UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA "HASAN PRISHTINA" BACHELOR PROGRAM IN NURSING

REACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

9th of July 2020 final report

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 25th June 2020 (via zoom)

Expert Team (ET) members:

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

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

Naim Gashi, Acting Director of KAA
Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring
Ilirjane Ademaj, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation report 2020*
- *Video concerning simulation centre and training laboratories*
- *Meetings and discussions which took place during the site visit (via zoom)*
- *The Code of Good Practice, Guidelines for Site-Visit and Guidelines for Experts (academic programs) provided by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency*
  Requested documents after site-visit:
- Strategic and financial plan of the faculty. If this is not available, maybe the strategic and financial plan of the university. Please mention the budget / sums allocated to the Nursing Bsc program.

- *List of spaces available for the Nursing BSc program in the new building/campus. Please mention their dimensions, the number of seats per lecture room/ seminar room and laboratory, the number of seats in the library. Please mention when will you start the teaching in the new building.*
- *The admission procedure/regulation*

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- *Quality Assurance procedures (including the monitoring group procedures/regulation) + an example of a survey for students evaluating their teachers + A report on the overall quality of the program (the most recent one)*
- *Regulation for BSc studies – we are interested to see regulation/policies for student transfer, guidelines for writing a final thesis (that were mentioned during the online discussion) + Code of ethics (including regulation of ethics in research)*
- *The mission of the University of Pristina*
- *List of criteria for teachers' evaluation (including the criteria used by the monitoring groups mentioned during the online discussion)*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *Accreditation Manual by KAA*
- *EU directive 20005/36/EC, with amendment 2013/55/EU B*
- *Health legistlation in Kosovo*
- *European Standards and Guidelines in Quality Assurance (only for benchmark)*
- *Benchmarking between the Nursing study programmes offered in Kosovo.*

1.2. Site visit schedule

09.00 – 09.30   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 and this applies for each session)*

09.30 – 10.40   Meeting with the heads of the study programme

10.40 – 11.20   Meeting with quality assurance representatives

11.20 – 12.10   Lunch break

12.10 – 13.00   Meeting with teaching staff

13.00 – 13.40   Meeting with students

13.40 – 14.20   Meeting with graduates

14.20 – 15.00   Meeting with employers of graduates

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| 15.00 – 15.10 | Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts |
| 15.10 – 15.20 | Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program |

Nr.	Study programs	Experts	Responsible persons of study programs			
1	Nursing BSc / University of Prishtina	Helvi Kyngas Delia Gologan	1. Elvana Podvorica	2. Qendresa Zogaj	3. Adelina Ismajli 4. Antigona Hasani

Other information

Overall instructions for HEIs:

1. Each meeting should be attended by maximum 6 persons;
2. The students selected for the meeting should reflect a diversity in terms of study cycle, year of study, students with special needs if any, etc;
3. The teaching staff selected for the meeting should reflect a diversity in terms of full-time and part time, local and international, etc;
4. The students, graduates and employers of graduates should not be employed at the institution;
5. Anyone whose attendance won't be agreed in advance with KAA and the Expert Team will be asked to leave the interview session;
6. Nametags are to be provided for all people attending the meetings.

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

University of Prishtina is established in 1969. It has bachelor (BA), master (MA) and doctoral (PhD) level programs. This is the fifth reaccreditation of the Nursing (BA) study program. It was accredited for the first time in 2001 and after that it has undergone several external evaluation processes. Previous accreditation for three years was in 2013. Both the SER and the online discussions with all internal and external stakeholders have indicated a dire need of specialised nurses in Kosovo, thus it is very clear that the program is needed. There is insufficiency number of nurses with bachelor level education in Kosovo. In spite of that in meeting with graduates it was pointed out (by one participant) that there is too much nurses in Kosovo. The program corresponds with mission and principles of faculty of medicine.

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2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

Mission of Nursing program fulfils most of the standards indicated by KAA accreditation manual. Mission is defined as a statement that includes elements of teaching, research and community service and seems to be linked to the mission of the university (available within the Statute of the university that can be accessed here: https://mjekesia.uni-pr.edu/Files/1---Statuti-i-UP-se----21-09--2012---Shqip.aspx). The study program reflects the vision of Faculty of Medicine to provide learning environment for students where they are challenged to demonstrate professional perfection, respect for professional codes of ethics, innovative on research and focus on promoting the profession around Kosovo. It can be clearly seen that the Nursing program is built on line with this. The objectives of the program are based on National Qualification Framework and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area. All objectives are in line with these. The study program has well defined didactic concept but research concept is not so clear in area of nursing and not so clearly reflected in the mission. We recommend the program to consider reflecting the efforts they have been taking upon regarding research in the mission. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations concerning the academic issues which are made publicly available through the SEMS (the internal platform used within the faculty). We recommend the faculty to consider publishing them on the website as well (https://mjekesia.uni-pr.edu/Ballina/Dokumente-dhe-Rregullore.aspx). During the online interviews it became evident that these regulations are known to the academic members. However, it is not clear neither from the SER, nor from the online interviews, whether they are reviewed periodically or just in link with external evaluations for accreditation.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:
1. Reflect in the mission of the program its research concept and priorities in terms of involvement in the community.
2. Consider periodical revision of all regulations and internal policies, regardless of the external evaluations for (re)accreditation.

2.2. Quality management

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Quality management follow all standards of the specific general area from the KAA accreditation manual. The quality assurance is integrated in daily teaching activity and covers all crucial areas. All staff members participated in self-evaluation and cooperate with reporting and improvement of activities. Quality assurance cover all areas from planning, implementation and evaluation. As well, it covers all issues of study program and its outcomes and improving of them. Quality assurance process ensure both that required standards are met and continuous improving is made. Survey data is collected, analysed and used for quality assurance. However, the results are not made publicly available – which might be one of the reasons why filling in surveys is not very popular among the stakeholders. Moreover, as indicated during the online interviews, the QA receives data collected by the Student Services about the student drop-out and success rates and integrates this in the QA reports. Also, the quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved. As well the students' perspective is taken account to improve the quality as students are both members in the QA structures and the main respondents to the surveys implemented as part of the QA system. Students confirmed that their improvements suggestions were always taken into account at the level of faculty.

During the site-visit in the meeting with employers of graduates, graduates and students it was emphasized that the quality of nurses' education is very high in Pristhina University.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:
- Publish reports of the QA structures while protecting personal data.

2.3. Academic staff

It was clearly indicated in the self-evaluation report on the table (according to standards of KAA accreditation manual) the name of academic staff, full time or part-time contract, academic title, qualifications and duration of contract. Academic staff fulfil all standards indicated by KAA accreditation manual. Comparing current qualifications of teaching staff with those from 2016 (when another external evaluation took place) the ET observes that there it is a significantly improvement of the quality in human resources. The qualifications of academic staff in Nursing program is defined in European Directive and according to that education of nurses should take place chiefly under supervision of nurses. The academic staff of nursing program is also according to that directive. There are 12 teachers with MASc degree

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in Nursing (5 full time and 7 part-time). As well, 2 of them are PhD candidates in Nursing Science (one is close to finishing his/her PhD studies). The number of full time teachers is proper – adequate to the number of students enrolled, workload is divided in a proper way, the work contracts are according to national standards and regulations, and responsibility of staff members is presented well and according to relevant standards. Candidates for employment are provided with full description of their conditions of employment, including their rights and reposnabilities – for example: the obligation of publishing at least 1 research paper per year. These rights and responsabilities were well known and agreed by the members of the academic community who seemed to be on board with the university's efforts of increasing the results in research. However, it was not clear for the faculty members what are the promotion criteria nor whether their research activity or involvement in the community or taking upon administrative/beauracratic responsabilities will count in the career advancement process. We recommend the university to clarify this aspect, as it might also serve as a good-practice example for all other HEIs in Kosovo.

Nevertheless, it is strongly recommended to support nursing teachers to undergo a PhD program in Nursing Science as a part of continuous professional development plan. According to self-evaluation report and discussions with academic staff it was also emphasized that the university offers continuous professional development opportunities including among others trainings for the improvement of teachers pedagogical competences.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:
1. It is highly recommended to support nursing teachers to undergo PhD programs in Nursing Science as part of the Staff Development Plan.
2. If the number of students will be increased (up to 100 per year) it is strongly recommended to maintain the qualifications of nursing staff in the same proper level as up to now.
3. Consider including in the career advancement system (promotion criteria) the research activity, involvement in the community and taking up administrative/beauracratic responsabilities within the university – thus encouraging academic staff to act in these directions.

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2.4. Educational process content

The curriculum fulfil the majority of standards presented in KAA accreditation manual. The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and it is according to the European Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (20005/36/EC, with amendment 2013/55/EU). The program has analytical syllabuses according to national standards and aligned with international practices, therefore the disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow needed in order to ensure the development of professional nurses.

The aim of the program is appropriate for a degree of Bachelor in Nursing. Description of subjects, objectives of the course, expected learning outcomes, teaching methodology, methods of assessment, literature (basic and additional) and designed learning plan are very clear. They all are logically connected to the aim of the program. The content of the evaluated program follows the European standards and the program is provided in Albanian. The Nurses BSc program also follows the European standards in terms of structure – it is divided into six semesters (each with 60 ECTS) with a total duration of three academic years, and credit allocation – as it is equivalent with 180 ECTS. All courses carry ECTS points and 1 ECTS is equivalent with 25 hours. There is proper number of ECTS of elective studies according to European Directive and its amendment mentioned above. All courses carry at least 3 ECTS which is according to requirements mentioned above. We recommend the university to continuously review the credit allocation per courses along with the students, in order to ensure that they reflect the real workload of each student.

Clinical training is very clearly regulated in European Directive and its amendment. According to that, nursing programs in bachelor level should include at least 4600 hours (2300 hours for clinical part with direct contact with patients/1/3 theoretical part and students' self-study). The evaluated program fulfils these requirements. There is proper number of clinical mentors and laboratory training is organized in small groups thus ensuring effectiveness of teaching and learning.

The program developed its own simulation centre and e-learning platforms – both very important in students learning process. The no. of rooms for laboratory training and the number of manikins and other equipments are proper for the number of students enrolled and for guaranteeing a qualitative educational process. ET's Evaluation of simulation centre, manikins

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and other equipments is based on video, self-evaluation report and discussions with responsibile persons for the program, academic staff and students.

The SER mentions that academic staff use a wide variety of types of teaching methodologies thus supporting the reach of preset learning outcomes. Teachers also pointed out that university arranges them opportunities to improve their teaching skills. The internal regulations cover teaching and assessment methods and they are appropriate and relevant for the learning outcomes. Students manifested, during the online discussion, their contempt with the relationship they have with their teachers. In the case of increasing the number of enrolled students, the university should consider monitoring more closely that evaluations and assessments are fairly and objectively implemented to all students. Policies and procedures should include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.

Clinical training for the UP students are organized within the clinical hospital of the university. Also, the clinical training assessment methods are relevant and appropriate for their purposes. Mentors evaluate students performance and skill-acquisition during the clinical training, while students evaluate their mentors. The ET recommends the university to develop QA procedures for the clinical training as well as training opportunities for the mentors, in order to ensure fair assessment of students as well as the quality of training. These QA procedures should be connected with the student learning outcomes for these clinical trainings.

The academic feasibly of the study program is ensured by taking account the expected entry qualifications, a suitable design of the curriculum, a students' workload that has been checked for plausibility as well as an adequacy number of exams.

The quality of educational process is evaluated continuously and adjusted if there exists the need for that based on evaluation. Educational processes face the standards of KAA accreditation manual.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:
1. Especially if the number of students will be increased (up to 100 per year) it is strongly recommended to keep in control clinical and laboratory training conditions to support

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high quality education and also the number of students in one group in training does not grow too big. The current situation is excellent for 50 students to ensure high quality training.

2. Develop QA procedures for the clinical training and mentors.
3. Review ECTS credit allocation per course, together with the students, in order to ensure that the student workload is reflected correctly.

2.5. Students

The Nursing BSc program is following the admission procedure formally adopted at the level of the Faculty of Medicine. Highschool graduates with a speciality in Biology, Chemistry or similar, that have sit and successfully passed the Matura exam can candidate for a place in the Nursing program. Admission is done based on the average grades from highschool and the one from the entrance exam – an exam in Biology and Chemistry.

The program currently enrols 50 students /year (a total of 150 students) which are organized in small groups to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process: „In lectures and exercises, the students are divided in groups that enable the development of teaching according to the high standards of teaching, whereas in the practical part they are divided into smaller groups, respectively the maximum number for the group is 8 to 10 students mentored by one clinical mentor."(SER, p.123) Students have confirmed this during the online interviews and they have manifested their satisfaction with the learning process which is interactive.

The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record held through the electronic platform that the faculty is using – SEMS. We recommend the head of the program to encourage and motivate its faculty members to offer continuous feedback to students regarding their progress in achieving the pre-set learning outcomes and not only by grades. Offering recommendations of what they should focus on, will help them develop the skills and abilities they need to become professionals in stead of just graduating with an average of more than 6. The university already has in place a system of consultations offered by the teachers to the students

The SER does not mention a flexible treatment for students in special situations and the ET recommends the university to consider offering such flexibility for students who go through a surgery, a disease, a death in their family etc. – which proved to be so needed worldwide during

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the CoVid-19 pandemic. For example, students in such situations could be granted the chance to sit the exam in a special session, benefit from an extended deadline or be granted a special scholarship etc.

Completion rates, drop-out rates and results in exams are also presented to the QA structures – though not collected by them directly – and used within the QA reports they prepare.

In order to ensure an ethical conduct within the academic community, the program follows the rules of the Code of Ethics adopted at university level. It includes references to ethical conduct and plagiarism and it is well-known and respected by all members of the community – as it was indicated by the online interviews. However, there have not been any cases of misconduct, plagiarism, harassment or corruption reported to the commission of ethics recently. The ET recognises the efforts put up by the university to discourage and reduce the dimensions of the plagiarism phenomenon – as they have acquired a software used both for students papers and teachers articles/research papers. Nevertheless, the ET recommends the university to continue its efforts in encouraging both students and staff members to report any case of misconduct. Though this is not a well embedded tradition in Balkan countries, reporting and dealing with these cases in a transparent manner is the only solution for reducing the phenomenon and raise the level of trust of third parties in the university – including its international popularity. Since for students it is rather difficult to report on a teachers miss-behaviour if the report should be filed to another teacher, we recommend the university to consider the creation of an Ombudsman – a person who is not a teaching staff member within the university that could work as a trust-worthy person for the students in the Nursing BSc programme and not only.

Students transfers take place according to the national legislation only twice a year at definite moments and some of the previous learning results are recognised.

The rights and obligations of the students are reflected in all internal regulations and published on the internal platforms, that students were aware of. We recommend the university to continue its efforts of working together with student representatives and student unions to popularize these internal regulations so that as many students comply with them, as possible. The students rights include the right to refuse a grade that the student does not agree with and retake the exam. As part of the appeal procedure students have the right to also ask for another commission – that does not include the initial teacher – to recheck the exam paper, but this has very rarely been requested. Both teachers and students were aware of these procedures, though more can be done to increase their popularity.

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Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. Motivate teachers to offer feedback to students on their performance regarding the achievement of their learning outcomes.
2. Offer flexible treatment for students in special situation.
3. Encourage both students and teachers to report the ethical misconducts they witness.
4. Continue efforts to make the appeal procedure as well as the other rights and responsabilities of students more popular among the academic community.

4.1. Research

Research objectives for the Nursing BSc program have been defined and they reflect the research development plan of university. Expectations from teachers to be involved in research and other academic activities is clear for all involved parties. Academic staff is encouraged by the management of the faculty and university to include their research results wihin their teaching and to involve students in research projects in order to encourage them to embark on a research-related career. Therefore, students are involved in research.

Given the national political context of Kosovo, that the ET is very well aware, the ET praises the efforts of the university to allocate financial and human resources for research. Though research in Kosovo is still at its beginnings, especially in the field of Nursing sciences, these represent relevant steps towards developing the research activity in the program, faculty, university and country and thus making the academic staff and institutions internationally acknowledged for this. In meetings with heads of program and teaching staff it was told that workload is proper and that faculty members managed to allocate time for both research and teaching as well as other duties – e.g. consultations for students, coordinating their final thesis and/or getting involved in . The academic staff is active in research and there are many published scientific papers and academic papers under the name of the university. We strongly agree with what was pointed out during the discussions with heads of study program: that nursing research is challenging to develop because of lack of academic staff with PhD level education in nursing science and that effects of research skills, but we are confident that, in time, with perseverance, the university will be able to make significant steps in this area as well. Efforts put together until now are very much appreciated. This situation cannot be

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changed in a moment, thus it would be beneficial to elaborate a long term plan on how to develop nursing research.

 Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. It is encouraged to create and adopt a longterm plan on how to develop nursing research.
2. It is encouraged to do Nursing research about areas which helps in Kosovo to develop quality of nursing and as well quality of nursing education

4.2 Infrastructure and resources

The premises, human resources, and equipment in the Faculty of Medicine comprises the adequate number within the necessary standards to ensure long-term implementation of the Nursing BSc study program. The ET considers that the available resources are appropriate for the current number of students. The program premises include lecture rooms, reading rooms, library, laboratories, a Clinical Skills simulation centre and they also use for the clinical training the premises of the clinical hospital in Pristina. Though the SER did not mention exact number of spaces within the faculty, the premises within the university were assessed by the ET based on the video submitted by the university, the mentions in the SER and the discussions during the online interviews with different stakeholders. All these three complementary sources indicated that the current facilities are appropriate for the purpose of the program. They are clean and adequate for the educational process as well as well equipped with manekins and simulation equipments, in order to help students develop some basic skills before going to the clinical training and get in touch with real-life patients. Should the program enrol more students in the future, the ET recommends a close monitor on the way spaces are allocated and used in order to guarantee a qualitative educational process for all students. Future investments in the campus are always welcomed. For example, such investments could be directed towards increasing the accessibility of the spaces, towards learning materials or constantly modernising the premises and laboratories. The SER mentioned that ` The Faculty of Medicine in the next coming years will have new administrative facilities with an increased capacity of teaching and laboratory space`(SER, p. 138) but with no other details regarding the calendar of these investments or the exact number and types of spaces that will be available once the investment is finished.

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The premises are accessible for students with physical disabilities, but extra-investments could be made to accesibilise the campus to other types of potential disabilities a student could face or adapt the learning materials to their special needs.

The library have a sufficient stock of literature, both in English and Albanian as well as enough study places for students to study. Wifi is available in the building and there are computer rooms available for all students. The university ensures access to the ScienceDirect portal for its academic community, but accessing online journals did not seem to be very popular among students. They should be more encouraged to use them as a source for documenting their papers and the university could monitor the usage of these expensive resources – to measure their efficiency and efficacy.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:
1. Encourage students to use more the online journals and monitor the access and usage of these resources.
2. Continue the investment in the faculty campus and resources.

5. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the Bachelor Program in Nursing (BSc) offered by University of Prishtina "Hasan Pristhina" *is Fully 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 one hundred (100) students to be enrolled in the program.

APPENDICES *(if available)*

1. A
2. B
3. C

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Expert Team

Chair

	Helvi Kyngäs	**3rd of July**
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	Delia Gologan	**3rd of July**
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

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(Signature)   (Print Name)   (Date)

Member

_____

(Signature)   (Print Name)   (Date)

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