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## **UNIVERSITY “FEHMI AGANI” IN GJAKOVA**

***PROGRAM: Preschool Education***

***PROGRAM REACCREDITATION***

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*March, 2021, Online visit*



## 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 .....	6
2.1. Mission, objectives and administration.....	6
2.2. Quality management .....	9
2.3. Academic staff .....	12
2.4. Educational process content.....	16
2.5. Students.....	21
2.6. Research.....	24
2.7. Infrastructure and resources .....	27
3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET.....	30



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit: 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2021**

**Expert Team (ET) members:**

- *Ass. prof. dr. Janez Vogrinc, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Slovenia*
- *Prof. dr. Janez Krek, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Slovenia*

**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:**

- Self-Evaluation Report (SER);
- Documents prepared by University "Fehmi Agani" in Gjakova, Faculty of Education
- Information obtained during the online meetings;
- Web-site;
- Supplementary documents requested by the ET;
- Video presenting the campus/infrastructure of the faculty

**Criteria used for program evaluation:**

- KAA Accreditation Manual (as of 11.07.2018);
- European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance;



- The Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (revised in 2018)
- Benchmarking of HEIs in Kosovo;
- References for articles published about Kosovo Higher Education Institutions

## 1.2. Site visit schedule

<b>09.00 – 09.40</b>	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated ( <i>no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion</i> )
<b>09.45 – 10:45</b> Education/ BA	Meeting with the heads of the study programme 1: Preschool
<b>10:50 – 11.50</b> BA	Meeting with the heads of the study programme 2: Primary Education/
<b>11:50 – 12:30</b>	Lunch break
<b>12.30 – 13:10</b>	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff
<b>13.15 – 14.00</b>	Meeting with teaching staff
<b>14.05 – 14.35</b>	Meeting with students
<b>14:40 – 15:20</b>	Meeting with graduates
<b>15:25 – 16:05</b>	Meeting with employers of graduates
<b>16:05 – 16:15</b>	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts
<b>16:15 – 16:25</b>	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program



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

The foundation of the University "Fehmi Agani" in Gjakova is a continuation of the Higher Pedagogical School, which was founded in 1967/68. The Department of Primary Education was opened in the school year 1975/1976. In 2001, the Senate of the University of Prishtina approved the curriculum on the basis of Bologna Declaration for the Bachelor level. After the establishment of the Faculty of Education, from the school year 2002/2003, students were not enrolled in the programs of the Higher Pedagogical School, but initially only in the Primary Education branch, and later in other programs.

With the decision in 2003 The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology decided that the Faculty of Education, with regional centers in: Prishtina, Gjakova, Prizren and Gjilan (established by Administrative Decision on September 9, 2002) to start curricula for preparation of teachers for lower secondary education - subject teachers - from the academic year 2003/2004.

In September 2004, the Senate of the University of Prishtina, on the proposal of Joint Governing Board, approved the curricula for the branch of the University of Prishtina in Gjakova.

The University "Fehmi Agani" in Gjakova started on October 1, 2013 with the Faculty of Education with preschool and primary programs, the Faculty of Medicine with nursing and midwifery programs and the Faculty of Philology with Albanian Language programs and English Language and literature.

The Faculty of Education at the University "Fehmi Agani" in Gjakova offers these programs at Bachelor level from the academic year 2013-2014:

- Preschool (BA, 240 ECTS)
- Primary Education (BA, 240 ECTS)

These programs were initially accredited by AAK for 2 years (01.10.2014 - 30.09.2016) and then for 3 years (01.10.2016 -30.09.2019). Due to the non-functioning of AAK, all decisions



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Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju  
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

---

are valid for another year (01.10.2019 - 30.09.2020), while due to the pandemic caused by the virus Sars-Cov 2, the accreditation was extended for another year (01.10.2020 - 30.09.2021).

The preschool program is designed for 4 years or 8 semesters, which includes 240 credits (ECTS). Each year 100 new students are enrolled. The preschool program is one of the programs for which there is a demand in the job market as the network of preschool institutions in the country continues to expand. This program enables students to gain knowledge about the basics of preschool education, to put the theoretical knowledge and teaching methods into practice, to continuously reflect on their professional development and to contribute to quality improvement and further development in working with preschool children.

## 2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

### 2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution and 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. In most of its parts, the study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept. However, course syllabuses of the program have a consistent pattern in the field of assessment of knowledge and skills from which it follows that not only knowledge and skills, but a sheer participation of a student at the course contributes – the amount is differently defined in particular syllabuses – from 5% to 20% of the student’s final grade. That the final grades of a particular courses in fact include not only the assessed knowledge and skills, but also participation of students, has been confirmed in the interviews with the university teachers.

There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues, defined in the Statute of University “Fehmi Agani” in Gjakova, the Regulation of bachelor studies of the Faculty of Education, the Regulation for selection procedures for election, re-election and advancement of academic staff in the University of Gjakova, etc. We have checked that these documents are made publicly available to all staff and students at the University website.

The rules that regulate ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities are indeed defined in the Code of Ethics of UFAGJ, the Regulation on

6



disciplinary procedures for academic staff and Regulation for disciplinary procedures for students. We may assume that they were also respected, however, the interviews with stakeholders did not provide enough data to evaluate how they function in everyday decisions.

Policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are defined in the University Statute, Regulation on quality management, the Strategic Plan, etc. The two later have been reviewed in the last period and the changes of Regulation on quality management entered into force on 01.10.2020. We concur that they are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.

We could not get the answers related to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) neither from the management at the level of the faculty nor the heads of the study programme. We assume that the institution is not regulated through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at the level of the study program.

It is evident that systems are established for central recording and analysis of course completion, program progression, completion rates and program evaluations, with summaries and comparative data distributed automatically to senior administrators and relevant committees at least once each year. However, policies and procedures to be taken to deal with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed could be taken into the consideration more systematically.

There are statistical data on indicators, including grade distributions, progression and completion rates are retained in an accessible central database and regularly reviewed and reported in periodic program reports.

The concepts of gender justice and the promotion of equal opportunities for students in special situations such as, for example, students with health-related impairments, students with children, foreign students, students with an immigrant background and/or students from educationally disadvantaged families are put into practice at the level of the study program. However, it was impossible to evaluate how they function in everyday decisions.

STANDARD	COMPLIANCE	
	YES	NO
<i>Standard 1.1.</i> The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	X	



<i>Standard 1.2.</i> 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.	X	
<i>Standard 1.3.</i> The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.		X
<i>Standard 1.4.</i> There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.	X	
<i>Standard 1.5.</i> All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	X	
<i>Standard 1.6.</i> 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.	X (1 out of 2)	

Comment: out of 6 listed standards (and, therefore, 12 maximum points), there are 9 points reached which is 75%. Thus, it is level substantially compliant.

**Compliance level: Substantially compliant**

**ET recommendations:**

- We suggest that the final grades of particular courses do not include participation of students at courses but only the assessment of knowledge and skills. The participation of students in a particular course according to the criteria that should be set in a syllabus of a particular course could be a condition that must be fulfilled to enter a final exam. Therefore, it is not possible to pass the course at all without student's appropriate participation and the grades do not mix and confuse knowledge with participation.*





2. *We suggest that the institution considers setting the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at the level of the study program and to regulate the program through that measures.*
3. *Policies and procedures to be taken to deal with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed could be reconsidered and applied more systematically.*

## **2.2. Quality management**

The Office of Quality Assurance plans faculty and program evaluation processes. All full-time and part-time employees of the Faculty of Education participate in the self-evaluation. During the interview with teachers it was confirmed that they are familiar with the quality assurance system developed at the level of the University and the Faculty. Students are also involved in the implementation of the quality assurance processes and have a representative in the Quality Assurance Commission. The Office of Quality Assurance has developed various questionnaires for students, graduates and employers (e.g. questionnaire for self-evaluation of academic staff, questionnaire for employers, questionnaire for undergraduate students, form for evaluation of administration by students, evaluation report for scientific publications and conference participation, evaluation report on the contribution to the University and contribution to society etc.). Quality assurance processes address all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution. The Office of Quality Assurance collects information on teachers, subjects, study program, infrastructure, and student services.

Quality assurance processes ensure that both required standards are met and continuous improvement in performance occurs. The results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account in the further development of the study program. These include evaluation results, analyse of student workload, academic success and graduate employment. However, the results of these evaluations are only publicly available as a general report and it is very difficult to obtain specific information from this report.

The Office of Quality Assurance is also responsible for the process of self-evaluation of academic staff each academic year. The self-evaluation is carried out by the academic staff, and each teacher compiles the annual self-evaluation report for scientific research and participation in scientific conferences, contribution to the university and contribution to the society. After that, each teacher gives this report to the Dean and the Commission for Quality



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Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju  
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

---

Assurance with the purpose of reporting and improvement in the field of academic staff activity. The performance evaluation of academic staff is based on the following criteria: Student evaluation (25%), peer evaluation (15%), Dean evaluation (15%), academic publications and participation in conferences (25%), contribution to the University and contribution to society (20%). However, the interview with the Quality Assurance Office and teachers did not give us specific information about what an academic staff member must do to achieve the maximum percentage for each criterion. It is very unusual that an academic staff member gets 15% if he publishes his paper in a journal indexed in Wos or Scopus, and the same percentage if he publishes his paper in a journal indexed in Doaj (this conclusion can be drawn from the Evaluation Report for Academic Publications and Conference Participation form). Also on other criteria, It is very difficult to differentiate the quality of work. The form Evaluation Report by Dean states that the assessment is done on a five-point scale (5 = excellent, 1= poor). However, for regular attendance it is possible to get 10%, 2.5% for regular exams and consultations, and 2.5% for ethical behaviour toward students and colleagues. Again, it is not clear how the conversion from a five-point scale to percentage is done. Also during the interviews, the expert team did not receive clarity on the situations in which an academic member receives less than the maximum percentage and how a lower than maximum percentage is calculated for each criterion.

Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are produced at regular intervals for consideration within the institution and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program. A comprehensive reassessment of the program is carried out on a regular basis, but further significant changes have been made only based on the recommendations of the expert team for the reaccreditation of the program.

In order to improve the work of the quality office, the plan of activities of Quality Assurance, the regulations for Quality Assurance and evaluation in the university, Manual for the evaluation of performance, quality and curriculum, Standards of internal quality assurance in the university were elaborated. However, from the interview with the members of the quality assurance office, it appears that the quality assurance system is not regularly evaluated and improved.



STANDARD	COMPLIANCE	
	YES	NO
Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.	X	
Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.	X	
Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	X	
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.	X	
<i>Standard 2.5.</i> Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.	X	
<i>Standard 2.6.</i> Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.	X (1 out of 2)	
<i>Standard 2.7.</i> 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.	X	
<i>Standard 2.8.</i> The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.	X	



<i>Standard 2.9.</i> The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.		X
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Comment: out of 9 listed standards (and, therefore, 18 maximum points), there are 15 points reached which is slightly more than 83%. Thus, it is level substantially compliant.

**Compliance level: Substantially compliant**

**ET Recommendations:**

- 1. Establish a system for self-evaluation of quality assessment and assurance procedures in the Faculty. A system that allows for ongoing adjustment of quality assurance procedures toward higher staff satisfaction with the system and its greater impact on the quality of the implementation of the study program.*
- 2. Develop more detailed criteria for each area evaluated and inform faculty staff of these criteria. The criteria must be designed in a way to differentiate between different quality work or activities.*

**2.3. Academic staff**

There are 23 full-time academic staff in the Faculty of Education, 5 academic staff in the University Gjakova Faculty of Phylology and 20 part-time academic staff. During the interview with teachers it was confirmed that new academic staff are provided with complete position descriptions and terms and conditions of employment, with information on rights and responsibilities, performance evaluation, promotion, and professional development support processes. Teaching staff meet statutory requirements for tenure. The structure of full and part-time academic staff is appropriate, just over 58% of academic staff are full time and they make up more than 50% of the classes in the program. For each student group and for each 60 ECTS, the University has employed at least one full-time member of staff with a PhD. Nevertheless, the expert time suggests that Gjakova University should employ more full-time academic staff at the Faculty of Education because full-time staff is a guarantee of sustainable development of the study program and the institution, especially because the number of enrolled students at



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---

the Faculty of Education is very high. Academic staff cover no more than two teaching assignments (one full-time and one part-time) within an academic year. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development for teaching staff. The Didactic Centre has been established at the University. This centre organizes various training programs for teaching staff and academic staff from the Faculty of Education are involved in the organization and delivery of the training programs. The training programs are from the areas of pedagogy, teaching strategies, ICT etc. The academic staff maintain a portfolio of evidence of their professional development. However, this portfolio contains more evidence of formal educational background, performance evaluation, and scientific references and less evidence of professional development needs and strategies for improvement. The expert team believes that it is very important, especially for the Faculty of Education, that all academic staff have appropriate pedagogical education. The bibliography of academic staff shows that the Faculty of Education has recruited some academic staff without pedagogical education (e.g. general medicine, electrical engineering). During the interview, the expert team learned in this regard that in-service training is organized for academic staff without pedagogical training at Didactic Centre. Teachers retired at the age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.

Duties of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include involvement in the academic community, availability for consultation with students, and service to the community. During the interview, students confirmed that they have enough opportunities to communicate with academic staff by mail or through regular faculty consultations.

Evaluation of academic staff is conducted regularly through self-evaluation, student, peer and supervisor evaluations and occurs once a year on a formal basis. Self-evaluation is done by the academic staff and each teacher prepares the annual self-evaluation report for academic research and participation in academic conferences, contribution to the university and contribution to the society. After that, each teacher gives this report to the Dean and the Commission for Quality Assurance with the purpose of reporting and improvement in the field of academic staff activity. The performance evaluation of academic staff is based on the following criteria: Student evaluation (25%), peer evaluation (15%), Dean evaluation (15%), academic publications and conference attendance (25%), contribution to the University and contribution to society (20%). However, as the expert team mentioned under Standard 2.2 Quality Management, the interviews with Quality Assurance Office and teachers did not give us specific information about what an academic staff member must do to achieve the maximum percentage for each criterion and that it is very difficult to differentiate the quality of work

13



based on these criteria. During the interviews, the expert team did not receive clarity on the situations in which an academic member receives less than the maximum percentage and how a lower than maximum percentage is calculated for each criterion.

The results of the evaluation are made publicly available, but only as a general report and it is very difficult to obtain specific information from this report, especially on individual academic staff members.

STANDARD	COMPLIANCE	
	YES	NO
<i>Standard 3.1.</i> Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment.	X	
<i>Standard 3.2.</i> The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.	X	
<i>Standard 3.3.</i> 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 their activity.	X	
<i>Standard 3.4.</i> 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.	X	
<i>Standard 3.5.</i> 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.	X	
<i>Standard 3.6.</i> Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	X	



<i>Standard 3.7.</i> The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.	X	
<i>Standard 3.8.</i> 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 each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.	X (1 out of 2)	
<i>Standard 3.9.</i> Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.	X	
<i>Standard 3.10.</i> Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	X	

Comment: out of 10 listed standards (and, therefore, 20 maximum points), there are 19 points reached which is 95%. Thus, it is level fully compliant.

**Compliance level: Fully compliant**

**ET Recommendations:**

1. *Depending on the number of students enrolled, it would be advisable to hire more academic staff in the Faculty of Education or reduce the number of students enrolled.*
2. *Pay particular attention to ensuring that new academic staff members have the appropriate pedagogical education and are academically engaged in the didactics/teaching of an individual subject. If they have not acquired the relevant pedagogical education in their undergraduate studies, they should acquire it in in-service training programs.*
3. *Develop more detailed criteria for academic staff evaluation and inform faculty staff of these criteria. The criteria must be designed to differentiate between varying quality of work or activities of academic staff.*



## 2.4. Educational process content

The preschool program is designed to last 4 years or 8 semesters, which includes 240 credits (ECTS). The curriculum of the program is designed on the basis of compulsory and optional subjects. The main components of the program consist of professional subjects such as: Theory of Education, Pedagogy of Preschool Education, Developmental Psychology, Education in Early Childhood, Methodology of Inclusive Education, Pedagogical Practice, Environmental Education, Strategies of Preschool Education, Education and Media, Psychology of Education, Basics of Research in Education, Lifelong Learning, Health Education, Fine Arts with Methodology, Albanian Language for Preschool Education, English Language for Preschool Education, Mathematics for Preschool Education, Working with Gifted Children, Children and Knowledge about Nature, etc. The program of study is based on the qualification objectives. These include subject and generic aspects and the acquisition of subject, methodological and generic skills and competences.

The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area. According to the study program, each teacher of the respective subject designs the curriculum, which includes the subject description, expected learning outcomes, student contribution and load, teaching methodology, assessment methods, literature, detailed learning plan for one semester, as well as academic guidelines and student rules of conduct.

The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and accurate identification of general and specific competencies, as well as compatibility with the programs of study and curricula delivered in the EHEA. The learning outcomes are used to: Explain the fundamental concepts in the field of preschool education; Recognize and implement curriculum based on competence and use of educational resources; Create an initial experience through practical learning about the teaching and learning process; Identify children's developmental needs and their learning potential; Recognize and study educational science; Master interdisciplinary research methods; Enable students to develop critical and creative thinking; Enable students to build and achieve classroom learning goals; Ability to implement contemporary and active methods, techniques, and strategies of teaching. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to student development.





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All syllabi are analytical and include the objectives of the discipline, the basic thematic content distributed in 15 weeks of the semester where the basic objectives of the subject, their content, methods and forms of assessment, learning outcomes, student load, teaching methodology, seminars and activities applied, basic and secondary literature are clearly specified. During the interview with students it was confirmed that they are familiar with the curricula - academic staff inform them at the beginning of each semester about the content of the subject, competencies, assessment methods, etc.

In the Faculty of Education - Preschool Program - the learning process is organized in Albanian language. The expert team proposes to develop courses in English, as this will increase the number of students and staff coming to the Faculty of Education in the framework of mobility. The expert team also suggests better support and encouragement for students in the Faculty of Education to study abroad and better guidance (e.g. presenting comparable programs from abroad to your students) in this area.

Learning is organized in the form of theoretical lectures, seminars, individual consultations, group and pair work, implementation of contemporary methods of teaching and learning by combining knowledge, professionalism and experience in teaching. During the interview with the students, the expert team was told that the academic staff could pay more attention to the individual needs and interests of the students. According to the program, students have the opportunity to choose elective courses, but if the group chooses an elective course, all students must take the same course.

Assessment methods have a consistent structure in the curricula. However, in the area of knowledge and skills assessment, the program syllabi show a consistent pattern (not all, but most) indicating that not only knowledge and skills, but also a student's attendance and participation in the course contribute - the amount is defined differently in each syllabus - from 5% to 20% to the student's final grade, with the consequence that the review of the student's performance in terms of knowledge and skills does not guarantee validity. Interviews with the university teachers confirmed that the final grade for a particular course does in fact include not only assessed knowledge and skills, but also student attendance and participation.

Policies and procedures include actions to be taken to deal with situations where standards of student performance are inadequate. However, from interviews with both teachers and students, we found that one of the regular mechanisms of faculty support for students who fail exams is to schedule additional exams during the semester as well, for example, in April and October. In effect, students have more than three opportunities to pass the exam in a year, and



this has the effect of reducing the value and intensity of exam preparation and reduces the seriousness of study in general.

To facilitate the practical training, the Faculty of Education enters into cooperative agreements with preschool institutions. Practical learning in preschool institutions is developed: in the first year of study - sem. II for 5 weeks; in the second year - sem. IV for 6 weeks; in the third year - sem. V for 6 weeks; in the fourth year - sem. VIII for 8 weeks. During the pedagogical practice (practical learning) students are supervised by the mentor teacher of the preschool institution and the mentor from the Faculty of Education. After students complete their pedagogical practice, they turn in to their mentor the reflective journals and portfolio created during the pedagogical practice. The intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that these learning outcomes and the strategies for developing that learning are understood by the student.

STANDARD	COMPLIANCE	
	YES	NO
<i>Standard 4.1.</i> 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. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.	X	
<i>Standard 4.2.</i> 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.	X (1 of 2)	
<i>Standard 4.3.</i> 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.	X	



<i>Standard 4.4.</i> 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.	X	
<i>Standard 4.5.</i> 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.		X
<i>Standard 4.6.</i> 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.	X	
<i>Standard 4.7.</i> 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.	X (1 out of 2)	
<i>Standard 4.8.</i> 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.	X	
<i>Standard 4.9.</i> 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.		X (1 out of 2)
<i>Standard 4.10.</i> Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.		X (1 out of 2)
<i>Standard 4.11.</i> If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the	X	



strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.		
<i>Standard 4.12.</i> In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.	X	

Comment: out of 12 listed standards (and, therefore, 24 maximum points), there are 18 points reached which is 75%. Thus, it is level substantially compliant.

**Compliance level: Substantially compliant**

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Provide English language courses and study programs in English.*
2. *We propose that the final grades of each course do not include the participation and attendance of students in the courses, but only the assessment of knowledge and skills. Student attendance in a particular course according to the criteria that should be specified in a syllabus of a particular course could be a condition that must be met in order to take a final exam. (In this case, it is not possible for a student to pass the course at all without appropriate attendance and participation, and grades do not confuse knowledge with attendance and participation.)*
3. *We suggest that the faculty finds out other mechanisms to support students who do not pass the exams and stop adding exam terms during the semester when other educational activities are being conducted.*
4. *Develop a strategy to encourage more students and staff to participate in various mobility activities.*
5. *The exams are important factor which defines the actual workload of students and the quality of the study program resulting in actual knowledge and skills of students. Therefore, we suggest that university teachers carefully design and apply the evaluation of student's knowledge and skills to ensure that it is impossible to pass the exams or obtain high grades using only simplified material (for example, PPT from lectures) without studying prescribed literature.*



## 2.5. Students

From the documents it is clear that there are formally adopted admission procedures at institutional level which the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. The faculty's leadership and heads of study programme have confirmed in the interviews that the admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.

According to the provided evidence, students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.

There are 50 students at lectures and 30 students at seminars which ensures an effective and interactive teaching and learning process. However, it would be also possible to organize lectures for more students (for example 100 students) and divide them into smaller groups (15-20) at seminar/laboratory work (for example, when they learn particular practical skills).

According to the interviews with students, feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly. The Faculty ensures mechanisms that include additional lectures and practical work as well as materials for the specific course if needed. However, from the answers both the students and teachers it seems that regularly used mechanism to ensure advancements of students are also additional exam terms in the middle of a summer semester and in October probably for students in second and higher years of study. Students get more than three options to pass the exam per year. So many exam options may not contribute to the quality of the study.

The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record. Students in specific situations (student pregnancy and the maternity leave, illnesses that require longer treatment time, interruption of studies for the reason of employment for fixed time, etc.) may have special treatment upon their requests to the dean. According to the statements of university teachers in the study program, flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations and records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.

UFAGJ possesses the anti-plagiarism programme and according to the statements of teachers and students, it is being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original. However, from their answers it appears that anti-plagiarism methods are used mainly for diploma papers, and not also for seminars and similar works of students.

Students' rights and obligations are defined with the UFAGJ Statute that is published as online document, rights and obligations are published also in the Student Handbook. Students have



the right to submit written complaints to the Dean of academic unit against the grade taken. The complaint should be submitted within two working days after the results are announced and further procedure seems to be fair.

The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is regulated in the UFAGJ Statute, for each academic unit and it is done with the decision taking on competition announcement by the UFAGJ Senate and specifying the criteria of transfer, based on the rules of recognition for foreign qualifications in compliance with the Lisbon Convention on Recognition of Qualifications as well as qualifications gained outside the Institutions of Higher Education and UFAGJ Statute.

The students confirmed that the academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students.

According to the teachers, they are continuously engaged for the improvement of the learning process by using contemporary methods of teaching, co-creative learning, consultations with students.

Students tests, assignments and projects are graded according to the matrices set in syllabi which ensures that the planned range of domains of student learning outcomes are addressed. However, according to information obtained through interviews it was possible also to pass the exam without using prescribed literature for learning, using only presentations from lectures given to the students.

From the self-evaluation and the interviews with teachers it is clear that there is lack of literature in Albanian language, which raises further question whether textbooks and reference materials are up to date.

STANDARD	COMPLIANCE	
	YES	NO
<i>Standard 5.1.</i> There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.	X	
<i>Standard 5.2.</i> All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	X	
<i>Standard 5.3.</i> The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.	X	



<i>Standard 5.4.</i> Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	X	
<i>Standard 5.5.</i> The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	X	
<i>Standard 5.6.</i> Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.	X	
<i>Standard 5.7.</i> Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.	X	
<i>Standard 5.8.</i> Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.		X (1 out of 2)
<i>Standard 5.9.</i> Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.	X	
<i>Standard 5.10.</i> The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.	X	
<i>Standard 5.11.</i> 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.	X	

Comment: out of 11 listed standards (and, therefore, 22 maximum points), there are 21 points reached which is 95%. Thus, it is level fully compliant.

**Compliance level: Fully compliant**

**ET recommendations:**

1. *As in the last years more and more student work (seminars, etc.) is written and submitted in electronic form, it is recommendable that anti-plagiarism mechanisms should be used also for seminars and similar "minor" works of students.*



## 2.6. Research

The Faculty Education University Gjakova has defined scientific/applied research objectives. These goals are: Creating opportunities for academic staff and students to develop their scientific research; Awareness among academic staff of the need to be involved in scientific research activities; Creating opportunities to conduct research in the context of international projects; Promoting and developing research work; Raising and improving the level of teaching and academic development of staff through research work. In this context, the expert team proposes to increase financial and human resources to achieve the research objectives of the Faculty of Education. Provide better assistance and support for academic staff (especially junior academic staff) in developing research collaborations with colleagues in other institutions and in the international community. During the interview, the expert team learned that international conferences are organized at the university level and academic staff from the Faculty of Education participate in the conferences with their contributions. However, it seems that the Faculty of Education does not organize academic conferences independently, nor are conferences organized at the university level at the initiative of the Faculty of Education.

Expectations for teaching staff participation in research and scholarly activities are specified, and performance against these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria. However, as mentioned by the expert team under Standard 2.2 Quality Management, the expert team considers that the criteria are not sufficiently specified and that it is very difficult to judge the varying quality of work against this criterion. It is very unusual that an academic staff member gets 15% if he publishes his work in a journal indexed in WoS or Scopus and the same percentage if he publishes his work in a journal indexed in Doaj and World Cat (this conclusion can be drawn from the form Evaluation Report for Academic Publications and Conference Participation ). There should also be more clarification on the policy of what is recognized as research. This is particularly important in the Faculty of Education as it is a very interdisciplinary institution and academic staff are involved in research in a range of disciplines: from art, philosophy, mathematics etc.

From the biography of the academic staff, the expert team can conclude that there is a big difference in the research activity and their references. Some academic staff have a very good track record of research outputs and they have published papers in journals indexed in WoS and Scopus. However, it also appears that not every academic staff member produces on average at least one scientific research publication per year (some of them have the last scientific reference in 2015 or 2017). Some faculty members (not many!) have published their





work in international journals that are now on the list of predatory journals (e.g. European Academic Research). Faculty need to establish strict rules for journals that are suitable for publication by academic staff, are of sufficient quality, and should not be on the Predatory Journals list. During the interview, the expert team was informed that a committee was established to review academic publications. Not all academic staff have a proven track record of research outputs on the same topics as their teaching activities. The expert team would particularly like to emphasize that academic staff in the Faculty of Education should also be involved in research into the subject didactics/teaching of a single subject (e.g. teaching chemistry, mathematics, etc.).

Full-time academic staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo to which they are affiliated as full-time staff. However, in the interviews with the teaching staff, it was found that there is some ambiguity as to the name of which institution the part-time academic staff publishes under, especially the academic staff who are affiliated with other universities.

There are intellectual property ownership policies and clear procedures for the commercialisation of ideas developed by staff and students. Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities relevant to the courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field. Students are involved in research projects and other activities but may be more familiar with the research activities of academic staff.

STANDARD	COMPLIANCE	
	YES	NO
<i>Standard 6.1.</i> The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre 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 proposed research objectives.	X (1 out of 2)	
<i>Standard 6.2.</i> 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.	X (1 out of 2)	



<i>Standard 6.3.</i> 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.	X (1 out of 2)	
<i>Standard 6.4.</i> The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.	X (1 out of 2)	
<i>Standard 6.5.</i> 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.	X (1 out of 2)	
<i>Standard 6.6.</i> Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.	X	
<i>Standard 6.7.</i> 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.		X
<i>Standard 6.8.</i> Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff.	X (1 out of 2)	
<i>Standard 6.9.</i> 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.	X (1 out of 2)	
<i>Standard 6.10.</i> Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	X	



<i>Standard 6.11. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.</i>	X	
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Comment: out of 11 listed standards (and, therefore, 22 maximum points), there are 13 points reached which is 59%. Thus, it is level partially compliant.

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

### ET Recommendations:

1. *Increase financial and human resources to meet the research goals of the Faculty of Education.*
2. *Provide better support for academic staff (especially junior academic staff) to develop research collaborations with colleagues in other institutions and in the international community.*
3. *The Faculty of Education should be the initiator and organize scientific meetings, symposia, conferences, round tables from the field of education.*
4. *Research on teaching of a particular subject (subject didactics) should be a priority topic for academic staff at the Faculty of Education.*
5. *Increase the number of scientific publications published by the academic staff.*
6. *Define strict rules for journals that are suitable for publication by academic staff, are of sufficient quality and should not be on the list of predatory journals.*

### 2.7. Infrastructure and resources

Currently, the Faculty of Education uses 10 classrooms, two laboratories of natural sciences, a cabinet of informative technology, didactic classroom and preschool education classroom, laboratories fulfil technical and technological conditions. The building of the Faculty of Education also has the Sports Hall. For the University Campus of UFAGJ the location and the financial sources are obtained and the building permit is in the procurement procedures. The



Campus building will begin in 2021 and it is planned to complete in 2025. We conclude that long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises and equipment. The concerns remain in relation to human resources, i.e. enough qualified university teachers and assistants to carry out the study program for that quantity of students.

The financial plan exists, however, except for some smaller expenses at the level of the program it is not set at the level of the study program but the faculty and university. We don't consider that arrangement as inappropriate or as non-compliance with the standard. The budget of this public university largely depends on the state finances that are provided through the Ministry of Finance. We conclude that the sustainability of the study program is guaranteed for the next three years.

The higher education institution possesses spaces adequate for the educational process, adequate software, library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.

There is a lack of textbooks in Albanian and also professional contemporary literature of the field, translated in Albanian.

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

STANDARD	COMPLIANCE	
	YES	NO
<i>Standard 7.1.</i> The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.	X (1 of 2)	
<i>Standard 7.2.</i> 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.	X	
<i>Standard 7.3.</i> The higher education institution demonstrates with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) 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;	X	



<p>b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;</p> <p>c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence;</p> <p>d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.</p>		
<p><i>Standard 7.4.</i> 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.</p>	X	
<p><i>Standard 7.5.</i> The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:</p> <p>a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>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 recognised publishers, from the last 10 years;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.</p>		X (1 out of 2)
<p><i>Standard 7.6.</i> The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.</p>	X	

Comment: out of 6 listed standards (and, therefore, 12 maximum points), there are 10 points reached which is 83%. Thus, it is level substantially compliant.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant



**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Increase book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, with a sufficient number of textbooks in Albanian and more subscriptions to foreign publications and periodicals.*

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

The overall compliance level for 7 standards for the study program PRESCHOOL EDUCATION delivered by the University "Fehmi Agani" in Gjakova, Faculty of Education, corresponds to the following: 2 fully fulfilled, 4 substantially fulfilled, 1 partially fulfilled standards.

The process of evaluation went smoothly, without any technical problems. The expert team would like to note that the process of re-accreditation of the study program was carried out in the conditions of externalities of COVID -19, and the Faculty of Education has emphasized the difficulties and consequences of this process. The Faculty of Education has effectively organized the process of re-accreditation of the study program and has also responded to the additional requirements of the expert team and has submitted all the required documents. The expert team believes that the Faculty of Education has a good potential. However, there are also some aspects that should be improved, especially in relation to academic staff. The Faculty of Education should recruit more academic staff with appropriate pedagogical education and they should be academically engaged in the didactics/teaching of an individual subject. Research on teaching of a particular subject (subject didactics) should be a priority research topic for academic staff in the Faculty of Education. The Faculty of Education should better support academic staff (especially junior academic staff) in developing research collaborations with colleagues in other institutions and in the international community. Academic staff need to increase the number of published scientific publications. Special attention should also be given to the publication of textbooks in Albanian and more subscriptions to foreign publications and journals. As the quality of the study program depends strongly on the quality of the research work of the academic staff (recorded in their scientific publications), the expert team suggests that the Faculty of Education should reduce the number of students enrolled in this study program until it recruits new academic staff with pedagogical background and good scientific publications. The expert team also suggests that the final grades of each course do not include students' participation and attendance in the courses, but only the assessment of

30



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Kosovo Accreditation Agency

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knowledge and skills, and that the academic staff carefully designs and applies the assessment of students' knowledge and skills to ensure that it is impossible to pass the examinations or obtain high grades by using only simplified material (e.g. PPT from lectures) without studying the prescribed literature.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program **PRESCHOOL EDUCATION** offered by the **University "Fehmi Agani" in Gjakova, Faculty of Education** is **"Substantially compliant"** with the standards of 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 study program.

#### Expert Team

##### Chair

**JANEZ VOGRINC**

**5. 4. 2021**

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(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

##### Member

**JANEZ KREK**

**5. 4. 2021**

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(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)