



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

University of Prishtina
Faculty of Philosophy
MA Sociology

REACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM



March 21, Prishtina

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1. Context	3
1.2. Site visit schedule	4
1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation.....	4
2. PROGRAM EVALUATION	5
2.1. Mission, objectives and administration	5
2.2. Quality management.....	6
2.3. Academic staff.....	7
2.4. Educational process content	8
2.5. Students	10
2.6. Research	11
2.7. Infrastructure and resources.....	13
3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET	14



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit (on line): March 16, 2021

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Prof. Dr. Melita Kovacevic

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

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

Sources of information for the Report:

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

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- KAA Accreditation Manual



1.2. Site visit (on line) schedule

09:00 – 09:40	Meeting with the management of the institution (<i>no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion, meeting with Dean, Vice dean</i>)
09:45 – 10:30	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff
10:35 – 11:35	Meeting with the heads of the study programme (<i>Sociology /MA</i>)
11:40 – 12:20	Lunch break
12:20 – 13:10	Meeting with the teaching staff
13:15 – 13:55	Meeting with students
14:00 – 14:40	Meeting with graduates
14:45 - 15:25	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders
15:30 – 15:40	Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA
15:40 – 15:50	Closing meeting with the management of the institution

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

University of Prishtina is the main national higher education institution, while the Faculty of Philosophy was the first academic unit in Kosovo, established more than 80 years ago, in 1960. This is an institution with a tradition, but also developing new programmes and making educational advancements in the national higher education. The Faculty of Philosophy has seven departments, and one among them is the Department of Sociology.

Faculty with its departments has defined their objectives. Its mission is to become an academic institution of the prestigious international universities, with emphasis on the European Union, and to be a serious competitor in the academic market not only in the region but also beyond. The Faculty has 15 programmes accredited or in the process of reaccreditation.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

The Faculty has dean and three vice deans, covering different areas of institutional functioning. Each department is chaired by the head. The Faculty has 42 full professors and 17 full time assistants, 17 administrative staff.

Programme that is in the evaluation process is MA Sociology, in this academic year. has, according to the SER, in total 91 students, 57 regular and 34 students that did not meet all the requirements and they are repeating part of their studies. It is two year programme, with 120 ECTS, full time study, it awards a degree master of art in sociology, enrolls 60 students per year. In total has 8 permanent staff members, 5 professors in different status, and 3 assistants, two with PhD and one with MA. The cost of study is 150 Euro per semester, according to the University regulations.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The mission of the study programme, according to the SER, is in line with the mission of the University of Prishtina, as well as with the mission of the faculty of Philosophy.

Department of Sociology offers also courses in English in order to improve language skills, but also to boost internationalisation process.

The programme has been changed within the accepted percentage of change (20 per cent) and some new, relevant courses have been added. The whole programme has been modernised and updated. The balance of obligatory and elective courses is reasonable.

The programme is aligned with NQF as well as it is in accordance with European Higher Education Area. According to the SER, it has been also taking into account recommendations and suggestions coming from the institutional and national higher education and QA authorities.

It does have well defined overarching didactic concept as well as research concept and this is reflected in its programme structure. There are two tracks, as called, scientific and pedagogic, separated during the third semester. A 'track' usually means that the students will get some kind of specialisation, specific profile. It is a question if it is the best solution to have such a clear division of two tracks and how much this corresponds to the employment needs.

The programme follows institutional policies and regulations and assures to have them available for staff and students. There are also ethical regulations assuring ethical conduct in teaching, research and all activities within the Department and Programme. Department, as

5



well as the Faculty, has a set of documents and regulations on different levels in order to review the study programmes, and in principal, as stated in the SER, number of those decisions and regulations and responsibilities surpasses the competence of the Department which is actually in charge of the Programme. Nevertheless, it is not clear that the Programme is reviewed at least every two year. It would be for the benefit of the Programme as well as for the Department, and it could be an internal decision to do so, with a main aim to assure quality and to be fast in implementing changes, if needed.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Reconsider the necessity to have two tracks as defined and separated now*
2. *Consider adding some science courses in pedagogical track as well, in case you keep two tracks*
3. *Implement programme reviewing on annual or biannual basis in order to assure better quality*

2.2. Quality management

Quality management meets majority of the standards as specified in the KAA accreditation manual. There are responsible staff for the quality management, there are procedures and all the staff as well as other main stakeholders are regularly involved in quality assuring processes. Quality office is in charge of implementing procedures, and to prepare and administer internal evaluation and student's evaluations.

The program staff asserted that they participate in formal and informal reviews of student data and curriculum design. They also confirmed that the student evaluation processes were consistent and understood by both staff and students, and that they had personally benefitted from these quality assurance mechanisms.

However, the results from the evaluations are not fully available publicly and the data from the gradates and employers are not collected and analysed sufficiently. Although Kosovo is facing many issues with employments, in particular in a professional filed, as sociology, still the Department has to put additional efforts in establishing a regular communication with the



employers or potential employers. In addition, there is not sufficient monitoring and follow up of activities performed outside the Department.

Department/Faculty has on disposal SEMS system, digitalised system, as well as other aspects of use of modern technology, which definitely supports better data collection and their analysis.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. It is important to apply regular monitoring and follow up of all QA processes*
- 2. Workload of students and their academic achievements need to be an important part of the internal quality assurance process*
- 3. Establish clear support and training mechanisms to enable younger staff to use the quality maintenance mechanisms for appropriate personal, methodological, and course improvement.*
- 4. Survey data collection must include employers as well*

2.3. Academic staff

The academic staff selected for this program are competent and evidently committed individuals. There is a sufficient balance between younger and more experienced staff on the program, however the main concern is with number of available staff and the number of students in total. Although the ratio of students-staff for the master programme is acceptable, the real issue is the ratio of all the staff and students for both levels of studies, with an assumption that teaching staff participating in master programme, also teaches at the bachelor level. There is another issue, number of permanent staff participating in the programme (p.22 of the SER) and the list of staff and their contracts, where some of the staff contracts expired (e.g. 2019 or 2020) and while for some of them there is some explanation, for others not. This termination of contracts could be an additional threat for the number of permanent and full time staff.

The staff contracted appear to have clear understandings of their contractual expectations and the expected teaching load (and any additional administrative support that may be necessary). It also appears that the Programme meets the basic minimum standards required in Standards 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7 in the KAA Accreditation Manual.



Staff professional development is a slightly unclear. Although the institution has organised trainings and courses, it does not seem to be frequently and/or regularly. It would be desirable to make certain that there are opportunities for new or junior staff to self-identify training necessary, and to make it available.

In light of Standards 3.8, it seems relevant to stress the importance for internal quality to do staff evaluations regularly involving different stakeholders and to make them publicly available.

While most performance indicators are met, some weaknesses are noticed. Training is provided predominantly centrally, and it is unclear how much it derives from staff identification of weakness and their actual needs. It seems that provided training appears to derive from institution-wide initiatives based upon centralized identification of training topics. It would be useful to build a programme-specific trainings based on staff self-identified needs or student suggestions.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. To organise more frequent and fit to the specific needs trainings for staff*
- 2. To decentralise trainings and fit them better to the actual needs of the filed-programme-department*

2.4. Educational process content

As noted earlier, the MA programme is well composed, having the balance between obligatory and elective course, but also preparing students for different career paths. Students receive training in different domains and they acquire different skills. Courses are equally relevant for academic training and practical work. Maybe it is relevant to report that during the site visit, students, but also employers, point to a need to have more courses related to research skills as well as generic skills, in particular academic writing.

The study programme is in compliance with NQF as well as EHEA and complies with the Erasmus Subject Area Codes (ESAC). The programme follows Bologna scheme, it is two year programme with 60 ECTS per year.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

Standards 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 are met, As previously commented upon, the program is well distributed among mandatory and elective courses, and it builds complexity and expected difficulty as the student progresses. The curriculum has a solid variety of available options to allow students to influence his or her educational path, based upon interest or professional desire. The programme has listed 7 learning outcomes. However, regarding the standard 4.5 there are some difficulties, articulated both by teaching staff as well as students. Although students entering the programme are required to have a good command of language, absorbing literature in English still might be an issue, at least for some students.

The syllabi produced are reasonable, and meet the expected standards. Sometimes there are occasional areas of re-using certain phrases or sentences in different courses, but this is a minor objection. Probably the most important objection is related to unrealistic lists of literature. The volume, quantity of listed papers and books definitely cannot be an actual list of titles student needs to digest, and of course it does not correspond well to actual number of ECTS. Most likely, the provided list embraces both obligatory and recommended literature, and some selection of chapters are required, but this needs to be clearly presented, not only for the purpose of evaluation, but for the overall transparency. In addition, the number of ECTS-hours dedicated to independent student learning requires revisiting. The ratio of lecturing hours, seminars versus independent learning requires additional reality check. However, the overall distribution of ECTS across courses seems well done.

Standards 4.6 - 4.9 appear generally to be met. The students and staff mentioned that the atmosphere in classes is positive and encouraging, and students mentioned that they felt comfortable with the student-teacher interactions. They also noted that they felt comfortable with the basic assessment mechanisms used.

There does not appear to be a clear opportunity for students to engage in internships. Again, both students and employers emphasised the importance of having internship as obligatory part of the programme. It would be beneficial for the programme to research and pursue potential chances for internships or community service opportunities.

Most performance indicators (4.1- 4.3) are generally met, although due to the on-line visit, it was not possible to check on site some of the resources. In regard to 4.3, although according to



the SER, there are mechanisms to check on teaching and learning outcomes, it is unclear how effectively the general categories of learning outcomes are assessed and improved.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Develop surveys for employers and alumni about the applicability of the defined learning outcomes to the employment market.*
- 2. Uphold expected entry-level language level testing and make sure that accepted students will be able to follow English literature*
- 3. Investigate the possibility of introducing internships into the curriculum.*
- 4. Consider to offer and-or introduce more courses re to research as well as generic skills, i.e. academic writing*
- 5. Consider establishing a program team to evaluate the appropriateness, measurement, and consistency of learning outcomes across the program's three years.*

2.5. Students

The students who participated during the on-line site visit were supportive, satisfied and generally very positive about the study programme they are enrolled. They were positive about the curriculum, but also teachers, and fielded in general. Although they were aware that it is not easy to find a job in the field, they were still very optimistic and experience they had was very positive one.

The admission procedure seems to be clear, but although English is required at entry it does not seem that completely works later during studying. Regarding number of students, it seems that the intake is relatively realistic, but it still worries the fact that significant number of students do repeat years, or in other words, it still seems that the completion rate is not satisfactory enough. It is therefore recommended to aim at an admission of cohort of 50 to 60 at most, but with some more rigorous criteria who can be admitted (of course, if this can be supported with national and institutional regulations).

Students reported that they receive the feed back from their teachers and that they can approach teachers with no problems. However, although it seems to be supported with the institutional regulations, it is not advisable to allow students to receive their grade and repeat it, if they feel so, for a couple of times. This is very unusual practice in European high education institutions and it should be very seriously questioned.



Students and staff agreed that the assessment mechanisms and grades are understood and are fairly applied. (Standards 5.4. and 5.5). Due to the fact that there are many students who work, most of the teaching and other duties are adjusted to working students and they take place in afternoons and/or evenings.

Standard 5.8 has not fully met yet. Although there are institutional regulations and committees dealing with misconduct, it appears to be no clear system to examine the originality of student work, and that burden falls upon teacher, primarily. It is strongly recommended to invest in software for plagiarism detection, and to make that resource available to the instructors.

Students and staff both verified that the students' rights and obligations were clearly understood, and that these were consistently upheld and supported. The students (and graduates) expressed an understanding of how to appeal disputed grades.

The ECTS credits seem reasonably calculated and appropriate to student workload, although, as noted earlier, there are some unrealistic expectations in terms of reading lists.

Academic staff expressed an understanding of, and willingness to comply with, requirements for student consultation and staff availability. Academic staff and students statements matched.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Assure that enrolled students have a good command of English*
2. *Assure technical support for plagiarism detection, preferable by purchasing a software*
3. *Try to change the rule that students can repeatedly refuse the grade; this is not truly beneficial for anyone involved, at all, although the student has a false impression that it is positive*

2.6. Research

Research objectives of the study programme follow the institutional strategy and it is intertwined within the programme, on one side, and reflected in staff activities on the other.

Academic staff are required to participate actively in the research community, usually as demonstrated by attendance at conferences or the publication of scholarly articles. The



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

academic staff all seemed aware of this requirement and did not express any particular objections to this requirement. They noted that this is an almost universal expectation in higher education employment. However, it has been emphasized by many participants during the site visit that there are extremely low science budgeting and this represents a serious obstacle to be more research productive. It has been also noted that the criteria for research productivity is not taking into account discipline specificities, namely social science and humanities, where publishing a book or a chapter in the book is recognised internationally, at universities across Europe (Standards 6.2 & 6.3).. The publication rate meets Standard 6.7, which specifies at least one publication per year. Standard 6.8 was not really confirmed, at least not completely, because authors primarily publish under their names, and as the SER reports ‘...mention the academic unit where it is engaged as a lecturer...’. Evidently, an institutional policy is missing to raise the awareness how important is to always cite the name of the institutions, namely University of Prishtina, as one of the main indicators of the institutional visibility.

Although there are institutional regulations for ownership of intellectual property, procedures are still not fully developed. At the same time, very little is focused on possible innovations and intellectual property in social sciences, and, as in many other instances, Department and the Programme itself relies on institutional regulations and policies, not followed with the lower rank, accompanied documents. Or in other words, it has been noticed relatively low level of proactive academic attitude with no attention to go beyond minimum criteria defined by the institution. It would be beneficial for the whole institution as well as for single Departments to better balance ‘center’ and academic ‘peripheries’ in order to raise motivation and further discipline development.

Students do participate in research, they also do it as a part of their study work, and it is evident that academic staff translate their research into teaching activities and work with students (standard 6.9 and 6.11)

Recently, research productivity has been supported with financial award for those who publish in journals listed as recognised journals, but up to now, not many staff member received this award. The mechanisms is still at the beginning of its implementation.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

12



1. *Consider developing departmental mechanisms for raising research productivity, by defining more focused research topics, form small research groups (instead individual approach) and develop internal criteria, in addition to the institutional*
2. *Try to identify ways of collaborating with companion social entities, or providing social benefit, through structure and conduct of staff research.*
3. *Consider small, but publishable research with students and/or graduates*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

Faculty of Philosophy as a part of University of Prishtina has adequate facilities and staff, human resources. It has multiple classrooms appropriate to the programme, furnished with necessary equipment and reasonable class sizes. Students also have on disposal a library and computers, although it should be noted that availability of literature has been issue for many years, not only for this Programme. This is an area for which the whole system, within the institution and outside, will have to pay more attention and find a way to resolve this problem. The administrative and management offices are located in the same building, making assistance easy for student or staff. The staff and administration are adequate to support the programme.

Department, and programme, do not have a three year financial planning, but this is due to the centralised institutional system in which University is responsible for assuring regular sustainable financing. Apparently, the Programme has this support, but still missing this kind of financial transparency.

It appears that resources are adequate to meet the basic requirements envisioned in Standard 7.3, although as previously noted there should be immediate investment in plagiarism detection software and database subscription. Standard 7.4 is met, in that the lecture rooms are comfortable and well structured.

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

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

1. *Focus on increasing number of relevant titles, and decreasing the literature availability depending on individual teacher*
2. *Be proactive in plagiarism software purchase via available communication channels with the University*
3. *Identify a research database that is appropriate for the program's support and development.*

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The ET would like to thank the main MA programme representatives, professor Krasniqi, Kicmari and assistant Selaci as well as to the Head of the Department. The ET would also like to acknowledge the time, insights, and contributions of the programme staff, students, and graduates.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the MA programme Sociology is substantially compliant with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends to accredit the study program for a duration of 3 year with a number of preferable 50 students (max 60) to be annually enrolled in the programme.

Expert Team

Chair

14



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

Melita Kovacevic

March 30

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)