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Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim  
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Kosovo Accreditation Agency

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**RIT Kosovo (A.U.K.) College**

**INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAM EVALUATION**

***REACCREDITATION***

***Final Report***

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*February, 2022*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
1. INTRODUCTION .....	4
1.1. Context.....	4
1.2. Site visit schedule .....	5
1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation .....	5
2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION .....	6
2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives.....	7
2.2. Strategic planning, governance and administration .....	9
2.3. Financial planning and management .....	12
2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability.....	14
2.5. Quality management .....	16
2.6. Learning and teaching.....	22
2.7. Research.....	25
2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development .....	27
2.9. Student administration and support services.....	30
2.10. Learning resources and facilities .....	34
2.11. Institutional cooperation .....	36
3. PROGRAM EVALUATIONS .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1. <i>Program 1</i> .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1.1. Mission, objectives and administration.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1.2. Quality management .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1.3. Academic staff .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>



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3.1.4. Educational process content.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1.5. Students.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1.6. Research.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1.7. Infrastructure and resources .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2. Program 2 .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4. OVERALL EVALUATION AND JUDGEMENTS OF THE ET .....	39
5. APPENDICES ( <i>if available</i> ) .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit:** February 8, 2022

**Expert Team (ET) members:**

- Prof. Dr. Melita Kovačević, University of Zagreb, Croatia
- Prof. Dr. Ahmad Zargari, Morehead State University
- Mr. Christopher Bohlens, Student expert

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

- Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Leona Kovaci, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Kastriot Ilazi, Senior IT Officer

**Sources of information for the Report:**

1. Self-evaluation Report (SER);
2. Annex (Agreements, Rules, CVs, Strategies, Manuals, List of Publications, Statutes, Syllabuses)
3. Online meeting with the representatives on 08.02.2022
4. Website of the Institution
5. Additionally requested documents

**Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations**

- *KAA Accreditation Manual, 2021*
- *Criteria of Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability*



## 1.2. Site visit schedule

<b>09.00 – 10.25</b>	<b>Meeting with the management of the institution (<i>no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion</i>)</b>
<b>10.30 – 11.20</b>	<b>Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative services</b>
<b>11.20 – 12.35</b>	<b>Lunch break</b>
<b>12.40 – 13.35</b>	<b>Meeting with the heads of faculties/study programs</b>
<b>13.40 – 14.30</b>	<b>Meeting with teaching staff</b>
<b>14.35 – 15.25</b>	<b>Meeting with students</b>
<b>15.30 – 16.20</b>	<b>Meeting with graduates</b>
<b>16.25 – 17.10</b>	<b>Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders</b>
<b>17.10 – 17.25</b>	<b>Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA</b>
<b>17.25 – 17.35</b>	<b>Closing meeting with the management of the institution</b>

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

In 2003, the American University in Kosovo (A.U.K) RIT-K was founded as a private and non-profit higher education institution that is supported by the U.S. Organization. The American University in Kosovo was established for the purpose of developing and offering academic programs only in English. The institution has executed an efficient and effective administrative approach that has, in partnership with Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in New York, made it possible for students/ learners in Kosovo and the region to earn the same degree programs that are offered in the RIT main campus through implementation of the same curricula, syllabi, assessment, evaluation methods, exams and grading standards.



The institution currently offers three programs, two at the baccalaureate level, and one at the master's level. Because RIT Kosovo offers programs identical with the main campus (RIT – New York), RIT-K students/graduates have equal access to over 70 master's and a number of PhD programs at the RIT main campus.

Undergraduate students (Bachelor Degree) at RIT Kosovo should complete a four-year program that is organized over two academic semesters per year, and depending on the program, upon completion, graduates are awarded either a Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Arts and Sciences, or Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information Technologies. Graduate students, upon completion, are awarded a Master of Science in Professional Studies.

The American University in Kosovo Foundation (A.U.K.F) Board of Trustees is composed of individuals who guide and support the institution toward fulfillment of the institution's mission and vision. The RIT Kosovo Academic Senate provides for the exercise of the faculty's role in academic decisions, the protection of legitimate faculty aspirations, the implementation and preservation of academic standards, and the promotion of the academic welfare of students.

The Student Government (SG) works to improve the quality of students' life at RIT Kosovo and serves as the instrument through which the student body may collectively influence decisions about student activities, roles, curricula, and other interests. Since its establishment in 2003, the institution has prepared well-rounded graduates who are employed in leadership positions in public and private organizations. Over the past 19 years, RIT Kosovo has also made major contributions to the development of infrastructure and enhancement of living standards in Kosovo.

The expert team's recommendation is based on their thorough review of the self-evaluation report submitted by the institution, careful evaluation of additional documents provided by the institution, virtual meeting with faculty and administrative staff, students, alumni, and employers.

## 2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION



## 2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives

The Institution has a well-defined clear mission that includes the three pillars of teaching, research and service. The self-evaluation report indicates that the RIT Kosovo will deliver an outstanding American education for students from Kosovo and the world through innovative curricular, experiential, and research programs in a student-centered culture. The RIT-K students acquire expertise, knowledge, and values that prepare them to contribute to the global society. As an integral part of strategic development plan, the mission has been revisited in accordance with the vision of the institution that provide a guide for decision, planning, and short, medium, and long-term objectives of the institution.

The RIT-K develops its strategy for a period of three years upon which the mission is tested against stated benchmarks. An annual review of the plan is performed in tandem with the mission statement to determine whether it withstands environmental pressures and changing circumstances. The institution's mission was last reviewed in 2020, and was approved by the Board of Trustees and A.U.K Foundation Board. The mission aligns with that of RIT USA and adheres to the standards of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) in the US that are fully recognized by Kosovo law on higher education. Strategic development plan developed by RIT Kosovo is based on the mission and vision of the institution, and as such provides an effective guide for strategic planning, decision making and operations of the institution.

According to the self-evaluation report, “the mission of RIT-K includes a mechanism for measuring its achievement. The mission center on “curricular, experiential learning and research programs in a student-centered culture” it can be further decomposed into specific goals and objectives of the strategic plan that lead towards fulfilment of the mission. Students achievement component within the mission enable us to validate those achievement through course learning outcomes and further evaluations, such as alumni surveys”.

The mission statement forms the guideline for further development, such as our quest to open new degree programs, increase experiential learning, provide the necessary learning resources, and find sources of funding to support research activities to achieve the mission. Every policy developed has to align to the mission.

The expert team evaluated the self-study report and additional documents provided by the institution, virtually visited the institution, interviewed the administrative and teaching staff, met with students, alumni, and employers.



As a result of thorough analysis of RIT's self-evaluation report, supplemental documents submitted by the institutions, virtual interview, virtual interviews with teaching and administrative staff, students, employers, the expert team confirms that:

- The institution has a defined mission statement that includes three main pillars: teaching, research and community service.
- The mission of the institution has been defined and, if the case, revised, based on a consultation process involving external and internal stakeholders.
- The mission is recognized by the members of the academic community of the institution.
- The institutional mission provides an effective guide for strategic planning, decision making and operations of the institution.
- Medium- and long-term institutional objectives are consistent with and support the mission.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 1.1. The institution has a defined mission statement that includes three main pillars: teaching, research and community service.	C	
Standard 1.2. The mission of the institution has been defined and, if the case, revised, based on a consultation process involving external and internal stakeholders.	C	
Standard 1.3. The mission is recognized by the members of the academic community of the institution.	C	
Standard 1.4. The institutional mission provides an effective guide for strategic planning, decision making and operations of the institution.	C	





Standard 1.5. Medium- and long-term institutional objectives are consistent with and support the mission.	C	
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**Compliance level: 100 % - Fully compliant**

**ET recommendations: None**

## 2.2. Strategic planning, governance and administration

RIT-K Strategic development plan has been formulated for a 3-year period of 2020 to 2023, which includes goal indicators for achievement of institutional goals. All faculty, staff, and administrators participated in a campus-wide session to gain an understanding of strategic planning and to provide key input through a SWOT analysis.

In addition to obtaining input from employees, SWOT was also conducted with key stakeholders including internal stakeholders represented by the Board of Trustees, students and alumni. External stakeholders such as members of the business community were afforded the opportunity to provide input during a meeting held with senior RIT Kosovo leadership.

The strategic plan incorporates both short and long-term goals that are closely linked to the budgets. Decision making system is apportioned and delegated among the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students of the Institution.

The RIT Kosovo's Academic Senate provides for the exercise of the faculty's role in academic decisions, the protection of legitimate faculty aspirations, the implementation and preservation of academic standards, and the promotion of the academic welfare of students. The Student Government works to improve the quality of students' life and serves as the instrument through which the student body may collectively influence decisions about student activities, roles, curricula, and other interests.

These measures are set in line both for balances and checks, as well as to be in conformity with the legal provisions of United States and Kosovo. Election criteria and responsibilities of decision-making bodies are clearly defined, and Student Government (SG) has its own democratically elected members that serve to on all decisional and consultative bodies that affect student learning and student life. Students Government meets with the president at least

9



once a month, and it has a representative on the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee. Additionally, the SG is in continuous communication with the Dean of Enrollment, who oversees their needs and provides support.

The expert team has analyzed the self-evaluation report, supplemental documents submitted by the institutions, and virtually met with teaching and administrative staff, students, employers. The expert team confirms that:

- The institution has a strategic plan for a period of minimum three years.
- The strategic plan is drafted in close consultation with the academic community at the institution, as well as external stakeholders and private sector.
- Strategic planning is integrated with annual and longer-term budget processes that provide for regular adjustments.
- The strategic plan takes full and realistic account of aspects of the internal and external environment affecting the development of the institution.
- The implementation of the strategic plan is monitored on short- and medium-term targets, and outcomes are evaluated.
- The institution has a decision-making system and internal operating regulations in conformity with current legal provisions.
- The responsibilities of the decision-making bodies are defined in such a way that the respective roles and responsibilities for overall policy and accountability, the senior administration for management, and the academic decision-making structures are clearly differentiated and followed in practice.
- Student representatives are members of all decisional, executive and consultative bodies. The mechanism for electing student representatives is clearly explained in internal regulations. There is a democratic, transparent and non-discriminatory election procedure that does not limit students' right to represent and to be represented. The institution is not involved in the process of electing student representatives.
- The institution has an administration that is effective in terms of organization, staffing levels and qualifications, and functions rigorously.
- The responsibilities of administrative staff are clearly defined in position descriptions and they match the qualifications of the individuals.



However, the ET **could not** confirm that the election criteria and processes of the decision makers and other elected positions are clear, transparent and published in institutional regulations.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 2.1. The institution has a strategic plan for a period of minimum three years.	C	
Standard 2.2. The strategic plan is drafted in close consultation with the academic community at the institution, as well as external stakeholders and private sector.	C	
Standard 2.3. Strategic planning is integrated with annual and longer-term budget processes that provide for regular adjustments.	C	
Standard 2.4. The strategic plan takes full and realistic account of aspects of the internal and external environment affecting the development of the institution.	C	
Standard 2.5. The implementation of the strategic plan is monitored on short- and medium-term targets, and outcomes are evaluated.	C	
Standard 2.6. The institution has a decision-making system and internal operating regulations in conformity with current legal provisions.	C	
Standard 2.7. The election criteria and processes of the decision makers and other elected positions are clear, transparent and published in institutional regulations.		C



Standard 2.8. The responsibilities of the decision-making bodies are defined in such a way that the respective roles and responsibilities for overall policy and accountability, the senior administration for management, and the academic decision-making structures are clearly differentiated and followed in practice.	C	
Standard 2.9. Student representatives are members of all decisional, executive and consultative bodies. The mechanism for electing student representatives is clearly explained in internal regulations. There is a democratic, transparent and non-discriminatory election procedure that does not limit students' right to represent and to be represented. The institution is not involved in the process of electing student representatives.	C	
Standard 2.10. The higher education institution has an administration that is effective in terms of organization, staffing levels and qualifications, and functions rigorously.	C	
Standard 2.11. The responsibilities of administrative staff are clearly defined in position descriptions and they match the qualifications of the individual.	C	

**Compliance level: 91% Substantially compliant**

**ET recommendations: None**

### **2.3. Financial planning and management**

RIT College has well defined financial developmental plan for five years as well as sustainable financial planning. It is soundly financed institution with satisfactory liquidity. According to the provided data and information, the institution has met all the requirements for operational functioning.

The institutions has in place procedures and bodies responsible for budget decisions. The main decision body is the Board of Trustees, while the budgeting policy is approved by the Management.



RIT Kosovo has regular auditing, and while internally there are quarterly reports, external auditors do perform auditing twice a year. In addition internal control is done via other channels and mechanisms such as departmental supervisor, finance director etc. The existing system assures effective and efficient financial management.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 3.1. The institution can demonstrate that it has sufficient financial resources in the short (one year) and medium term (a minimum of three successive years) to adequately reach its mission as well as objectives set out in the strategic plan.	C	
Standard 3.2. The institution has a realistic annual budget and a three-year budget, as well as financial policies which address its financial sustainability.	C	
Standard 3.3. Oversight and management of the institution's budgeting and accounting functions are carried out by a specialized office responsible to a senior administrator.	C	
Standard 3.4. There is an accurate monitoring of expenditure and commitments against budgets with reports prepared at least once per year.	C	
Standard 3.5. Accounting systems comply with accepted professional accounting standards and as far as possible attribute total cost to particular activities.	C	

**Compliance level: 100% Fully compliant**



**ET recommendations: None**

#### **2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability**

The institution fulfils values of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and ethical practices through different RIT established policies maintaining the following important five areas of academic discipline: (1) academic freedom, (2) transparent employment procedures, (3) core essentials for teaching, scholarship and service, (4) maintenance of high-quality faculty instructors, and (5) faculty and student integrity.

The self-evaluation report states that “RIT- K demonstrates that it does apply its code of ethics as there are a number of cases over the years that students that have committed academic dishonesty have failed the course, which at times resulted in academic suspension. RITK highlights the case where last academic year a senior student on their last semester (two months before walking on their graduation) was dismissed from university for violating the code of ethics of the institution.

Financial statements and policies are readily available on its website. The RIT-K website also includes detailed information on its academic program, academic staff and their research interests and academic activities, learning outcomes of programs, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, rates and the learning opportunities available to its students, graduate employment information, scholarship opportunities, as well as tuition and administrative fees. All staff must also file conflict of interest form on annual basis to ensure no such cases exist. RITK abides by all rules and procedures set out by RIT, which follows all requirements by Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

The expert team has analyzed the self-evaluation report, supplemental documents submitted by the institutions, and virtually met with teaching and administrative staff, students, and employers. The expert team confirms that:

- The institution has a code of ethics and academic integrity through which it defends the values of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and ethical integrity.
- The code of ethics requires that all internal stakeholders act consistently with high standards of ethical conduct and avoidance of plagiarism in research, teaching, performance evaluation, and in the conduct of administrative duties, and avoid conflicts of interest.



- The code is enforced through clear processes and mechanisms, and it applies to all staff and structural units in the institution.
- The institution has established a designated structure (such as Ethics Committee) responsible for the analysis and resolution of any potential breaches in the code of ethics.
- There is evidence that the institution is applying the code of ethics and its associated processes and mechanisms on all activities related to management, administration, teaching and research. The results of its application are made public.
- All internal regulations, procedures, self-evaluation reports and decisions of governing bodies are made publicly available.
- The institution is publishing clear, accurate, objective, relevant, accessible and detailed information regarding its academic staff, its research and academic activities, the programmes it offers, the number of students enrolled, the intended learning outcomes of its programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to its students, graduate employment information, scholarship opportunities, as well as tuition and administrative fees.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 4.1. The institution has a code of ethics and academic integrity through which it defends the values of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and ethical integrity.	C	
Standard 4.2. The code of ethics requires that all internal stakeholders act consistently with high standards of ethical conduct and avoidance of plagiarism in research, teaching, performance evaluation, and in the conduct of administrative duties, and avoid conflicts of interest.	C	
Standard 4.3. The code is enforced through clear processes and mechanisms, and it applies to all staff and structural units in the institution.	C	



Standard 4.4. The institution has established a designated structure (such as Ethics Committee) responsible for the analysis and resolution of any potential breaches in the code of ethics.	C	
Standard 4.5. There is evidence that the institution is applying the code of ethics and its associated processes and mechanisms on all activities related to management, administration, teaching and research. The results of its application are made public.	C	
Standard 4.6. All internal regulations, procedures, self-evaluation reports and decisions of governing bodies are made publicly available.	C	
Standard 4.7. The institution is publishing clear, accurate, objective, relevant, accessible and detailed information regarding its academic staff, its research and academic activities, the programmes it offers, the number of students enrolled, the intended learning outcomes of its programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to its students, graduate employment information, scholarship opportunities, as well as tuition and administrative fees.	C	

**Compliance level: 100 % Fully compliant**

**ET recommendations: None**

## 2.5. Quality management

One of the special features of the quality management is that the quality management of the institution is connected with the overall quality management of the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester New York, USA, which operates sites worldwide. Thus, a lot of data is collected and processed centrally in the USA at the Rochester site and sent back to RIT Kosovo. Thus, quality assurance at the various locations is also monitored by the





RIT office in Rochester. The ultimate benchmark across all RIT campuses is set by the main campus in Rochester and on an annual basis the data are compared to the benchmarks.

The RIT Kosovo program maintains quality assurance being based on traditional practices of maintaining the following important five areas of academic discipline. These are: Academic freedom; Transparent employment procedures; Core essentials for teaching, scholarship and service; Maintenance of high-quality teaching faculty instructors; Faculty and student integrity;

The quality plan is codified within the employee handbook, policies and standard operating procedures. The quality is controlled in two stages, the first from each department head and from the process of internal audit. Data is collected, and a plan for improvement is implemented on a regular basis. The plans are shared in the RIT Kosovo server in a common drive that is accessible by all individuals affiliated with RIT Kosovo.

Adequate resources are allocated to assure the quality of operation including assistance from external parties such as auditing firms. The faculty involved in administrative responsibility will be released accordingly from teaching responsibilities.

Through the quality assurance process, weaknesses are recognized and recorded by respective departments within the institution.

Quality assurance extends beyond academics, and includes regular external auditing on all processes and financial matters to ensure that mistakes or weaknesses are recognized and used for refining or avoiding future recurrences throughout the institution. For example, faculty and staff are asked to rate the quality of internal services offered to them.

In line with RIT and good-practices in the USA, and to maintain standards required by the accrediting body in the USA (Middle States Commission for Higher Education), RIT Kosovo carries out student course evaluations at the end of each semester and prepares reports that provide academic staff and dean of faculty with detailed information on performance for the institution as a whole and for individual academic staff on a per course level. Furthermore, evaluation of staff performance for supporting services for the institution are carried out with the aim of continuous improvement of performance and services.

Evaluation considers inputs such as surveys conducted or performance evaluation reports which go through the process of data analysis to form a course of action needed to improve



the performance of all the functions within the institution. In addition to course evaluations required to be carried out by students, different areas of academic program are required to undergo a goals performance measurement process, with data collected and analyzed by RIT.

Quality assurance lies at the center of RIT processes and therefore is fully integrated within RIT Kosovo. As part of a continuous drive to meet and improve upon accreditation standards in the US, all academic and relevant administrative units within the institution are required to participate in the processes of overall program quality assurance measurement and contribute to its continuous improvement. This participation is facilitated through several channels such as Academic Senate, Management Council, specific committees, student government, etc.

Within each division of the institution there is an individual in charge within the management team to oversee quality management processes. The Board of trustees of RIT Kosovo plays an important part in ensuring that that institution complies with the same quality requirements as the RIT main campus in Rochester, New York, and as such there are various committees established.

The organizational structure, the roles and responsibilities of the quality management office and the committee and also the relationships of these and to other administrative and planning units are clearly specified. A special feature is the integration of RIT Kosovo into the overall structure of RIT University.

RIT Kosovo implements an exit survey with all graduating students to assess several areas of the institution's operations. The data is collected on an annual basis and trends are analyzed. Each year, RIT Kosovo conducts a survey with alumni to collect information regarding employment, further studies and college evaluation. The data results from Alumni Study are made publicly available.

Enrolment data are collected and retained in an accessible central database. Furthermore, as a partner to RIT all student information, including data on every course taken, and progress is maintained in RIT's Student Information System (SIS), which are then analyzed to provide information to departments and units for their use in preparation of reports on indicators and other tasks in monitoring quality.



Student course evaluation, faculty goals and objectives evaluation, and program evaluation are done on semester or annual basis. This is reported to RIT provost, Program assessment office, General Education assessment and other quality assurance bodies as required by RIT faculty senate, constitution and bylaws.

The RIT, and the (additional location) RIT Kosovo, must have its quality assurance measures evaluated by external agencies in the U.S., which require that all units report and provide feedback to ensure continuous improvement. For the RIT is the MSCHE: Middle States Commission on Higher Education in charge of the accreditation. (Last Reaffirmation: 2017; Mid-Point Review: 2022; Next Self-Study Evaluation: 2025-26)

While the overall quality management system can be described as good, there are some points for improvement. Part of this is that much of the work regarding quality management is done centrally in Rochester. As a result, local resources are few and far between. However, the university itself has already recognized in the SWOT analysis that there is a need for improvement in this area. Establish a central office for educational effectiveness assessment system in Kosovo campus.

In one point, there is a student workload calculation, but the questionnaires do not record whether the workload in the courses is also appropriate. Therefore, there is no systematic workload assessment. Unfortunately, it turns out that targeted questions on student workload are not found in the sample questionnaires. It would be better to ask how many hours the students have spent preparing and following the course. Accordingly, these results should be used to make any necessary adjustments to the study programme.

A final point to mention is the lack of transparency and the corresponding deadweight loss for a closed cycle in quality assurance. The corresponding results of the course evaluation are not discussed with the students. Thus, the students cannot enter into a dialogue with the lecturers. With regard to a common understanding of quality, this gap also still needs to be closed. Therefore, a discussion of course evaluation should take place.

Unfortunately, this feedback is not reflected in the relevant guidelines and should therefore be supplemented.



Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 5.1. The education provider has formally adopted a quality assurance policy that describes the institutional quality assurance system, its processes, mechanisms, instruments, reporting, data collection, timeframes, quality cycle, responsibilities of all individuals and units involved in these processes. The policy is a public document.		C
Standard 5.2. Adequate human, financial and material resources are provided for the leadership and management of quality assurance processes.	C	
Standard 5.3. Mistakes and weaknesses are recognized by those responsible and used as a basis for planning for improvement.	C	
Standard 5.4. Quality assurance functions throughout the institution are fully integrated into normal planning and development strategies in a defined cycle of planning, implementation, assessment and review. The quality assurance system covers the whole range of institutional activities.	C	
Standard 5.5. Regular evaluations are carried out at the end of each semester and reports prepared that provide an overview of performance for the institution as a whole and for organizational units and major functions within it.	C	
Standard 5.6. Evaluations take into account inputs, processes and outputs, but give particular attention to the quality of outcomes. Evaluations deal with performance in relation to continuing routine activities as well as to strategic objectives. They	C	



also ensure that required standards are met, and that there is continuing improvement in performance.		
Standard 5.7. All academic and administrative units within the institution (including the governing body and senior management) participate in the processes of quality assurance and contribute to its continuous improvement.	C	
Standard 5.8. A quality management office is established within the institution's central administration and sufficient staff, resources and administrative support are provided for the office to operate effectively.	C	
Standard 5.9. A quality committee is established with members drawn from all types of members of the academic community, including students.	C	
Standard 5.10. The roles and responsibilities of the quality management office and committee, and the relationship of these to other administrative and planning units are clearly specified. If quality assurance functions are managed by more than one organizational unit, their activities are clearly specified and effectively coordinated under the supervision of a representative of institutional management.	C	
Standard 5.11. Common forms and survey instruments are used for similar activities across the institution (academic activity, student services, administration, etc.) and responses are used in analysis of results including trends over time. Survey data is collected from students, staff, graduates and employers; the results of these surveys are made publicly available.	C	
Standard 5.12. Statistical data is being retained in an accessible central database and provided routinely to departments and units for their use in preparation of reports on indicators and other tasks in monitoring quality.	C	
Standard 5.13. There is clear evidence that quality assurance data is used to guide enhancement and as a base for improvement.	C	



Standard 5.14. The quality assurance arrangements are themselves regularly evaluated, reported on and improved.	C	
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**Compliance level: 93 % - Substantially compliant**

**ET recommendations:**

- *The student workload must be collected, for example by asking appropriate questions in the course evaluation. These results must be systematically incorporated into the further development of the program in order to make any necessary adjustments to the workload.*

**2.6. Learning and teaching**

RIT College is, in general, institution that has all the policies and other structural documents in place, and this also refers to the area of learning and teaching, including academic programme. There is some kind of mirroring process between the main campus situated in Rochester and RIT Kosovo with an aim to adhere to the same or similar standards. There is a regular monitoring of all the courses-programs and appropriate changes and adjustments are implemented.

As the institution belonging to different higher education system and accredited accordingly, the criteria defined by the qualifications of the EHEA are not met. Although some transformations could be done in order to calculate the number of the ECTS, and it is implemented across Europe, this still does not meet all the criteria. The calculation formula is primarily part of the recognition of diplomas gained in different system, not the evaluation component needed for the institution to be accredited. In the same line, learning outcomes would need to be better aligned with the Qualifications of EHEA.

Institution has well defined and monitored procedure for hiring. They are competitive and transparent, and as such they are assuring to have teaching staff with good credentials. Significant number of them are educated outside Kosovo in good international institutions which contributed significantly in overall quality of teaching.



Students are exposed to different teaching models and methods, following the latest pedagogical developments and suggestions how to improve learning environment. Teachers are getting regular training to develop new skills, while students are learning in groups of optimal size and in well equipped classrooms and labs.

Regular evaluations, surveys and other tools implemented are the basis for a feed back which is used to make improvements in the overall teaching process as well as in individual courses.

The RIT is also in continuous communication with its graduates and employers who are an important source of feedback for the institution. The ET team had the opportunity to hear very positive impressions of both graduates and employers who confirmed their close and continuous cooperation with the College and their students.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 6.1. The institution has drafted and adopted policies and procedures applicable to all academic programs; the institution monitors the extent to which those policies and procedures are effectively implemented.	C	
Standard 6.2. There is an effective system for ensuring that all programs meet high standards of learning and teaching through initial approvals, regular changes and monitoring of performance.	C	
Standard 6.3. The institution monitors quality indicators, identifies and investigates differences in quality between programs, and takes action required to ensure that all programs meet required performance standards.	C	
Standard 6.4. Each study program is based on correlations between learning outcomes. A study program is presented in the form of a series of documents which include: general and specific objectives of the program; the curriculum, with the subjects' weight expressed in ECTS credits and disciplines distributed over the study period; thematic programs and syllabuses expressing learning outcomes in the form		C



of cognitive, technical or professional and affective-value competences achieved by a discipline; the assessment methods for each discipline taking into consideration the planned learning outcomes; the method and content of the graduation examination which certifies the assimilation of cognitive and professional competences corresponding to the academic qualification.		
Standard 6.5. Student learning outcomes of each program are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.		C
Standard 6.6. There are effective processes in place to ensure the fitness and effectiveness of the assessment methods for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.	C	
Standard 6.7. Teaching staff are appropriately qualified and experienced for their particular teaching responsibilities, they use teaching strategies suitable for the different kinds of learning outcomes and participate in activities to improve their teaching effectiveness.	C	
Standard 6.8. The learning methods and environments are student-centered and stimulate students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process.	C	
Standard 6.9. Teaching quality and the effectiveness of programs is evaluated through student assessments and graduate and employer surveys with evidence from these sources used as a basis for plans for improvement.	C	

**Compliance level: 78 % Substantially compliant**

**ET recommendations:**

- 1.Revisit learning outcomes and rethink what are the possibilities to be better fitted to the Qualification of EHEA.





## 2.7. Research

As stated in the SER, RIT is primarily teaching institutions and this is the main focus. Nevertheless, it is stated that the research which is considered to be the part of scholarships is one of the three institutional pillars (it has to be noticed that this kind of a deviation where research is under the umbrella of scholarships is very unusual from the European evaluation perspective; at the same time it is appreciated the mentioned book of E. Boyer who redefines the concept of scholarship and provides different aspects). In other words, apparently, teaching staff is required to perform some research as well and to have productivity that could be disseminated in different publication or forms of activities. Still, according to the SER, the range of this activities is much broader than research productivity itself and the RIT will need to make additional efforts in order to increase number of published papers in journals listed in WoS or SCOPUS. As stated in the SER regarding the standard 7.6., *at least 50% of full-time faculty meet the KAA standard*. Faculty Development Center is a unit that could provide support to the staff in some aspects of their development, but probably not sufficient for being more involved in research.

As provided information in the SER and confirmed during the interviews, staff is expected to engage in research activities and align them with classroom needs and courses taught. Teaching staff do have Professional Development Program, research being a part. However, developing research skills and being more profoundly engaged in research requires more resources and bigger capacity. During the interviews, ET noticed that there is no equal engagement in research among different members of teaching staff.

Interinstitutional and international cooperation as stated in the SER is a good way of broadening the network of staff and to increase capacity. Probably, this should be further developed.

Institution provides certain financial resources for different activities related to research, it is motivating for the staff, but it seems that it is still not fully absorbed. Also, in the provided financial information, it is not elaborated and it is not fully transparent what is the actual allocation of funds for research. This segment is not elaborated and not transparent enough. In the SWOT analysis funding has been also identified as one of the weaknesses, in particular to have sufficient funds for all teaching staff to be more intensively engaged in research. The similar challenge is identified for student research activities.



RIT has been doing a lot in order to support and motivate staff to be research active. According to its developmental documents, it is moving forward to become research institution. This is certainly going to be a challenge which will significantly contribute to its overall quality.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 7.1. A research development plan that is consistent with the nature and mission of the institution and the economic and cultural development needs of the region is prepared and made publicly available.	C	
Standard 7.2. The research development plan includes clearly specified indicators and benchmarks for performance targets.	C	
Standard 7.3. The institution has formally adopted an adequate research budget (including allocations for research equipment and facilities) to enable the achievement of its research plan.	C	
Standard 7.4. Sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are available for achieving the proposed research objectives.		C
Standard 7.5. Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centers, scientific parks and other structures for validation.	C	
Standard 7.6. 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.		C



Standard 7.7. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research/scholarly/artistic activities is specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in the individual performance review system and in promotion criteria.	C	
Standard 7.8. Teaching staff is 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.	C	
Standard 7.9. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.	C	
Standard 7.10. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	C	
Standard 7.11. There are clear policies, procedures and relevant structural units to ensure the safeguarding of ethical principles in research.	C	

**Compliance level: 82 % - Substantially compliant**

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Research should be further supported and put in the institutional focus in order to assure better research productivity by all the staff.*
- 2. Appropriate funding and also a teaching load reduction should be provided for research.*

**2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development**

RIT has developed put all the relevant documents and procedures for the employment process. The main documents that defines procedures, regulations etc. is the Employee Policy Handbook. Part of relevant documents and policies are also available online.



Recruitment and hiring procedures are transparent and competitive. The main unit that is in charge of all the procedures is HR office. All the new staff receives orientation on their first week of their new position. All the teaching staff has good qualifications for the work they perform.

Institution has favourable students-teacher ratio which enables optimal teaching process. This has been also confirmed during the interviews with students. The quality of staff is also confirmed in evaluation students do. In addition, institution has in place performance evaluations that are already given to all employees on their first working day.

All staff are evaluated, their performance, and in case of a need, institution provides the necessary resources as well as it organizes trainings for professional individual development.

ET collected all the relevant information to conclude that RIT is investing significantly in its employment process and professional development of all staff in order to be a good quality educational institution with well trained, qualified and professional staff as well as satisfied and successful students.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 8.1. A comprehensive set of policies and regulations is included in an employment handbook or manual accessible to all teaching and administrative staff. It includes rights and responsibilities, recruitment processes, supervision, performance evaluation, promotion, support processes, and professional development.		C
Standard 8.2. The recruitment processes ensure that staff have the specific areas of expertise, qualification and experience for the positions they occupy. The recruitment processes ensure equitable treatment of all applicants.	C	



Standard 8.3. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment.	C	
Standard 8.4. New teaching staff is given an effective orientation to ensure familiarity with the institution and its services, programs and student development strategies, and institutional priorities for development.	C	
Standard 8.5. The level of provision of teaching staff (the ratio of students per full time staff member) is adequate for the programs offered. Teaching loads are equitable across the institution, taking into account the nature of teaching requirements in different fields of study.	C	
Standard 8.6. All staff employed in the institution (academic, scientific, administrative) hold the relevant qualifications so that they are able to effectively manage educational, scientific, research, creative activities and administrative processes.	C	
Standard 8.7. Criteria and processes for performance evaluation are clearly specified and made known in advance to all staff.	C	
Standard 8.8. Academic staff evaluation is done 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.	C	
Standard 8.9. If staff performance is considered less than satisfactory, clear requirements are established for improvement. The institution is closely monitoring the improvements in staff activity, especially in the segments underlined during the evaluations.	C	
Standard 8.10. The institution has clear plan for all staff professional development, a structured approach in identifying such needs, and allocates appropriate resources for its implementation.	C	



Standard 8.11. All staff are given appropriate and fair opportunities for personal and career development, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	C	
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**Compliance level: 91 % Substantially compliant**

**ET recommendations:**

*1. To assure accessibility to Employee Policy Handbook*

**2.9. Student administration and support services**

The admission requirements of the RIT Kosovo are clearly specified and well-suited for the institution and its programs. These criterias are published on the website. RIT Kosovo is Kosovo's only private, non-profit higher education institution which teaches entirely in the English language. The range of programs are accessible on the website with a wide range of information.

RIT Kosovo organizes an orientation week for all freshmen students to be acquainted with the range of services and facilities available to them. Various workshops are organized during the orientation to which all freshmen students need to attend. In these workshops students learn about policies and procedures of the institution, they learn about the rights and responsibilities that are enshrined in the Student Academic Bulletin. During orientation each student is assigned an academic advisor and they meet on a one to one basis to plan the learning schedule for the semester.

A range of scholarships and financial support are available to students to both stimulate and reward performance, while also financially supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds. These two categories and their criteria are operated separately, but merit scholarships and financial support can be cumulated. Every year RIT Kosovo awards about 40% of its freshmen class with scholarships based on merit and need in the range of 20% to 100% of tuition fees. The scholarships are awarded from a scholarship committee that is composed of deserving persons including students.



At the RIT Kosovo makes use of RIT main online platforms including Student Information System (SIS) which is a management information system for education establishments to manage student data. The institution uses this data for analysis of local students such as the profile of the student population, student progression, success and drop-out rates students' satisfaction with their programs, learning resources and student support available, career paths of graduates.

The Academic Bulletin includes all information on admission, progression, recognition and certification, this is publicly available on the website. Student appeal procedures are specified in the publicly available Academic Bulletin. Appropriate academic policies and procedures are in place to deal with academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating, also in the Academic Bulletin.

RIT Kosovo provides a range of services and resources to help students meet their graduation requirements. Also there is the use of tools to regularly monitor the effectiveness and relevance of student services including: Class Survey and Exit Survey.

The evaluators were positively convinced that there is academic advising, career planning and career counseling, as well as personal and psychological counseling available for students. Student Clubs together with faculty club advisors organize various extracurricular activities throughout the year.

As reported in the previous chapter 5 (Quality Management), a discussion of the evaluation results should take place.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 9.1. Admissions requirements are clearly specified and appropriate for the institution and its programs; admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied.	C	



Standard 9.2. Complete information about the institution, including the range of programs and courses, program requirements, services, scholarship opportunities, tuition and administrative fees and other relevant information are made publicly available prior to application for admission.	C	
Standard 9.3. A comprehensive orientation program is organized for starting students to ensure thorough understanding of the range of services and facilities available to them, policies and procedures at the institution and of their rights and responsibilities.	C	
Standard 9.4. A range of scholarships and financial support are available to students in order to both stimulate and reward performance, as well as to socially support students with disadvantaged backgrounds. These two categories and their criteria are operated separately; these scholarships and financial support can be cumulated.	C	
Standard 9.5. There are effective processes in place to collect and analyze reliable data referring to the profile of the student population, student progression, success and drop-out rates, students' satisfaction with their programmes, learning resources and student support available, career paths of graduates. The statistical data is used for quality assurance purposes, as well as in supporting decision making.	C	
Standard 9.6. A student handbook is made widely available within the institution, covering all information required for all phases of the student „life cycle” - admission, progression, recognition and certification – including all concerning regulations, the rights and responsibilities of students, actions to be taken for breaches of discipline, responsibilities of relevant officers and committees, and penalties that may be imposed.	C	
Standard 9.7. Student appeal procedure is specified in regulations, published and made widely known within the institution. The regulations make clear the grounds on which academic appeals may be based, the criteria for decisions, and the remedies available. The appeals procedures guarantee impartial consideration by persons or committees independent of the parties involved.	C	





Standard 9.8. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to deal with academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating.	C	
Standard 9.9. The range of services provided and the resources devoted to students reflect all requirements of the student population. Formal plans are developed for the provision and improvement of student services; the implementation and effectiveness of those plans is being monitored on a regular basis.	C	
Standard 9.10. The effectiveness and relevance of student services is regularly monitored through processes that include satisfaction surveys. Services are modified in response to evaluation and feedback.		C
Standard 9.11. Academic counselling, career planning and employment advice as well as personal or psychological counselling services are made available with easy access for students from any part of the institution.	C	
Standard 9.12. Opportunities are provided through appropriate facilities and organizational arrangements for extracurricular activities for students. Arrangements are made to organize and encourage student participation in extracurricular activities.	C	

**Compliance level: 92% - Substantially compliant**

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. The results of the course evaluation could be discussed with the students; This should promote the dialogue between the students and the lecturer.*



## 2.10. Learning resources and facilities

Adequate funding is provided at the college for acquisitions, cataloging, equipment, services, and systems development. The equipment can compete with many other European universities.

Regarding the equipment of the library, be it with the variance of books, but also the languages or the printed books or electronic books, the reviewers were impressed and have no concerns in this regard that it speaks for a good study success. Appropriate measures for the acquisition of further literature are in place. Physical collections hold materials that are available in English, Albanian and Serbian. Since RIT Kosovo is an English language teaching institution, most of the materials are in English. Access to over 200 databases is ensured.

The evaluators have no doubt that the other equipment in buildings and rooms is well available for study purposes. The opening hours of the library are also adequate. Accessibility could be recognized. A new multi-purpose building is under construction and is scheduled to open in 2023.

Therefore, the reviewers conclude that this chapter can be rated very good overall. The university has also already recognized the needs itself, for example that there is currently a lack of space, but this will be remedied with the opening of the new building.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 10.1. Adequate financial resources are provided for acquisitions, cataloging, equipment, and for services and system development.	C	
Standard 10.2. Books, journals and other materials are available in Albanian and English (or other languages) as required for programs and research organized at the institution.	C	



Standard 10.3. Reliable and efficient access to online databases, research and journal materials relevant to the institution's programs is available for users.	C	
Standard 10.4. Adequate facilities are provided to host learning resources in a way that makes them readily accessible. Up to date computer equipment and software are provided to support electronic access to resources and reference material.	C	
Standard 10.5. Library and associated facilities and services are available for extended hours beyond normal class time to ensure access when required by users.	C	
Standard 10.6. Reliable systems are used for recording loans and returns, with efficient follow up for overdue material. Effective security systems are used to prevent loss of materials.	C	
Standard 10.7. The institution provides an adequate, clean, attractive and well-maintained physical environment of both buildings and grounds. Facilities fully meet Kosovo legislation on health and safety.	C	
Standard 10.8. Quality assurance processes used include both feedback from principal users about the adequacy and quality of facilities, and mechanisms for considering and responding to their views.	C	
Standard 10.9. Appropriate provision for both facilities and learning resources is made for students and staff with physical disabilities or other special needs (such as visual or hearing impairments).	C	
Standard 10.10. Complete inventories are maintained of equipment owned or controlled by the institution including equipment assigned to individual staff. Space utilization is monitored and when appropriate facilities reallocated in response to changing requirements.	C	



Standard 10.11. Adequate computer equipment is available and accessible for teaching, staff and students throughout the institution. The adequacy of provision of computer equipment is regularly evaluated through surveys or other means.	C	
Standard 10.12. Technical support is available for staff and students using information and communications technology. Training programs are provided to ensure effective use of computing equipment and appropriate software for assessments, teaching and administration.	C	

**Compliance level: 100 % Fully compliant**

**ET recommendations: None**

### **2.11. Institutional cooperation**

The university addresses this issue in different ways. Furthermore, it should be noted that RIT Kosovo is integrated into the network of the RIT, which also operates other locations.

RIT Kosovo commitment to expanding exchange opportunities, while joining the IIE Generation Study Abroad Initiative for increasing student, staff and faculty mobility. As a member of this initiative KIT Kosovo joined a global community committed to supporting students and universities in creating a more global learning environment.

Here should be mentioned in particular

- RIT Global (exchange between RIT campuses) - Students can go to the main campus for one or two semesters while paying the home campus tuition.
- ERASMUS + Exchange (4 universities)
- Three exchange opportunities in the USA

RIT Kosovo has embraced institutional cooperation and internationalization, and it is part of its strategic plan as part of Goal One: Broaden the academic offering to promote enrolment and Goal Two: Strengthen relationships with local community and abroad. RIT Kosovo has a number of memorandums of understanding (MOU) with foreign institutions around student and faculty exchange. RIT Kosovo takes part in international projects together with RIT Main



campus. RIT Kosovo is a partner in several Erasmus+ agreements, such as with HAMK University.

Through the RIT network and the good position in the educational market in Kosovo, the university has a corresponding international network and also carries out corresponding events such as conferences, etc. RIT Kosovo encourages the engagement of faculty in research with universities outside Kosovo and those activities are part of performance evaluation and promotion. All faculty and staff are encouraged and promoted to participate in forums organized by other faculty to discuss and contribute to the plans for community development.

One of the special features is the program, as mentioned in the SER:

- A 'Co-op' is a cooperative education work experience (internship) in a private or governmental organization in Kosovo or abroad. A Co-op is defined as a paid professional experience of 400 hours to be completed within 3 months (full time) or 6 months (part-time). The Co-op needs to be designed as a qualitative learning experience related to the students' career interests and should provide the student with new challenges and opportunities.
- Each RIT Kosovo student must complete one Co-op during the freshmen and sophomore year, and one Co-op during the junior and senior year in order to be eligible for the Bachelor's Degree. When a student already has full time employment, his/her regular job might be considered as fulfilling the Co-op requirement.
- The office of Co-Op and Career Services establishes relationships with local industries and employees to ease the transfer of students to Co-Op (internships).

The evaluators can only welcome such programs.

All degree programs offered by RIT have an established advisory committee that participates in review of the programs in order to strengthen the program and ensure the program meets the demands of the industry in the field. In addition, a Presidential Advisory Council consisting of prominent alumni, business and community leaders, and friends of higher education and the college is being established to provide wide-ranging advice.

Regular Contact is maintained with all alumni and an Alumni Association is supported by the college.

In summary, therefore, the evaluators were able to obtain a very positive overall picture of the criteria in this chapter.



Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 11.1. The provider has drafted and adopted an institutional cooperation and/or internationalization strategy/policy that guides the institutional decisions and resource allocation in this area.	C	
Standard 11.2. The institution has created and assigned the portfolio for institutional cooperation and/or internationalization to a member of the upper management that is directly mandated and accountable for the initiatives and results in this area.	C	
Standard 11.3. The institution has different agreements and memorandums of understanding with relevant international partners and organizations. The responsibilities of partners are clearly defined in formal agreements.	C	
Standard 11.4. The institution takes part, either as a leader or as a partner, in international projects.	C	
Standard 11.5. The institution organizes events of international visibility and outreach (conferences, summer schools, etc.)	C	
Standard 11.6. The institution is encouraging the international visibility of its staff and students by supporting their participation in different study mobility, forums, events, internships, summer schools, seminars, etc.	C	



Standard 11.7. Engagement in international cooperation and contributions to the community are included in promotion criteria and staff performance review.	C	
Standard 11.8. Mechanisms are established to support cooperation with international higher education institutions, networks and organizations. Assistance is given for teaching staff to develop collaborative arrangements with the international community.	C	
Standard 11.9. All staff are encouraged to participate in forums in which significant community issues are discussed and plans for community development are considered.	C	
Standard 11.10. Relationships are established with local industries and employers to assist program delivery (these may include placement of students for work-study programs, part time employment opportunities, and identification of issues for analysis in student project activities.)	C	
Standard 11.11. Local employers and members of professions are invited to join appropriate advisory committees or other structural units considering study programs and other institutional activities.	C	
Standard 11.12. Regular contact is maintained with alumni, keeping them informed about institutional developments, inviting their participation in activities, and encouraging their support for new developments.	C	

**Compliance level: 100% Fully compliant**

**ET recommendations: None**

## 1. OVERALL EVALUATION AND JUDGEMENTS OF THE ET

According to the KAA Accreditation manual, in order to be granted a positive decision for institutional re/accreditation, every education provider has to demonstrate at least a



**substantial compliance** level in the overall judgment. Therefore, failure in meeting at least an overall substantial compliance level entails delaying, withdrawing, suspending or denying accreditation.

In conclusion, in line with the Manual requirements, the **RIT College** is **substantially compliant** and the Expert Team recommends **to reaccredit** the institution for three (3) years.

Standard	Compliance Level
1. Public mission and institutional objectives	Fully compliant
2. Strategic planning, governance and administration	Substantially compliant
3. Financial planning and management	Fully compliant
4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability	Fully compliant
5. Quality management	Substantially compliant
6. Learning and teaching	Substantially compliant
7. Research	Substantially compliant
8. Staff, employment processes and professional development	Substantially compliant
9. Student administration and support services	Substantially compliant
10. Learning resources and facilities	Fully compliant





Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

11. Institutional cooperation	Fully compliant
Overall Compliance	<b>Substantial</b>

### Expert Team

#### Chair

1-3-2022

**Prof. Dr. Melita Kovačević**

(Date)

(Print Name)

(Signature)

#### Member

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**Prof. Dr. Ahmad Zargari**

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Kosovo Accreditation Agency

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