



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

*The University of Gjakova ‘Fehmi Agani’
Bachelor in English Language—Translation and Interpretation*

Accreditation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

22 March 2021, Skopje, North Macedonia



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.....	5
2. PROGRAM EVALUATION	7
2.1. Mission, objectives and administration.....	7
2.2. Quality management	10
2.3. Academic staff	13
2.4. Educational process content.....	17
2.5. Students.....	20
2.6. Research.....	22
2.7. Infrastructure and resources	25
3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET.....	28
4. APPENDICES (<i>if available</i>)	29



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 11 March 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)*

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, English Language—Translation and Interpretation (2021)*
- *Proposed syllabi (internal to the SER)*
- *C.V.s and scholarly publication information for Staff proposed for engagement in the program*
- *Annexes*

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

Expert Team

- Prof. Dr. Andrew Goodspeed – University of South East Europe, MK

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

Schedule	Participant
09.00 – 9.40	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated Kamber Kmberi – Dean at Faculty of Philology Fitor Ollomani – Vice dean Nazli Tyfekqi - Head of English Language Labinot Berisha - Head of Albanian Literature.
9.45 – 10.45	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Laura Naka Nazli Tyfekqi Elsa Vula Sazan Kryeziu



<p>10.50 – 11.30</p>	<p>Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff Daut Islami - Quality Assurance Office manager Labinot Berisha - coordinator of the quality commission at the faculty of philology Rina Rudi Xhiha – Head of the budget and finance division Denis Spahija - Head of department for international cooperation and projects Mentore Zejnullahu - Students services officer Rita Bala– assistant at dean’s office</p>
<p>11.30 – 12.10</p>	<p>Lunch break</p>
<p>12.10 – 13.00</p>	<p>Meeting with teaching staff Shqipe Husaj Lorina Pervorfi Agon Kokaj Petrit Duraj Yllka ymeri Gentiana Muhaxheri</p>

<p>13.05 – 13.45</p>	<p>Meeting with employers of graduates Sazan Ibrahim - Executive Director of Association of Kosovo Municipalities. Zhaklina Lipoveci – Director of Language center Xhevalin Nikollbibaj - director of the directorate for education in Gjakova Enes Toska – director of GUIDEKS, tourist guides at the level of Kosovo Bedri Berisha – BBCE English studio centre of Language in Suhareka Islam Haxhiu – Syri Television</p>
<p>13.50 – 14.20</p>	<p>Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts</p>
<p>14.20 – 14.30</p>	<p>Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program</p>

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

The University of Gjakova ‘Fehmi Agani’ is located in Gjakova, Republic of Kosovo, and derives its origin to the Normal School opened in 1946/1947. It went through several academic iterations until—most pertinently to the program proposal herein reviewed—the Government of Kosovo founded the Public University of Gjakova on 6 March 2013. In April 2013, the Faculty of Philology received accreditation from the Kosovo Accreditation Agency to run programs in Albanian Language,



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

Albanian Literature, and English Language and Literature. (SER, 6) The University of Gjakova now bears the formal name University ‘Fehmi Agani’ Gjakova, commonly shortened to UFAGj.

The SER identifies three ‘pillars’ of managerial leadership, specifically: 1) the University Steering Council and University Senate; 2) the General Secretary of the University; and 3) the Deans and Vice-Deans of the faculties or academic units. Rather inexplicably, the only mention of the Rector’s function in these three pillars is to sign the contract of the Secretary General; a clarification of how the Rector functions within this ‘three pillar’ system would be desirable. (The University organogram identifies the Rector as reporting to the Steering Council, and apparently chairing the Senate and Rector’s Cabinet; this report merely notes that the SER insists upon a ‘three pillar’ structure in which the Rector’s function and responsibilities is somewhat unclear.)

UFAGj administration includes offices with varying purviews, specifically the Office of Finance; the Academic Affairs Office; the Procurement Office; the Foreign Relations Office; the Quality Assurance Office; the Information Technology Office; the Law Office; the Office of Human Resources; and the University Archive. (SER, 10-11) The functions of these offices are clear, and need no particular elaboration here, as these are commonly-encountered administrative divisions in higher education institutions.

According to both the SER and discussions with the UFAGj staff during the online site-visit for this report, the institution sees itself as filling a key position in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo by committing to providing strong education in Gjakova and thereby responding to, and ideally meeting, the needs of the local community. As stated in the UFAGj vision, the institution intends to contribute ‘to the social and economic development of the country and the region, thorough unique and quality study programs.’ (SER,7, quoting the UFAGj mission) During discussion with the various program and institutional representatives, the regional and local commitment was repeatedly emphasized to the external evaluator.

The program being proposed for accreditation is seen by the institution as filling both local and national needs, most specifically, the training of competent, market-ready translators who are capable of varied, high-level translation between the Albanian and English languages. Based upon their understanding of local and national labor market needs, there is a strong demand for translators between these two languages in a broad field of employments, which include (but are not restricted to) hospitality and tourism, business and entrepreneurship, diplomacy and government, and other allied professions.

It is the general motivating conception of this program that traditional English Language and Literature, and Albanian Language, programs produce graduates who may possess formidable language skills in these languages, but that they are underprepared for the specific terminology and



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

field specializations that may be required by the labor market for translators and interpreters. The program is therefore proposed as an attempt to fill this perceived need.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

For all sections (below) it should be remembered that the program being evaluated is being proposed for first accreditation, and a full comparison between intentions and achievements is not possible in all instances.

The English Language—Translation and Interpretation B.A. program is intended to meet two perceived needs: 1) the need of the local and national labor market for qualified and competent translators and interpreters with nimble linguistic skills in specific employment fields; and 2) the inadequacy of most traditional English Language and Literature programs to produce graduates with this ability. This intention is specifically stated in the program’s vision, as articulated in the SER: the program is designed to ‘prepare[s] students to be experts in the field of translation and interpretation...[the intended students will be] all interest group of students wishing to obtain a university degree recognized by the MEST, who can apply for employment in many public and private institutions or companies that need translators and interpreters.’ (SER, 8) This general structure and intention appears congruent with the mission and social commitment of UFAGj as an institution.

The emphasis on market-readiness is both admirable and problematic. It is an openly-stated intention of the program to meet a market need (as stated in the SER, ‘a special importance in the design of the problem and in its progress will have the connection with the labor market [...] the interconnection with the labor market shows that the program is based on the mission of our institution [...] the field of the study program is relevant to the labor market and social development.’ (SER, 17) This is valid and credible, although the external evaluator is of the impression that much of the perceived need is anecdotal, and not based upon structured market surveys or extensive contractual commitments by institutions to hire graduates. Yet determining the specific employment profile of an intended graduate is a vexed question, given the rapid changes in contemporary economic and social conditions. In this sense, two notes should be made. First, the program appears genuinely created to focus specifically on preparing young students to meet multiple possible market needs for translators and interpreters, and does not seem merely opportunistic. Secondly, during the site visit, the representatives of the group of potential employers were emphatic and convincing that in their individual fields there is already felt a strong and—in their view—ongoing need for specialists in translation and interpretation. Several specifically mentioned that they had open employment positions available at the present moment that would be appropriate for such graduates as are envisioned by this program. It is therefore the opinion of this assessment that, although strong weight is placed upon the somewhat uncertain market demand to be anticipated no sooner than three years from accreditation (when the first cohort of graduates would enter the labor market), there seems no reasonable cause to doubt that the program is designed to produce students capable of employment in multiple

7



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

fields that may require translators and/or interpreters, and that regional employers believe that such graduates would fill a need felt now. It thus meets the general social engagement commitment of the UFAGj mission to contribute to local and regional social development.

During the site visit discussion, the external evaluator asked the question of why the UFAGj believed that graduates of traditional English Language and Literature were inadequate or underprepared for translation and interpretation. For perhaps understandable reasons of reticence and not wishing to criticise other institutions or programs, the UFAGj collocutors were somewhat hesitant to declare traditional English Language and Literature programs inadequate (as such) in the development of translators and interpreters. The general replies, however, were consistent in maintaining two points: 1) that traditional English Language and Literature programs often offer subjects (literature, British culture, teaching methodology, testing and assessment, teaching practicum) that are not directly relevant to translation and interpretation, and 2) that the proposed program largely alters the traditional grammar-and-syntax curriculum with courses that are more closely aligned towards the conception of ESP (English for Specific Purposes). This is consistent with the proposed curriculum as a whole, although individual exceptions will be noted later in this report (specifically, the Education Process Content).

As pertains to the National Qualifications Framework and Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, there is no clear evidence either of compliance or of aberrance from these basic principles. The general learning outcomes of the program, however, are keyed to Level 6 of the NQF and seem relatively consistent with expected qualifications in comparable or analogous programs in the EHEA. As noted previously, the program is intended to diminish strict academicism and to focus upon producing a more results-based graduate profile. It appears consistent with the Bologna process, and results in a B.A. earned after completion of courses totalling 180 ECTS.

In terms of didactic and research emphases, the structure and conception of the program do not emphasize research. In a B.A. program, extensive, high-level individual research is much less expected than in Second- and Third- Cycle education, and this program does indeed feature several courses that would require traditional research (formal essays, research projects, etc.). Nonetheless, it is a potential weakness of the program that research is not systematically developed as a skill; as may be observed in the course descriptions of the proposed curriculum (SER, 58-99), research is not consistently implemented in the assessed work. This may reduce later academic development for students who may wish to pursue M.A. or PhD opportunities subsequent to graduation. (It may also be noted, without prejudice against the staff, that their own research seems largely individual, and not project-based; it may therefore be difficult for even the most devoted of instructors to include students in the instructor's own research work.)

Regarding the didactic approach, much of the SER discussion thereof is either vague or tautological ('the teaching methods that will be applied to the program in evaluation are suitable for instructional approaches in accordance with the goals and objectives of the program' SER, 14). Yet in reading the individual course descriptions closely, there is a clear emphasis on in-person attendance, participation in discussions and seminars, and a laudable emphasis upon engaged participation in the learning process. The only notable concern to be raised here would be the frequently-encountered heavy assessment weighting towards one or two major



examinations, instead of the expected ‘continuous assessment’ model that would be more appropriate to a skills-based translation and interpretation program. There are multiple courses in the proposed curriculum in which the ‘term-end’ examination accounts for 50% of the student’s total grade, which seems an oddly anachronistic assessment methodology that privileges one final exam over weeks of in-class performance.

It is unfortunately the reality that mobility opportunities for the students may be anaemic. In most European higher education, mobility is either mandatory or strongly advocated, and would be considered essential for students in a foreign language—or translation/interpretation—program. Yet the external evaluator accepts the statements of several UFAGj collocutors that financial difficulties, combined with vexatious visa bureaucracy, make the guarantee of mobility opportunities difficult. If this program is accredited, however, it is the strong recommendation of the external evaluator that UFAGj pursue any reasonable opportunities for student mobility, ideally to native Anglophone countries (realistically, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, although there may be occasional opportunities also available more distantly, such as in the United States).

Regarding the program administration, the program—because it is being proposed for first accreditation—cannot demonstrate achieved compliance with the basic administrative and structural oversight mechanisms of UFAGj. The SER, however, details a clear administrative structure, with a relatively comprehensible division of responsibilities and authorities. It is always difficult to anticipate how a new program will cohere with established institutional administrative processes, ethical guidelines, complaint resolution procedures, and protection of student rights, etc. Nonetheless, the SER and the UFAGj collocutors during the site visit discussions were consistent in noting that the institutional structures of UFAGj exist, are followed, and are compatible with the English Language—Translation and Interpretation program. There is no obvious reason to dispute the applicability of these institutional policies and procedures to the proposed 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: Partially. The program aims for Level 6 of the NQF, and individual potential ‘employers’ verified that they had discussed the program’s intended graduate skills. As noted previously, however, the external evaluator has not been presented with evidence from structured market surveys or studies (professional advice).

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

1.3: Yes, with one exception—research is under-developed, and the grading structures seem primarily designed to emphasize term-end examinations instead of research papers or projects.

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, although these policies and procedures are institutional, and have not been applied in regard to this program (as it is proposed for first accreditation).

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, with the same codicil as above: these are institutional policies that have not yet been tested or observed in regard to the program under evaluation.

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, as institutional policy; yet it must again be noted that there can be no evidence-based support for this in regard to this program, as it is proposed for first accreditation.

Compliance Level: Substantially Compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. *Reconsider the assessment methodologies. A process of continuous assessment would be far more appropriate to the program under review than the traditional 'mid-term/final examination' method of assessment.*
2. *Build research more clearly into the curriculum. This may potentially be done by reducing the examination percentage of the final grade (as in recommendation 1), and incorporating research projects, research presentations, academic essays, etc.*
3. *Seek, establish, and promote mobility opportunities for program students, particularly in native English-speaking countries (most likely, the U.K. or Ireland).*
4. *Adhere to and comply with UFAGj policies on ethical conduct, student rights and responsibilities, complaint resolution, and other established institutional procedures and policies.*

2.2. Quality management

It should again be noted at the outset that much of what follows, in the assessment of Quality Management, is institutional, and cannot be independently evidence-based in specific relation to English Language—Translation and Interpretation, given the program is applying for initial accreditation.

UFAGj has a multi-layered quality assurance structure, guided by the ESG (SER, 22), and led by the Office for Quality Assurance. There are multiple underbodies contributing to the work of the Office for Quality Assurance, among which may be noted the Central Quality Assurance Commission and Quality Assurance Commissions at the level of the academic units. This last group—presumably, the group most closely associated with the individual programs being monitored—is a body of five individuals, specifically: the CCQA faculty representative, three academic staff members, and a student representative, one of whose requirements for participation is the maintenance of a cumulative G.P.A. above 9.

The existence and composition of these various bodies suggest a strong institutional commitment to quality assurance and quality maintenance procedures. It is particularly to be approved that, at the most local level of



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

quality assurance, there is student representation. It is somewhat unclear to the external evaluator how exactly each quality assurance body oversees or is subordinate to the other groups within the hierarchy; yet the general structure suggests that the Office of Quality Assurance is ultimately responsible for the enactment of quality assurance mechanisms, and that the other bodies are intended to provide more faculty- or program-specific input.

The main quality assurance activities of UFAGj are (but are not restricted to): program delivery and program revision oversight; administration of and data generation from student surveys; implementation and oversight of teaching evaluation processes; and the preparation of an internal quality self-evaluation report. (It may be noted that this last item seems to be contemplated for the future: ‘To meet these standards, the quality assurance office plans to organize internal quality assessment of study programs’—SER, 33—although this may just be a linguistic infelicity.)

The stated mechanisms are appropriate to institutional quality assurance and quality improvement. Anonymous student surveys are crucial; in the case of UFAGj, they are based upon questionnaires structured around Likert Scale questions with additional open-ended response possibilities. The data provided in the SER for student survey results are encouraging, as evidence of the effectiveness of the process (see SER, 35-38); the specific data themselves, however, are inapplicable to the program under review, as the data presented refer to the UFAGI Albanian Language and Literature program. Nonetheless, these data demonstrate the practical achievability of comparable student evaluations in the English Language—Translation and Interpretation program.

The academic staff are observed during the teaching delivery, either by trained colleagues from the Faculty or academic unit, or by central university observers. These observations are apparently all pre-announced (‘staff members receive advice prior to class time’—SER, 31), which may be counter-productive; teachers who know observers are coming may put uncommon effort into a class being observed or may, in the worst cases, appeal to students for a feigned enthusiasm whilst the observers are present. It would be advisable to operate a ‘hybrid’ observation mode, with some announced observations, and some unannounced observations. Yet the general value of in-class teaching observations is high: colleagues can identify educational excellence and weakness that may not be apparent to the instructor herself/himself.

It should be noted briefly that it is unclear to the external evaluator what consequences follow from an unsuccessful observation, or a strongly critical student evaluation. In neither case should one poor performance or survey result be determinative, but training and assistance (or a second observation) would be justified. But the evaluator remains uncertain about when the level of underperformance becomes a matter either for training or, in the extremity, contract termination.

It is also unclear whether or not UFAGj programs receive external program evaluation outside the parameters or accreditation or re-accreditation. Many European and North American university programs invite collegial evaluation for improvement, on the basis of a contracted expert or quality champion (commonly, a senior figure in the field, from another institution). It does not appear that this opportunity is pursued by UFAGj, and it may

11



be advisable in the case of (at least) the proposed program, given the wide availability of experts in the European Union in the general fields of English and Translation/Interpretation.

It is additionally somewhat unclear what role, if any, external social partners or alumni have in quality assurance, program advice, and curricular modification. Employers and alumni can be crucial partners in identifying skills that need to be built into the curriculum; courses that are outdated or ineffectual in practical applications; and the market-readiness of graduates. These questions are central to the appropriate assessment of program effectiveness and the modification of programs and, if the English Language—Translation and Interpretation program is approved, it is highly recommended to build a close quality assurance community of external partners (as alumni will take some time to appear, one might suggest contacting potential employers and current translators/interpreters).

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, in so far as may be established by example of other programs.

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

2.2: Yes, again, on the basis of comparable programs within the Faculty of Philology.

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, on the basis of existing quality assurance processes at UFAGj.

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: Partially—the main focus of the quality assurance mechanisms seem coordinated to in-class delivery. It is uncertain how often instructors or students comment officially with ‘particular attention’ to matters regarding larger learning outcomes.

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

2.5: Partially—in general, the quality assurance standards are well-supported by the internal Q.A. policies; yet, as noted, it is not clear what consequences result from poor or improvable performance reviews (either from observers or students).

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. Although data is collected from students, it remains (as noted above) unclear how effectively or extensively employers and graduates are engaged in program design, curricular review, and other associated processes.

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, by analogy with reports and data generated for other programs.

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

2.9: Yes, by analogy with precedent of other academic programs in the Faculty of Philology.

Compliance Level: Substantially compliant.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Augment the teaching observation process by implementing a 'hybrid' mode of announced and unannounced observations. Unannounced observations permit genuine in-class assessment of teaching excellence, and diminish the possibility of instructors prompting students to display unnatural enthusiasm.*
- 2. Develop or specify clear and regularized procedures for underperformance as detected by teaching observations or study evaluation results. Establish and publish precise guidelines about the training, assistance, or contractual consequences that result from each instance of underperformance (prioritizing, however, training and support before invoking termination).*
- 3. Establish and maintain a clear presence for social partners (graduates, employers, external partners or external quality champions) to evaluate Q.A. data and tendencies, and to propose appropriate program modifications or developments.*

2.3. Academic staff

Academic staff at UFAGj are hired through an open competition once a teaching need is identified. The specific procedure is elaborated in the SER (41), yet the general process—somewhat simplified—is: when a position is needed, a call for applicants is publicly announced (on the university website, the newspaper, and within the institution). Then, when the call for employment concludes, the relevant Faculty Council appoints a review commission of members with equal or higher title to the position being considered. They make a recommendation that goes to the Faculty Council, whence it then proceeds to the Rectorate for publication of the decision. After two weeks, the Faculty Council votes again, and the decision is then referred to the university Senate for final verification. The process therefore appears to be reasonably transparent although, because all procedures are internal (except for public announcements), it likely privileges people already within the institution (say, recent graduates) to the potential cost of qualified external applicants. It may be advisable to establish the habit of appointing one external member—with the same titular requirements—at the level of the review commission.

In specific reference to the English Language—Translation and Interpretation program, the institution has identified a pre-contracted academic staff of 15 main full-time participants, all apparently currently employed by the Faculty of Philology. Among this group, their current contractual termination dates vary from 30 September 2021 to 30 September 2024. By academic title, they break down into: 0 Full Professors; 5 Associate Professors;

13



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

4 Assistant Professors; and 6 assistants. (Of these, eight are women and seven are men; yet there is a slight gender imbalance in the titular level, in that all seven men hold some level of professorial appointment, whilst all six assistants are women.) The staff tend to be relatively young (none immediately near the age of 70, and only one at or above the age of 55; fully ten of the fifteen are 45 years old or younger, implying the possibility of significant teaching sustainability and academic continuity). These staff will carry the main burden of teaching, whilst being supported by part time colleagues (again, apparently sourced from the Faculty of Philology) consisting of: 2 Full Professors; 4 Associate Professors; 5 Assistant Professors; and 9 assistants, for a total of 20 part time contributors.

The program thus appears to meet the basic staffing requirements of the KAA, in terms of title and institutional contract. It may, however, be noted that there remains some ambiguity regarding the exact percentage of the curriculum that will be covered, and by whom. In the SER, we find conflicting estimations: ‘More than 50% of the program modules in the evaluation are covered by the regular staff of the Faculty of Philology...’(SER, 44); ‘90% coverage of the program by UFAGj regular staff...’ (SER, 48); ‘the regular staff at the Faculty of Philology covers about 70% of the teaching program courses, and even more if considering the regular teachers of other faculties within UFAGj’(SER, 49). To note this discrepancy should not be interpreted as implying evasive purposes by the institution; course assignments may vary, and individual engagements may vary for purely logistical or scheduling reasons. Yet the institution is reminded that one of the KAA standards to which they are accountable is that ‘full-time staff account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.’ When the percentage of courses covered by ‘regular staff’ varies from ‘more than 50%’ to ‘90% coverage of the program’ it indicates some planning instability. But as long as the minimum requirement of at least 50% full time coverage of the classes is met—and it appears to be met—the standard is fulfilled.

Teaching staff will be expected to maintain the full responsibilities of both teaching and collegial cooperation, including but not limited to: classroom instruction, student consultation, participation in the relevant university bodies (for example, the Faculty Council), implementation of ethical standards for assessment and academic integrity, etc. These seem consistent with the expectations of comparable academic positions in Europe and North America. Where there seems to be a notable discontinuity between the proposed program and analogous teaching opportunities elsewhere lies in research support and mobility opportunities. As research is a vital part of any academic career, and is a contributing element in both hiring and promotional processes, it is to be lamented that there appears to be little financial possibility for strong conference-participation support, and perhaps even less opportunity for academic staff mobility. (The SER reports that ‘a’ member of the Faculty of Philology participated in an Erasmus + mobility experience, to WSB University in Poland, during AY 2018/2019: SER, 46). If the program is to be accredited, UFAGj leadership, and particularly program management, are strongly advised to support staff participation in international conferences and mobility exchanges, wherever practicable given the financial and visa difficulties that may pertain thereto.

As elaborated in the previous section (2.2 Quality Management), there are multiple opportunities available to teaching staff to identify their own needs for improvement and training, specifically the teaching observation process and the student evaluation processes. Additionally, there are basic consultations with relevant superiors or line-managers (Dean, Vice-Dean, etc.) in cases of difficulty or need for consultation. There thus appears to be a relevant and appropriate process for seeking to improve one’s performance. It remains unclear, however, as

14



stated in 2.2, what precise training, correction, or contractual termination procedures are in place for people who consistently underperform, or encounter broad-based student denunciation through the student survey mechanism.

It should perhaps also be noted that most of the contracted full time staff do not seem to be specialists in translation and interpretation as such, but are rather gathered from allied fields such as English Language and Literature and Albanian Language and Literature (as assessed through the main foci of their published research). Of course, this is not damning: there being no comparable ‘Translation-Interpretation’ degree program in Kosovo, obtaining specialization in the precise field of translation-interpretation is essentially unachievable. But if the program under evaluation is to be accredited, it would be well for the program managers to consider long-term hiring planning by emphasizing specialists in the precise field of translation and interpretation.

Another potential staffing weakness of the proposed program is the apparent lack of international staff. The external evaluator offers no denigration of the proposed program’s staff by noting that none of the engaged staff is a native speaker of English (although the evaluator welcomes correction if this impression is inaccurate). Whilst the external evaluator also fully understands the difficulty—financial and legal—of attracting international instructors, a program in English Language—Translation and Interpretation would seriously benefit from international staff participation, whether engaged full time, part time, or as potentially modular instructors on high intensity course offerings. There does not appear, at this early stage, to be a role envisaged for such international staff. It would be to the benefit of the students to investigate such opportunities, particularly if externally supported (by, say, a partner university in another country willing to sponsor one of their instructors to visit for a term on staff mobility, or perhaps to attract someone from the United States through the auspices of the Fullbright Program). Such engagements would bring valuable academic diversification, and would fill a basic gap in the delivery of the program as intended.

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. Employment procedures are complex, but relatively clear; and contracted staff evidence is presented in tabular form, as required (SER, 42-43).

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. The external evaluator has detected no breaches in the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions.

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. If staff are multiply engaged in excess of these limitations, they are doing so covertly; and there is no indication that this is occurring (SER, 44, unambiguously affirms this)..



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: Yes—although, as noted above, there is ambiguity in the accurate percentage to be covered by full time staff—yet no estimation is under 50% of the classes of the study program.

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: Partially—as noted above, it is unclear what consequences and procedures eventuate after an unsatisfactory teaching evaluation or student evaluation; and there appear to be very few opportunities available for the aspects of professional development related to international conference participation and mobility opportunities.

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. Teaching staff are required to be available for student consultations and to participate in the relevant academic bodies. ‘Community service’ is not clearly differentiated from participation in the academic community.

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: Yes—this standard is complied with in intention, although the program cannot evidence such regular evaluation processes as yet.

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

3.9: Yes. The evaluation processes, whether self-determined or established by teaching evaluation, are designed to promote reflective professional improvement.

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—although again, this is in intention, without evidence in previous experience. As noted above, no full time teaching staff members are currently in the immediate proximity of retirement age. (SER, 46, commits to this loss of full-time status for retired professors).

Compliance level: Fully compliant (with the codicil that multiple areas here are structural and intentional, without being previously demonstrated).

ET recommendations:

- 1. Investigate the possibility of engaging appropriate international staff—ideally, full time, but part time or modular engagement would also be beneficial. Additionally, seek possibilities for sponsored international staff (partner universities, foreign government teacher-sponsorships).*



2. *Prioritize as a long-term policy the hiring, or internal promotion, of direct specialists in translation and interpretation.*
3. *To the best of the institution's ability, pursue and support international opportunities for teaching staff, including financial support (when possible) and scheduling support for teacher participation in international conferences. Additionally, pursue international staff mobility exchanges, and permit staff to participate on the basis of merit, not necessarily by seniority.*

2.4. Educational process content

This program is clearly intended to differentiate itself from a traditional 'English Language and Literature' curriculum, notably by focusing on various professional areas related to translation and interpretation. It is intended for native speakers of Albanian; there seems to be no provision for native speakers of other languages, which may be a weakness of the program. Although the majority of intended students will likely be native speakers of Albanian, there is likely no role for speakers of, say, Serbian.

In general, the curriculum is well designed. It features a logical variety of courses, with a notable development of complexity throughout the six semesters. The program has a reasonable allocation of ECTS credits, with courses varying from 4-6 ECTS credits per course (the one exception to this is the final semester's 'Final Exam,' which has 12 ECTS credits).

As noted above, there is a strong element of Albanian language study in this curriculum, given the intended student body. The logic is clear: students who lack knowledge of their native language will be hampered in their efforts to be translators or interpreters between English and Albanian. For this reason, the curriculum requires mandatory courses on 'Morphology of Albanian Language,' 'Albanian Language Syntax,' 'Albanian Language for Translators I' and 'Albanian Language for Translators II.' These courses appear valuable and well-structured. It is worthy of note again, however, that the program is focused on native speakers of Albanian, and there is no clear role for native speakers of other languages.

The main focus of the curriculum is to offer a variety of courses relating to the theory and practice of translation and interpretation. The main obligatory courses in this sphere are: 'Introduction to Translation,' 'Computer Application in Translation,' 'Interpreting I,' 'Interpreting II,' 'Linguistics for Translators,' 'Non-Literary Translation from English to Albanian and Vice Versa,' 'Literary Translation from English to Albanian and Vice Versa,' 'Consecutive Interpreting,' 'Reading and Interpreting,' 'Simultaneous Translation,' 'Theoretical Approaches to Translation,' and 'Translation of Political and Legal Texts.' This is a strong, skills-based variety of appropriate courses given the design of the program. Among the field-specific optional (elective) courses one finds 'Technical Translation,' 'Social Translation,' 'Translation for Medicine,' 'Business Translation,' 'Criticism of Translation,' and 'Audio-Visual Translation.' These too seem well-designed and appropriate for the program's design.

There are several courses that do not wholly cohere with the skills-based focus on translation and interpretation, which may have strong academic value, but which seem vestigial to traditional 'English Language and



Literature' courses. One may note, in this context, the elective course 'Music and Literature Authors (medieval),' which again may have strong intellectual content, but is not notably congruent with a program designed to produce market-ready translators and interpreters. Such incongruous courses are not, it should be emphasized, bad ideas—but it would be more compelling to see how they fit into the conception of the curriculum, instead of pondering how they relate to the structure of the program.

It is also unclear why German is offered as an elective for only the first two semesters. There is, of course, nothing wrong with German, which is a fine and useful language. Yet one wonders what the rationale is in offering only one year of German. If a student took these two semesters, and discovered a talent for or interest in German, she or he would not be able to develop this linguistic skill. One cannot develop much useful fluency in one year. If it is feasible, it would be desirable to allow students to take electives in German beyond one year, at least to include German Language III and German Language IV.

In the final year, there are two 'Work Placement' courses, which account for 10 ECTS credits (combined), and are to be commended. A curriculum of this nature is market-oriented, so it is highly appropriate that students have these 'internship' opportunities. Of course, the UFAGj authorities will need to keep close observation on the students' progress within the work placements, but the general conception of work placement is suitable to the program.

Where there is a serious structural flaw in this curriculum is in traditional English language skills courses: there are none. The clear intention of the program is to attract students with already high levels of English language skills. This is a reasonable expectation, but there is no provision made for students who find themselves struggling with English. Enrolment realities being what they are, it must be acknowledged that some students may be accepted into the program without the ideal level of English language ability. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that the program include 'English Skills' courses in the 'elective' course slots, but that they be effectively mandatory for students who need them. (That is, if the staff recognize that a student needs additional English language skills training, the student could be informed that he/she must choose the appropriate 'English Skills' course as an 'elective' selection.) While this is not ideal, it would allow struggling students to receive the help they need, without forcing them into the position of grappling unsuccessfully with the whole program because of weaker than expected English ability.

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, although as noted, there should be Skills opportunities for students who may need assistance



with their English language ability.

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: Dubious. As noted above, the program is exclusively intended for students who already possess a high level of English. Yet it is likely that some participating students may need additional English language skills practice, so it is recommended that such skills courses be added in as 'elective' offerings.

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, as structured.

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, but with the caution mentioned in 4.5, regarding students who may have weaker than expected English language skills.

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.

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.

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: Partially—as noted above, there is no mechanism to develop English language skills for students



who may need such additional development.

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: Yes.

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: Yes.

Compliance Level: Substantially compliant.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Include 'elective' English skills classes for students who may need additional language skills development.*
- 2. Expand the available German elective offerings, to include at least German III and German IV.*
- 3. Give due consideration to how non-Albanian native speakers might participate in the program, if at all.*

2.5. Students

The students targeted by this program are those from the region who are native speakers of Albanian and who possess already well developed English language skills. As noted several times in this report, there seems to be little provision made for students who are not native speakers of Albanian. This is perhaps unavoidable in a program that is clearly designed for the purposes of translation and interpretation, but it is a potential weakness of the curriculum that it does not clearly envision a position for students who are native speakers of, say, Serbian.

The general policies for student recruitment and enrolment are governed by UFAGj university policy, specifically Article 103 of the university's statute. There are different entrance criteria for students with, or without, the results of the state 'matura' exam.

As noted above, one weakness of the program may lie in the admission of students who possess less than ideal preparation in English. Whilst it is the stated intention of the program managers to impose a rigorous English admissions examination to establish student English ability, it is probable that there will be students who are attracted to this program who may still need English skills training. For this reason, this report has recommended that an 'elective' offering of 'English skills' courses, into which weaker students may be directed. It will also be the recommendation of this report that, if the program is accredited, that the initial cohorts

20



accepted should be restricted to 50 students, instead of the anticipated cohort size of 70. By making a more exacting selection of students, particularly based upon student English ability, the program will reduce the possibility of enrolling students whose English ability would impede their successful participation in the program.

Students at UFAGj have the opportunity for university representation through the student union, and student representatives serve in university bodies (such as the University Senate, the Faculty Council, the Central Commission for Quality Assurance, etc.). A student handbook is provided to all enrolling students, and outlines the main opportunities and responsibilities. These are policies and procedures that are consistent with good practice in other comparable higher education institutions.

It is unclear whether or not there is an effective student ‘ombudsman.’ Student intercession in cases of complaint or grade disputation can be effectively assisted by an ‘ombudsman,’ and such a role would be useful, if it does not already exist.

The SER (104) states that students are eligible for, and supported in, mobility exchanges. This is laudable, but in practise it may prove difficult to pursue mobility offerings, given the realities of economics and the requirement for visas. This report strongly encourages UFAGj to make all reasonable accommodations to outgoing mobility students, and to emphasize—for students in the proposed program—mobility opportunities in native Anglophone countries such as the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland. Additionally, it would be worthwhile to seek similar opportunities to welcome incoming students on mobility exchanges, again with a special emphasis on students who originate in British or Irish universities.

Students are also served by UFAGj university centers throughout the expected student-lifecycle, notably through the Career Center, the Center for Development, and the Alumni Association.

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: Partially: as stated, it is a recommendation—but not a requirement—of this report that cohort size be anticipated for 50 students, instead of 70.

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: Partially—it seems that the program is well-designed for reasonable student assessment yet, as noted above, there is at present no mechanism for building students’ English skills, if needed.



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, as structured.

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

5.8: Partially—it is unclear how plagiarism detection can be effectively monitored for both English and Albanian in this program as most plagiarism detection software is designed for English.

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—see SER, 104.

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: Substantially compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. Investigate whether or not Albanian-language plagiarism detection software is available and may be coordinated with more common English-language plagiarism detection software.
2. Consider lowering the intended cohort size from the planned 70 to 50 (which may be expanded to 70 if the students applying all have the required English language facility).

2.6. Research

Academic staff are encouraged and required to maintain a research profile within their sphere of expertise. As part of their career development, academic staff are set the target of publishing at least one peer-reviewed scholarly paper within their disciplines, and to participate in conferences. It is also a stated goal (SER, 107) of the academic units that they should organize conferences once in two years, and to organize what are referred to as 'research-scientific expeditions [...] in the field of dialectology, sociolinguistics, and popular literature.' These policies are admirable, although the practicality of 'research-scientific expeditions' for the English Language—Translation and Interpretation is unclear. It may be more useful to include students of this program as helpers/interpreters for conferences being hosted by other academic units in UFAGj.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

The emphasis placed on academic research profiles is appropriate. Research is an expected element of scholarly professional development, and it is heartening to see it treated as such by UFAGj. Funding assistance for research-related costs may be requested through the MEST and UFAGj. As noted in the SER (108), the budget for scientific research covers: faculty research projects, conference participation, publication of papers in international scientific journals, and co-financing for regional or international research projects.

Academic staff have their research profile assessed as part of staff evaluation procedures and academic promotion. In specific terms, the individual staff members are maintaining good publication levels consistent with their academic levels and teaching responsibilities. Most of the staff for the program under review focus, understandably, primarily on areas of linguistics or literature, which are appropriate fields for teachers in the field of translation and interpretation. It is notable, however, that there is little evidence in their research profiles for specific research on the theory and practice of translation. With no adverse comment intended towards the research profiles of the staff, it might be useful as a long-term strategy to begin researching and publishing in the specific fields of translation and interpretation themselves, instead of (as presently) focusing on allied fields such as linguistics or literary interpretation.

In general terms it may be noted that much of the conference attendance recorded by the staff for English Language—Translation and Interpretation are relatively local (Kosovo, North Macedonia, Albania). This is understandable for financial and visa considerations. Yet it should be a long-term goal of the program, if accredited, to support academic staff to publish in non-Balkan international journals, and to participate in conferences beyond the region, perhaps in the European Union.

The SER (110) notes that the institution has ‘a considerable number of national and international agreements with various universities for cooperation in the field of research and mobility for academic staff and students.’ It is unclear, however, how effective these agreements may be, as mobility of staff seems relatively low. There have indeed been some mobility opportunities; staff have engaged in mobility visits to Poland, Hungary, and Turkey. What is unclear, however, is how much incoming mobility the Faculty of Philology have hosted. It would be wise for the implementing teachers and managers of the English Language—Translation and Interpretation program to seek to bring in international staff, perhaps through formal mobility arrangements or, as noted earlier in this report, through other externally-sponsored programs (such as the American Fulbright program).

It is slightly unclear what consequences result for staff members who maintain a poor research profile. While it is stated that research productivity is assessed for both staff evaluation and promotional considerations, it is not obvious what becomes of people whose research output is inadequate. Obviously the first step should be advice and training, before any potential punishment occurs. It would be valuable to have clear metrics about what constitutes inadequate research performance, and specific policies for advice and training—or perhaps collegial mentorship by a more accomplished researcher on staff—for those whose research needs improvement.

It is likely the nature of the field that it may not be clearly possible to attract international research projects in the field of translation, nor to incorporate undergraduate students into such projects. Yet students of the program English Language—Translation and Interpretation could usefully be incorporated into projects from other



academic units, for example by serving as interpreters at conferences in other fields at UFAGj. They might also be encouraged to assist in the translation of papers from Albanian into English by academics from UFAGj (of whatever specialization) who may only know Albanian; having their work translated into English, as the world's foremost language for scholarship, might enable those scholars to increase their research profile while also giving Translation and Interpretation students practical, high-level translations to generate.

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: Partially—as noted, mobility opportunities exist, but seem underutilized, and incoming mobility seems inexistent.

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: Partially—as noted, it is unclear what policies exist for underperforming researchers.

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: Partially—as noted, staff seem to gravitate primarily to Balkan conferences and publications, and should be encouraged to publish and present in the broader E.U. or beyond.

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.

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. It is unclear how research ownership and potential commercialization of research is structured.

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

6.11: Unclear—it is uncertain how students would be engaged in research projects for the program English Language—Translation and Interpretation.

Compliance Level: Partially compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. *Develop or clarify the consequences and assistance to be provided for staff members whose research is deemed inadequate.*
2. *Encourage staff to participate in conferences, and publish in peer-reviewed journals, beyond the local Balkan region.*
3. *Encourage Translation-Interpretation students to serve as interpreters for UFAGj conferences hosted by other UFAGj academic units.*
4. *Encourage staff to exercise mobility opportunities.*
5. *Develop opportunities for incoming mobility, particularly by international staff.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

(It should be noted that most of the information herein is derived from the program SER. Because of pandemic conditions, the external evaluator was unable to verify the specific details of infrastructure personally.)

The UFAGj is located in Gjakova, with a total area of 11697.5 m²; the Faculty of Philology occupies a building of 7117 m², while the other buildings consist of shared spaces (i.e. indoor amphitheater), the Rectorate, a sports hall, etc.

Within the Faculty of Philology building, there are 9 teaching halls, 1 lab, 1 working group hall, 1 meeting hall, 7 teachers' offices, 4 administrative offices, and 1 students' office. In addition to the laboratory, there are other technical teaching technical tools, such as overhead projectors, laptops, etc. The facilities therefore seem adequate to the teaching and learning processes to be expected in this program.

As 'additional documentation,' the external evaluator requested photos of any program-specific technology, such as language laboratories, translation booths, or an interpretation set-up (headphones, microphones, an interpretation booth). These were not provided; it is unclear whether this request was ignored, or perhaps was miscommunicated between the external evaluator, the KAA, and the institution. This is of little significance; yet



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

it would be welcome to know what interpretation technology may be available for interpretation practice, such as an interpretation booth, headphones and microphones, perhaps recordings (either taped or digital files). A program of this nature would benefit from exposure to real-life translation technology, and the external evaluator would encourage the UFAGj to invest in modern interpretation technology, specifically as relates to headphones and microphones (as used in conference interpretation). It is noted that the program SER does list (135) the specific technology received through the Erasmus + project called EUFORIA, specifically: 1 projector, and 1 laptop,

The budgetary arrangements appear well-structured and sustainable in the immediate future. Of course, pandemic conditions may have unintended—and realistically unforeseeable—budgetary consequences. Yet there is nothing in the budgetary numbers presented in the SER (129-137) that suggests poor planning or a lack of reasonable budgetary academic planning.

It may be noted, however, that the budgetary anticipation for the English Language—Translation and Interpretation research budget is relatively low. As planned for the next three years, the Translation and Interpretation research budget is 17,138 euros (2021), 18,851 euros (2022), and 20,736 (2023). This may be inadequate to meet the full research support needed by the academic staff, given their obligation to publish in international journals and to present papers at international conferences. Whilst funding is always a concern in the support of research, it may prove that the amount anticipated for the program might not cover the reasonable research interests of the academic staff. If this is so, there must be clear policies for requesting funding, and equally clear policies for the prioritization of one request over another (for example, it may be necessary to prioritize funding for people who did not, say, request funding in the previous academic year).

It is not clear what library or database resources specific to this program exist. This is not a reflection on the institution itself—this could easily have been verified by an in-person site visit—yet it is noted that a program on translation and interpretation may have specific research support needs (in terms of available books and journals, either in hard copy or online), and that there may need to be a clear acquisitions policy for materials requested for this program.

Finally, it should be noted that there is no independent way to verify the accommodation of students with disabilities. Again, this could easily have been verified by an in-person site visit. This is merely to note formally that students with physical disabilities may need access to ramps, wheelchair-accommodating toilets, etc., and the classes must be scheduled for classrooms or auditoria that are accessible to students with reduced physical mobility.

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.

26



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: No. The institution has what appear to be adequate facilities, yet as mentioned above, there is no clear breakdown of the specific program-related technology or library resources.

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: Unclear. There is no reason to doubt that the rooms would be adequate for the courses proposed, yet in the absence of a site-visit, this is difficult to ascertain in the abstract.

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: Unclear, for the same reasons noted in 7.4.

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

7.6: Apparently, although this has not been verified with independent observation.

Compliance Level: Partially compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. *Develop a clear policy for resource prioritization, particularly in the area of acquisitions or database subscriptions, for the program.*
2. *Ensure that all course scheduling takes into account the needs and challenges of students with disabilities.*
3. *Make certain that all lecture/classroom spaces meet the requirements (as above) for appropriate seating and student accessibility to teaching/learning technology.*



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The program offered in English Language—Translation and Interpretation is a well-designed attempt to offer a novel program for the Kosovo market: an English program focussed primarily on the challenges and opportunities presented by translation and interpretation. This is a reasonable and market-focused curriculum, with a nice mixture of practical and theoretical elements and a curriculum of developing complexity.

There are several weaknesses in the program, which should again be noted. As observed several times within this report, there is only provision for native-speakers of Albanian. While it may be unavoidable to focus specifically on Albanian and English, it is here noted that native speakers of Serbian would have no role in such a program. Similarly, the program relies almost completely upon the students already possessing a high level of English language ability. It is for this reason that this report strongly advocates the inclusion of ‘elective’ courses in ‘English Skills,’ which would effectively be made mandatory selections for students who are diagnosed as needing additional language practice. It is also to make student recruitment and enrolment more selective that—although the institution requested a student intake of 70 per cohort—this report recommends (but does not require) an intake of 50 students per cohort. If the additional 20 students display appropriate and adequate English language preparation, then they should be permitted to enrol. Yet this report strongly recommends that the initial English language testing for incoming students should be rigorous and exclusionary. No student will benefit from being allowed into a program for which she or he is under-prepared.

It should be observed that one of the merits of this program is in the opportunity to learn field-specific areas of translation and interpretation, often via the ‘elective’ offerings (for example, technical translation, or translation for medicine, etc.). This allows for an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) approach to teaching and learning that is appropriate to the field. It also allows for the development of later elective offerings, as student needs of staff research makes new offerings appropriate. The Faculty of Philology is encouraged to support innovations in elective offerings for this program, as the varieties and diversity of these electives is admirable.

On the whole, however, this is an innovative attempt to meet a perceived market need, and to create graduates with a clear employment profile and specific professional skills. The engagement of students in two terms of ‘work placement’ will also facilitate the transition from academic work to real-life applications of the skills developed.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program English Language—Translation and Interpretation offered by the Faculty of Philology of the University ‘Fehmi Agani’ in Gjakova 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 70 students to be enrolled in the program.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

4. APPENDICES *(if available)*

1. none

Expert Team

Chair

(Signature) (Print Name) (Date)

Member

(Signature) (Print Name) (Date)

Member

(Signature) (Print Name) (Date)

Member



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)