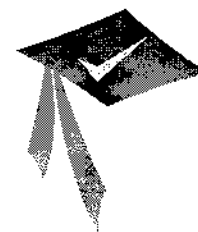




Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

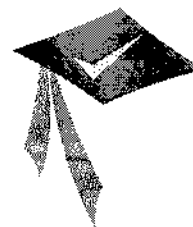
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***The University of Prishtina ‘Hasan Prishtina’  
Bachelor in Balkanistics***

***Accreditation***

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*11 June 2021, Skopje, North Macedonia; Zagreb, Croatia*

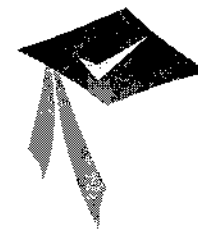
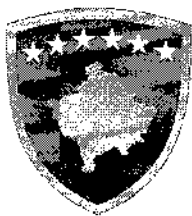


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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit: 21 May 2021 (N.B. Because of prevailing COVID-19 pandemic conditions, the 'site visit' was conducted exclusively online).**

**Expert Team (ET) members:**

- *Prof. Dr. Andrew Goodspeed (South East European University, North Macedonia)*
- *Mr. Juraj Bogat (Zagreb, Croatia)*

**Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):**

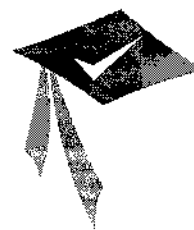
- *Naim Gashi (Executive Director of KAA)*
- *Shkelzen Gerxhaliu (Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring)*
- *Arianit Krasniqi (Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation)*
- *Leona Kovaci (Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring)*
- *Ilirjane Ademaj (Senior Officer for Evaluation and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

**Sources of information for the Report:**

- *KAA Accreditation Manual, July 2018*
- *Self-Evaluation Report (5.1.2021)*
- *Syllabi*
- *C.V.s and scholarly publication information for Staff proposed for engagement in the program*
- *Annexes*
- *Subsequent requested documents*

**Criteria used for program evaluation:**

- *KAA 'Standards and performance indicators for external quality assurance (per KAA Accreditation Manual, July 2018)*



- *Criteria of proposed program deliverability, curricular appropriateness to intended graduate outcomes, academic responsibility, and diversity and sophistication of skills developed.*

## 1.2. Site visit schedule

Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA)

Site Visit Program

Programme Re/accreditation Procedure at University of Prishtina

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2021

Expert Team

- Prof. Dr. Andrew Goodspeed
- Mr. Juraj Bogat

Coordinators of KAA

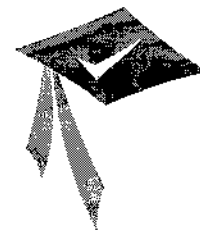
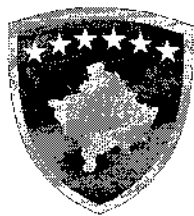
- Naim Gashi, Executive Director of KAA
- Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation
- Leona Kovaci, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Ilirjane Ademaj, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring

Site Visit Program

### 21<sup>st</sup> May

09:00 – 09:40 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*)

Prof.dr. Lindita Rugova, dean



Prof.dr. Avdi Visoka, vice dean for teaching

Prof.asoc.dr. Isa Memishi, vice dean for infrastructure

Prof.asoc.dr. Milote Sadiku, vice dean for quality assurance and international relations

MA. Besfort Krasniqi, secretary

09:45 – 10:30 Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff

Mr. Besnik Loxha, Head of the Academic development Office

Dr. Alban Zeneli, academic development officer

Mr. Emanuel Gjoleka, officer for students relations, MA

10:35 – 11:35 Meeting with the heads of the study programme: English Language and Literature/ BA

Lendita Kryeziu, Seniha Krasniqi, Lirak Karjagdiu

11:35 – 12:15 Lunch break

12:15 – 13:15 Meeting with the heads of the study programme: Balkanistics/ BA

Lindita Rugova, Zeqije Xhafçe, Ardita Berisha, Ana Sivacki

13:20 – 14:00 Meeting with teaching staff

Zinaide Gruda, Yllke Pacarizi, Aferdita Kasolli, Muhamet Hamiti

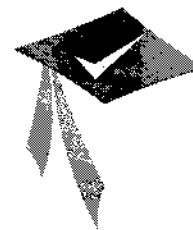
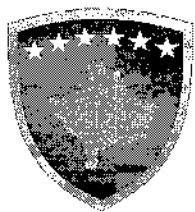
14:05 – 14:45 Meeting with students (Agon Murati, Artiola Mamaj, Art Shala, Djellza Krasnqi, Liresa Nurqaj, Sabile Hyseni.

14:50 – 15:30 Meeting with graduates (Rina Krasniqi, Trendelina Haliti, Adriatik Bytyci, Flamur Latifi, Gresa Koca)

15:35 – 16:15 Meeting with employers of graduates

Margita Pakashtica -Britannica ELT Prishtine, Aurora Zuna Krasniqi-Oxford Studio, Fatmire Maloku- Britannica LC-Gjilan, *Josip Ivanovic (OSCE), Svetlana Rakic (IOM)*

16:15 – 16:25 Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts



16:25 – 16:35

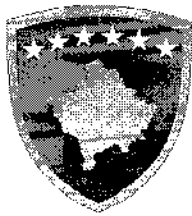
Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program

Nr.	Study programs	Experts	Responsible persons of study programs		
1	English Language and Literature/ BA (Reaccreditation)	Prof. Dr. Andrew Goodspeed	Lendita Kryeziu	Seniha Krasniqi	Lirak Karjagdiu
		Mr. Juraj Bogat			Bekim Bejta
2	Balkanistics/ BA (Accreditation)	Prof. Dr. Andrew Goodspeed	Zeqije Xhafçe	Ardita Berisha	Ana Sivački
		Mr. Juraj Bogat			Josip Lasić

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

The program proposed here for initial accreditation evaluation is offered by the Faculty of Philology of the University of Prishtina ‘Hasan Prishtina.’ The Faculty of Philology occupies a location in the center of Prishtina, the capital city of the Republic of Kosovo. The Faculty traces its origin to the 1960-1961 founding of the Cathedra of Albanian Language and Literature, which was at that time a component of the Faculty of Philosophy. Since that formative time the Faculty has switched from a cathedral to a departmental structure, and contains departments including Albanian, English, French, German, Turkish, and Oriental Studies.

The program under evaluation here is explicitly designed to meet societal and educational needs in the Republic of Kosovo and the surrounding region. It is structured to be a linguistically-based multicultural and intercultural program of study, aiming towards the promotion of social cohesion. The institutional representatives repeatedly noted that the approach, and inclusive curriculum, are genuinely needed in Kosovo, which in many ways is—and has been—an historical, linguistic, and cultural crossroads, where many cultures, language groups, and traditions form a unique, blended society. Yet this factual coexistence in all areas has, at times, been a source of division and disorder in Kosovo and the region, and the Balkanistics program is intended to ameliorate cultural misunderstanding and distrust through collaborative study of the region’s cultures and languages. This, it is believed, helps to fulfil the University’s mission commitment to serving the local community as one of the strategic and developmental needs of society: ‘Misioni i UP-së bazohet në zhvillimin akademik, hulumtimet shkencore, artistike dhe sigurimin e arsimit të lartë përmes



programeve me interes strategjik dhe zhvillimor të Republikës së Kosovës.’ (<https://www.uni-pr.edu/page.aspx?id=1,47>). This is particularly notable in a feature noted in the Self Evaluation Report: ‘The academic feasibility of this study program is ensured by making this program available to all Kosovo high school graduates regardless of the language in which they completed their high school education.’ (SER, p. 34)

The general structure of the university management is clear and consistent. Executive management is provided by the chief academic leader of the institution, the Rector, who is complimented by a team of Vice-Rectors and a Secretary General (for administration). As one of his *ex-officio* obligations, the Rector chairs the meetings of the University Senate, which is the highest decision-making body in the institutional structure. Below university-wide functions the Faculties operate with self-responsibility—particularly through the Faculty Councils—whilst remaining under the institutional oversight of the Senate and the Rectorate.

Faculty management is the responsibility of a Dean, who is assisted by a team of Pro-Deans, and their work is facilitated by a Faculty Secretary. As this is to be a new program, it is unclear exactly how much intra-Faculty collaboration there will be, but likely some of the foreign language components of the Balkanistics program would promote such interdisciplinarity.

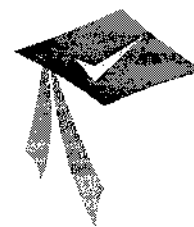
The main University functions related to this program (student enrolment, quality assurance mechanisms, complaint resolution processes, etc.) seem largely centralized, with Faculty or departmental implementation. These will be addressed where appropriate later in this report.

It should perhaps also here be noted that during the site-visit discussions the institutional representatives, as well as their social partners, expressed their conviction that this program would be genuinely beneficial to the program students themselves, and to the broader community in the Republic of Kosovo and the region. It is notable that the program, therefore—even before accreditation—has established an important support network of partners, institutions, NGOs, embassies, and other bodies willing to work with the program deliverers and students in a spirit of collegiality.

## 2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

### 2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The Balkanistics B.A. program is designed around a simple concept: social cohesion in the Balkans may be built, maintained, and strengthened through the study of the multiple constituent cultures and their languages. This is both philosophically aligned with the mission of the University of Prishtina, and makes practical sense as a general approach: someone with multiple local languages, and



familiarity with regional cultures and traditions, is simply a more employable person (in virtually any field) than someone with limited cultural exposure or linguistic competence.

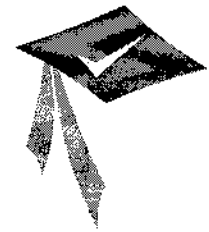
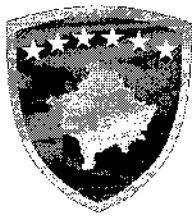
The SER concisely articulates the rationale behind this program: ‘The Balkanistics Program aims to improve cross-linguistics and cross-cultural communication in Kosovo and the Western Balkans region, by organizing quality studies to prepare competent professionals with a focus on linguistics and translation in the local languages in Kosovo, but also for individuals with an interest in cross-cultural teaching and studies [...] in their further future academic and professional work and development. In this sense, a Balkanistics program within [the] University of Prishtina would become a facilitation point of cross-cultural communication within the country and in Southeastern Europe.’ (SER, p. 16)

The program, therefore, is of a deliberately wide scope and conception. The main element, if one is to be identified, is linguistic study. Presumably, the greatest labor market need that will be met will be for linguists competent in multiple regional languages. Such individuals would have a broad variety of professional opportunities open to them, including (but not restricted to) teaching, translation, working with multinational corporations, working with embassies or consulates, working with or in NGOs or governmental offices, providing social or cultural analysis for companies, diplomats, or think-tanks, etc. It seems highly unlikely that a diligent student would graduate from this program without having a significant variety of employment choices.

In addition to the market-readiness of Kosovo to employ competent linguists, the program also more abstractly meets the mission of the University of Prishtina to contribute to the society. Employment is not the sole goal of any good program, and the Balkanistics B.A. curriculum appears designed to provide significant cross-cultural study and knowledge. This element is accentuated by the fact that many of the cultural or historical courses are in the elective options, allowing the student to specialize and personalize her or his education by focusing on those cultures or events that are personally compelling, or merely inspire the student’s curiosity.

The program representatives reported, and the Self-Evaluation Report formally affirms, that the program is designed to meet the NQF requirements: ‘This program is based on the National Qualifications Framework, whereby this study program falls under Level 6 qualifications which include the preparation of students for such levels of specialized study in the field of translation and teaching in this case. This field of study is also compliant with the Erasmus Subject Area Codes (ESAC) points: 09.0; 09.3; 09.4; 15.0; 15.1; 15.2; 15.3; -05.0.’ (SER, p. 18) The expert teams believes this to be truthful, and believes additionally that a good-faith effort has been made to consult with outside advisor and social partners in the design of this program, among which are notable the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, the IOM Office, the EU Office, and multiple interested embassies.





In regard to the didactic and research emphases of the program, the main element (as noted) is linguistic, and therefore language competence and capability are heavily emphasized. This will, of course, place significant logistical difficulties before the academic staff, but the basic curricular structure is clear. In regard to research, an undergraduate degree does not commonly require significant research autonomy, and much of the research built into this curriculum would appear to be field-based reports, or formal essays. Rather oddly, however, there does not seem to be a final project or diploma thesis envisioned in the curriculum; this may be an opportunity lost, and it might be worth considering whether or not one of the mandatory eighth semester courses might profitably be replaced by a credited project or diploma thesis.

It may be noted that mobility should form an absolutely vital element of such a curriculum, given the focus on regional linguistics and culture. The expert team fully understands some of the difficulties facing Kosovo students who wish to participate in mobility exchanges—visa restrictions can be onerous, and the simple cost-of-living in numerous E.U. countries may be prohibitively expensive. Yet the expert team would also like to note that many of the countries, languages, and cultures comprehended in this curriculum are nearby, many are not E.U. members, and are not financially substantially more costly than is the Republic of Kosovo. It would be good, therefore, in the event of accreditation, to consider how flexible the University of Prishtina can be in concluding learning agreements with regional partner universities, in support of mobility, given the unique curricular structure of the program being proposed in Balkanistics.

During the site-visit discussions, the institutional representatives insisted that this program will follow the policies and regulations of the University of Prishtina, which seems highly centralized in terms of policy and regulation, decision-making, and budgetary authority. Yet the expert team also takes note of certain potential structural weaknesses identified by the program managers themselves, in the Self Evaluation Report, such as ‘centralized decision-making at the University level on key issues related to program mission or objectives’; ‘deterioration of certainty as related to the program in case of lack of an interstate agreement’; ‘lack of an administrative structure responsible for the implementation of the program (there is no Balkanistics Department).’ (SER, p. 21) While this report cannot compel a significant reorganization of University of Prishtina policies or procedures, it is the firm belief—and recommendation—of the expert team that, if this program is accredited, a Balkanistics Department must be formed immediately to oversee the delivery of the program, and to lobby centralized decision-making bodies (the Senate, the Rectorate) for policies or resources specific to this program.

Thus, relating this section to the required KAA Standards, this report finds:

Standard 1.1: The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.

1.1: Yes.

Standard 1.2: Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the



Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

1.2: Yes. This requirement seems to have been carefully considered.

Standard 1.3: The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.

1.3: Yes, although a final research project or thesis may be desirable.

Standard 1.4: There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.

1.4: Yes, as far as can be evaluated by analogy with existing programs.

Standard 1.5: All staff and students comply with the institutional regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.

1.5: Yes, again, based upon evidence of other programs running in the Faculty of Philology.

Standard 1.6: All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.

1.6: Yes, again, by extension from other programs already running in the Faculty of Philology.

**Compliance Level: Fully Compliant.**

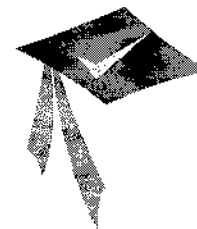
### **ET recommendations:**

1. *Consider including a research project or diploma thesis in the eighth semester, perhaps in place of one of the mandatory subjects, to build in a more concrete research goal for the program.*
2. *In the event of accreditation, immediately form a Balkanistics Department to oversee program delivery, and to coordinate teacher and student needs.*
3. *Anticipate and build regional mobility contacts with partner universities whose languages and cultures are appropriate to this program.*

## **2.2. Quality management**

The SER statement regarding Quality Management is disconcertingly unspecific and aspirational: 'The quality of teaching and learning within the Balkanistics program will be managed through a legislative infrastructure that covers various aspects of the teaching process relating to academic staff and students. At the same time, an effective internal communication and monitoring network for students, academic, and administrative staff will be needed.' (SER, p. 21) This is unfortunately imprecise, which is disappointing, as the expert team was genuinely impressed by the Quality Assurance representatives who participated in the site-visit discussion.

As this program is being advanced for first accreditation, much of the Quality Management information here is based upon existing structures at the University of Prishtina and the Faculty of Philology. There is also some coincidence here with a report prepared by the same expert team for



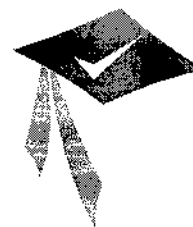
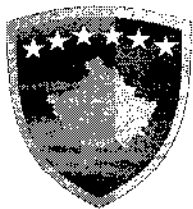
the B.A. in English Language and Literature program, as the Quality Management meeting covered both programs.

The University of Prishtina maintains a generally centralized quality management structure. Formally, this is overseen by a Quality Assurance Committee, which is a subcommittee of the University Senate. During the site-visit discussions with the quality assurance representatives, they noted that while general policies and procedures for quality management are centralized, the Faculty Deans have primary 'local' authority for oversight and application of these processes.

As described to the expert team, one of the main mechanisms for monitoring the quality of program delivery is a semestral student survey. This is common good practice in education, and is commended here. Yet there appears to be a notable procedural weakness in the specific realization of these surveys, as they are not mandatory. The expert team asked whether or not there is a specific percentage of responding students per class that must be met, as a minimum standard for statistical validity; it appears that there is no such minimum. It would be worthwhile to formulate this statistical minimum. The students of the English program, however, verified that these surveys were regularly conducted, and were (in their view) taken seriously by the teachers being evaluated. Interestingly, the students were not in favor of transferring—as is happening now—the student surveys from paper to the university's electronic management system (SEMS). The students expressed the view that the most effective surveys were those conducted in-class and on paper, and they were not convinced of the anonymity of an online survey system. The Quality Assurance Committee should perhaps effectively demonstrate the absolute confidentiality of the electronic student survey procedure, or else maintain a paper option for those who prefer it.

Encouragingly, a new peer-to-peer teaching observation process is being undertaken. At present, this seems largely to consist of observations being made by academic staff trained by the Center for Teaching Excellence. It is intended, however, to expand this process later, perhaps to include all teaching staff receiving observation training. In the current manifestation of this process, all observations are pre-announced, so the teacher being observed knows that the observer is coming. In the future, unannounced observations may also prove useful, to guarantee that the class observed is truly representative of the teaching being regularly delivered. Yet, as this peer observation process is just beginning, it is here commended and encouraged as a potentially valuable assistance for the teaching staff.

The academic staff are supposed to be evaluated in an annual performance review, but it is the impression of the expert team—based on the site-visit discussions with the English department academic staff—that these are somewhat informal. While this can be admirable in terms of building collegiality within the program and with Faculty management, it was unclear to the expert team what



formal processes may be required by formal underperformance (e.g., say, an academic who does not publish regularly).

In terms of program review for quality assurance and quality improvement, it is also unclear whether or not external advice is sought. During the site-visit discussions, university collocutors quite refreshingly acknowledged that program review is often the result of these accreditation or reaccreditation processes. Yet it may be advisable as well to seek external program review and advice from a contracted expert. Many distinguished professors, after retiring, continue to engage in their profession by providing these types of program reviews, and can bring valuable external insights and suggestions to the program (without the stress or potential consequences of a formal accreditation process). If financial resources permit, it may be desirable to consider contracting such an external evaluator whose portfolio is simply to identify weaknesses and suggest improvements.

Alumni also appear to be somewhat under-utilized in regard to quality assurance. The alumni of the English program noted that they have almost no formal advisory interaction for program delivery or curriculum redesign, and observed that most of their interaction with the department remains informal and is maintained socially. Alumni, it need hardly be said, are a crucial resource for advice and employment insights in any program, but are particularly so in a program with a multi-decade history. It is recommended that any future Balkanistics Department carefully consider forming a formal advisory body of willing alumni who may comment on potential developments or identify curricular areas in need of improvement.

Finally, it is unclear to the expert team how, and how widely, quality assurance data or analytics are shared with staff. Obviously, in such cases, individualized data—student opinion or teacher performance—must be protected by confidentiality. Yet it might be beneficial to provide general or aggregated performance data, to enable instructors and program managers to identify which areas of performance require attention, or may benefit from additional training.

Thus, relating this section to the required KAA Standards, this report finds:

Standard 2.1: All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.

2.1: Yes, by analogy with existing programs currently running.

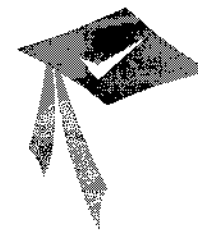
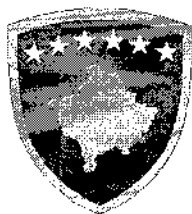
Standard 2.2: Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.

2.2: Yes, by evidence of existing programs currently running.

Standard 2.3: Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources and resources provided by other parts of the institution.

2.3: Yes.

Standard 2.4: Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.



2.4: Yes, although it is unclear whether or not learning outcomes are the foremost priority of the quality evaluations, signifying 'particular attention.'

Standard 2.5: Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.

2.5: Yes, although as mentioned above, it is unclear what formal processes are instituted in instances of obvious under-performance.

Standard 2.6: Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these Evaluations are made publicly available.

2.6: No. It does not appear that the data collected are 'made publicly available,' and much of the alumni engagement with the program is, by their testimony, largely informal.

Standard 2.7: Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.

2.7: Yes.

Standard 2.8: The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (e.g. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.

2.8: Yes, in part to meet re-accreditation requirements, and by evidence of programs already operating.

Standard 2.9: The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.

2.9: Yes.

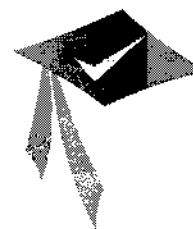
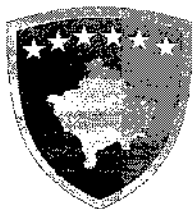
**Compliance Level: Substantially compliant.**

### **ET recommendations:**

1. *Make the student evaluations mandatory, but provide in-class paper options for those who prefer paper surveys or distrust online questionnaires.*
2. *Generalize or anonymize performance results (student survey results, teacher-teacher observation results) and make these data available to teaching staff and program managers.*
3. *Continue peer-to-peer observation processes, to include unannounced observations as well.*
4. *Consider contracting an external program review outside of the reaccreditation procedures.*
5. *Establish a more formal advisory board of alumni—when alumni begin to exist for the Balkanistics program—to comment on program delivery, skills evolution, and market requirements*

### **2.3. Academic staff**

The hiring of academic staff is a process controlled centrally by the University of Prishtina, and centrally regulated. As a general process, once a Faculty has identified a needed position, this is approved by the Senate, and the position is advertised in multiple media. The eventually successful



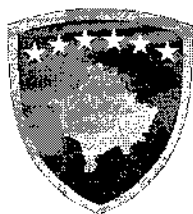
applicant is given appropriate contractual details, job descriptions, and other relevant documentation. The teaching staff, once hired, are held to general performance requirements, including teaching responsibilities, availability for student consultation, participation in academic functions (councils, commissions, etc.), maintenance of a research and publication profile, and other institutional or program functions that may require broad academic participation.

For the Balkanistics B.A. program, the main body of instructors identified are seven in number. By scientific degree, six of these seven hold PhDs, and the remaining one is an M.A. holder identified as being in an advanced stage of doctoral research ('PhD Thesis at the stage of ratification by the Senate'). (SER, p. 27) By academic title, only one holds professorial rank: there is one Assistant Professor, two Lecturers, two Teaching Assistants, and two without identified academic titles. (SER, p. 27) All of the contracted staff members appear to have appropriate research and teaching profiles, and represent among them an impressive array of linguistic diversity and multilingual competence.

Yet there is no avoiding the fact that staffing is one of the major concerns of the expert team. Without in any way questioning the qualifications, skill, or diligence of the staff already contracted, they seem simply too few for so linguistically ambitious a curriculum. Indeed, the SER states, in bold font, 'the University of Prishtina should announce in the first possible vacancy at least 4 new positions for teachers who would cover courses within the program: **two for Albanian language and literature and another two for Balkan languages and literature.**' (SER, p.28) The expert team well understands the difficulty of staffing a program before accreditation, yet it is also a genuine problem for the expert team to make congruous the huge linguistic scope of this curriculum with the relatively limited number of staff members available.

During the site visit discussions, the program and Faculty representatives repeatedly emphasized two points in relation to staffing: the first is that available staff may be readily 'borrowed' from regional partner universities (to cover, say, Greek); and secondly, that several social partners and agencies have committed to assisting in supporting a Balkanistics program by helping in facilitating such exchanges that would bring external instructors to support this program. Both points are highly encouraging, and reveal again the strong value that external social partners and international agencies may have for this program. Yet the expert team notes that this program is ambitious, and is being proposed at a currently bare-minimum level of necessary staffing. The expert team feels compelled, therefore, to state unequivocally that *inadequate staffing is the single greatest threat to the success of this program and, in the event of accreditation, must be rectified decisively and with immediate urgency.*

Such teaching staff would have, in addition to teaching responsibilities, requirements to be regularly available for student consultation; faculty responsibilities (councils, commissions, etc.); participation in quality assurance mechanisms; enforcement and upholding of University of Prishtina guidelines for



academic and ethical conduct, etc. Such extra-curricular responsibilities are comparable with those imposed as employment conditions at comparable higher education institutions throughout Europe and North America. These do not seem excessive or onerous and, by staff testimony, are followed and are understood.

Research may be under-supported area for the instructors. All academic staff are expected to maintain a publishing research profile as a condition of regular performance evaluation and promotion in academic title. It was unclear to the expert team how much practical assistance—indeed, including simple funding—is available to teaching staff. During the site-visit discussions it was mentioned that there is a centralized budget to assist research efforts, but that this is controlled centrally, and is not under the authority of the Faculty. It was the impression of the expert team that conference attendance and research publication is largely dependent upon individual instructor initiative. The staff mentioned their satisfaction with the provision of the EBSCO database to assist them. It seems, therefore, that research is an area of instructor support that could be improved.

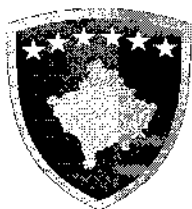
It is notable and laudable that this program is being structured with the advice and support of local and international partners. This cooperation will be decisive in the future success of this curriculum, if the program is accredited. Here it is perhaps not impertinent to mention that the academic staff would also benefit from close individual contacts and cooperation with these partner agencies and organizations. This could assume many forms, of which perhaps the most obvious would be: facilitation of appropriate guest lecturers; assistance to conduct study visits in the country and abroad; and perhaps providing real world praxis in terms of study visits for instructors within the agencies or organizations themselves.

Again, the expert team is highly impressed by the quality and capability of the staff already contracted to teach on this program, if accredited. But it must be emphasized once more that staffing must be the first priority of this program, particularly given the various combinations and permutations of language groups the program intends to cover. The Standards listed below do not adequately address the potential gravity of this staffing concern, so it is here iterated that *inadequate staffing is the single greatest threat to the success of this program and, in the event of accreditation, must be rectified decisively and with immediate urgency.*

Thus, relating this section to the required KAA Standards, this report finds:

Standard 3.1: Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.

3.1: Yes.



Standard 3.2: The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.

3.2: Yes.

Standard 3.3: Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out this activity.

3.3: Yes.

Standard 3.4: At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.

3.4: No. The various potential language combinations available make this judgement impossible to approve at current staffing levels.

Standard 3.5: For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.

3.5: Yes.

Standard 3.6: Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.

3.6: Yes, by extension of the evidence of other programs currently operating.

Standard 3.7: The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.

3.7: Yes.

Standard 3.8: Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once a year, The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.

3.8: No. The expert team is not convinced that the results of these evaluations are publicly available, at least as currently observed in current programs.

Standard 3.9: Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.

3.9: Yes.

Standard 3.10: Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.

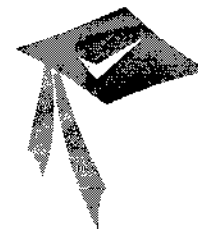
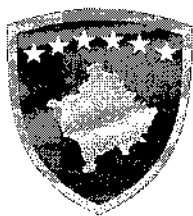
3.10: Yes, as affirmed in the SER, 'Retirement or loss of full-time teacher status is done according to applicable legislation (65 if the retirement age and up to 70 years is the age of engagement as associate staff).' (SER, p. 29)

**Compliance level: Substantially compliant**

### **ET recommendations:**

1. *Immediately contract additional teaching staff to cover the program delivery, or at least formalize guaranteed arrangements for the hosting of guest lecturers to cover gaps in the curriculum.*





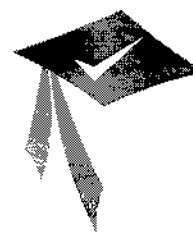
2. *Maintain close cooperation with social partners and international organizations to help identify guest lecturers, facilitate study visits for students and staff, and generally expand the community outreach of the program.*
3. *Clarify what research support is or will be available to teaching staff on this program, if accredited.*

## 2.4. Educational process content

The Balkanistics B.A. program is a highly ambitious, and frankly logistically complex, undertaking. It is a 240 ECTS credit program intended, for full-time students, to occupy four years in eight semesters. It is commendably unusual, as previously noted, in being open to any qualified Kosovo student irrespective of the language in which she or he completed her or his high school studies. Although the primary student recruitment anticipates students enrolling after completing high school, there is no formal impediment to older or non-traditional students participating, if they meet the other enrolment requirements. Program credits tend to vary from 5-7 for mandatory courses; electives are all 5 credits.

The curriculum is obviously designed to maximize student personalization of her or his studies, particularly in the study of regional languages. Yet with so many potential variations, it is highly difficult to summarize the curriculum as a basic structure. It is therefore worth quoting the SER quite extensively here, as it explains the main skeleton of the program's language offerings: 'In principle, a Contemporary Balkan Language can be Bosnian/ Croatian/ Serbian/ Montenegrin/ Bulgarian/ or Macedonian, Modern Greek, Romanian or Roma. This course also covers intensive language learning. For non-Albanian candidates, Contemporary Balkan Language is Albanian. Therefore, depending on the nationality of the enrolled students/student candidates, Albanian language is taught as a native language for Albanian native speakers and as a Contemporary Balkan language for non-Albanian communities. A Foreign Language within the Balkanistics Program includes English, German, French, Italian, or Spanish (all non-Balkan foreign languages which are taught at the Faculty level). Second Balkan Language 1 and 2 in the final year of studies may include any Balkan language that is not First Balkan language chosen in the first year. Therefore, if Bosnian is the first Contemporary Balkan language for an Albanian student, the Second Balkan language can be selected from amongst other languages such as Romanian, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Greek, etc.' (SER, p. 35)

Given the sheer number of possible language combinations permitted in this program the curriculum seems almost undeliverable in practice. But it is the belief of the expert team that not all permutations will be required at all times; it is likely that certain language combinations will prove to be popular, whilst others may never be selected.



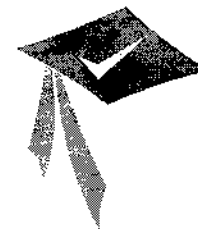
The basic structure is therefore less complex than is initially evident. A student takes, in each of the first three semesters, three language courses per semester: a native language (say, Albanian); a Balkan language (say, Bulgarian); and a Foreign language (say, Italian). The foreign language then drops out in the fourth semester, while the native language continues through all eight semesters. In semesters seven and eight, the Balkan language is potentially replaced by a second Balkan language, if selected as an elective. Thus, by our hypothetical example, a student might take eight semesters of native language Albanian courses; six semesters of Bulgarian courses; three semesters of Italian; and then might take (as an elective) a new Balkan language (say, modern Greek) in semesters seven and eight. Such a curriculum would require high-level linguistic competence of the students, but it is a program intended for students of precisely that description and scholarly inclination.

Because this is by design a program heavily weighted towards languages, the substantial majority of the course structure is based around language study. As a general observation, it may be said that the program seems well-designed to build the intended linguistic capabilities, with courses not just for language acquisition but also courses on syntax, morphology, phonetics and phonology, lexicology, dialectology, etc. A student who can manage all this linguistic study in three or four languages (through the whole of the eight semesters) would be admirably positioned to obtain employments in numerous fields requiring multilingual capability.

The social and cultural elements of the program are largely located in the elective offerings available. The electives begin in the second year; the first two semesters have only mandatory courses, and only one—Introduction to Balkan Studies—is cultural. Beginning with semester three, the student chooses two elective courses per semester (for 10 credits, each being 5 credits per course), in addition to the three mandatory language classes per semester.

The electives are well considered, allowing for student selection of the themes, topics, or regions most stimulating to the individual. These electives are: History of the Ancient Balkans; Native Language Folklore; Contemporary Balkan Language Folklore; Creative Writing; Political Geography of the Balkans; Byzantine History of the Balkans; Religions in the Balkans; the Ottoman History of the Balkans; Language Contacts; Comparative Literature; New History of the Balkans (19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century); History of Balkan Arts; Albanian Language Media in the Balkans; Scientific Research Methodology; Second Balkan Language I & II; Contrastive Idiomatics; and Media in the Balkans. This is impressively diverse, and would likely be highly appealing to students particularly intrigued by Balkan cultures: few programs indeed can boast of elective options covering the Byzantine history of the Balkans and Contrastive Idiomatics as available options.

If there is a notable flaw in these elective offerings, it is perhaps in the simple lack of contemporary cultural study. If the program is designed to build social cohesion and mutual respect amongst communities, it seems odd to avoid any consideration of modern cultural or social analysis. When the



expert team asked about this, the answer offered was somewhat timid, being simply that modern history has been very contentious in the Balkans, and such topics might be provocative. This is understandable, but may represent a lost opportunity. Students who are interested in the Balkans, and who can handle such potentially divisive topics as Religions in the Balkans, would presumably have the cultural breadth and maturity to examine contemporary Balkan social analysis.

The curriculum is therefore most notable for the extremely ambitious commitment to multiple language study, combined with an impressive variety of elective offerings. While the program would naturally require students with a genuine talent for languages, it should prove a fascinating and intellectually serious course of study. It would likely also, as mentioned previously in this report, produce highly employable graduates with opportunities in many potential professional applications.

Thus, relating this section to the required KAA Standards, this report finds:

Standard 4.1: The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.

4.1: Yes.

Standard 4.2: The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the Program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.

4.2: Yes.

Standard 4.3: The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.

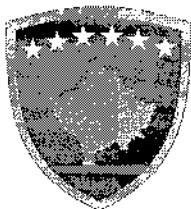
4.3: Yes.

Standard 4.4: The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars, and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/syllabuses of each subject/module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.

4.4: Yes.

Standard 4.5: If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.

4.5: No. As noted above, the sheer variety, and possible combinations, of language groups, makes this standard unfulfilled given current staffing.



Standard 4.6: The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.

4.6: Yes, by evidence of programs currently running.

Standard 4.7: Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.

4.7: Yes, again, by evidence of programs currently running.

Standard 4.8: Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.

4.8: Yes, by evidence of programs currently running.

Standard 4.9: Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.

4.9: Yes, by evidence of course design and programs currently running.

Standard 4.10: Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.

4.10: Yes, by evidence of programs currently running.

Standard 4.11: If the study program includes practise stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ECTS credits and the work of students at the practical training organizations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.

4.11: N/A.

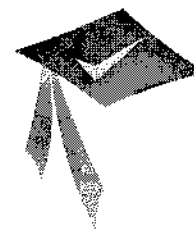
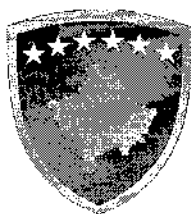
Standard 4.12: In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts, or other documents with institutions/organizations/ practical training units.

4.12: N/A.

**Compliance Level: Substantially compliant.**

### **ET recommendations:**

1. *Immediately address the potential staffing gaps foreseeable for the delivery of the language components of this curriculum.*
2. *Consider replacing one of the mandatory semester eight courses with a final research project or diploma paper.*
3. *Consider providing more contemporary country or cultural analysis courses in the elective offerings.*



## 2.5. Students

Because there are no current students of this program, the following assessment by the expert team is done with regards to the SER, the treatment of students on other departments of this Faculty (since both members of the expert team have already conducted evaluations for other departments at the same faculty) and information obtained through online interviews. That being said, there is no doubt about the fair enrolment procedure, inclusion of students within the Faculty, respecting their rights, addressing their needs, academic and administrative support etc. Professors and other academic staff proved to be very active and responsive towards the students, they have multiple consultation periods throughout the week and they are available through emails as well. Their availability is one of the key elements through the studies and especially within this *new* study program.

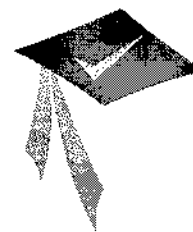
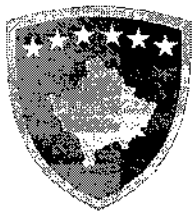
Students' rights are properly addressed at other departments of the faculty and the expert team has no reason to believe that it will be any different at this department/program. Sufficient number of exam periods is guaranteed by the Statute and the students have the right to appeal in case of disputes.

In the SWOT analysis in the SER (SER, pp. 122-123), some of the recognised threats include cultural and social differences. Since that threat is factual, it is necessary for the Department and the Faculty to stay critical and objective and to implement such values to their students. There is no doubt that getting to know the Other results in lowered or even non-existent hostility, but the program should then be an example of such practices.

What the expert team finds somewhat problematic is a relatively large number of possible language combinations when enrolling into the studies. Some potential students might be attracted by that option, but as the Dean said during the interviews, the lowest number of students needed to enrol for each language (in order to have legal obligation to carry out the studies) is 5. Analysis should be made in regard to student provenance and factual interest of enrolling into Greek, Romanian or Romani languages (for example). In the expert team's opinion, the studies seem a truly optimistic and wide project, but in order to ensure a safer and sustainable future, the expert team would suggest narrowing down the language options to a few most popular languages, at least in the early years of the studies. After 2 or 3 generations of graduates, it should be easier to widen the language choices.

Generally, the University of Prishtina would definitely profit from the studies. New generations of young, critical and objective graduates would further build Kosovo's society and culture and would contribute to lowering and mitigating potential tensions.

In the interview with the employers, the expert team met the IOM representatives who expressed a great need for professionals in their line of work, and anticipated those professionals being graduates from the Balkanistics program. More specifically, they introduced the expert team to their project



VOC-UP which calls for more than 200 language professionals. Furthermore, the program has more international support from various institutions where students could eventually conduct their student practice or exchange.

In conclusion, while the expert team did not get a chance to talk to current students, the department staff and potential employers were very reassuring regarding the students. From the student perspective, there are no major downsides to the studies and for that reason the expert time is fully compliant with the standards.

Thus, relating this section to the required KAA Standards, this report finds:

Standard 5.1: There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organizing students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.

5.1: Yes.

Standard 5.2: All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.

5.2: Yes.

Standard 5.3: The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.

5.3: Yes.

Standard 5.4: Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.

5.4: Yes.

Standard 5.5: The results obtained by the students through the study cycles are certified by the academic record.

5.5: Yes.

Standard 5.6: Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.

5.6: Yes.

Standard 5.7: Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.

5.7: Yes.

Standard 5.8: Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.

5.8: Yes..

Standard 5.9: Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.

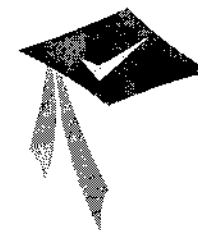
5.9: Yes.

Standard 5.10: The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties, and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.

5.10: Yes.

Standard 5.11: Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.

5.11: Yes.



**Compliance Level: Fully compliant.**

**ET recommendations:**

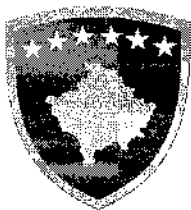
1. *Limit the number of possible language combinations.*
2. *Connect with other similar programs in the region in order to encourage student exchange.*

## **2.6. Research**

The academic staff of the Balkanistics program will be expected to conduct scholarly research and to publish their work regularly. This requirement is subject to Regulation 2/7447 (2019) (SER, p. 125). Promotional considerations incorporate evaluation of academic publication, with particular weight given to essays published in the Web of Science or other journals/databases identified by MEST. Financial awards are available for instructors who publish in the highest-value publications. Staff of the Faculty of Philology are also, by their own affirmation, interested in participating in national, regional, and international scientific conferences and congresses.

It should be noted, however, that this strong commitment to research appears to be under-supported institutionally. The SER repeatedly questions the institutional support provided to the teaching staff: 'insufficient financial support for research projects'; 'lack of a serious scientific support for membership and indexation in the world scientific platforms from the financial viewpoint'; 'lack of online resources accessible through the web related to the respective fields'; 'devaluation of quality local and regional publications in the selection of academic staff and creation of special lists for this by local institutions'; 'researchers' access to publications on platforms indexed according to the requirements of the institution.' (SER, p. 128) Although some of these are more broadly national concerns, there is a clear current of concern detectable herein regarding the research support provided by the University of Prishtina.

While the staff were perfectly aware that financial resources are limited, and repeatedly expressed their understanding that the University's executive management cannot accommodate all requests, it remains true that there appears to be a significant impression that research is required, but under-supported. This report cannot possibly compel an alteration in the research funding of the University of Prishtina, yet the report again suggests identifying and appointing a staff member to serve as a departmental research coordinator, once a Balkanistics department is constituted. It may be possible for the departmental staff to apply collaboratively for research projects, or perhaps to apply as an institutional partner in projects led by other departments or universities in Europe. Here again the support of international partners and agencies may be very helpful indeed in facilitating such collaborations.



Student research may also be an element worth expanding. Although the acquisition of languages does not necessarily entail formal and novel research as such, it does appear to be a lost opportunity not to have an eighth semester final research project or diploma paper. That being noted, however, the general course descriptions describe an admirable variety of assessment mechanisms, with numerous classes featuring papers (essays), projects, presentations, and other somewhat-autonomous research and critical thinking. The proposed curriculum therefore appears congruous in general structure with undergraduate programs in Europe and North America regarding the research performance expected of students.

As noted in the section 'Students' above, the expert team were highly impressed by the social partners and international organizations who hope this program will be accredited, and have already identified potential areas of employment that might benefit from adding program graduates. In this discussion, it was evident that these organizations believe that program graduates would bring linguistic skill, writing ability, analytical capability, and research skills of a sufficient level to make additional training productive and relatively easy. The expert team takes very seriously this assessment.

The expert team believes that the currently contracted staff for the Balkanistics program have demonstrated their interest and capability in discipline-appropriate research. Yet they also appear to be disadvantaged by similar bureaucratic or institutional impediments facing their academic colleagues in other Faculty of Philology departments—lack of access to physical and electronic scholarly sources; lack of funding support for conference participation outside of the immediate Balkan region; lack of opportunities to conduct research mobility visits to other European universities or research institutes; MEST valuation of journals and databases that may not be acknowledge the regional journals that might be appropriate for Balkanistics; etc. These disadvantages seem unlikely to be amendable in the near future, yet they may perhaps be ameliorated by partnerships or collaborations with other departments or programs in international partner institutions.

Thus, relating this section to the required KAA Standards, this report finds:

Standard 6.1: The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a Research center or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the research objectives.

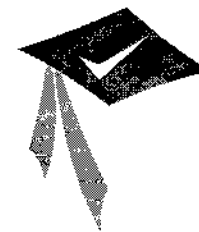
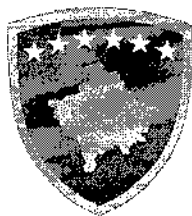
6.1: No. It does not appear either to the expert team or the Faculty of Philology itself that 'sufficient financial, logistic, and human resources are allocated for achieving the research objectives.'

Standard 6.2: Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.

6.2: Yes.

Standard 6.3: Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with





international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.

6.3: Yes.

Standard 6.4: The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.

6.4: Yes.

Standard 6.5: The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars, etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.

6.5: Yes.

Standard 6.6: Research is validated through scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centers, scientific parks, and other structures for validation.

6.6: Yes.

Standard 6.7: Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.

6.7: Yes.

Standard 6.8: Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.

6.8: Yes.

Standard 6.9: Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.

6.9: Yes, at least in intention.

Standard 6.10: Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.

6.10: No. The expert team has seen no evidence of a 'clear procedure' regarding intellectual property or commercialization of ideas.

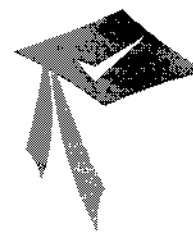
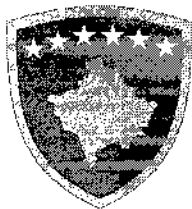
Standard 6.11: Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.

6.11: Yes, at least in intention.

**Compliance Level: Partially compliant.**

### **ET recommendations:**

1. *If institutional research support is inadequate, apply for projects (or participation in projects) that will bring outside funding or provide conference opportunities.*
2. *Seek, perhaps through international partners, to identify research collaborations appropriate to Balkanistics in the countries where they operate.*
3. *Consider adding a mandatory final research project or diploma paper in semester eight.*
4. *Seek to include students in instructors' research projects, wherever appropriate.*

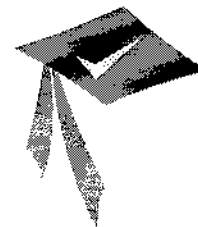


## 2.7. Infrastructure and resources

The general infrastructure of both the Faculty and proposed program seems to be somewhat satisfactory with a lot of space for improvement. The expert team is aware of the fact that such improvements are above and beyond the program's jurisdiction and responsibility, yet still the obligation for addressing those potential improvements and downsides exists. The faculty, department, management, classrooms, professor offices, and library all seem to be located in the same physical building, along with other departments and even other faculties (FMNS). One lecture hall and one exercise room seem unfit for such a large number of courses and language combination and that is also one of the reasons why the expert team suggest limiting the possible number of languages and their combinations. Additional classrooms would be a great improvement in regards to professors and students schedule, but the expert team has no insight into whether that is achievable.

According to the SER (SER, p.14), the library has a fund of 15.000 titles and 300 master/PhD theses and working area with 80 seating places and additional 20 in the computer room. In regards to the number of enrolled students (in both the Faculty and the program), the ratio with working area seating places is not satisfactory and the expert team cannot give compliance for that standard. The library has a rather small book fund with little to no access to international databases, journals and other relevant periodicals neither for students or the professors. The expert team, again, is aware that the majority of funds is allocated by the University of Prishtina and that neither the program nor the Faculty can afford to singlehandedly acquire such access. It is advised that the management of the Faculty firmly requests solutions to this problem from the responsible bodies of the University of Prishtina (Senate, Rectorate). In order to produce relevant and professional graduates and also to provide resources for research, the Faculty needs to enable access to contemporary scientific works, be they physical and/or digital. While foreign literature donations are welcomed, the library cannot entirely depend on them. Effort needs to be put into actively procuring relevant literature because good part of the syllabi for BA courses call upon foreign literature. Furthermore, not providing access to databases and relevant literature may result with copyright infringement which is something no higher education institution should practice nor tolerate and it can also be a burden for professors who need to go above and beyond to provide relevant literature for their courses.

Infrastructure is barely adapted to the students with special needs, and it seems not all of their needs are properly addressed. The needs of the students with visual or hearing impairments



are not addressed as well as needs of the students with extremity impairment. One of the solutions that arises, as seen in practice at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, is to provide personal assistants to students with special needs. An assistant is usually another student of the same faculty who helps and guides or navigates a student with special needs around the faculty premises. The assistant engages in that kind of activity as a way of working out (instead of paying) some or all of his or her scholarship fee, and as well out of empathic and altruistic reasons. The benefits of implementing this or similar kinds of assistance are enormous for all parties included - the Faculty, the person with special needs and the student assistant.

From the SWOT analysis in the SER (SER, pp.135-136) it is commendable that certain steps have been taken into fixing infrastructural flaws of the building and the expert team suggest that certain steps are taken as soon as possible in regards to the flooding basement which is both a health hazard and building stability hazard.

Despite the compliance to 4 out of 6 standards (66%), the expert teams' final decision is substantial compliance because a great majority of the standards goes beyond the program's jurisdiction and monetary power.

Thus, relating this section to the required KAA Standards, this report finds:

Standard 7.1: The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in qualitative terms as regards premises, human resources, and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.

7.1: Yes.

Standard 7.2: There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.

7.2: Yes.

Standard 7.3: The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents that, for the study program submitted for evaluation, it possesses the following, for the next at least three years:

- a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process; b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence; d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.

7.3: Yes.

Standard 7.4: The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms, and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT



equipment.

7.4: Yes.

**Standard 7.5:** The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognized publishers, from the last ten years; d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for; e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications, according to the stated mission.

7.5: No, for the same reasons elaborated above.

**Standard 7.6:** The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.

7.6: No, for the reasons elaborated above.

**Compliance Level: Substantially compliant.**

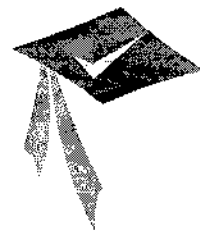
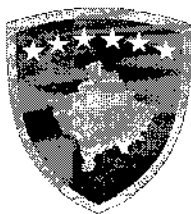
#### **ET recommendations:**

1. *Enrich the book fund of the library through active acquisition of new titles.*
2. *Enable access to international databases, journals, and other periodicals.*
3. *Address the needs of all students with special needs.*

### **3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET**

The B.A. program in Balkanistics is a logistically complex and ambitious undertaking, as it would need to be: the Balkan region has a large cultural, linguistic, and social variety, and to examine these at university level requires a certain audacity. Yet in assessing such a program, particularly for a first accreditation, two questions suggest themselves to an expert team: is the program deliverable, and would the intended students learn from it. In both cases the answer here appears to be positive.

There are multiple hesitations expressed throughout this report. The expert team is alarmed by the potential under-staffing of the program, particularly given the wide number of potential language combinations. As this report has recommended, it is likely prudent to reduce the number of available language offerings, at least in the first accreditation period. Similarly, the expert team believes that certain slight modifications of the curriculum (some contemporary cultural analysis electives, a research project or diploma paper in semester eight) would be worthy of consideration. Institutional support of staff research seems undesirably weak.



But this program seems to have, despite all such misgivings, a real position in the society of Kosovo, a clear academic purpose, and a real chance to succeed—thus making a positive contribution to the lives of the students, and to the general community. The expert team believes that this program deserves a place in the University of Prishtina, and will recommend accreditation—but, for reasons of staffing and linguistic variety—will recommend a relatively small student intake for the first accreditation. This is intended to enable to program staff (and, it is to be hoped, a future Department of Balkanistics) to grapple with the staffing and logistical problems with relatively low initial numbers, and then scale up in later accreditation applications.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program B. A. in Balkanistics offered by the Faculty of Philology of the University ‘Hasan Prishtina’ in Prishtina 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 years with a number of 30 students to be enrolled in the program.

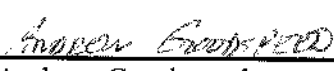
#### 4. APPENDICES (*if available*)

1. none

#### Expert Team

##### Chair

  
(Signature)

  
Andrew Goodspeed

14 June 2024  
(Date)

##### Member

(Signature)

Juraj Bogat

(Date)

