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ESLG COLLEGE

INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

Vienna-Tbilisi-Bucharest, March 2022



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit:

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Mag. Dr. Dietmar Paier, University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna*
- *Prof. Dr. Elene Jibladze, Ilia State University*
- *Ms. Delia Lupescu (ex Gologan), Student expert*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Naim Gashi, Director of KAA*
- *Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-Evaluation Report (SER) submitted by ELSG College*
- *Information obtained during the online site visit on with the management of the institution, teaching and administrative staff, students, graduates, external stakeholders and employers of graduates*
- *Website of ELSG College*
- *Additional documents requested by the ET*
- *Video presenting the campus of the college and checked by the KAA representatives*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *Institutional evaluation standards of KAA*



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1.2. Site visit schedule

09.00 – 10.25	<i>Meeting with the management of the institution</i>
10.30 – 11.20	<i>Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative services</i>
11.20 – 12.40	<i>Lunch break</i>
12.40 – 13.35	<i>Meeting with the heads of faculties/study programs</i>
13.40 – 14.30	<i>Meeting with teaching staff</i>
14.35 – 15.25	<i>Meeting with students</i>
15.30 – 16.20	<i>Meeting with graduates</i>
16.25 – 17.10	<i>Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholder</i>
17.10 – 17.25	<i>Internal meeting – Expert Team and KA</i>
17.25 – 17.35	<i>Closing meeting with the management of the institution</i>

1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

The ESLG College is a private higher education provider situated in Ljipan. It was established in 2009 and accredited for the first time by decision No. 479/10 of 20 July 2010, as the ESLG Institute (SER, p. 3). The ESLG College is a 100% subsidiary of the 100% privately owned UBT College, a private higher education provider based in Pristina. The ESLG College provides its programs in close collaboration with the “New University” in Slovenia. The scope of this collaboration also covers main tasks in academic staff development.



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At the time of the institutional evaluation, the College offered one Bachelor program *Management of Real Estate and Infrastructure* and one Master program *Management of Real Estate and Infrastructure*, although in the SER only the master program is mentioned. In recent years, the number of study programs accredited has declined and, therefore, there is an obvious need in drafting strategies which ensure the sustainability of the institution.

The College ESLG defines its mission to “provide premier education in Kosovo with unique programs and unique teaching methodologies that contribute to economic growth, sustainable development, and advancement of teaching, learning, and research in the built environments.” (SER, p. 4).

2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives

ELSG builds its mission around the uniqueness of its educational offerings in the construction management or broadly, infrastructure management and development in Kosovo. The college claims to make advancement in research in this area as well in community work and makes reference to sustainable development. The college took into account the feedback from the previous accreditation report and made its mission more focused on the study area and also accounted for the sustainable development component which is very relevant in the infrastructure development. This is all commendable and the expert team appreciates the college leadership’s effort in rethinking its mission. The mission defines the niche of the college, and clearly points to the teaching and research pillars. However, the expert team considers that community service as a third pillar of the college’s work is not entirely understood and pursued. This became more apparent when the community work was explained to the expert team as college’s graduates being environmentally cautious or when college’s research tackles sustainable development issues. These last two examples contribute to the teaching and research pillars of the mission and not the community work.

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A brief clarification might be helpful; if ESLG intends to pursue sustainable development as its teaching, research and community concentration, then it must be visible in all three dimensions of its work: programs, research emphasis and its main theme when involved in community development. The latter could mean, building awareness on sustainable development issues among different stakeholders, or carrying out studies related to the sustainable development matters in the region/municipality/district, cooperating with the private or public sector in promoting or acting upon the issues of sustainable development. Along those lines, the mission would articulate that all three pillars are linked to sustainable development. Alternatively, if sustainable development is a theme which college uses as a community development topic, then the mission would articulate that the college's community engagement is determined or informed by the sustainable development issues.

The mission revision was a participatory process, as it was part of the strategic planning exercise and as it became clear from the interviews, the communication with a wider college audience was made in the process of revision as well as afterwards. The mission is available on the ESLG website and is part of the college's statute. The college has identified the 'mission creep' as one of the risks that the educational institutions face, and intends to ensure that this does not happen in ESLG. It is yet to be seen whether ESLG follows through with this intention in practice. However, the attempt is visible to follow through the hierarchy of the mission, strategic objectives, and respective actions. There are two factors which can work in favor of institutionalizing mission-oriented operations in the ESLG. First, the college is a considerably small institution, hence the administrative and academic staff inevitably participate in multiple decision-making structures within the college and therefore, sharing the institution's guiding values, the vision and the mission of the organization. Second, it is cooperating with a more experienced institution - "New University" in Slovenia - which already has established processes. Borrowing already existing frameworks from the university and adopting them to the ESLG context assists the college in a comprehensive development.

The strategic plan outlines six main areas for development - teaching, i.e program development, academic staff development, research capacity development, advancing QA system and international cooperation, and improving cooperation with the private sector and community.



The first two goals speak directly to the mission of the institution and the rest act as necessary mechanisms to support the first two. The strategic plan does not specify medium and long term objectives. The timeframe for most of the objectives is 2021-26. Therefore, the expert team is unable to conclude whether the mission informs the medium-term objectives of the institution.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i> <i>Yes = 1</i> <i>Partially = 0.5</i> <i>No = 0</i>
<i>Standard 1.1. The institution has a defined mission statement that includes three main pillars: teaching, research and community service.</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 1.3. The mission is recognized by the members of the academic community of the institution.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 1.4. The institutional mission provides an effective guide for strategic planning, decision making and operations of the institution.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 1.5. Medium and long term institutional objectives are consistent with and support the mission.</i>	<i>0</i>

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Refine the mission formulation to clearly include College's community contribution*
- 2. Organize a strategic plan according to immediate, medium and long term goals*



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2.2. Strategic planning, governance, and administration

In the SER (p. 4f.), the College presents six strategic goals:

1. Develop unique study programs in the sectors that contribute to GDP growth, sustainable development and management of built environment for the betterment of society, environment and construction industry.
2. Develop full-time academic staff of the highest quality in teaching and research with special emphasis in planning and management of built environment
3. Develop research capacity at College ESLG
4. Advancing the Quality Assurance System
5. Advancing international cooperation
6. Furthering cooperation with private sector and community

The first two objectives in this list concentrate on the core areas of the academic programs offered by the College. However, it is unclear if all statements regarding the programs supposed to be realized belong to both, bachelor and master cycle, since no differentiations are made in the SER or in other documents. This is also true for the competencies which the College intends to impart. For example, innovation skills are mentioned and listed up two times in the SER, however, it remains unclear if this is to be understood ancillary or as a specification of different cycles. In general, the SER could be more concise if redundancies are avoided. Strategic goal 3 has extremely ambitious objectives, both regarding the financial development and the development of human resources. Strategic goal number 4 is well documented, for example, through collaboration with New University in Slovenia and several research collaborations at the European Level. Also from research, especially contract research, cooperation with the private sector and community is fairly comprehensible.

In the SER, the College generously attests itself that the strategic objectives are fully compliant with its mission, however, it uses rather circular arguments instead of real explanations, in some cases it just says „supports the mission“.



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The College submitted two relevant documents regarding strategy and strategy implementation as annexes: The first is the „Revised Strategy of College ESLG 2021-2026“, the second is the „Annual Action Plan for Implementation of Five Year Action Plan of ESLG College 2021-2022“. The latter is an extension of the first which explains the measures to be taken for the short-term period in greater detail.

In the „Action Plan for Implementation of Strategy“, which is a part of the revised strategy, the College determines to get 8 programs accredited until 2026, five of them in the construction sector, and one program each in environmental and spatial planning law, sustainable finance, and green and circular economy. For the last three programs, completion of „adoption of the concept note, feasibility study, and market research for each program is envisaged in March 2022, while the implementation period for „development of program in Environmental Law“ is scheduled to be accomplished by June 2022. This is for sure an ambitious task and much can only be achieved through collaboration with New University in Slovenia, which has been operational for several years. Given the program that is mentioned in the SER - „Management of Real Estate and Infrastructure“ - will continue, this means that within the strategy period 9 programs are supposed to be realized.

All the sectors which shall be addressed with these programs can be regarded as important spheres of activities and the ET acknowledges that emerging fields which are important for societal and economic development are given due attention. Interestingly, the implementation period of the action plan submitted for institutional accreditation already starts in 2021 which suggests that the same action plan has been used for other purposes before and was not updated or revised carefully. This reduces the quality of the key performance indicators which have been presented in the action plan. This is a pity, since the action plan displays a detailed and highly ambitious set of objectives and measures for implementation.

The strategic plan is integrated with a five-year financial plan. The financial plan also shows clearly the ambitious plans of the College, although, as is explained in more detail in section 2.3 of this report, the ET doubts the strategic plan is fully realistic. Neither during the site visit nor in the documents the ET could obtain evidence-based information about the degree of completion of these objectives.



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A main issue arises from the cooperation with New University of Slovenia. In the documents submitted to the ET as well as in the site-visit, the importance of New University for academic advancement of teaching and research staff was emphasized several times. In the SER, “joint development” of teaching and research as well as advancement of academic staff is a matter of cooperation with the New University. As it becomes clear in the SER, p. 4, many key areas of academic activities are implemented collaboratively: Student and staff mobility; development of joint study programs; development of ECTS Recognition Schemes in support of student mobility; habilitation of ESLG academic staff according to Nova Univerza Rules, which can be later used in the implementation of joint degree study programs; use of the IT and library system of Nova Univerza; use of research equipment of the University in the implementation of joint research projects. Reading this list provokes the question to which extent ESLG College acts as an autonomous higher education provider. This is also in contrast to the statements of the academic staff of the College during the site visit, where maintaining independence regarding the “unique” resources and capabilities was referred to as a distinctive competitive advantage. The College should clearly denominate the programs and projects both in teaching and research which are planned as collaborative activities and which the College plans to carry out independently.

With regard to the more managerial tasks of a higher education provider, an important function like financial management is not done in-house but by the financial office of UBT College. In the site visit, it was particularly surprising that managers could not present the financial officer’s name. The ET also found it difficult to determine the actual state of strategy implementation, since no systematic information could be obtained in the site visit.

Overall, the expert team gained the impression that several key processes and functions of a higher education provider are not implemented centrally at the College. While it is without doubt conceivable that processes and services are sourced in by a smaller higher education institution, this becomes crucial when the development strategy is geared towards strong growth. In this case, internal organization of key processes and services is indispensable. In this sense, the strategy of the College is ambitious, but difficult to accomplish.



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The overall governance of the institution is not fully comprehensible, since, as was mentioned before, key processes such as financial management and business administration are not within the autonomy of the institution under evaluation.

Standard	Compliance <i>Yes = 1</i> <i>Partially = 0.5</i> <i>No = 0</i>
<i>Standard 2.1. The institution has a strategic plan for a period of minimum three years.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 2.3. Strategic planning is integrated with annual and longer term budget processes that provide for regular adjustments.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>Standard 2.5. The implementation of the strategic plan is monitored on short and medium term targets, and outcomes are evaluated.</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>Standard 2.6. The institution has a decision making system and internal operating regulations in conformity with current legal provisions.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 2.7. The election criteria and processes of the decision makers and other elected positions are clear, transparent and published in institutional regulations.</i>	<i>0,5</i>



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<i>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.</i>	0,5
<i>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.</i>	1
<i>Standard 2.10. The higher education institution has an administration that is effective in terms of organization, staffing levels and qualifications, and functions rigorously.</i>	0,5
<i>Standard 2.11. The responsibilities of administrative staff are clearly defined in position descriptions and they match the qualifications of the individual.</i>	0,5

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Develop a strategy which clearly shows which academic areas and management areas are accomplished autonomously.*
- 2. Draft a strategic plan which ensures the sustainability of the institution based on evidence-based and realistic figures on students and staff development and on incomes.*
- 3. Develop strategies which incorporate organic growth and systematic development of key staff areas.*

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4. *Develop a systematic procedure to integrate all relevant stakeholders into strategy development and monitoring.*
5. *Ensure reliable documentation of all strategy implementation.*

2.3. Financial planning and management

The strategy of the College is based on ambitious growth of income from student fees and research. While incomes are expected to grow very strong, expenses and costs are supposed to grow not so strong.

In financial planning, the College takes advantage of cooperation agreements with UBT College and Nova Univerza, Slovenia. With UBT College, the institution holds an “Agreement on mutual use of infrastructure resources” which was submitted to the expert team as an additional document. In this document, the College is warranted free of charge use of UBT College premises such as classrooms, computer labs, library, video conferencing equipment, research databases, software and other premises “for the purpose of implementing the study program Management of Real Estate and Infrastructure (MA)”, as is explicitly mentioned on page 1 of this agreement. This would ensure availability of resources for one out of 9 programs which shall be accredited. However, there is still the possibility to extend this agreement in the future.

The College holds a second cooperation agreement with Nova Univerza, which defines extensively the scope of cooperation. In particular, “joint development of study programmes within the scope of Nova Univerza” and “joint development of the research activity or cooperation of the researchers of both parties in the applications for and implementation of research and development programmes in the field of art and other fields, programmes and projects associated with art” (Article 3 of Association Agreement) are defined as objectives among others. The agreement obliges the College to observe the rules of Nova Univerza regarding “academic standards and procedures”, “planning and use of HR capabilities”, “joint annual and medium-term planning”, particularly with regard to the annual and medium-term

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work plan, and to “appoint its higher education teachers, associates and researchers to the title at Nova Univerza according to the procedure and criteria that apply to Nova Univerza”. As was pointed out before, these are very general provisions which have not been explained in more detail during the course of the institutional evaluation.

Furthermore, the College is obliged to “participate with its higher education teachers and assistants in the implementation of the educational and research activity of Nova University in the manner laid down in accredited study programmes and development projects accepted for financing” (Article 4).

In order to acquire the rights referred to in Article 4, the College shall pay Nova Univerza the amount of 1.000 Euros per year which is an interesting fact, since the provision in Article 4 can be understood as contribution of the College’s human resources into the scope of activities of Nova Univerza. In turn, the College gets study programmes including study regulations and more. Also, the students shall be enrolled as students of Nova Univerza (Article 9) within the scope of “franchise programs”, while in the next sentence it says that “students who are already enrolled at the associate member shall fulfill their study obligations and acquire a diploma document at the associate member under unchanged conditions” (ibd.). The difficulty which arises here is that it remains unclear which of the programs that are scheduled for implementation in the strategy documents will be implemented through the College and which will be implemented through Nova Univerza.

Hence, it is unclear if the financial plan provided is realistic, since if some of the programs are implemented by Nova Univerza, the incomes from the student fees related to these programs can hardly be treated as income of the College - unless Nova Univerza provides higher education to the College without invoicing the College for the costs of program implementation. Thus, one could expect that the costs for external program delivery are shown separately in the financial plan which, indeed, is not the case. Hence, it remains unclear if all student fees can be entirely accounted for by the income of the College.

On the contrary, the financial plan shows increasing research income received from Nova Univerza, starting with Euro 150.000 in 2021/22 and increasing to Euro 450.000 in 2025/26. At the same time, expenses for advancement of academic staff of the College through Nova



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Univerza and for importing academic staff from Nova Univerza increased from Euro 62.000 in 2010/21 to Euro 359.000 in 2025/26 (figures rounded to full thousands).

The overall income from research shown in the financial plan is impressive: It increases from Euro 245.000 in 2021/22 to Euro 1.795.000 in 2025/26; the annual average of the projected income from research in this period is € 1.157.200. This is an extremely impressive outlook, however, the expert team doubts if it is realistic, since a significant discrepancy arises when summing up the incomes from research realized in 2021, which - based on the figures in the document on “Research Revenues” and in the “List of research and other academic projects of College ESLG” provided as additional document, amounts to about Euro 113.000. This is less than half of the sum projected for 2021/22. This can be understood as an indicator that realization of the research income is more difficult than expected. If the documented research income is taken as a basis for projecting the research incomes per year, the average annual research income would be approximately Euro 550.000. This, in turn, would mean that the College makes serious losses and medium-term financial viability cannot be assumed si

Another difficulty in the financial plan stems from the intention to spend 25% of all (!) incomes for quality assurance in 2022 with keeping this level constantly at this level in the entire period. In the “Breakdown of expenses for QA costs” which was requested from the expert team to learn more about this extremely high amount dedicated to Quality Assurance, the College referred to costs for hiring QA and other staff, to purchase of software and a great variety of training for all sorts of staff. For the year 2022/23, the College intends to hire 7 full-time academic staff members and 3 part-time staff members “one year in advance of accreditation at KAA of Environmental Law Program” at the cost of Euro 122.000. This not only seems to be an excessive investment, but it is also misplaced in the budget plan, since it should be attributed to the position of personnel costs as should be the costs for staff training, too.

Another difficult situation arises from the fact that the responsible financial officer is outsourced to UBT College. During the site visit, the heads of the programs found it difficult to recall the name of this officer and the expert team received the impression that the institutions’ sovereignty in budgeting, accounting and monitoring expenditures is not fully developed, although the accounting system in place seems to be organized properly.

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<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i> <i>Yes = 1</i> <i>Partially = 0.5</i> <i>No = 0</i>
<i>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.</i>	0,5
<i>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.</i>	0,5
<i>Standard 3.3. Oversight and management of the institutions budgeting and accounting functions are carried out by a specialised office responsible to a senior administrator.</i>	0,5
<i>Standard 3.4. There is an accurate monitoring of expenditure and commitments against budgets with reports prepared at least once per year.</i>	0,5
<i>Standard 3.5. Accounting systems comply with accepted professional accounting standards and as far as possible attribute total cost to particular activities.</i>	1

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Develop a realistic, reliable and transparent financial plan.*
- 2. Allocate costs to appropriate budgetary items.*
- 3. Establish in-house financial management which ensures full financial autonomy of the institution and the capacity to act independently.*

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2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability

The College has developed several provisions which regulate ethical behavior of different groups and in different areas, among them teaching and research. Students and academic staff are addressed in distinct regulations. These regulations address most of the important issues regarding ethical integrity. Institutional autonomy is not addressed at all in the five relevant documents provided by the College.

The ET appreciates the detailed regulations and procedures on plagiarism which are at place in the College. They not only regulate the various forms of plagiarism including self-plagiarism and provide clear regulations in case of violation, but also address data falsification and data fabrication. In fact, the list of violations of scientific integrity is well-developed and comprehensive. What is missing are clear sanctions and processes in cases of violation, which are not specified. Here, the “Research Integrity Policy”, the “Plagiarism Prevention Policy” as well as the “Academic Integrity Policy” assign handling of violations to the Ethics and Disciplinary Commission. According to these documents, the Ethics and Disciplinary Commission can, in case the review of allegations done by the Office of the Rector is positive, impose any of the sanctions which are said to be set out in the Code of Ethics for Academic Staff or Code of Ethics for Students. Unfortunately, these Codes do not contain provisions on sanctions, which leaves the Ethics and Disciplinary Commission in the state of case-by-case-decisions. The regulations referred to here are published at the website of the College and they are easily accessible for all relevant groups.

Also, in other provisions the concrete procedures and nature of sanctions are not very clear.

The College has adopted standard software for plagiarism detection, which also covers the English language. The threshold imposed for plagiarism is 20% of toleration of similarities which is more than the usual levels often adopted by academic institutions. The College does provide rather comprehensive, yet not always up-to-date information about the academic staff on its website.

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<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i> <i>Yes = 1</i> <i>Partially = 0.5</i> <i>No = 0</i>
<i>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.</i>	0,5
<i>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.</i>	1
<i>Standard 4.3. The code is enforced through clear processes and mechanisms, and it applies to all staff and structural units in the institution.</i>	0,5
<i>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.</i>	1
<i>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.</i>	1
<i>Standard 4.6. All internal regulations, procedures, self-evaluation reports and decisions of governing bodies are made publicly available.</i>	1



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<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
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Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Develop concise and clear provisions on sanctions in case of violations for students and academic staff.*
- 2. Define a maximum percentage of plagiarism for students and academic staff which is compliant with international standards.*
- 3. Update personal information on academic staff on the website.*

2.5. Quality management

It is the ESLG strength that it has managed to formalize its operations substantially, perhaps overlay so. The College presented the variety of regulations, development plans and strategies that comprehensively describe and regulate its academic, organizational and research activities. This overall, is an indication that the institution exercises the comprehensive approach to the quality where it is made sure that the organizational, academic and research activities are geared towards achieving the mission of the College.

QA work is mainly based on the QA manual, which is a comprehensive document, which defines the way QA is organized in the College and also, the areas which are covered by the

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QA - teaching and learning, research and community work are part of it and the content is well elaborated. The supplementary document that serves as a QA work plan is the QA (annual) strategy. The document seems to be quite practical and is essentially a one year guide to the QA operations, hence the college might consider renaming it to the annual plan and include the possible timetable in it, or alternatively, rework the document into a multi-year strategy document. More importantly, while the QA manual is comprehensive and covers all the areas of the college work, the ‘strategy’ is heavily oriented on teaching and learning area. It is better, if the ‘strategy’ accounts for research more, or perhaps, explain why ESLG prioritizes teaching and learning improvement in 2022 over the research or other areas for that matter.

All of the guiding documents are available on the website.

ESLG has the policy making and implementation functions of the internal QA divided between the QA commission and the QA Office, respectively. The QA office has three full-time staff who are mainly concentrated on data collection. The office has been doing a good job of systematically collecting data from different departments, faculties and analyzing those. However, there is not much evidence to conclude that the accumulated data is requested from different departments in order to inform their decision making. It would be more accurate to state that the analyzed data is used for decision making processes at the institutional level, rather than its separate units. As mentioned earlier, in 2.2, QA budget is over 20% of the overall budget of the College, which seems overly excessive, given that the QA is designed to be a support mechanism in running the educational institution.

The QA Commission, apart from having a QA policy development function, acts as a monitoring unit for QA processes. QAC is composed of academic personnel, student representatives and, interestingly, from the external stakeholders, such as industry and alumni. The QA system is based on the PDCA cycle. Annual QA review reports starting from 2016 until 2021 give a good understanding that the QA system is well institutionalized in the College and the data is collected at multiple levels, and multiple dimensions. The interviews with the alumni and industry representatives proved that they are involved in the evaluation processes and their feedback is being collected and accounted for.



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The management of the ESLG made an important emphasis on their effort to remain mission-oriented and it is observable that the college puts effort in organizing its operation around the strategic goals of 2021-2026. This is visible in the strategic documents and its follow-up reviews or simple measurement sheets, which provide performance measurements and indicators or process indicators, which are always referenced back to the strategic goals and their respective indicators. Having made this effort, the college is on its way to collecting data on inputs, outputs and outcomes as well.

QA strategy as well as the QA Manual provide measurements according to which the QA mechanisms should be assessed and then improved, if needed. However, the expert team could not collect evidence of such a review or measures of improvement during the meeting with the QA representatives.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i> <i>Yes = 1</i> <i>Partially = 0.5</i> <i>No = 0</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 5.2. Adequate human, financial and material resources are provided for the leadership and management of quality assurance processes.</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>Standard 5.3. Mistakes and weaknesses are recognized by those responsible and used as a basis for planning for improvement.</i>	<i>1</i>



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<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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 also ensure that required standards are met, and that there is continuing improvement in performance.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 5.8. A quality management office is established within the institutions central administration and sufficient staff, resources and administrative support are provided for the office to operate effectively.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 5.9. A quality committee is established with members drawn from all types of members of the academic community, including students.</i>	<i>1</i>



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<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>Standard 5.13. There is clear evidence that quality assurance data is used to guide enhancement and as a base for improvement.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 5.14. The quality assurance arrangements are themselves regularly evaluated, reported on and improved.</i>	<i>0.5</i>

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Rework the QA strategy to reflect research in a more comprehensive manner, or develop a multi-annual strategy, and put forward different priorities for different years (e.g. 2022 priority - teaching and learning, 2023 - research).*



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2.6. Learning and teaching

According to the rector of the ESLG, the college has a teaching philosophy, which is to have a competence-based approach at the BA level and a research-based approach at the MA level. However, he could not elaborate on the substance of these approaches. The Regulation and procedure of development/review and approval of new curricula mentions the term ‘teaching philosophy’ (p.1), however it is not elaborated in this or other relevant documents either. QA manual (p.12) mentions student centered learning, however the meaning of it was not elaborated by the program heads or teachers. Instead, academic personnel were able to elaborate on PBL, an interdisciplinary approach that is being piloted among four courses and other good practices in their teaching approaches. While the academic staff is involved in the ongoing process of improving teaching and learning in their own realms, what is lacking is the final effort to bring these experiences together under a unified teaching philosophy.

The SER mentions two documents - the Statute and the Regulation and procedure of curriculum development - that are guiding teaching and learning processes in the ESLG (p.70). The expert team would like to add that the Guide for constructive alignment of learning outcomes and assessment is equally important. The Regulation and procedure of development/review and approval of new curricula defines how to create a program and make sure that it falls in line with the mission and strategic objectives of the institution, that there is a special scrutiny that a new program goes through in order to prove its relevance and justify the need for developing on. Lastly the document shows that the program development is a participatory process. Article 19 of the regulation provides the quality criteria for the new academic program, where the monitoring requirements are also spelled out. The Guide for constructive alignment of learning outcomes and assessment, makes sure the learning outcomes are taken into account when devising learning activities and respective assessment methods. The Guideline for Student Assessment is another useful document that provides different assessment methods and guidelines on how/when those need to be used. At the same time, the document suggests a revision process, e.g. that the assessment tools be reviewed annually (p. 10).

Monitoring system is dominantly based on the annual reviews of programs from different angles: against annual performance indicators, annual program evaluations by students, annual



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academic staff evaluations, to name a few. Apart from these, there are departmental reviews. These reviews include the feedback from the alumni as well as the industry representatives. It is worth mentioning that the industrial board members were very eloquent and seemed to be quite involved in the program development process. As it is mentioned in the SER (p.74) findings from all of these reviews are aggregated in annual self evaluation reports, which in turn is a base for the annual Quality improvement strategy. Ideally, this strategy would suggest improvement activities at the program level - be it teaching methods, assessment, learning environment or other. As mentioned in 2.4. The latter is an annual action plan to guide institutional improvement.

While generating this much data is commendable, however the College needs to assess whether this amount of effort to produce formalized assessment is necessary and cost-efficient.

Currently, the college has two programs: Management of Real Estate and Infrastructure (BA) and Management of Real Estate and Infrastructure (MA). Both are developed in correspondence to the NQF and fulfill the ECTS requirements.

Teaching staff, as their credentials show, are qualified for the courses they deliver. During the site-visit, it did not become clear to the expert team whether the teaching staff employs modern teaching methods, or assessment techniques. However, the SWAT analysis in the SER indicates (p.79) that the academic staff needs more training in modern teaching methods and the alignment of the learning outcomes with the teaching methods. Respectively, in its quality improvement strategy, the College has included training in teaching methods. Overall, the expert team concludes that the ESLG is aware of the capacity building needs of its academic staff and plans to improve it. The expert team could not gather evidence if previous training impacted the teaching practices, hence is unable to assess this particular matter.

(It should be mentioned that the standards 6.7, 6.8 and 6.9 are omitted in the SER.)



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Standard	Compliance Yes = 1 Partially = 0.5 No = 0
<i>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.</i>	0.5
<i>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.</i>	1
<i>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.</i>	1
<i>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 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.</i>	0.5



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<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>Standard 6.8. The learning methods and environments are student-centred and stimulate students motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process.</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Elaborate on teaching philosophy in relevant document(s) and ensure that the academic staff and leadership learn about it.*
- 2. Assess whether all types of data collection is necessary and optimize it.*



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2.7. Research

It was already mentioned that the research objectives of the institution are extremely ambitious. The ET praises the College for its efforts which have been accomplished and for the success achieved in the past. The College has submitted documents which prove these successes. The ET also highly appreciates the key objectives of the research strategy which include various provisions of increasing different types of collaborative research at the national and international level.

There are some discrepancies between the research section in the SER and the “Research Strategic Plan 2021-2026”. While in the SER, strengthening a “Lead Scholar and Young Scholar Research Support Grant Program” is mentioned as a strategic objective, this is not the case in the Research Strategic Plan, however, it is a distinct budget line in the financial plan.

This is important, since it can be assumed that the projected growth of research activities very much depends on the academic advancement of young talented researchers. In addition, the projected study programs would benefit from this very much. However, an important part of a research strategy is not explained in detail, i.e., the management and the organization of the prospective research units along key research priorities. It is interesting to learn that the College intends to “participate in research projects with serious foreign and domestic research institutions”, to “build Critical Mass in Research Areas through strengthening the contract research and consulting arm of the College”, to “establish research fund of College ESLG from research grants, private sector and own funds”, and to “emphasize excellence of research and scholarly activity both with quantitative and qualitative metrics”, the strategic plan omits the development of key priorities aligned to the study programs that shall be established.

Among the most important elements of a concrete research development plan, there would be a concept which research priorities will be addressed, and which measures are needed in a staff development plan to build internal capacities for conducting excellent research, attracting research funds and managing complex and challenging research projects. There is no information about these topics in the SER and related documents and no information on this could be obtained during the site visit. Also, it is interesting to notice that the College intends to sort of outsource the advancement of academic staff although it is addressed as an

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outstanding objective in the SER and related documents. Here, the question arises why the institution does not build up internal capacities instead of subjecting itself to external regulations.

Regarding the research budget, it was already explained that it does not seem realistic if actual achievements are contrasted with short-term projections. Especially, the mid-term prospects lack substantiation. The number of publications of academic staff in recent years varies a bit: In 2019 22, in 2020 14 and in 2021 24 publications were achieved, if double entries in the list provided by the College are not considered. Several members in this list presented without publications in the last three years and it contains several publications which were not published under the name of the institution.

Expectations for teaching staff involvement in teaching and research as well as other activities are communicated well in the College, as the ET could learn during the site visit. There is also significant encouragement of the academic staff to advance research skills as is shown in the “List of trainings of academic staff 2020-2022” which was submitted as an additional document upon request of the ET. Here, the neglect of skills needed to build a research-based College and to improve the organizational foundations of a research organization become apparent again, since most research training is dedicated to advancement of very specific research methodologies.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i> <i>Yes = 1</i> <i>Partially = 0.5</i> <i>No = 0</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>



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<i>Standard 7.2. The research development plan includes clearly specified indicators and benchmarks for performance targets.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>0,5</i>
<i>Standard 7.4. Sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are available for achieving the proposed research objectives.</i>	<i>0,5</i>
<i>Standard 7.5. Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>0,5</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 7.9. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.</i>	<i>0,5</i>



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<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 7.11. There are clear policies, procedures and relevant structural units to ensure the safeguarding of ethical principles in research.</i>	<i>0,5</i>

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Develop a research strategy that is aligned to distinct research priorities representing the study programs that shall be established.*
- 2. Draft a realistic and reliable financial plan on research.*
- 3. Develop clear measures to advance the scientific and research skills of junior researchers.*
- 4. Establish an in-house scheme and regulation for academic advancement.*

2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development

Teaching staff, as their credentials show, are qualified for the courses they deliver. The College prioritizes building capacity of teaching staff in modern teaching and learning methods. Most of the staff has already been working with the college. Those that joined the institutions recently confirmed that they had spent an orientation day meeting different units and were provided a package of main documents of the institution.

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Currently 150 students are studying in the ESLG with an academic staff of 18. In pure numbers, the student/faculty ratio is satisfactory. Nevertheless, it is important to look at the numbers closely. Out of the 18 academic staff members, 9 hold doctoral degrees, out of which 6 are full time employees. SER states that 80% of those teaching are full time professors and lecturers. As clarified by the ESLG, the lecturers, although they do not have doctoral degrees, can be involved in the academic activities, including student assessment at the BA level, but not at the MA level. With this in mind, the academic staff is sufficient to run currently accredited programs. Nevertheless, given college's plans to accredit more programs, it has a small number of the full-time academic staff with the doctoral degrees (3 full time assistant professors and 1 full time professor). Hence the ESLG intends to recruit or support seven doctoral candidates. The expert team learned that so far, only one doctoral candidate is being supported by the ESLG and the leadership plan to recruit/support the rest of them within the five-year period. This is particularly important, as the ESLG plans to accredit more programs and it is highly unlikely that with the current state of affairs, it will be able to do so.

The regulatory framework for staff hiring/dismissal, promotion, workload and professional development are in place. The Faculty Workload Policy provides general provisions on e.g. number of courses a junior or senior faculty needs to teach, or the conditions that define the ratio of administrative and teaching load. However, it remains unclear for the expert team, what is a typical division of time for a full-time assistant professor? How much of its teaching workload is dedicated to thesis supervision, or to consultations with students? Workload matrix of the academic staff could be a useful tool that explains the state of affairs with regards to the commitments of the academic personnel to the ESLG.

Staff appraisal and development policy and the regulation on staff appraisal are two guiding documents for the staff professional development. The policy brings forward the aim of the staff appraisal and links it with the College's strategic goals in the relevant areas. Staff appraisal is multidimensional - the department has its own performance indicators, individual staff self-development plans are also in place. Both of these assessments happen annually, and the measures of assistance are decided upon. Staff development plan 2021-2026 provides 17 goals to be achieved within this 5 year timeframe. These concern teaching and learning and research



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capacity building in the College. Each goal has its corresponding target at the institutional level. Self-assessment reports of the academic staff are incorporated in the End of academic year staff appraisal report, which is produced by the program directors.

Overall, the regulatory framework for staff attraction and promotion and their professional development is well rounded. It has the policy document, followed by the regulations, performance indicators, where applicable and the templates for assessment reports. It should be stressed that much of it all is achieved due to the close cooperation of the ESLG with Nova Univerza. It is obvious that the regulatory framework of the College closely resembles that of the Nova Univerza. The expert team is unable to assess how much of the original regulatory framework from Nova Univerza was altered in order to meet the ESLG scope and context. It is undoubtedly beneficial for the College to organize its work around a well-established operational system of another institution, however it also raises concerns on how much it all fits the ESLG context. A larger concern this raises is the autonomy of the ESLG, which has been raised in 2.2.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i> <i>Yes = 1</i> <i>Partially = 0.5</i> <i>No = 0</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>

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<i>Standard 8.3. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment.</i>	1
<i>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.</i>	1
<i>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.</i>	1
<i>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.</i>	1
<i>Standard 8.7. Criteria and processes for performance evaluation are clearly specified and made known in advance to all staff.</i>	1
<i>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.</i>	0.5
<i>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.</i>	0.5



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<i>Standard 8.10. The institution has a clear plan for all staff professional development, a structured approach in identifying such needs, and allocates appropriate resources for its implementation.</i>	0.5
<i>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.</i>	0.5

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Create a workload matrix to explain the state of affairs with regards to the commitments of the academic personnel.*
- 2. Create distance between the regulations of Nova Univerza and ESLG concerning staff development.*

2.9. Student administration and support services

In order to assess the student administration and the support services offered by the ESLG College to the students, the Expert Team (ET) started by analysing the appropriateness and clarity of the admission requirements. For this task, the Expert Team (ET) read both the SER and the annexes and checked the information during the online interviews. The next three paragraphs present shortly these procedures.

Admission to the Bachelor programs of ESLG College is organized according to the Regulation on Admission and Transfer [SER, p.118] and is done based on two main criteria: the matura exam results (30% of the admission grade) and the GPA from the previous educational level (70% of the admission grade). English programs also require potential students to prove their English competences (minimum 500 points at a TOEFL test) – in this

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case the weight of each grade changes: GPA – 50%, Matura exam results – 30% and TOEFL results – 25%. The results of the admission to the 2017/2018 academic year show an inconsistent application of the rules (e.g. in 2017/2018 there were 3 students admitted even though they did not fulfil the criteria of having a GPA of at least 3.5).

Admission for the masters programs is similarly organized based on the Regulation on Admission and Transfer [SER, p.119] and considers instead of the secondary school education GPA, the average grade of the Bachelor level studies (which have to be at least 7.5). Moreover the admission considers the `relevant experience` of the student for admission. The results of the admission to the 2018/2019 academic year show an inconsistent application of the rules (e.g. in there were at least 6 students admitted even though they did not fulfill the criteria of having a GPA of at least 7.5 in their Bachelor studies).

The criteria are presented on the college website: <http://www.eukos.org/?page=2,20>, as well as the results of the admission processes for the academic years up to 2017-2018 for the BA level and 2018/2019 for the MA level.

In conclusion, though the admission requirements are clearly specified and well-communicated to the general public, there is proof that they are not consistently implemented and more could be done to improve this.

Secondly, the ET assessed the **transparency of the college**. One can observe that the college website is functional and includes complete information about the institution, its mission, vision and strategy, its quality management procedures and the description of different bodies of the college, as well as the minutes of their work, the tuition fees and scholarships. However most of them are from previous academic years, thus not really up-dated. Extensive information about each study program is available on the webpage. The ET salutes as a good practice the publishing of information about the accreditation status of each program as well as the fact that the website is still updated for the currently enrolled students even for programs that did not receive a re-accreditation decision.

The ET also salutes the good practice of publishing the decisions of the ethics committee.



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Next, the ET evaluated the **disponibility of an orientation program for the students**. In the case of ESLG College, the Dean or Head of the Department delivers an induction session at the beginning of each year [SER, p.121]. The rights and responsibilities of the students are available on the website of the college. Among the rights listed on the website there are: the right to dignity, equal treatment, to information and financial aid, to freedom of expression etc. Among the responsibilities of students, the college mentions: upholding the academic integrity, the research ethics, etc. To give an example: „*The students also have the right to association and representation: a student is a member of some bodies of the college – recommendations for student membership in these bodies are requested from the ESLG’s Student Council*” [SER, p.127].

There is also a library induction offered to new students.

One can conclude that these induction activities ensure the students the opportunity to learn about the range of services and available facilities offered to them by the college. However, there is no student handbook offered to students, since it is considered that the website already covers all information required for all phases of the student „life cycle”. Students, during the online interviews, confirmed that they knew that information was available online and accessed it when necessary.

Availability of scholarships and financial support for students. As it reads from the SER [pp. 121- 124], the college offers merit-based scholarships, financial aid, financial aid for categories of children of war veterans and invalids. The website presents in detail the procedure for allocating these scholarships as well as lists of beneficiaries. For example, in the academic year 2020-2021, there were two student beneficiaries of the financial aid. This proves that the scholarships and financial support available to students aim to both stimulate and reward performance, but also support students with disadvantaged backgrounds. However, no proof was found that the two categories are operated separately but can be accumulated.

Data collection and analysis. The ESLG college has in place quality assurance processes that include collection and analysis of data regarding the student population, student progress and success, drop-out rates and student satisfaction [SER, pp. 124-125]. All these are used for the annual reviews – reports that are annually published online, thus one can assume they are used

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for quality assurance purposes as well as in supporting decision making. This also proves that the data collection process is effective and generates reliable data. The ET commends the publication of these reports on the college website and recommends that the college continues its efforts for QA by also publishing plans on how to improve its results from one academic year to another.

Appeal procedure. The Regulation on Administration of Exams refers to the three different types of appeals: academic appeal, examination appeal and admission appeal. They are all described on the website, which is a good thing - thus proving it is made widely known to the institution and its members. However, the procedures are not clear enough to make sure that both the students and the teacher know the difference between different types of appeals. Moreover, the college should continue its efforts in this regard ensuring that the appeals students make when not content with how they were evaluated, are re-examined by other examiners than the first time around. This way, the regulations would become more clear regarding the grounds on which academic appeals may be based, the criteria for decision and the remedies available, while also guaranteeing impartial consideration of the appeal.

Student services. Among the student services offered by the college, the SER refers to [p.133]: academic counseling that is made accessible to students through a Tutoring Program and a Career and Employment Guidance Counseling structure. They are easily accessed by the students from any part of the institution.

The college has set its own performance indicators regarding services and resources allocated for students and the table presented in the SER page 133 indicates an improvement of the situation in the last four years. For example, the student – staff ratio improved from 10:1 up to 5:1. This review of the students' services and resources against the set indicators is also available online and is the basis of an improvement plan. This formally adopted plan was provided as an additional document to the ET, but with little indication that the implementation of this plan is monitored along with its effectiveness. However, there is not much proof that both the facilities and the services are adapted to all students' needs (to the diverse student population), so the college could continue its efforts of ensuring that the student services and facilities of the campus answer the needs of the diverse student population.



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The ESLG College regularly monitors the effectiveness and relevance of the student services through a student satisfaction survey that is applied online annually [SER, p.134]. The online interviews confirmed that these surveys include questions about the student services and the facilities and learning materials offered by the college. However, there were not many examples of the suggestions received from the students, thus proving that the services are modified in response to evaluation and feedback. Therefore, the college could do more to encourage students to speak up and express their needs and desires.

Moreover, the ESLG College provides opportunities for students to get involved in extracurricular activities, providing appropriate facilities for them. Within the college there are some clubs undergoing activity (at least before the pandemic): the debate club, the movie nights, the sustainable house design competition etc. [SER, p.135] Most of them were active before the COVID19 pandemic and had to stop their activity for the safety of its members, but the students expressed their hope that they will resume once the epidemiologic context will allow it.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i> <i>yes = 1</i> <i>partially = 0.5</i> <i>no = 0</i>
<i>Standard 9.1. Admissions requirements are clearly specified and appropriate for the institution and its programs; admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied.</i>	0
<i>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.</i>	0.5



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<i>Standard 9.3. A comprehensive orientation program is organised 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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 9.5. There are effective processes in place to collect and analyse 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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>0.5</i>



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<i>Standard 9.8. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to deal with academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>

Compliance level: *Substantially compliant*

ET recommendations:

- 1. Try to clarify the admission criteria – e.g. what is considered „relevant experience” and how it is measured/taken into consideration;*
- 2. Continue efforts of ensuring a consistent and fair application of the admission criteria and procedures;*



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3. *Continue the efforts of ensuring transparency of the institutional activity, by publishing up-to-date information and documents on the college website;*
4. *Consider giving the students the opportunity to cumulate their scholarship and financial aid (if they received them based on two different criteria – e.g. academic performance and economic hardship);*
5. *Continue the efforts for QA by also publishing plans on how to improve its results from one academic year to another.*
6. *Continue efforts to clarify the appeal procedures and informing all members of the academic community about them;*
7. *Continue efforts to encourage students to express their opinion about the facilities, the student services and the learning materials, in order to continuously adapt them to the needs of the diverse student population.*

2.10. Learning resources and facilities

This section evaluates the availability of financial resources, learning resources and facilities in order to assess whether they are sufficient and appropriate for the learning and teaching scope of the institution. Appropriateness of resources for research is also discussed in section 2.7.

First, financial resources and their adequacy for the acquisition, cataloging, equipment and for services and system development are discussed. Though there is no financial line dedicated to this, the SER mentions that funds that are used for this are included in the expenditure captors: `recurring maintenance`, `capital investments`, `other expenditure` and are also part of `research expenditure`. All these expenditure chapters are predicted to be growing during the next four years and are appreciated by the SER as `sufficient` [SER, p.136]. However. As detailed in section 2.3, the ET

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did not find evidence to support this affirmation. On the contrary, the financial plan of the college seems rather unrealistic.

Secondly, learning resources availability was evaluated. The college library entails a total of 1.000 physical and electronic copies of textbooks that are offered in Albanian or English, when available. According to the SER ` Library of ESLG operates during the whole year. It is open from Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 19:30, and on Saturday from 09:00 to 14:00` [SER, p.138]. The library staff uses a reliable system - a software - for recording books and managing loans, returns and overdue items. This ensures the security of the available materials and prevents their loss.

The college also has memorandums of understanding/agreements signed with two other institutions to provide access to physical and electronic learning materials for their staff and students. Based on these agreements, the students can go to the UBT library and access EBSCO, SAGE Journals and JSTOR Journals. Online interviews confirmed that, before the COVID19 pandemic, this was habitual for the students. However, more could be done to actively encourage both students and academic staff to use these resources and monitor the usage rate of these valuable resources, in order to adjust them to the needs of the academic community.

The college provides computers within the library and the computer laboratory so that students can use them to access electronic learning materials and relevant software. This proves that there are adequate facilities that host learning resources that make them accessible to a majority of students. However, the ET encourages the college to continue its efforts in making the learning materials accessible also for students with different disabilities (e.g. with hearing or sight deficiencies).

As it could be seen from the video provided as evidence, the ESLG College provides an adequate, clean, attractive and well-maintained campus that serves the learning, teaching and research purposes of the institution. The premises of the college consist of 6 classrooms, one computer lab and 9 offices for staff, administrative and research work – they total around 1000m2 [SER, p.138]. The spaces have a health and safety certification from the Municipality of Lipjan (the most recent one is from 2020 and is available on the college website), thus meeting the legislation on health and safety. In order to provide the facilities needed for offering the study programmes of the college, ESLG College signed an agreement (in 2020) with UBT college which allows them to share some physical and human resources. This was facilitated by the fact that both institutions share the same owner. Though sharing resources, they remain independent from one another, both

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having already a clear and well-known brand. There are QA processes that measure the satisfaction of students with the facilities and based on their response, a Strategy for improvement is adopted [SER, p.140]. The latter is a mechanism for considering and responding to the views of students.

According to the SER, the college shows flexibility for scheduling classes for students with disabilities as only some of the spaces within the college premises/used by the college meet the standards *`with regards to physical infrastructure dedicated to students with physical disabilities`* [SER, p.141]. However, more efforts could be directed towards ensuring that the campus and learning resources are available to both students and staff with physical disabilities or other special needs.

The college presented an up-to-date inventory of its equipment and mentioned they have agreements with other institutions that allows the college staff and students to use GIS computer lab (which has 120 computers) as well as some Video conferencing equipment [SER, p.141]. The Plan for improvement of student services and resources – provided as an additional document to the SER – included targets for improving the student: computer ratio. In conclusion, adequate computer equipment is available and accessible to both students and staff. Its complete inventory is maintained periodically. More could be done to monitor space utilization, especially in the context of the ESLG-UBT agreement for joint use of physical resources, this could be useful. Moreover, the college could develop the internal procedures for regularly evaluating the adequacy of provision of computer equipment - especially in the context of switching to online education during the COVID19 pandemic - or future similar contexts, this could be helpful to indicate where extra resources are needed.

The SER [p.142] mentions that training in several IT fields was provided to teachers – e.g. Microsoft office, Zoom, Google Meet etc. thus technical support is available for staff. Teachers confirmed during the online interviews that training programs were provided to them and ensured effective use of computing equipment and appropriate software during the online teaching context determined by the COVID19 pandemic. However, there is not enough proof regarding the availability of technical support for students using information and communications technology.



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<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i> <i>yes = 1</i> <i>partially = 0.5</i> <i>no = 0</i>
<i>Standard 10.1. Adequate financial resources are provided for acquisitions, cataloguing, equipment, and for services and system development.</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>Standard 10.2. Books, journals and other materials are available in Albanian and English (or other languages) as required for programs and research organised at the institution.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 10.3. Reliable and efficient access to online databases, research and journal materials relevant to the institution programs is available for users.</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>

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<i>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.</i>	0.5
<i>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).</i>	0.5
<i>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.</i>	1
<i>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.</i>	0.5
<i>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.</i>	1

Compliance level: *Substantially compliant*

ET recommendations:

- 1. Consider monitoring the access to international databases and journals and continuing efforts of encouraging both students and academic staff to use them.*
- 2. Continue the efforts of making the learning materials accessible also for students with different disabilities (e.g. with hearing or sight deficiencies).*



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2.11. Institutional cooperation

The college has adopted an Internationalization Strategy for 2021-2026, that includes objectives in 6 areas connected to internationalization, which all have resources allocated to them [SER, p. 143]. The document is an institutional policy that guides the institutional decisions in the field of institutional cooperation, and it is publicly available on the college's website.

Though there is no upper management directly mandated to follow the implementation of the internationalization Strategy, there is an Office of International Cooperation responsible for this. The SER mentions that the office is led by Turkish Professor Dr. Kemal Yildirim. Moreover, a person – Prof. dr. Peter Jambrek – is assigned the responsibility to monitor the Association Agreement with Nova Univerza – a special cooperation for the college. Both seem - from the online interviews - to be mandated and accountable for the initiatives and results in this area, along with the institutional management [SER, p. 144]. Their role and position in the institutional organizational chart could be more clear.

The institution has different agreements and memorandums of understanding with relevant institutional partners and organizations. The SER [p.144-145] enlists 10 agreements with HEIs from Norway, Slovenia, Germany, Turkey, US etc. These agreements refer to academic exchanges, mobility agreements, scientific research cooperation etc. As far as the ET can figure from the provided documents, the responsibilities of the partners are clearly defined in these formal agreements.

Moreover, the institution organizes events of international visibility and takes part, as a leader or as a partner, in international projects. In the SER [p.146], the college listed 4 projects that they were part of. These projects are considered the main source for the college's future revenue, thus college's efforts should be focused on developing institutional capacity on writing project proposals for potential financial lines and implementing such projects.

The institution is encouraging the international visibility of its staff and students by supporting their participation in different study mobility/forums/events/internships etc. For



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this, the ESLG college signed agreements with international HEIs in order to organize students and staff mobilities. Before 2020 there were approximately 10 students incoming to ESLG college each year and approx. 10 students outgoing, while there were 3-4 staff members incoming and outgoing each year. The COVID19 pandemic affected the mobilities in 2020 and 2021, but the college will continue its efforts to re-establish these mobility programs. Moreover, there are two international Summer Academies mentioned [SER, p.148], that were organized in the last two years (one/year). The academic staff indicated, during the online interview, their intention to continue these events once the international epidemiologic context will allow it - as they were suspended during the COVID19 pandemic.

Another way in which the institution is encouraging the international visibility of its staff is through the recognition of their efforts in internationalization. For example, the engagement in international cooperation is considered for academic/professional promotion, according to the Nova Univerza Habilitation Rules (http://www.eukos.org/repository/docs/Habilitation_Rule_Nova_Univerza.pdf). This can take the form of an invitation as lecturer in an international scientific meeting, membership in foreign academies, lecturing in international programs etc.

Similarly, staff is rewarded if they are offering services to the academic community during their election into Higher Academic Titles. In order to meet this standard, the staff has to (do one of the following): conduct training within the department, serve as a liaison for international cooperation, represent the department or college at official events, serve as a member in different boards or committees etc. [SER, p.152].

Similarly, the ESLG College encourages its staff members to get involved in the larger community, surrounding the college, to discuss and contribute to the solving of key community issues. The SER enlists 12 staff members that are members of different fora in the community. As part of the relation with the community, the college has established connections with local industries and employers in order to organize the internships and practical placements for their students, but also for identifying employment opportunities for them. The SER presents a list of 18 cooperation agreements signed by the college. Moreover, there is an Industrial Board of the ELSG College that includes 5 industries/companies' representatives, as well as a Program Industrial Council that gathers 8 such representatives.

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The SER describes in pages 151-152 several ways in which the college supports the cooperation with international HEIs, including dedication of resources for this and provision of incentives for academic staff to initiate and continue cooperations with these institutions. This includes covering travel costs, payment of per diem costs and organizing training on international research grant applications. These established mechanisms support cooperation with international Higher Education institutions, networks and organization, but there is little proof regarding the assistance given to the teaching staff for developing collaborative arrangements with the international community. As mentioned before, since projects with international funding are essential for the future development of the provider, the ELSG College could put more efforts into developing the institutional capacity of developing collaborations with the international community.

Last, but not least, the college has an alumni network in place and functioning according to the regulation on the Functioning of Alumni Club. A representative of this network is part of the Quality Commission and was also involved in the revision of the college Strategy [SER, p.157].

The Alumni network publishes an annual report on the BA and MA studies offered by the college. The online interview confirmed that the alumni network is frequently contacted by the colleges representatives and invited to offer feedback on the programmes structures and content or other elements of the academic life.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i> <i>Yes = 1</i> <i>Partially = 0.5</i> <i>No = 0</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>



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<i>Standard 11.2. The institution has created and assigned the portfolio for institutional cooperation and/or internationalisation to a member of the upper management that is directly mandated and accountable for the initiatives and results in this area.</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Standard 11.3. The institution has different agreements and memorandums of understanding with relevant international partners and organisations. The responsibilities of partners are clearly defined in formal agreements.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 11.4. The institution takes part, either as a leader or as a partner, in international projects.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 11.5. The institution organises events of international visibility and outreach (conferences, summer schools, etc.)</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 11.7. Engagement in international cooperation and contributions to the community are included in promotion criteria and staff performance review.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard 11.8. Mechanisms are established to support cooperation with international higher education institutions, networks and organisations. Assistance is given for teaching staff to develop collaborative arrangements with the international community.</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>

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<i>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.)</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>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.</i>	<i>1</i>

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Develop the institutional capacity of writing project proposals and implementing the projects that are approved for funding.*
- 2. Consider inviting the alumni network to support the current activity of the college or support individual potential students during their studies – e.g. offer scholarships, donate funds to the college in times of financial hardship etc.*



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3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND JUDGEMENTS OF THE ET

As shown above the compliance levels per general area are:

General area (from the KAA manual)	Compliance level
1. Public mission and institutional objectives	Substantially compliant
2. Strategic planning, governance and administration	Substantially compliant
3. Financial planning and management	Partially compliant
4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability	Substantially 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	Substantially compliant
11. Institutional cooperation	Substantially compliant

*The expert team considers that ESLG College is **Substantially compliant** with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation manual and, therefore, recommends to accredit the institution for 3 year period now. The present report suggested a series of relevant recommendations that would bring the college closer to the KAA standards and these should be implemented by the college before another future request of accreditation is made.*



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