



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

***UBT College
Psychology Programme, BSc***

Draft Report

ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

May 5, Prishtina



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit (on line): April 19, 2021

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Prof. Dr. Melita Kovacevic

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

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

Sources of information for the Report:

- Psychology programme, SER (Self Evaluation Report plus annexes);
- Meetings with management, staff, students, administrators, and graduates of the institution;
- Additional materials requested by the Expert

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- KAA Accreditation Manual



1.2. Site visit (on line) schedule

19th April

09.00 – 09.40	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated (<i>no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion</i>)
09.45 – 10:30	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff
10.35 – 11.35	Meeting with the heads of the study programme
11:35 – 12:10	Lunch break (to be provided within the faculty premises)
12.10 – 12:50	Meeting with teaching staff
12.55 – 13.35	Meeting with employers of graduates
13.35 – 13.50	Internal meeting between expert team and KAA
13.50 – 14.00	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty

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

UBT College did not provide a brief overview of the institution and programme under evaluation.

However, knowing the institution from other circumstances and checking the website, UBT college is a private institution which has been licensed in 2004. It has 14 (?) faculties, performs programmes on bachelor and master level and has branches in other places in Kosovo (Prizren, Ferizaj, Peja, Gjilan, Lipjan).

Psychology programme, BSc has been in the process of evaluation in 2017, but at that time it has not been accredited.



2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The mission of the study programme in Psychology, according to the SER, complies with the UBT institutional mission. The SER states that the mission of the BSc programme in Psychology is ‘to enrich teaching and learning atmosphere and methodologies, to contribute to the community and society and to promote research in psychology’ and it defines its main goals and core values.

It is in particularly stressed that there is a strong intention to follow EuroPsy guidelines in structuring the programme. The programme is align with NQF as well as it is in accordance with European Higher Education Area. According to the SER, it has been also taking into account recommendations and suggesting coming from the institutional and national higher education and QA authorities.

It does have well defined overarching didactic concept as well as research concept, including a developed Research strategy for the period of four years (2021 to 2025).

The programme follows institutional policies and regulations and assures to have them available for staff and students. There are also ethical regulations assuring ethical conduct in teaching, research and all activities within the Programme. There is a confusion in terminology and institutional structure: Programme is sometimes replaced with the term Department, sometimes with the Faculty (this is also reflected in the provided organogram), which leads us to think that certain clarifications and use of common terms-structures in the area of higher education, not only in Kosovo, but in Europe as well, need to be taken into consideration. Similar comments the institution, the UBT College, has already received in the previous evaluation processes, but it does not seem that it has been taken into account.

The programme has responsible academic staff, in the documents provided in annex, used terminology refers to the Faculty and its structure: dean and three vice-deans, plus administrative staff. Definitely, such a structure with so many actors involved in a programme management is too much elaborated and could easily be not optimal. It appears as too many management-administrative roles for small size overall structure. It is possible to conclude that the use of terms allocated to individuals in complex and demanding academic settings whose roles are demanding with a lot of responsibilities is too easily allocated in the context with all the opposite features.



Institution/Programme has a set of documents and regulations on different levels in order to review the study programmes. Nevertheless, it is not clear that the Programme is reviewed at least every two year. It would be for the benefit of the Programme, and it could be an internal decision to do so, with a main aim to assure quality and to be fast in implementing changes, if needed.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Implement programme reviewing on annual or biannual basis in order to assure better quality*
2. *Optimise institutional structure and distribution of roles and tasks*
3. *Clarify and be consistent in using different terms/institutional structures and making them comparable to other institutions in HE, not only in Kosovo, but in Europe as well*

2.2. Quality management

UBT as a HE institution shows a high level of awareness that the quality of institution is a relevant factor and that needs to be supported and implemented in individual programmes as well as across the whole institutions. In order to assure higher level of quality on administrative level, it underwent the evaluation in order to be certified for the quality management (ISO standard). Quality management meets majority of the standards as specified in the KAA accreditation manual. There are responsible staff for the quality management, there are procedures and all the staff as well as other main stakeholders are regularly involved in quality assuring processes. Quality office is in charge of implementing procedures, and to prepare and administer internal evaluation and student's evaluations.

The programme staff asserted that they participate in formal and informal reviews of student data and curriculum design. They also confirmed that the student evaluation processes were consistent and understood by both staff and students, and that they had personally benefitted from these quality assurance mechanisms. Of course, all of this is from the experience working in other programmes, not one which is still not accredit According to the SER, a bottom-up approach has been implemented in order to prepare the self-evaluation and different aspect of functioning of the programme.



According to the SER, and other activities that are already in place, or that are planned to be implemented for a new programme, majority of the standards are met.

At this point, it is not possible to check if everything what it has been planned is actually done, however, it does not seem that the plan is to make the results from the evaluations fully available publicly. It was not possible to find the data on the website for other programmes either.

Compliance level: Substantially. compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. It would be important to assure implementation of all the procedures claimed that are planned*
- 2. It is important to apply regular monitoring and follow up of all QA processes*
- 3. To assure that evaluation results and survey outcomes are publicly available*

2.3. Academic staff

According to the KAA standards, formally most of them, except standard 3.1 and 3.8, meet the basic minimum required criteria. However, although the SER includes the table with some information related to academic staff engaged in the Programme under evaluation, teaching, research and administration load is only presented as division of the total work load expressed in percentage and it is not transparent what is the actual teaching load of each staff member expressed in their teaching hours. It raises even more questions due to the fact that all the staff is already employed and do teach in other programmes. In other words, it is not transparent how the teaching load and their responsibilities in different programmes will be redistributed. During the interviews, it has been formulated that there will be also new employments as well as the fact that some staff members still have slots for more teaching, and that they will be still meeting the criteria defined by the law of the maximum workload, however this has not been supported by the facts and transparent figures.

Another issue of concern is the profile of listed teaching staff. According to the SER, there is 25 staff, all, but one, holding PhD degree, however a fine analysis of their academic profiles shows that only half of them have education in psychology. Of course, for few of them it is justified to have a degree in fields such as, for example philology (English) or



mathematics/statistics, or law, but definitely there is no balance and it is hard to justify their number. Moreover, from their work experience, and in particular the published work, it is not possible to identify their academic qualifications that would make possible to see the reason why they are included in psychology programme.

It is good to recognise that a part of a staff has been awarded their degrees in good institutions in different countries in Europe and outside Europe and for sure, this could be an asset to the institution for further development. They are competent and evidently committed individuals. Unfortunately, it seems that some teachers, in particular those who have education in psychology, are quite overloaded with the number of courses they need to teach. Of course, this is understandable, bearing in mind that half of listed staff is not in the field of psychology (again, for some of them is justified and it is acceptable).

At this point, standard 3.8 is not met due to the fact, on one side, it is still a programme that did not start being implemented, but on the other, it is also not evident for other existing programmes that evaluations, in particular self-evaluations, are regular and publicly available. It seems relevant to stress the importance for internal quality to do staff evaluations regularly involving different stakeholders and to make them publicly available.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. To increase the number of staff with proper profile for psychology programme
2. To assure well distributed teaching load per staff member

a. Educational process content

Programme Psychology offers a range of relevant courses, and as it is stated in the SER it has been taken care to follow the framework in EuroPsy as well as to comply with NQF. The programme offers a range of mandatory and elective courses, aiming to prepare students for working in different areas and to prepare them for different career paths. Students will receive training in different domains and they will acquire different skills. Courses are potentially equally relevant for academic training and practical work.



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Therefore, the study programme is in compliance with NQF as well as EHEA and complies Bologna scheme, it is three year programme with 60 ECTS per year.

However, it is concluded that the Programme does not fully meet minimum criteria for the standards 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 due to different reasons. For example, it is a three year bachelor programme, and following European regulation for the field and profession (and not only European) it is well known that the three year programme does not provide education in psychology which will enable the graduate to be called ‘psychologist’ and to perform a work as a full fledged psychologist. This fact has been also acknowledged by the staff during the interviews, but unfortunately it is not provided in any part of the SER neither is reflected in the ten learning outcomes of the programme (pg. 6). Considering this fact, and checking the programme it seems as an ambitious curriculum, with part of the courses being too early introduced (bachelor level) and not completely adjusted to the reality – not in terms of the employment, but also not in terms of the existing institutional capacity, both in terms of specific facilities (research) and human resources. In some instances it seems like courses are created following the existence of available staff not what is really crucial for the well content-wise structured programme.

The syllabi consist of all the required components, the number of distributed ECTS per courses following internal logic (number of courses/mandatory and elective courses), however, sometimes there are occasional areas of re-using certain phrases or sentences in different courses, but this is a minor objection. Important objection is related to unrealistic lists of literature. The volume, quantity of listed papers and books definitely cannot be an actual list of titles student needs to digest, and of course it does not correspond well to actual number of ECTS. Most likely, the provided list embraces both obligatory and recommended literature, and some selection of chapters are required, but this needs to be clearly presented, not only for the purpose of evaluation, but for the overall transparency. The overall distribution of ECTS does not follow necessarily the logic of actual working load of a particular course, it cannot be identified the relevance of the course checking the ECTS, the same number of ECTS evidently does not assume always the same workload for a students etc. The ratio of lecturing hours, seminars versus independent learning requires additional reality check. For the practical experience, although it is plan to have designated supervisor, bearing in mind the planned students enrolment, and the available staff, it is not realistic and it is not stated what kind of monitoring will be actually possible. It is also questionable how and where students will be able to engage in internships, especially with the institutional ambitious in a few years to enrol

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up to 300 students. This is absolutely unrealistic and not self-reflexive considering the actual institutional capacities.

At this stage of evaluation, when the programme is actually seeking the accreditation, the standards 4.6 and 4.8 to 4.10 and 4.12 are met consuming that what is planned and stated in the SER it will actually be implemented once the programme enrolls students. The programme offers two courses of English for students, so the standard 4.5 is also met.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Revisit the distribution of ECTS and/or students work load, in particular for some elective courses and generic skills courses*
- 2. Assure actual monitoring of students during their independent work/practice*
- 3. Consider establishing a program team to evaluate the appropriateness, measurement, and consistency of learning outcomes across the program's three years*
- 4. Revisit the overall concept of the programme and define what kind of competencies will graduate gain*
- 5. Literature requirements need to be redefined, and adjusted to actual students needs and capacities*

b. Students

The students did not participate in the interviews due to the fact that there is no enrolled students, therefore the evaluation of standards in this section is based primarily on a written SER. All the standards are met, except the standard 5.3 and 5.8. According to the institutional plans on the number of students to be enrolled, it would not be possible to have the size of students' group where interactive and effective teaching could be managed. On contrary, the planned number of students would be a serious obstacle to have quality in teaching and effective learning process.

Students and staff agreed that the assessment mechanisms and grades are understood and are fairly applied. (Standards 5.4. and 5.5).

Standard 5.8 has not fully met yet. Although there are institutional regulations and committees dealing with misconduct, it appears to be no clear system to examine the originality of student



work, and that burden falls upon teacher, primarily. It is strongly recommended to invest in software for plagiarism detection, and to make that resource available to the instructors.

It has been verified that the students' rights and obligations were clearly understood, and that these were consistently upheld and supported. It is also supported with the institutional regulation and documents.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Make sure that the study groups are optimal for effective teaching and learning process and to comply with the institutional capacities*
2. *Assure technical support for plagiarism detection, preferable by purchasing a software*

c. Research

Research objectives of the study programme follow the institutional strategy and it is developed a strategy for next four years (2021 to 2025) for the Psychology Programme in particular.

Academic staff are required to participate actively in the research community, usually as demonstrated by attendance at conferences or the publication of scholarly articles. The academic staff all seemed aware of this requirement and did not express any particular objections to this requirement. They noted that this is an almost universal expectation in higher education employment, and especially the staff who earned their degrees in foreign, well established institutions in Europe and outside Europe were aware and supportive of such requirements. Interestingly, no one pointed to an issue of low budget for research which might be definitely an issue in the field as psychology which actually asks for more and more funds to perform research. Considering the comments received by the programme-institution, UBT supports staff members to attend conferences or to go for study visits; also there is a research office established which provides additional financial and administrative support to staff. Nevertheless, there is no clear budget, logistic and human resources sufficient to meet some of the proposed programme/institution objectives. This is even more evidenced with the fact that for many staff members there is no clear connection between their teaching areas and their research, and with extremely low overall publishing rate, with a very few exceptions.



Dealing with psychology field, this is one of the most serious weak points for those who plan to implement a programme. On the other side, the offer of courses do not reflect actually this extremely modest situation in terms of research and research productivity.

The publication rate does not meet Standard 6.7, which specifies at least one publication per year. Unfortunately, after all the evaluations that took place in each institution, evaluators are still faced with the lists of publications that are missing number of information, that are written in a way that it is not possible to check them and that do not follow any of internationally accepted styles of writing. In number of cases, listed publications do not match at all with the courses they teach. Standard 6.8 was met, at least according to the SER. For majority of the publications was not possible to check.

Regulations for ownership of intellectual property, procedures are still not fully developed, although there are plans to regulate innovations and ownership both by staff and students.

Presently, it is not clear how and will students participate in research, depending how much research will actually go on. UBT intends to establish research platform, as stated in the SER, but at the same time this is very ambitious plan and it would be too much for some very well established HE institutions dealing with psychology. Therefore, it seems as over ambitious plan which, in the first pace, does not have human capacity to follow it.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Consider developing mechanisms for raising research productivity, by defining more focused research topics, form small research groups (instead individual approach)*
- 2. Consider small, but publishable research with students and/or graduates*
- 3. Research plan needs to fit to the institutional capacity*
- 4. Regulate and unify the way of reporting on research productivity, following international standards*

d. Infrastructure and resources



UBT has adequate facilities. UBT has potential and soon will have additional spatial capacity, which will support enrolment of new students but also upgrade the conditions for the programmes, staff and students that already exist.

It has multiple classrooms appropriate to the programme, furnished with necessary equipment and reasonable class sizes. Students also have on disposal a library and computers, although it should be noted that availability of literature has been issue for many years,. The administrative and management offices, as well as number of services are also available and adequate to support the programme (the UBT provided a video to facilitate evaluation of the institutional infrastructure, but some information were still limited or not possible to check directly).

It has been provided very rough financial plan for the next three years, in particular not enough elaborated and transparent in the area of research. It appears that resources are adequate to meet the basic requirements envisioned in Standard 7.3. Standard 7.4 is met, in that the lecture rooms are comfortable and well structured.

Infrastructure and other facilities respond to the program implementation requirements for students with special needs (7.6)

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Specific laboratories for research in psychology needs to be established*
2. *Be proactive in plagiarism software purchase*
3. *Human capacity needs to be further supported and developed*

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the **BSc programme Psychology** is substantially compliant with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends to accredit the study program for a duration of **3 year** with a number of **60 students** to be annually enrolled in the programme.



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Expert Team

Chair

	Melita Kovacevic	May 5 2021
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Member

(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)
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