from the consultancy of both internal and external stakeholders, though through interviews there was no strong confirmation by all the participants that they were aware of the process. Nevertheless all the members of the academic community of the institution recognized the mission and its role. The institution also reported on following the recommendations from the previous evaluation process and tried to assure high level of the involvement of all the stakeholders.

However, the way mission is defined and later elaborated it does not provide clear guideline for strategic planning, as well as it is not clearly reflected neither on structural or operational level. Provided objectives do not enable a clear division between the medium and long term objectives and they do not completely follow the mission. While the mission itself is defined and covers three pillars, when it is offered its elaboration it is actually in a way surprising that in the first place comes scientific progress through outstanding research process, which is in general not align with the type of HE institution, where for college, education should be on the first place and it is hard to expect to have an outstanding research considering the overall capacity of the institution as well as research performance, which is more elaborated in the section 2.7.

Similarly, the role of education is not clearly formulated by saying that .. *transformational study experience, established on student care programs and processes...*(SER, page 7), and accordingly it is hard to further elaborate this part of the mission in the strategic planning.

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant



### **ET recommendations:**

1. *It would be beneficial for the institutional planning to reconsider the mission and its elaboration better fitted to the institutional reality and overall capacity*
2. *Objectives should be defined in a way to allow better monitoring process*
3. *Consider to articulate differently education and its relevance*

### **2.2. Strategic planning, governance and administration**

Fama College has developed a strategy for 5 years period, from 2018 to 2023, and the time framework should have enabled the institution for clear planning and definition of different targets as well as possibility to measure outcomes. Unfortunately, this did not happen. Objectives are too general, they are, in a way, all stretched through longer periods and in the analysis of already performed monitoring (document *Preliminary assessment for general meeting of January 2020*) apparently most of the activities are either in a process or not yet started, with almost no articulated outcomes so far, although this is already a third year of the Strategy. Accordingly, document is focused on evaluation, not monitoring, and for the activity, for example stretched from 2018 to 2023, reports that *evaluation not done*. The other example, using the same document, for another activity, scheduled from 2020 to 2023, report says *not running yet, because of the scheduled running period*.

Such an approach makes impossible to perform any adjustments if needed, what would be actually one of the first roles of the monitoring process. A good structural step was establishment of the Office for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategic Plan. Now, it would be important for the Office to develop and implement regular monitoring procedures.

Although the strategic plan has been drafted in consultation with the academic community as well as with the participation of external stakeholders, the overall strategic plan does not fully reflect the reality. In other words, the strategic plan did not take into account the real context,



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both internal and external environment and this fact could be a hindering factor in institutional development. On the first place, teaching and educational role somehow did not come up front in the strategic planning and, in a way, it has been masked with a wording. At the same time, research being quite weak component in the overall system, comes first and emphasised in the strategic planning. While both research and internationalisation are stressed out, teaching and education are wrapped up in non-transparent statements such as *Creating a transformational study experience: continuous development of the educational offer, coordination and management, student development, improving student life* (SER, page 10). In teaching experience and educational process, what is meant by coordination and management? The Statute mentions Vocational Education Centre, however the same Centre is not mentioned in the Strategy or Action plan and it is not clear what is its role.

Information provided in the SER documents and annexes, on one side, and information collected during the interviews do not overlap completely. The College established and has number of administrative units, offices, however, it is not transparent who are the employees, are they full time or part time, is academic staff at the same time fully employed in the office as well etc. During the interview it was noticed that Rector provided very little content information. There is no profound description of duties of different staff and positions as well as no clear election criteria. For example, for the post of College Secretary it is required to have university degree and administrative work experience (Statute, Art. 67), without specifying what kind of degree, what kind of experience, how long etc. Surprisingly, it is stated that calls for new academic staff are announced usually each semester, and it could be even more often, when needed (Art. 74), which raises the question what is the reason for that. It is certainly unusual, and the first rationale for that is the unstable full time staff employment, as well as part time staff. According to the SER, as well as the Statute student representatives should be present in all decisional, executive and consultative bodies, however it is not precisely stated what are their rights and do they have a right to vote for any issue on the agenda, or only for those issues that are directly related to students. This has been the obtained information during the interviews.

During the interviews the ET could not establish consistent and reliable information on staffing, in particular related to staff in the offices. The information were contradictory and different, as well as it was established during the interviews that the provided lists of full and part time academic staff were not completely accurate, while the interviewed representatives were providing different information being asked the same questions.

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**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Revisit the Strategy and the Action plan in order to develop adequate indicators which will enable monitoring of the strategy implementation*
2. *Implement regular monitoring of the Strategy implementation and perform adjustments if needed*
3. *Make the Office for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategic Plan fully operational*
4. *Consider more realistic account of the existing environment, in particular the internal one in order to enable actual institutional development*
5. *Revisit criteria for election of both academic and administrative staff with clearly defined roles and responsibilities*
6. *Enhance the role of students and clarify their role in relevant documents as well fully implementing these regulations*

### **2.3. Financial planning and management**

FAMA College is a private provider of higher education established in 2003 (SER, page 3) which has provided an Income Statement at institutional level for 7 years (3 with real data and 4 with estimated ones): 2017-2023. In all years, the statement shows a net profit for the year. During the online site visit, the meeting with the management of the institution proved that there is at least inconsistency in terms: Finance and accounting office in some areas (SER, page 15: “FAMA College has the Office for Finance and Accounting, which consists of a qualified and professional staff in financial and accounting matters.”), Finance office in other areas. In the same set of additional documents, the Organigram has only the Finance office. In addition, the new office created to monitor the strategic plan does not appear in the organigram. It was mentioned during the meeting that the concept of an Office is not a physical space, but an organ working within the college. In addition, the newly created office is part of the budget with an amount that is increasing a lot during 2020-2023. Since this is not a physical space (not in the Organigram), these expenses have no clear destination, as salaries and equipment are other categories. At the same time, the Quality Office expenses show a strange dynamic, but after 2020 a huge increasing is planned. When asked questions why this is so, the





management replied that the increasing is explained by the recommendations the college received from previous evaluations, without concrete explanations referring to the dynamics over time. In addition, ET observes that the accreditation fee is another category separate in the budget/income statement. Anyway, the management of the institution proved that they were not really aware of their expenses and costs.

In the Strategic plan, it is mentioned that *“The specific actions envisioned in the strategic plan are planned in the institution's annual budget and contain integrated budget items. Such actions constitute an integral part of budget items research costs, training costs, academic staff development costs, student scholarships, conference expenses, workshops and workshops, library expenses, equipment and inventory expenses, costs for laboratory material and other expenses. Budget planning is regularly reviewed and updated annually, depending on the specific requirements and dynamics of institutional development.”* (page 7). In the Statement of income and expenses, there are several elements for the expenses, while for the revenues, no description. If this is so general, ET can assume that most of the revenue is based on tuition fees. In such a case, the institution cannot demonstrate that it has sufficient financial resources especially on medium term to adequately reach its mission as well as objectives set out in the strategic plan. In addition, there are no measurable objectives that generate from the so-declared statement of mission. Therefore, no connection between objectives and resources. Most of the information provided in the Excel tabel as Income and Expenses Statement refer to issues that are definitely doubled or several times inserted. Some examples: service cost is a category, while many other divide this into other cost categories: sanitation, cleaning, Internet etc; utility is one element, but also: fuel, electricity are separate; marketing costs are one category, but at the same time other costs are also integrated: representation, cost press etc. Examples can go on, on the same idea. At the same time, there is no Erasmus funds planned after 2020, or research funds, or alternative sources apart from tuitions, as if the institution has no intension to attract income, but just to allocate funds. Under such circumstances and based on the provided documents, ET considers that the college does not have a realistic budget. In addition, financial policies that might address to its financial sustainability are completely missing. It also must be mentioned that according to SER page 107, FAMA College provides funds from many sources, detailed in Article 145 of the Statute, but these are not reflected in neither in the budget nor in financial policies referring to financial stability. There is no evidence that the institution has set out effective measures for attracting funds from all sources considered in the Statute. In addition, in SER, there are considered as weaknesses, not enough financial resources for students’ extracurricular activities and institutional community engagement. (SER, page 15).

In terms of budgeting and accounting, institutional functions are carried out, according to the organigram by the Finance office, although the other new created one is mentioned in the Strategic plan as having responsibilities. In addition, there is another concept: Office for



Finance and Accounting (SER, page 15). Therefore, based on the organigram, at least Finance Office is responsible for financial activity and reports to Secretary general. But ET does not consider that college has provided an accurate monitoring of expenditure and commitments against budgets. The Office that is so many times mentioned (Office for monitoring and evaluation the strategic plan) is not really working with Financial office, so monitoring is mainly related to objectives and directions, but not to financial resources: “ With the Strategic Plan 2018-2023, a new office was established, which is part of the FAMA College Organogram, the Office for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategic Plan, which has consultative functions and reports to the Senate of the FAMA College, Rector, while coordinating its activity with the Office of Quality Assurance and the Office for Institutional and International Cooperation. Therefore, it is difficult to measure the level of objectives’ fulfillment in the absence of a direct correlation to financial issues”. (SER, page 11).

The college does not clearly attribute costs to particular activities in a transparent and simple manner. The statement includes mostly expenses and some of the items are repetitive in the Table, as if they would like to spend even more for the same item. Therefore, considering the abovementioned arguments, ET is reserved in accepting the accounting system compliant with accounting standards and at this stage it is not associated to particular activities.

**Compliance level:** Non compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Elaborate the budget in a simple and transparent way and correlate the budget allocation to concrete measurable strategic objectives;*
2. *Define clear activities based on the measurable objectives that require financial resources;*
3. *Elaborate the budget on a unitary base, avoiding repetitions or under or over estimations;*
4. *Create financial policy to address to financial sustainability;*
5. *Diversify the income sources;*
6. *Create a local/institutional decentralized evidence of expenditures and incomes on cost units (faculties/study programs);*
7. *Make a clear procedure for collaboration among institutional offices (especially between Finance office and the Office for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategic Plan).*



## 2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability

The institution is using two websites, as mentioned in SER (page 17): “*The College has recently launched the redesigned of the web site, from [www. Kolegjifama.eu](http://www.kolegjifama.eu) to the new [www domain http://kolegjifama-edu.org/](http://kolegjifama-edu.org/), and the process of placing and transferring of the materials on the new Internet site is ongoing.*” The college has a Code of Ethics adopted in 2018 which is posted on one website (the new one) only in Albanian language: <http://kolegjifama-edu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2.-KODEKSI-I-ETIKES-SE-KOLEGJIT-FAMA-converted.pdf>. According to SER, the code is a document “*which defends the fundamental values on which the university community is inspired, promotes the recognition and respect of individual rights as well as responsibilities and duties vis-à-vis the institution. The university community consists of all those individuals participating in the daily work towards the accomplishment of university institutional objectives, such as teaching staff, technical-administrative staff and students*” (page 15). According to the Code of Ethics, “Any kind of plagiarism of works and ideas is considered a violation of this Code of Ethics. All members of the College community who participate in scientific research work should guarantee the originality of the scientific works, the authorship of which is attributed to them, as well for accuracy and honesty when presenting and quoting (mentioning) information on the source (origin) of the ideas and sayings (citations) that have been used in the paper” (page 6), based on ET translation.

The college has established a structure responsible for the analysis of any violation of the Code of Ethics. According to SER: “*Following the update of the Ethics Code, in October 2018, an Ethics Committee was established consisting of 6 members, 2 from academic staff, 2 technical-administrative staff and 2 student representatives*”. (SER, page 16). The management of the college during the online site visit declared that no violation of the code has been reported, so no measures have ever been taken.

The institution declares in SER that a new regulation has been adopted: “*To implement the update of the Ethics Code, FAMA College Senate in November 2018 adopted the Regulation on the Procedures for the Implementation of the Ethics Code at FAMA College*” (SER, page 16). ET considers this declaration as a simple statement, with no clear effect on the community behaviour, as this regulation does not exist on any of the websites, even if in both sites, special area is dedicated to Regulations: <http://eng.kolegjifama.eu/frmArtikujt.aspx?ID=12#>, and <https://kolegjifama-edu.org/en/rregulloret/>. In addition, the “Guide on how to write a diploma thesis” provided to ET as an additional document after the online site-visit does not refer clearly to any ethical issues, such as plagiarism and students behaviors. Studing the Strategic plan, the

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budget planning, the objectives as incorporated in SER, the interest of the institution to act towards ethical principles and allocate resources on that looks rather absent than at least marginal. Therefore, ET considers that the institution has not enforced yet the Code of ethics in clear process and mechanisms, related to teaching, research, college engagement, or administrative and management processes. As a consequence, there is no evidence that the institution is applying the code of ethics on all activities related to management, administration, teaching and research. The results of its application are not made public.

The college has a lot to work on making available all internal regulations, procedures, self-evaluation reports and decisions of governing bodies; at this stage, very poor information is made publicly available. The explanation that changing the website from an old version to a new one, does not stand as the former should be in place until the final version of the new one is ready. In other words, ET has noticed that the college is publishing very little information and not clear or relevant, accessible and detailed information regarding many issues on teaching and learning, research and many other processes. For example, the fees for studies in the Student Handbook are totally vague (no quantitative information), no information on internships opportunities, on students' possibilities to engage in research or extracurricular activities. ET has noticed, that there is no clear evidence on employment information, as well. Academic staff cannot access information on research opportunities although there are some areas dedicated to research on the website.

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Make public (available online) the results of the code of ethics application, self-evaluation reports and decisions of governing bodies – Senate, Rector, Quality Council and Ethics Council;*
2. *Invest in a performant anti-plagiarism software for staff and students in all languages of the study programs;*
3. *Integrate principles of the Code of Ethics in all regulations to enforce it in all processes and mechanisms;*
4. *Develop the site of the institution with relevant information for all stakeholders – internal and external.*



## 2.5. Quality management

FAMA College has formally adopted Quality Assurance Regulations which *defines the role and responsibility of the quality assurance committee* (SER – page 152). There are not clearly mentioned mechanisms, instruments, data collection etc. and, also, it is difficult to identify what the committee clearly means and how the attributions are divided between the *QA Office* and the *Quality Assurance Committee*. Anyway, according to the FAMA's website, the QA Regulations were approved in 2008 (<http://kolegjifama-edu.org/en/rregulloret/>) and even if the SER mentions as guidelines in the QA processes the European Standards and Guidelines 2015 or KAA Accreditation Manual, it is quite difficult to believe that new requirements didn't impose changes at the level of institutional regulations. How we already stated, a QA Office is established within the institution's central administration, but discussions during the online meetings were quite confusing regarding the QA Committee which seems to be created around of the Office, with students and teaching staff occasional invited. SER (page 18) presents as responsible structures in QA: *The quality assurance system is provided through: i) Organizational Structures of FAMA College, ii) Quality Assurance Office*. The roles and responsibilities of the QA Committee, and the relationship of this to other administrative and planning units are not clearly specified. Also, according to the SER (page 36) *students are represented in the College Senate (through the Chairperson of the Student Parliament), in the Teaching and Scientific Councils of the Faculties and the Ethics Council (through a student representative), in the Quality Assurance Office, and in the Ethics Committees, in cases when these commissions present issues pertaining to students*, and for ET is difficult to understand how students are represented in an administrative unit as long as the explanations received were that they are not employed. According with KAA's standards and international practices in QA field, the QA Office and QA Committee has to be two different structures, with different responsibilities, clearly defined by institutional regulations.

In terms of resources dedicated to QA, the director of QA Office is presented also as full-time teaching staff (SER – page 82). For the last two years, people directly involved in QA processes didn't participate in any training or events with QA topics.

Assessment of teacher performance by students is done by the students through anonymous evaluation questionnaires at the end of each semester and fragmented reports are produced. An overall self-evaluation reports to provide an overview of performance for the institution as a whole is also prepared, but it is very general, without clear objectives and measurable



indicators. Statistical data are processed, stored in hard copy and on a special database at the Quality Assurance Office and are always available to the governing bodies of the college.

SER (page 19) - *College has developed its quality indicators through which periodically (at the end of each semester) conducts the college quality assessment. The indicators are grouped into 5 dimensions (Student Engagement, Curriculum and Pedagogy, Student Learning Assessment, Culture and Teaching Spaces, Professional Cooperation and Communication).* During the discussion with the representatives of teaching staff, none of them knew to nominate one of the five areas in order to identify their duties, as part of the continuous improvement process.

The ET has not found any evidence that the college develops its own quality assurance system in order to maintain the quality of its operations. The internal quality assurance system is not integrated into the day-to-day activities of the college, but rather it seems to be presented in order to meet KAA's standards. From the perspective of the ET, therefore, there is more work to be done by college authorities and staff in achieving a better balance between external and internal quality assurance. The ET believes that the current system does not provide enough space for self-analysis and self-criticism, the opportunity for a department, or whatever entity, to present its unique features and to internalise the process. Overall, there is no evidence of a functional internal quality assurance system with periodic analysis at all levels of the college and annual self-evaluation reports, analysis and action plans to improve the weaknesses. The descriptions in the SER are not supported by coherent and up-to-date internal regulations. For instance, how we already mentioned, according to the SER students are represented in structures as Teaching and Scientific Councils as faculties level, but, during the discussions with the heads of the programmes, it was difficult for them to specify the name of the student member (even if some of them, indicated more than 10 meetings of the Council in this academic year) which might suggest that students' involvement is only on paper.

FAMA College established also an Office for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategic Plan *which has consultative functions and reports to the Senate of the FAMA College, Rector, while coordinating its activity with the Office of Quality Assurance and the Office for Institutional and International Cooperation.* (SER – page 11). At strategic level, it is not clear how all these structures collaborate and share their responsibilities and also, how the monitoring of the Strategic Plan for the period 2018-2023 didn't impose the changes in some internal regulations available from 2005, 2007 or 2008 (QA Regulations, Regulation for passing the exam and grading the exam or Disciplinary procedures).



With internal QA Regulations unchanged from 2008, ET considers that quality assurance arrangements are not themselves regularly evaluated, reported on or improved.

**Compliance level:** Non compliant

***ET recommendations:***

- 1. Ensure that QA responsibilities are clearly divided between QA Office and QA Committee;*
- 2. Update the QA regulations according to the new requirements at institutional, national and international level;*
- 3. Improve the role of the QA system in the processes for planning and development and its use in the daily strategic and operations management;*
- 4. Increase the internal commitment for the constant quality improvement and develop the quality culture across the institution so that it supports the university in the development of its operations;*
- 5. Ensure that quality assurance functions throughout the institution are integrated in a defined cycle of planning, implementation, assessment and review and that the data is used to guide enhancement and as a base for improvement;*
- 6. Increase student participation in quality assurance processes;*
- 7. Provide or facilitate the access of QA staff to relevant training for the positions they occupy;*
- 8. Ensure that internal QA processes in FAMA College are regularly evaluated and improved.*

## **2.6. Learning and teaching**

The main documents relevant for teaching and learning are: The Statute which explains among others the academic structure, the role of the Teaching-Scientific Council and its responsibilities, the role of the Vocational Education Centre Bodies, students and organization of studies, study conditions, study programs, academic success; then the Study Regulation includes information on organization and realization of studies, structure of the study programs, details about the academic year and exams, organization of lectures, evaluation on teaching, enrolment of students. Other documents relevant for teaching and learning are: Regulation for

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passing and grading the exam; syllabus template, Teaching Handbook. Therefore, ET appreciates that FAMA college has drafted policies and regulations applicable to teaching programs. The college is applying these policies and procedures to all programs.

In terms of quality, the existence of procedures does not mean real and effective monitoring of performance neither at program level, nor at institutional level. In terms of quality assurance, there is no clear set of clear and valuable performance indicators based on which the institution might develop an internal system for regular and efficient changes at the curriculum level, at learning outcomes and skills level, at teaching and assessment level etc. In the annexes at SER, two main questionnaires were provided – one for teaching staff evaluation and the other for administrative staff evaluation. At the program level, there is no clear evidence to prove the institutional preoccupation for program performance in terms of concrete indicators; the provided additional document called “Program Evaluation/ Fields & Indicators” does not refer to measurable indicators, as indicators should express the state of level. Therefore, ET considers that the institution does not properly monitors quality indicators able to express the differences among programs.

*“These programs are subject to a continuous periodic review process, as a possibility of opening up for program updates to new developments from all sources used in designing the program. Each program has clear objectives and learning outcomes defined at the program level and relevant courses, which helps orientation and clarification of expectations for students from the program in question. The whole process of teaching and learning is structured in the fulfillment of these objectives and realization of learning outcomes, divided into knowledge, skills and competences.” (SER, page 23).*

In the additional documents provided to ET after the site visit (online) – Curricula on Management (MA) and Curricula on Nursing (BSc) the study programs revealed a description of the learning outcomes, as well as theoretical and practical objectives, calculation of ECTS, description of the practical work, forms of learning methodology and assessment methods, descriptors of courses; in the end, few lines about the Diploma thesis. The assessment methods for disciplines take into consideration the planned learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes of programs are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. Discussion with the students and graduates during the online site visit revealed that many professors pay a lot of

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attention to practical training and incorporate practical skills into teaching and learning. Assessment methods are different and they follow the internal regulation.

Teaching staff is aware of their teaching responsibilities and participate to different trainings, including trainings relevant for their teaching effectiveness, such as “*Modern approach for writing and defining learning outcomes in higher education study programs and courses*” or “*E-skills training*”, in 2019, as mentioned in the additional documents. The learning methods and environments are student-centred and stimulate students’ motivation and their engagement in the learning process.

Students have a questionnaire to fill in and questions are related to teaching quality (professionalism, focus on the topic, manner of presentation etc). Unfortunately, there is no evidence that other categories of stakeholders, such as graduates and employers have ever been part of some clear surveys from which concrete plans for improvement the institution would have got. It is not about simple discussions at different events, it is about clear and precise surveys, with concrete results for improvement, which are missing.

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Involve students and partners in the curriculum design/changes in a formal way;*
2. *Elaborate a methodology on the study program monitoring (when is done, how, what kind of indicators are used, how are they collected, by whom); express the indicators with measurable expressions referring to input, process and outcome issues;*
3. *Structure the learning outcomes in the form of cognitive, technical or professional and affective-value competences and include them in the syllabi;*
4. *Elaborate a graduate and an employer surveys for teaching quality and the effectiveness of programs.*

## 2.7. Research

FAMA College emphasized the role of research in some of the documents and, in particular, in strategic planning, putting research very high on its priority list. However, when it comes to some other documents, especially those dedicated to research, than the situation is different.



The institution, when asked to send research plan, send an example of individual research plan, not the institutional. The same situation is with the attached research plan which is one of the annexes of the SER. It is not institutional research plan that can assure further development, neither it includes clearly specified indicators nor benchmarks for performance targets, and, it covers just a small portion of the fields comprised by the institution. Since there is no well defined research plan, it is also not possible to develop and implement sound and transparent budget allocations, although according to the SER (page 26)... *Following the recommendations from the last accreditation process, which suggested to allocate more resources to fund research within the collage, we have taken concrete steps to increase the supporting resources for research activities...* which might be a first positive step, but not actually efficient as long as the institutions does not develop an overall research plan, and among other things define the priorities in research. The scope of the institutions, and, with, no doubt, it is not possible to support equally all of the possible areas of research, and even more so, if the ambition is as high as stating in documents and its components (e.g. Mission, Strategy, objectives, etc.).

As it is now, the College did not evidence that it has sufficient resources to perform high quality research, in particular the level they aim to in their documents. In addition, since there is no developed research plan, it is also impossible to match elements of the research plan with their resources and to identify clearly heir strengths and weaknesses. By stating *..FAMA College is constantly striving to employ staff with the highest professional caliber and the most innovative researchers by creating networks with the local, national and international community and fostering inter-institutional co-operation and cross-disciplinary research. (SER, page 25)..*one would expect to receive evidence for such an approach, and the best evidence is the research productivity which is apparently much lower than stated in the submitted documents. *Over the past five years, college staff has participated in more than 400 scientific projects by carrying out major projects by publishing manuscripts in indexed journals and international conferences. (SER, page 27),* however within additional documents that provided a list on research projects, although not covering the full range of five years, there are less than five ongoing projects, among which most of them are not research project! At the same time, following the institutional feed back on a draft report, where was written *As you can see annex 20 of SER, there are more than 400 research projects implemented by FAMA academic staff,* the ET checked once again the document, and the mentioned document Annex 20, has in total listed 42 topics/thems of research, divided in 4 areas: economy (13 topics), law (15 topics), political science and public administration (7 topics), psychology (7). Besides that fact that the total number of provided topics is far away from 400, such individual topics cannot be considered as research projects. There are clear international criteria what it can be called a

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project, and in between other criteria has to be evaluated and financed. In other words, it is expected to have listed, along side with the title/theme of the project, a PI, funder, and project life cycle. None of this information has been provided.

A similar situation is with the list of published papers. The provided list within the requested additional documents, although asking only for a period of one year only, is far away from the common standards of citing the publications, it is absolutely non transparent, non professional and included all kinds of activities and research outcomes, definitely not only published full scholarly papers, and definitely not following the statement ....*However, all journals are conditioned not to be domestic or from the neighbouring countries except those indexed on the Web of science or Scopus and also conditioned not to be on the lists of suspicious publishers (SER, page 29).*

The research is not validated reliable, systematically and consistently following different categories of research and research outcomes and this has been observed through submitted documents, but also information collected during the interviews.

What is observed as a constructive step and potentially beneficial for the institution, as well as for the teaching process and students, is the encouragement for teachers to translate their research into their teaching, but also to include students to participate in research. This has been also documented in individual research plans in which students play a significant role.

Although there is a claim of developing a system for protecting intellectual property, there is a still lack of systematic rules on transfer technology, and the whole range of commercialization which is very demanding process and require well developed and skillful, specially trained administrative support furnished with adequate documents and regulations. Similar observations is related for ethical principles and research integrity. The Code of ethics is global, covering different aspects of institutional life, but not enough focused on conducting research. The fact that the institution covers a whole range of areas in medical science and social science, dealing with people, it is of outmost importance to regulate involvement of participants on any kind of research activities.

**Compliance level:** Non compliant

**ET recommendations:**



- 1. Institution needs to develop clear research plan for the whole institution, considering research priorities and actual context and capacity*
- 2. Research plan, as well overall institutional ambitions related to research must fit the existing capacity.*
- 3. Institution needs to develop accurate, evidence based reporting which will facilitate institutional critical thinking and enable institution to be more realistic in future plan for development*
- 4. It is important to consider and elaborate criteria for research performance and to evaluate it regularly*
- 5. Institution might consider development of the system (IT) to collect data on research productivity regularly and following international rules how to report on it*
- 6. Institution must develop clear and measurable indicators for research performance*
- 7. Code of ethics needs to be further developed and assure the full concept of research integrity and enable misconduct of research*
- 8. Commercialisation, processes of transfer technology, and intellectual property rights are very complex and demanding and need to be revisited and defined in much more precised and elaborated way, respecting specificities of different fields (e.g. difference btw medicine and social science)*

## **2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development**

According to SER (page 33):

- *“The need for new staff is identified at the programs level, from where the Dean, within the framework of planning in the scientific teaching council, foresees the demand for new staff. This request goes to the Human Resources Office, whereby the public announcement of the requested position(s) is completed, where the conditions and criteria required in the application call are specified in coordination with the Deanery.*
- *The call is announced in the media and on the website. Recruitment continues with the interviewing phase of candidates who are in the short list. Short listed candidates may*



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*also be required to give a lecture before the evaluation committee, consisting of representatives of the human resources office, deanery and rectorate”.*

The institution has several policies regarding employment process and staff development: Statute, Recruitment and advancing regulation, Regulation for external recruitment. They have all provided as annex to SER, as well as a model of Employment contract. Unfortunately, there is not available to staff (no category – neither academic, nor administrative) a clear manual describing recruitment processes, supervision, performance evaluation, promotion, support processes, and professional development. None of the two websites has information for staff processes; in the staff area on the website, there is only a very short (incomplete) list of names for academic staff, or nothing, for administrative staff (<https://kolegjifama-edu.org/en/administrativ/>).

The recruitment process considers specific areas of expertise, qualification and experiences. Different achievements of staff have been provided in SER as annex (list of publication), while some qualification (such as for Finance office staff) for administrations were provided to ET as additional documents, after the online site-visit. The recruitment processes ensure equitable treatment of all applicants. At present, staff lists provided as annexes to SER consist of 74 full-time staff and 30 part-time staff, which then, they are allocated to programs. New entrants are welcomed within FAMA being offered support to understand easily and rapidly how the institution work; the support is mainly offered by senior staff. Discussion with the teaching staff confirmed also that the teaching load is equitable and different for different fields of study. Teaching staff is aware of the responsibilities mainly in relationship with teaching process and research, as number of publications/year. Therefore, ET considers that criteria and processes for performance evaluation are clearly specified and made known in advance to all staff. Unfortunately, if the criteria are specified, this does not mean that performance is evaluated and based on its monitoring, improvements measures are set out. In fact, the college is not monitoring the improvements in staff activity neither for academic, nor for administrative staff.

The institution does not demonstrate enough interest in quality assurance. There is no evidence that academic staff evaluation is done through self-evaluation, peer and superiors evaluations. More importantly, not even the evaluation made by students is not entirely publicly available; ET appreciates the effort of posting on the website of student evaluation for academic staff (<http://kolegjifama-edu.org/evaluimi-2018-2019/>) and considers it as a work on progress as only 19 members of the staff are considered (out of 74 full-time and 30 part time, according to

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annex 9 of SER). The other categories of evaluations are not yet reflected in the provided documents. In such conditions, stakeholders have no clear feedback that their answers were properly taken into consideration.

FAMA College has elaborated a staff development plan for the 2018-2023 period and provided as annex to SER. It has objectives associated with the Strategic plan, as well as a set of activities for supporting and developing the academic staff. Expenses for staff development are clearly allocated in an increasingly rate for the following years in the estimated budget. Therefore, ET appreciates that the institution has clear plan for staff professional development, and allocates appropriate resources for its implementation. In addition, staff are given appropriate and fair opportunities for personal and career development; for academic staff the Regulation on the conditions and procedure for selecting teachers and associates while for administrative staff, the Statute of the college include non-discriminatory principles.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Make publicly available (on the website) the regulations and procedures regarding staff processes and development;*
2. *Create institutional conditions to motivate teaching staff to work in international teams;*
3. *Create a procedure for staff performance monitoring (academic and administrative);*
4. *Integrate the feedback of students into the academic staff promotion procedure;*
5. *Create a procedure for academic staff self- evaluation, peer and superior evaluation;*
6. *Make public a report on all members of the academic staff evaluation (at least statistical report);*
7. *Consider lecturing skills as criterion for academic staff recruitment.*

## **2.9. Student administration and support services**

According to the student's testimonials and additional documents sent by the College, the information regarding the admission procedure is published on the official website of the institution. The website also includes information on the study programmes and services provided by the institution.



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*The College has recently launched the redesigned of the web site, from [www. Kolegjifama.eu](http://www.Kolegjifama.eu) to the new [www domain http://kolegjifama-edu.org/](http://kolegjifama-edu.org/), and the process of placing and transferring of the materials on the new Internet site is ongoing. (SER – page 17) which made quite difficult to verify some information, ET navigating between the two sites.*

The ET didn't identify a clear orientation program for new enrolled students. All necessary information is provided *at the beginning of the new academic year, the main representatives of the institution (Rector, Deans, Professors, and representatives of the administration) .... inform the students about the rights and responsibilities as well as the services at their disposal.* (SER – page 35). In the online meeting with heads of programs was specifically explained the induction procedure for new students but also mentioning only the meetings with the college top management (president, rector, deans etc.)

There are not mentioned meetings with students' representatives, facilities' visit or an induction programme.

The college offers scholarships by partially reducing the fee for different categories of students: students with very good learning performances, students with limited economic conditions or students who are members of the Kosovo Police and Security Force. Annually, the College offers free of charge studies for at least 3 war-disabled students.

According to the information provided, there are processes in place to collect data referring to the student progression and drop-out rates, students' satisfaction with their programmes, the learning resources, and administration and support services. As ET already mentioned, there are not clearly evidences that data are used for supporting decision making at all college's levels: teaching, research or administrative. The indicators presented by the college are not measurable and difficult to quantify. For instance, as the ET already mentioned at Standard 5, *Regulation for passing the exam and grading the exam* was adopted in 2008 and it is almost impossible that a real analysis of the obtained data did not impose certain changes in this procedure. Also, analysis performed at Standard 5 indicated that the students' involvement in decision making processes is not really recognized by the rest of academic community.

A Student Handbook is available within the institution, covering a large number of information.

*The right of students to appeal, the procedures and remedies available are regulated by the Ethics Code* (SER – page 37). The Student Handbook specifies also which academic appeals may be based, the criteria for decisions, and the remedies available. The students stated that they are aware of these rights and know them.

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Students and graduates confirmed that FAMA College has a soft to identify plagiarism and all bachelor's or dissertation papers are verified by the QA Office. It is quite strange for the ET because one of the weaknesses presented by the SER (page 41) is *Lack of software against plagiarism*. The Code of Ethics is in place to deal with academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating.

The FAMA College has established a Career Development Office that deals with career planning and employment counselling. The students mentioned that the Office supports them finding internships, but not all of them, depending on the average grades they have. The College doesn't provide evidences for any other kind of counselling (personal or psychological counselling).

The college presents as extracurricular activities organized during the last years two trainings, two excursions in Albania and Absolventiada. There are not activities to encourage students' involvement in the community, social responsibility or sustainability and, according to the College's mission, social responsibility is one of the *basic values*.

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

***ET recommendations:***

1. *Ensure a comprehensive orientation program for starting students;*
2. *Ensure that the results obtained by analysing the satisfaction surveys are properly used for improvement;*
3. *Ensure that all regulations are permanently updated according to the students' needs and quality indicators;*
4. *Increase the number of internships proposed by the Career Development Office;*
5. *Provide real counselling for students (career, psychological etc.);*
6. *Encourage students to participate in a wide range of extracurricular activities, to train them not only as good specialists, but also as responsible citizens.*

## **2.10. Learning resources and facilities**

First of all, ET should mention the fact that regarding the learning resources and facilities, the evaluation was made on the basis of the information received from the institution, and those declared by the participants in the meetings during the online site visit.





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During the meetings, the ET found out that the institution provides an adequate, clean, attractive and well-maintained physical environment for its building. The building is not suitably adapted for students with physical disabilities and also, learning resources for special needs (as blindness, deafness etc.) are not available.

In terms of resources, FAMA College provides that it has possibility for acquisitions, cataloguing, equipment, and for services and system development. Complete inventories are maintained of equipment owned or controlled by the institution including equipment assigned to individual staff.

Based on the discussions taking place during the online site visit and the pictures presented by the College, the facilities respond to the needs of education in accordance with the areas where the educational process takes place. In the classrooms or laboratories of the FAMA College, there are modern equipment used in the teaching and learning processes. The Library offers books, journals and other materials in Albanian and English, reading room equipped with computers and helpful staff to support students and teachers. In the College's library is allowed free access to electronic books. (SAGE and EBSCO Host). It is still place for improvement in terms of electronic resources for students and staff.

According to the information provided by teachers, students and graduates during the meetings, library is available for extended hours and a reliable system is used for recording loans and returns.

How the ET already mentioned, the quality assurance processes use to collect data considering the satisfaction of students with the learning resources and facilities No equivalent instrument is in place to collect teachers' or administrative staff satisfaction with learning resources and facilities.

Adequate computer equipment is available and accessible for teaching, staff and students throughout the institution. The Organogram of the College presents an Computer Office which is responsible to support staff and students to use the information and communication technology. Also, the additional documents sent by the College present some trainings programmes provided to ensure effective use of computing equipment and appropriate software for assessments, teaching and administration.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant



***ET recommendations:***

- 1. Ensure appropriate provision for learning resources is made for students and staff with learning disabilities or difficulties;*
- 2. Design, periodically conduct and analyse a survey to evaluate administrative and teaching staff's satisfaction with the learning resources and facilities.*

**2.11. Institutional cooperation**

FAMA College has not drafted and adopted an institutional cooperation and/or internationalization Strategy, but the strategic directions in the field are part of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023.

Strategic Plan in Internationalization presents as main areas for development:

*Expanding the international dimension;*

*Recruitment of international docents, in the capacity of visiting professors;*

*Internationalization of the educational offer;*

*Creating new partnerships;*

*Ranking improvement.*

The achievement of the strategic objectives is concretized through 3 strategic lines of action according with the College's Action Plan which is considered by the ET quite unfunctional in terms of monitoring. For instance, the Action Plan specifies:

***Activity:*** *Identification of priority Universities to cooperate over the next five years, based on teaching standards, curricula, innovative training capacities of academic and administrative staff and the signing of institutional cooperation agreements*

***Actions:*** *drafting a full database of Universities that represent an interest in cooperation; organizing bilateral visits to formalize cooperation drafting of framework agreements of cooperation. the drafting of specific agreements for the creation of joint centers of scientific research (Running schedule 2019-2021)*

It is almost impossible to monitor such an Action Plan without clear indicators and clear deadlines for a certain action (Ex: completion of the database until ....., three bilateral visits per year etc.).

According to the SER (page 42), the College has appointed the Vice-Rector for Foreign Relations, who is responsible for the internationalization of the institution, but the ET didn't identify on the Organogram this position. According with the Organogram, the administrative unit responsible for International Cooperation is the Foreign Relations Office (an

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administrative office supposed to be headed by an administrative staff) which *reports to the president and the rector* SER (page 42), not to this vice-rector. Similar to the situation of the director of QA Office, the director of the Foreign Relations Office is also presented as full-time teaching staff. (SER – page 82).

According to the SER (page 42) FAMA College is engaged in some types of national and international institutional agreements:

- *Agreements for Double Degrees;*
- *Practice Agreements for Students;*
- *Joint Research Projects Agreements;*
- *Student Exchange Agreements.*

SER presents a list of national and international partners, and ET expressed its doubt that all agreements are really functional, especially because we identified among the partners a university which was closed 5 years ago.

Even if the Strategic Plan identifies some mechanism to support international cooperation, the results are not visible and this because, how the ET already mentioned, there are not clear actions with measurable indicators and deadlines. Consequently, there are a very small number of mobilities for students and staff, only four international projects and few participations or organizations of events with international visibility. Engagement in international cooperation and contributions to the community are not included in promotion criteria and staff performance review. Also, the college has not demonstrated specific actions to encourage participations of teaching staff in forums in which significant community issues are discussed and plans for community development are considered.

In terms of relationships established with local industries and employers to assist program delivery (such as placement of students for practice or employment), the ET could confirm during the online site visit that cooperation are in place. The representatives of local employers expressed their engagement in the work of committees or other structural units considering study programs and other institutional activities.

The institution has established an Alumni Association and during the meetings, the graduates confirmed that they received surveys, support and information from the college.

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant



***ET recommendations:***

- 1. Develop and adopt an internationalization/institutional cooperation strategy to really guide the institutional effort into this direction, including measurable indicators;*
- 2. Establish a member from the upper management that is directly mandated and accountable for the initiatives and results in cooperation and internationalisation;*
- 3. Update periodically the list of partners;*
- 4. Ensure that staff engagement in international cooperation and contributions to the community are supported by the institution according with clear mechanisms and, also, it is included in the staff performance review system;*
- 5. Organize events of international visibility and outreach (conferences, summer schools, etc.);*
- 6. Encourage the participation of staff and students in international projects;*
- 7. Enhance the capacity of the staff in English language skills.*

### **3. Overall Evaluation and Judgments of the ET**

According to the KAA Accreditation manual, in order to be granted a positive decision for program re/accreditation, every education provider has to demonstrate at least a **substantial compliance** level in the overall judgment. Therefore, failure in meeting at least an overall substantial compliance level entails delaying, withdrawing, suspending or denying accreditation.

**FAMA College** demonstrated an **overall partial compliance**, with six partial compliance area of evaluation, two substantial and three non compliant. In all the areas of evaluation, including the areas with the substantial compliance there is a need for continuous institutional improvements. The standards that have been evaluated as having partial compliance, and even more non compliant areas, would need careful, well planned institutional engagement and activities in order to overcome the weaknesses, both on a structural and operational level.



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During the on-line site visit, ET invited every group of participants at the end of the dialog to add anything more they would have considered relevant to be taken into account in the report.

According to the Manual requirements, the Expert Team recommends **not to accredit the FAMA College.**

### Expert Team

#### Chair

	<b>Melita Kovacevic</b>	<b>June 8, 2020</b>
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

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#### Member

	<b>Margareta Platis</b>	<b>June 8, 2020</b>
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

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#### Member

	<b>Oana Sarbu</b>	<b>June 8, 2020</b>
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

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