



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

***COLLEGE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES REZONANCA
BSc SENIOR TECHNICIAN OF ANESTHESIA AND
INTENSIVE CARE***

ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

31 of May 2021 final report

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 11 of May 2021 (via zoom)

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Prof. Dr. Helvi Kyngas
- Ms. Delia Gologan (Student Expert)

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- Naim Gashi, Executive Director of KAA
- Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation
- Leona Kovaci, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Ilirjane Ademaj, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation report 2021 with appendices*
- *Meetings and discussions which took place during the site visit (via zoom)*
- ***Requested documents after site-visit:***
- *Syllabus of Senior Technician of Anesthesia and Intensive Care*
- *List of academic staff of that program according to accreditation manual*
- *Short video about Laboratory training rooms for Senior Technician of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care (where it can be seen equipments)*
- *List of Clinical training places and mention if there is preliminary contract of those places*
- *The number and profession of clinical training mentors*
- *A schedule for the first semester*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *Accreditation Manual by KAA*



- EU directive 20005/36/EC, with amendment 2013/55/EU B
- Health legislation in Kosovo
- European Standards and Guidelines in Quality Assurance (only for benchmark)

1.2. Site visit schedule

09.00 – 09.45 Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated (*no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion*) – Joint session

09.50 – 10:30 Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff - Joint session

10:30 – 11:10 Lunch break

11:10 – 12:10 Meeting with the heads of the study programme

12:15 – 12:50 Meeting with teaching staff

12:55 – 13:40 Meeting with employers of graduates

13.40 – 13:50 Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts

13.50 – 14.00 Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program

No	Study programs	Experts	Responsible persons of study programs			
1	Senior Technician of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care/ BSc (Accreditation)	Prof. Dr. Helvi Kyngas Ms. Delia Gologan	Qamile Morina	Xhevdet Çuni	Basri Lenjani	Bedri Braha Valon Zejnullahu

Other information

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

College of Medical Science “Rezonanca” was established 2003, by Dr. sc. Ramadan Idrizaj, in accordance with the Law of Higher Education Kosovo (nr 2003/14). In 2008 it was joined with College “ILIRIA” as its academic units. College of Medical Science “Resonance” was accredited in 2015 and 2018 for three years which was extended for period of one year (Until 2019) by the State Council of Quality. The College is private higher education institution. The program under accreditation is BSc Senior Technician of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care (180 ECTS). The College also offers bachelor studies in: BSc Biochemistry Laboratory (84 students), BSc in Community Pharmacy (111 students), BSc in Medicine (180 students), BSc in Nursing (440



students), BSc Sanitary Medicine BSc in Diagnostic Radiology (46 students), Integrated Dentistry Program (300 ECTS Dr.stom.) (417 students), and two master programs: MSc in Pharmacy (102 students) and MSc in Nursing (73 students)`[SER, p.3 and 4]

It is indicated in the self-evaluation report (hereafter referred to as `SER`) but especially during the online discussions of the `site visit` (we will refer to it as `online discussions` from now on) it was emphasized that there is need for Senior Technician of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care. In Kosovo the same kind of program does not exist (UBT college has an accredited anesthesia program). The need of that was realized especially during the Covid19 pandemic when the need of health care professional with anaesthesia knowledge and skills was high. Comparing the situation in Kosovo with an international situation, in many countries it is educated Technician of Anaesthesia in health care and they have bachelor or lower level education referring to European Qualifications Framework (EQF) levels 2-4 depending on the requirements and needs in countries. As well, the name of that education varies. Without doubt that professional group is needed also in Kosovo Health Care but the program under accreditation is not in line with that education. However, it is not clear to the ET what pathway will the graduates of this program have. As far as it could be understood, the job the graduates will be able to apply to after graduation is also available to other nurses, without BA level studies, so there is a question to be raised regarding the number and reasons of nurses with experience that will choose to undergo this program. According to ET understanding of the Kosovo legislation, Technicians of Anesthesia in Kosovo are nurses (with a BSc degree) who have extra training which lasts 6 months and is organized from the hospital where the nurse is working, so there is no real justification for potential students to opt to enrol in the evaluated program in stead of a classic Nursing program (which might be cheaper or at least with more experience in teaching).

Technicians in Anaesthesia have very important role in many sectors in health care, for example operating room, emergency care, delivery room, intensive care and depending on of health care organization also in dental care and interventional and diagnostic radiology. They need fundamental and advanced skills in the acquisition, preparation, and application of various types of equipment required for the delivery of anaesthesia care. Technicians in Anaesthesia work together with anaesthesia team and surgical team and they absolutely need the basic education and qualifications of health care professional. Therefore a program designed for them should have a strong focus on preparing them as health care professionals.



Alternatively, the ET strongly believes that this program could have been designed as a Masters's program and targeting the already working nurses who want extra-training before getting a job in the Anesthesia field.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

1.4. Mission, objectives and administration

According to SER the general mission of college consists of following five points: "1) development and application of new concepts of the medical education of XXI cent in Kosovo, 2) offering, promoting and developing qualitative curriculums, according to international standards, 3) increasing the general capacities for academic and scientific research work for the higher education, 4) creating institutional infrastructure and increasing intellectual capacities for academic and scientific research work and 5) enriching the health system in the community with quality medical services, especially the Kosovo's deficit-based medical services for the current period." The mission includes three main pillars according to KAA standard which are teaching, research and community services. Based on documents it is not clear what is the mission of study program. According to SER (page 5) the mission of the program is "enables the advancement of knowledge and creative and scientific ideas in the field of Anaesthesia, in accordance with European standards. The program aims at full integration into the European Higher Education Area as well as Scientific research in the field of anaesthesia." This mission is not in line with KAA standard because community service is ignored. Especially that pilar would be crucial to understand community service aspect of this program. Also, according to mission the focus is only in anaesthesia even this profession needs broader perspective of the patients care. As well, that mission is not in line with the name of program which is the Senior Technician of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care. The mission of program ignores intensive care. On syllabus the mission of study program is: "to teach students the knowledge and skills required in which students become familiar with new principles and different techniques of anesthesia, equipment, instruments, and related drugs. Students also learn how to provide patient care under general and local anesthesia before, during and after surgery." this mission is in line with the content of syllabus, but it is not in line with the name of program and with KAA standard because research and community service is ignored. As well, there is conflict between the mission of program on SER and mission of program on the syllabus. As a format the objectives of the program are based on National Qualification Framework and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area. But the heads of the program could not convince the ET whether they are in line with the content of



Anaesthesia Technicians profession. After revising the mission of the program, the ET strongly recommends that the objectives are revised to be in line with mission.

Because the technicians in Anaesthesia have very important role in many sectors in health care as mentioned above (for example operating room, emergency care, delivery room, intensive care and depending on of health care organization also in dental care and interventional and diagnostic radiology) we recommend to reconsider the name of program. Does it really need to mention intensive care on the name of program? Does it impose restrictions on the content of syllabus? Does it impose restrictions on the employment of graduate students? ET is also considering why there is mentioned senior in the name? The profession Anaesthesia Technician covers all areas in health care where anaesthesia technicians are needed. Comparing the current program name with the content of syllabus, the second covers more than only intensive care which also support to change the name of program.

Overall, the study program has a well defined overarching didactic but the research concept is not clear enough. There is clear administration procedure and named responsibility persons of program. The program has formal polices, guidelines, and regulations dealing with recurring procedural and academic issues. According to the SER, they are revised every three years – including the QA procedures. During the online interviews it became evident that these regulations are known to the academic members. However the College should consider developing QA instruments to monitor that all members of the academic community are compliant with these regulations.

Compliance level: partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *There must be a clear indication of where these graduates will find employment and the conditions for their hiring.*
2. *There must be clear indication of community service aspect of this program.*
3. *The objectives of the program should be revised in accordance with the mission of the program.*
4. *It is strongly recommended to consider the name of program to be Senior Technician of Anaesthesia or Technician of Anaesthesia and even consider the type of program offered (maybe a Professional Bachelor program or MA program would be more appropriate than a BSc program).*



5. *The mission of the program must be specified and it must be in line with the mission of the college and the name of program or if the name of program will be changed then the mission must be modified to be in line with college mission.*
6. *The objectives of program should be modified to be in line with new mission.*
7. *The college should consider measures to check if the members of the community comply with the regulations and internal policies.*

2.2 Quality management

Quality management follow all standards of the specific general area from the KAA accreditation manual. Quality Management main objective is to ensure that the policies, processes and procedures set down in the institution's Quality Manual are implemented and it has been tasked to monitor the performance and produce quality enhancement measures. In the strategic plan 2019-2023 there is a set of activities for improving quality. Internal quality assurance system includes and evaluates many activities of the College: study programmes, teaching process, student support, support to students from under-represented and vulnerable groups, learning resources, scientific activity, professional activity, etc., and provides underlying documentation. However, learning outcomes, fairness of examination, infrastructure (including accessibility) and employability (when it will be the case) could also be added to the list of things monitored by the college through the QA procedures.

The quality assurance is integrated in daily teaching activity and covers all crucial areas. All staff members participated in self-evaluation and cooperate in reporting and improvement of activities. Quality assurance cover all sorts of areas from planning, implementation and evaluation. As well, it covers all issues of study program and its outcomes and improving of them. Quality assurance process ensure both that required standards are met and continuous improving is made. Survey data is collected, analysed and used for quality assurance. Also, the quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved. As well the students' perspective is taken account to improve the quality. The college should consider collecting feedback from the industry representatives (employers) and graduates, when it will be the case. For now, potential employers of the graduates and potential students could be consulted regarding the design of the program.



Reports – including strengths, weaknesses and a plan to correct them – should be published and available to the entire academic community. They should guide the processes of constant improvement of the programs and the institution.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Publish QA reports on the college website (e.g. publish a summary of the QA activities along with a plan to improve the current situation);*
2. *Use the results of the evaluations to constantly improve the program and the institution.*
3. *Consider developing surveys for employers and graduates when it will be the case.*
4. *Consider including questions about the infrastructure and the fairness of exams, in the survey for students;*
5. *Consider evaluating the learning outcomes of the program -e.g. by checking, randomly, final thesis of the graduates;*
6. *Consider developing QA procedures for the clinical stages.*

2.3 Academic staff

After site-visit it was required as an additional document the list of academic staff of program according to accreditation manual which mean that it is reported the name of academic staff, full time or part-time contract, qualifications, duration of contract and labour load. However, it was not received that kind of table of academic staff of program. It was compared the staff names mentioned on syllabus with the table on SER (pages 12-16) to find that information of academic staff of program. As well there was CV's of full and part time staff to use. Based on that comprising there is permanent staff for the program all together 38 and 21 of them have qualifications of Dr in science. Person in charge of study program is Dr in Science. There is plan to take 60 students. The ratio between the number of students and full-time academic staff is proper. The most of teaching staff are medical doctors and their areas of expertise are proper for courses they teach. Based on benchmarking of the similar programs in EU the current situation of academic staff qualification is proper. However, it would be wise to consider if also the other professional groups would have valuable knowledge to teach these students. For example persons whose background is in nursing and whom who work in places were anaesthesia technicians will be employed.



ET did not receive required document (mentioned above and required by standard 3.1) so ET is unable to confirm if academic staff workload is divided in proper way and if the work contracts are according to standard. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff in college.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The information of academic staff (standard 3.1.) is needed*
2. *It would be wise to consider if also the other professional groups would have valuable knowledge to teach the students of this program*
3. *Consider including an induction period for the newly hired staff.*
4. *Consider adapting the workload and responsibilities of the full- and part-time staff (e.g. check how many staff members teach in more programs and what does this mean for their workload).*

2.4 Educational process content

The structure of study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and it is according to the European Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC, with amendment 2013/55/EU) insofar as it is realistic. The program has analytical syllabus and it fulfil all standards presented in KAA accreditation manual. The structure of program follows the European standards. The program is divided into six semesters (each with 60 ECTS) and the duration of study is three academic years, equivalent with 180 ECTS. All courses carry ECTS points and 1 ECTS is equivalent with 30 hours. There is proper number of ECTS of elective studies according to European Standards. Even though the structure of program is according to standard, the serious concern is whether does this program empower you to work in the legal health care profession.

There are ten learning outcomes. Their focus is on central issues when comparing with the content of program but again the concern is where the graduated will work. The most of learning outcomes and the content of courses are focused on patients care (directly or indirectly) and the rest in equipment maintenance. However, the learning outcomes cover also other health care sectors than intensive care and again this raises the question why the program name is focused only in intensive care. Another concern is how the students can learn all those contents and receive learning outcomes because they do not have just any contacts to practise



and especially to patients care. As well, it would be useful to add at least one learning outcome which focus is on ethical and legal issues. As well the important part of work is multi-disciplinary teamwork so it would be considered to add on learning outcome for that. It is noteworthy that the syllabus covers these areas but those issues are not made visible in program learning outcomes.

Laboratory and clinical training are extremely important part of the Senior Technician of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care education. However, the number of clinical training hours is not so strictly regulated in European Directive and its amendment than some other health care professionals education. According syllabus there is 1095 hours theoretical studies and 1695 practical studies and 480 of those hours are in clinical settings. Benchmarking other similar programs across Europe the ratio between theoretical and practical hours varies a lot. In current program there is clinical training in anaesthesia 16 ECTS and laboratory hours 240. Benchmarking the number of clinical training hours in anaesthesia with similar programs in EU it is recommended to increase the number of them especially because the current program is bachelor level program. In the current program clinical training is placed mostly in third year and it should be consider to add more clinical training also in the second year. However, the fundamental question is that because the students do not have any health professional education (e.g, nurses or medical doctors) how they can practise in anaesthesia and with the patients in there. It is planned to take in to program of Senior Technician of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care 60 students. At the moment there is enough clinical places and mentors to supervise that number of students in clinical settings. The clinical training assessment methods are relevant and appropriate for their purposes. However, the students booklet for clinical training would be very useful to assure the quality of clinical training

It is plan to use widely different types of teaching methods (such as lecture-based learning, problem-based learning, simulation-based learning, practice-based learning, reflective learning and research-based learning). These support to receive learning outcomes. It is also clearly indicated teaching and assessment methods and they are appropriate and relevant in relation to learning outcomes. Because of new program it is highly important critically and openly evaluate quality of educational process continuously and adjusted if there exist need for that based on evaluation. It is very well known that the new program contains some challenges and mistakes that could not have been foreseen.

Compliance level: Partially compliant



ET recommendations:

1. *Demonstrates graduate employment in health care following this curriculum*
2. *Continuously evaluate critically and openly quality of educational process and adjusted if there exist need for that.*
3. *Critically evaluate the number of clinical training hours and to consider to increase the number of them*
4. *To consider to add also learning outcomes which focus is on ethical and legal issues, as well as multidisiplinary team work. Those elements are included in syllabus but would be also good to add learning objectives of program.*
5. *The students booklet for clinical training would be very useful to assure the quality of clinical training.*

1.5. Students

There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at Institution's level and the new study program will also respect that. SER (on page 28) reported admissions requirements that include being a graduate of highschool and successfully passing the Matura exam. There is a public call for admission and an entrance exam with subjects from Biology, Chemistry and Physics, as well as an evaluation of the non-academic personal qualities of candidates [SER, p.29]. The college should develop the QA mechanisms to check if this entrance procedure is applied fairly and objectively to all candidates.

The College has internal regulations (Rule of studies) that define the size of the study groups and they will be applied to the new study program as well. The lectures are offered for 120 students, seminars and workshops are held in smaller groups of only 16-20 student while clinical training is organized for 6 students. The dimension of the study groups could ensure interactive teaching and learning process (standard 5.3), but the ET is concerned that it could not ensure effective teaching and learning. This is because the reality in the hospitals and clinics will not allow for 6 students to assist an anesthetic procedure, but rather individual training should be considered. The SER allows for this *`In certain cases, in some forms of instruction, according to the teacher's proposal, the student groups may be even smaller`* [SER, p.29] but it will need extra-resources to be put in practice. The ET understands that this limitation will put extra pressure on the college to find more mentors for the clinical practice and will be one critical condition for establishing the capacity of the program (the maximum number of students that can be enrolled). At this point, the ET feels that the college did not



offer enough thought to this important matter for the development of the professionals in the field.

According to the SER, the practice in the college is that feedback is offered to students in order to help them improve. Several assessment forms are mentioned (formative exam, summative exam, quizzes etc.) which seem to be applied through the Moodle platform for the rest of the programs. And will probably be implemented the same way for the new program. The SER mentions that the moodle indicated instantly the result of the examination (grade) and `recommendations for improving performances` [SER, p.30] The ET is concerned that multiple-choice exams on the Moodle is not enough to evaluate the progress of the students from this program towards their learning outcomes and recommends diversifying the assessment methods.

In college it is used a variety of teaching methods, combining case-studies, project-based learning opportunities and simulations in order to reach the pre-set learning outcomes. But as discussed in the QA section, there are no QA procedure to check if the learning outcomes are met. Especially for new programs this would be important.

Flexible treatment is provided for students in special situations. The ET recommends that this is also granted for students getting sick of COVID-19 or having someone sick in the family (that would impose quarantine and thus missing on lectures/practical training sessions).

The SER mentions that the college records all student results in a platform and will do so for the new program also. Academic records should be assessed by the QA structures and used as quality indicators.

Each student is allocated a mentor to provide him/her with guidance and support, as part of the efforts of the college to identify early in the process. Moreover, students will also benefit from consultation hours, that each academic staff is obliged to announce and offer (2hours/week).

The college has adopted a Code of Ethics and student conduct and also stipulates the rights and responsibilities of students in the Student Handbook. The college makes efforts to discourage plagiarism for the other programs and will also make them for this new program – e.g. there is a manual providing information on how to correctly quote authors and relevant literature [SER,



p.30]. However, the responsibility of checking the originality of student work goes to the coordinator, as the college still does not have an anti-plagiarism software.

According to the SER: `The rights and obligations of students, defined by the Kosovo Higher Education Law, the Statute of the College, the Rules of Study and the Code of Ethics, are made public on the College's website` [p.31]. The college has an appeal procedure that allows students to reject a grade. It should also allow students to report a situation in which they feel disadvantaged by a teacher and they should benefit from a re-evaluation of their paper by a different teacher/a commission, during the same exam session.

Student transfer procedures are available within the college. However, since this new program is a unique one, the ET recommends that special transfer procedures should be developed for this particular program.

Based on SER the programs is periodically revised as part of a natural and normal QA process.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Develop the QA mechanisms to check if admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all candidates.*
2. *Diversify the assessment methods (including practical exercises, for example), in order to assess the competences of students and their progress towards the learning outcomes.*
3. *Consider using academic records of the students as quality indicators of the program and monitor them periodically.*
4. *Develop a student transfer procedure for this program, adapting the one that the college already has to the specificities of this unique program.*

1.6. Research

The development of research activities in the Program follows the objectives set out in the institution's strategic plan 2019-2023. According to SER there is expectation that the program's academic staff are involved in research in the field of Anesthetics. Sufficient financial, logistic and human resources should be allocated for achieving these objectives, given that the field of research will be a new one for the college and even for Kosovo.



Moreover, the college has to deal with the fact that several of the academic staff are involved in several different study programs thus they are required to publish in different fields and might not be able to sustain this practice for a long time.

There is clear policy for research. In period 2016-2019 the academic staff was published 813 publications. 345 of them were published in scientific journals and 468 as an abstract in scientific meetings. The average of publications is 12.7 per academic staff. There is also research and publication focusing on the anaesthesia and connected issues.

Since 2019 it is required that regular academic staff scientific papers are published under the name of the College of Medical Science “Rezonanca”, Pristina. This is understandable and very commonly used publish policy.

There is support system for new academic staff to develop their research programs and they are mentored by senior colleagues. There is also some financial support for publishing articles.

There is “Staff Academic Performance Review” form which is used to evaluate academic staff’s scientific activities. The college could consider the research results of academic staff for promotion criteria or rewards. According to the SER `College have established clear policies for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program` [SER, p.33]. Given that this is a new program that will mean a new field of research, the heads of the program should adapt the college policy defining the research quality to the needs of the program.

The college declares in the SER that they encourage academic staff members to include research results in their teaching and to involve students in research activities. For this new program they intend to ask students to write a review paper during the Research Methodology subject.

The SER mentions `During 2019, the College will establish a policy for the protection and commercialization of intellectual property and the allocation of budgetary resources for expenses related to the protection of intellectual property` [SER, p. 35]. It is not clear if this is already in place and if it will apply for the new program.

Compliance level: partially compliant



ET recommendations:

1. Consider rewarding those academic staff member who perform in research activities;
2. Adapt the college policies defining what is recognised as research to the field of anesthetics;
3. Monitor the workload of academic staff (those involved in several different programs might be put in the situation of publishing in different research fields and this is not sustainable).
4. Allocate proper financial and material resources to carry out the research objectives.

1.7. Infrastructure and resources

Because the site visit was done on-line it was asked that the college sends a short video about Laboratory training rooms for Senior Technician of Anesthesia and Intensive Care that was provided by the college (where it can be seen equipments).

According to SER currently the college has 1441 students in bachelor or master programs. The premises, human resources, and equipment in college comprises the adequate number within the necessary standards to ensure long-term implementation of new program. The ET considers that the available resources are appropriate for the current requested number of students.

The program premises include lecture rooms, reading rooms, library and laboratories. The current facilities are appropriate for the purpose of the program. According to SER the number of seats in lecture halls, seminar rooms and laboratories are proper for the number of students. However, ET questioned if there is enough laboratory training rooms, equipments and especially the instruments to parties all those skills which are mentioned in syllabus. Because the number of clinical training hours are quite small it requires more specific practise in laboratory conditions. It was assured that there is space enough for more students than current situation is. And that it will be supplemented after the building of the new campus.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Ensure a good library stack of books for medicine and anesthetics;
2. Encourage teachers to write and publish books and learning materials (study supports);



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3. *Ensure access to online international databases of articles and journals, both for students and academic staff to conduct proper research.*

2. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

As shown in the previous sections, the ET recognises the efforts done by the institution to prepare for this program evaluation and the necessity of such programs for Kosovo. However, the program needs to be re-evaluated (its' name, educational content and title) and more resources need to be allocated for a successful implementation of the program (e.g. hire more clinical mentors, buy more specific books, ensure access to international databases etc.). In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program Senior Technician of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care offered by College of Medicin “Reconanca” is *Partially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends not to accredit the study program.

3. APPENDICES (*if available*) : *Not applicable*

Expert Team

Chair

Helvi Kyngäs

31 of May 2021

(Signature)

(Date)

Member

Delia Gologan

31 of May 2021

(Signature)

(Date)