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AKADEMIA EVOLUCION

INSTITUTIONAL

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

14 FEB.2022, KOSOVO



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 02 FEB.2022

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Prof. Dr. Olgun Cicek, YODAK*
- *PhD. Maiki Udam, University of Tartu*
- *Ms. Marija Vasilevksa, Student expert*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation*
- *Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*
- *Kastriot Ilazi, Senior Officer for IT*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation report and other documents of the Academy „Evolucion“ (AE) provided prior to the site visit*
- *Interviews during the site visit*
- *Video on the Academy Evolucion“ premises*
- *Additional documents provided upon the request of the expert team after the site visit*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- Accreditation Manual of KAA



1.2. Site visit schedule

2nd of February 2022

09.00 – 10.25 Meeting with the management of the institution (no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion)

10.30 – 11.20 Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative services

11.20 – 12.40 Lunch break

12.40 – 13.35 Meeting with the heads of faculties/study programs

13.40 – 14.30 Meeting with teaching staff

14.35 – 15.25 Meeting with students

15.30 – 16.20 Meeting with graduates

16.25 – 17.10 Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders

17.10 – 17.25 Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA

17.25 – 17.35 Closing meeting with the management of the institution



1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

The Academy “Evolution” (hereinafter AE) is a private higher education institution in design and applied arts. It was originally established as Fashion Institution “Evolucion” on 14.09.2005, based on Board of Directors’ Decision Nr. 01/05. The AE is based in Prishtina, “Shefqet Shkupi” str.

At the institutional level, the AE was initially accredited for the period of one year from September 2009 -October 2010, then was re-accredited for a period of three years from September 2010-October 2013 and re-accredited again for a period of 5 years October 2013 - September 2018 and one year 2018 - 2019 and lastly, it was reaccredited again for a period of 3 years from October 2019 - September 2022.

Currently, the AE offers three-year study programmes at Bachelor level in the following programmes:

- Fashion Design Program - accredited / re-accredited for the time periods: September 2009 - September 2010, September 2010 - September 2013, October 2013 - September 2016, October 2016 - September 2021, October 2021 - September 2022;
- Communication Design Program - accredited / re-accredited for the time periods: September 2009 - September 2010, September 2010 - September 2013, October 2013 - September 2016, October 2016 - September 2021, October 2021 - September 2022;
- Interior Design Program - accredited / re-accredited for the time periods: September 2009 - September 2010, September 2010 - September 2013, October 2013 - September 2016, October 2016 - September 2021, October 2021 - September 2022;

In all its Bachelor programmes, AE provides the studies at the level 6 according to the EQF, with 180 ECTS credits, finalized by issuing the respective Bachelor level Diploma.

The AE also offered two-year study programmes at Master level in the following programmes:

- Interior Design Program - accredited / re-accredited for the time periods: October 2016 - September 2019, and from October 2019 - September 2020;
- Design and Marketing Program - accredited / re-accredited for the period: October 2016 - September 2019, and from October 2019 - September 2020.

Currently, the AE offers a two-year Master's study program in the following program:



- Fashion Design Program - accredited / re-accredited for the time periods: October 2013 - September 2016, October 2016 - September 2021, and from October 2021 - September 2022; The study in the Master level programs contains 120 ECTS credits (level 7, according to KEK) and is finalized with a Master level Diploma.

Since its establishment and until now, the AE has been constantly evolving. The AE has added new programs and advanced the existing ones, improved the teaching infrastructure and implemented mechanisms to increase the quality of teaching and learning as well as the advancement of academic staff.

In addition, from year to year, the number of students has increased.

The structure of AE students is quite diverse. They come from all regions of Kosovo, from neighboring countries (Albania, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro and Preshevo Valley) as well as from the diaspora.

2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

The institutional evaluation consists of 11 sub headings through which the administration, organisation and management of the institution, as well as teaching and research are assessed.

2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives

2.1.1 Mission

AE enables students to develop and become successful professionals, active and useful members of the community through an efficient teaching process, practical exercises and creative and research projects in the field of applied arts and design.

The AE helps students not only in the advancement of arts but also in human creativity, as well as the formation of a leading community of artists and professionals.

It was achieved through the implementation of contemporary teaching techniques and methodologies as well as interactive communication between the students, AE staff and external stakeholders.

2.1.2 Objectives



The main objectives of the AE are:

- To be recognized as valued higher education institution in Kosovo and wider, known for the development and advancement of new creative, scientific ideas and overall education
- To continuously develop and expand its teaching activity in accordance with contemporary standards in the field of higher vocational education;
- To achieve the highest possible level of vocational education for professionals in the field of applied art, design, science and culture, through a comprehensive process of teaching, research, artistic activities and creative projects;
- To provide the local and regional market with qualified professionals in the field of applied arts and design in accordance with the regional and wider economic development trends;
- To exercise commercial activities in the field of applied arts and design;
- To help in the promotion, advancing and strengthening the position of women in society;
- To strengthen the social responsibility awareness of staff and students and continue to be an important contributor to activities of interest to the community; • To be a strong voice in defense of the causes of marginalized groups.

(SER - AE 2022 p.6)

The institution has a defined mission statement that includes three main pillars: teaching, research and community service. However, the research and community service pillars seem to be less prioritised. AE is more focused on the teaching and training activities.

Based on the document review and interviews during the site visit, it was clear that the mission of the institution has not been defined or revised, based on a consultation/involvement of external and internal stakeholders. The mission is set by the Leadership team of the AE.

It was also observed during the site visit and interviews that the mission is not well recognized by the members of the academic community of the institution.



The institutional mission does not provide an effective guide for strategic planning, decision making and operations of the institution. The objectives of the AE are broad, and sometimes very ambitious. One of the objective states “To exercise commercial activities in the field of applied arts and design” which seem to be inappropriate to state it as an objective under the mission statement for an education institution.

There is no clear medium- or long-term institutional objectives listed nor consistent with and support the mission. There is no vision statement for the AE listed anywhere in the section of the SER.

On the basis of the information stated in the SER, information gained during the interviews and also with regard to the fact that the mission statement is published and shared with the community on the website of the AE.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Mission statement to be set with the involvement of the internal and external stakeholders as well as to be specific for the institution*
- 2. Adjust the format of the mission statement so that it is brief, clear, concise, specific and distinguishable*
- 3. Mission statement should reflect and distinguish between the medium- and long-term institutional objectives*
- 4. Vision of the AE should also be stated on the strategic documents and shared publicly*
- 5. Strategic plan should be prepared for 5 years period and there should not be a gap in between the plan periods*

2.2. Strategic planning, governance and administration

The AE has defined the strategy for achieving its mission and objectives. The strategy was drafted by the Board of Directors in co-operation with the management and the heads of the AE departments. It is reviewed and updated periodically in accordance with ongoing changes in the country and abroad.

The development strategy of the AE is focused on the following areas:

- Study programmes;
- Academic and administrative staff;
- Students;



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- Adaptation to changes;
 - Cooperation and interaction and - Social responsibility.
- Each area consists of specific objectives and action points for achieving them.

The governance, activity and work processes of the AE are regulated by its Statute. The Statute also regulates the organization, authorizations and the way of establishing the AE governing bodies, the development of studies, the status of academic, administrative and student staff, the issue of taking discipline measures and all other important issues for the AE. The following sections provide the main data related to the governance and administration of the AE. More detailed explanation of the organizational structure, description of the organizational units, description of duties, competencies and responsibilities of the governing bodies is set out in the AE's Statute .

The previous strategic plan was scheduled for 2015-2020. The next one planned for 2020-2025. However, it was not implemented. The reasoning for this pause when questioned during the site visit was “due to accreditation period”! The new strategic plan is updated for the period of 2022-2027. There was a gap between 2020-2022 for the strategic plan. When it was questioned during the site visit, no satisfactory reason or justification provided by the management. There were no clear and understandable justification for this revision/update or the pause for the strategic plan.

In year 2020, due to the emergency the pandemic COVID-19 the management decided to create a short emergency plan 2020 that lasted until end of year 2021, this was presented verbally during the interview with ET and AKA representatives .

The strategic plan was not prepared in close consultation with the academic community at the institution, as well as external stakeholders and private sector. During the site visit interviews with all the stakeholders it was clear that they were not aware of either the preparation stage or the action planning of the strategic plan.

There were no evidence on the regular adjustment of the strategic plan based on long term budget processes.

As stated in the strategic plan 2022-2027 (p.4), it is reviewed on general terms and updated periodically in accordance with ongoing changes in the country and abroad. However, during the interview it was stated that the update, upgrade was based on the accreditation decision as well as process.



The AE continuously monitors developments, trends and market demands in the areas covered by the study programs. These changes are followed through active participation in these events and they are taken into account and reflected in our programs and other teaching activities (such as art projects, participation in competitions, exhibitions, etc.), meetings with businesses (Industrial Board). All of these are taken into account and reflected in our curricula and other learning activities. **(SER-2022, p.9)**

It is on the documents as the legal requirements by the government that the election criteria and processes of the decision makers and other elected positions are clear, transparent and published in institutional regulations.

Student representatives are members of all decisional, executive and consultative bodies. The mechanism for electing student representatives is clearly explained in internal regulations (e.g., the Statute, Regulation on Students Organisation). 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.

ET recommendations:

- 1. AE must ensure the involvement of internal and external stakeholders, as well as consultation with the academic community while preparing the strategic plan.*
- 2. The Strategic planning should be integrated with annual and longer term budget processes that provide for regular adjustments.*
- 3. The implementation process and the outcomes of the strategic plan should be monitored as per the short- and medium-term targets.*

2.3.Financial planning and management

Based on the current financial performance, student enrolment trends, as well as future development plans, the AE claims to go through a stable financial period which enables economic sustainability and further development in all planned processes. The AE indicates its main sources of income to be student fees, making 97% of revenues in 2021. In 2022, the AE is hoping to increase its income from projects and other sources, although during the accreditation visit, the projects were still in the preparatory phase. The budget presented to the

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experts shows a net profit of 15%, which confirms the sustainability of the AE's fiscal sustainability.

The management of financial resources is the responsibility of the Executive Director with the approval of the Board of Directors. The financial management is regulated in “The Financial Regulation of the AE”. Specific financial operations are provided by the finance department. According to the SER and interviews during the visit, the Executive Director and the Head of the Finance Department are responsible for drafting the budget in cooperation with the ad hoc Budget Committee. Budget planning is done based on the requests of the departments in relation to each activity in support of the progress and success of the operational activities. The budget and annual report are approved by the Board of Directors, which also decides on long-term financial commitments on behalf of the AE.

The EA claims that as a legal person, they are obliged to prepare annual financial reports in accordance with the good accounting practice of the Republic of Kosovo. The annual financial reports are prepared in accordance with the Internal Financial Regulation and the General Accounting Regulations of the Republic of Kosovo.

ET recommendations:

- 1. AE is encouraged to diversify its sources of income, in particular through research / creative projects.*

2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability

The AE has a Code of Ethics defining the principles, procedures and measures in order to defend the values of academic freedom, equality and fairness, human rights and ethical integrity, among others. The Code of Ethics requires that all internal stakeholders, including students and individuals who are not AE employees, but who participate in work and activities of AE, 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. Although the students are mentioned as stakeholders, the Code of Ethics is not directly applicable to them, as there are no principles or measures related to, for example, cheating or plagiarising in student works. Moreover, there is no systematic use of any

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plagiarism detection software in the academy. Both students and employees claimed that they all get a hard copy of the Code of Ethics when joining the AE, but the interviewed students could not explain what will happen if they misbehave/break the rules of academic ethics.

The AE has established an Ethics Committee responsible for the analysis and resolution of any potential breaches in the Code of Ethics. As there have not been any cases so far, the review panel cannot confirm that the principles of the Code of Ethics are applied.

The review panel can confirm that all internal regulations, procedures and important decisions of the governing bodies of the AE are publicly available on academy's webpage. Also, the relevant information about the academic staff, research and academic activities, programs it offers, number of students enrolled, expected learning outcomes of its programs, qualifications they give, teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, passing rates and learning opportunities for students, employment graduation information and scholarship opportunities are presented there. The review panel could not find self-evaluation reports or information on tuition fees. On the English webpage, the regulations are in Albanian, though, and the panel recommends to replace them with the English versions.

ET recommendations:

- 1. AE should add clear principles, measures and procedures of the academic integrity for students (cheating, plagiarising, etc) to the Code of Ethics or study regulations.*
- 2. AE is recommended to organise seminars/information days about academic integrity, the bureaucratic text of the Code of Ethics might not be enough for raising people's awareness about it.*
- 3. AE should start systematically using plagiarism detection software for the written course works and/or final theses of students.*
- 4. Results and reports of previous accreditations as well as information about tuition fees should be made public. AE is also recommended to update the English webpage and replace the current versions of the regulations in Albanian with the existing English ones.*

2.5. Quality management



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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 available on the web site as well.

The QA Regulation, its mechanisms and processes have been drafted with the support of the EU project (QA@PHHEP), which has supported the establishment and development of quality assurance structures within IAL in Kosovo.

Quality Assurance at the AE is the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Office (QA Office), which reports to the Quality Assurance Council (hereinafter: QA Council) and operates under the Quality Assurance Regulation. (SER p.28, QA Regulation).

The AE controls and develops its own QA system of teaching and creative and artistic activities. The Quality Assurance Regulation is based on the AE Statute. This regulation contains QA's rules and procedures, instruments and executive mechanisms as well as QA's organizational structure. (SER p.31)

There is only one staff member serving at the QA office. The QA Council is more active and responsible. However, the accuracy and speed of data collection and analysis might be a drawback for AE.

The results of the report are reviewed by the Quality Assurance Committee. It serve as the basis for further plans for improving and ensuring quality in the AE.

The Quality Assurance Office implements the recommendations and carries out the tasks undertaken by the Quality Assurance Committee.(SER p.33)

Quality assurance functions throughout the institution are not integrated in a defined cycle of planning, implementation, assessment and review: the interviewees the ET has met had difficulties indicating examples of changes operated based on the data collected (quality assurance data used to guide enhancement and as a base for improvement).

Following the completion of each evaluation of the reports and the monitoring of the work process, a report in writing shall be produced regarding the evaluation procedure, the results and the proposed measures. The results of the report are reviewed by the Quality Assurance Committee. It will serve as the basis for further plans for improving and ensuring quality in the AE. The Quality Assurance Office implements the recommendations and carries out the tasks undertaken by the Quality Assurance Committee.

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Moreover, at the moment, the level of development of the quality culture across the institution does not support the development of the institutional operations. The very idea of quality culture is not well defined, spread or promoted across the institution. The institution should increase its efforts to promote the development of quality culture as a common understanding of quality values, for which every individual of the organisation is responsible, a set of shared ideas, beliefs and values about quality united when everyone inside the academic community is sincerely engaged and motivated.

In order to enhance both, the performance and the quality of the AE in all processes, the QA Office is led by the Quality Assurance Officer, who is supervised and supported by the Administration Director. The regular process that she conducts is fully supported by the administrative staff and heads of departments.

The Quality Assurance Office is an executive mechanism for the implementation of quality assurance measures at the AE.

The role and duties of this office are regulated by the Regulation on Quality Assurance Procedures.

The work of all academic and professional staff is subject to continuing evaluation. Certifying and evaluating of the teachers' teaching, work of associates and professional staff in the school is done on a regular bases (once a year). Internal evaluations through self-evaluation are done by:

- a) the questionnaires and self-evaluation by academic staff;
- b) the anonymous student assessment questionnaires;
- c) the analysis of parameters based on work reports and performance of tasks, with the help of which, the measures to be taken for maintaining and improving the quality are determined.
- d) communication with businesses and other relevant institutions which are provided through the Careers Guidance Office and alumni.

Data analysis and reports coming out of various procedures, such as students' assessments and academic services, monitoring of the teaching as well as training data, contribute to the successful implementation of key management performance processes. Discussions and recommendations that derived from the high-quality training opportunities organized by the QA Office in January and August were used as a basis for setting standards for academic and administrative performance, as well as for modifying and improving existing quality measurement procedure.



The QA Office produces the QA Annual Report, a document that contains information, based on which the AE plans its activities and acts towards further growth and development. (SER p. 29, QA Annual Report)

ET recommendations:

- 1. Adequate resources (human and financial) should be provided to the Quality Office to support the management of the quality assurance process*
- 2. QA functions need to be integrated with the planning and development strategies at all cycles*
- 3. QA data and analysis should be used for enhancement and improvement of the services*
- 4. Evaluations should reflect the performance in relation to continuing routine activities as well as to strategic objectives. Evaluations should also measure that the standard is met and continuing improvement in performance is in place based on the analysis.*

2.6.Learning and teaching

Teaching activity at the AE is realized by four programs organized in 3 academic departments:

- Fashion Design Program, BA and MA level, within the Department of Fashion Design;
- Communication Design Program, BA level, within the Communication Design Department;
- Interior Design Program, BA level, within the Department of Interior Design.

In the Program Approval Regulation, the AE has established rules, standard processes for drafting and approving its programs. Program design and development processes are subject to final approval by the Board of Directors following a positive evaluation by the Academic Council. Additional documents, regulating the studies, are Bachelor Studies Regulation and Regulation of Master Level Studies, as well as the Statute of the AE and Student Handbook. All documents are publicly available on AE's webpage.

The AE produces annual reports to ensure continuous monitoring. The reports include, among others, student registration information, number of students and their division by departments, gender division of students, regional division of students, academic mobility of students,



number of students who discontinue studies (dropout rate), number of graduates and their employment, recognition of prior learning and results of student satisfaction surveys. The monitoring processes are divided into, so called, small changes, which occur every year and major changes that extend over a period of 3-5 years. The small changes are, for example, updates of a course syllabus; major changes involve external actors from the industry and may result with changing the profile of the particular profile. In general, monitoring tools were sufficiently implied in the AE, although there was no evidence that differences between programs were being monitored and sought to be addressed. At the moment, the fashion design program seems more advanced compared to other programs.

According to the SER, efforts to design, develop and implement the study programs (see the processes mentioned above) refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education of the Republic of Kosovo and consequently to the European Qualifications Framework of Higher Education Area. The interviews with academic staff, students and employers confirmed that different stakeholder groups are involved in program development.

The AE has implemented the ECTS system in all study programs. The curricula describe objectives, learning outcomes, content and learning outcomes of the syllabuses, and the assessment methods. According to the study regulation, the final exam can make up to 50% of the course assessment. The review panel finds it a commendable practice that the EA uses diverse assessment methods throughout the course. The interviewed students were satisfied with the feedback they got from teachers, and confirmed that assessment criteria were clear for them. The appeals procedures were not fully clear, though. The employers and graduates told the panel that students are very well prepared for starting the work after graduation.

The teaching staff of the AE consists mainly of recognized practitioners in their field, which is appropriate taking into account the institution's focus on the applied arts. The interviewed students were satisfied with their teachers, although there was no evidence how the AE supports the development and upskilling of their academic staff.

According to the SER and interviews with students and graduates, the student-centred learning is implemented on different levels:

1. Students are involved at all levels of the AE's governing structures, where they can exercise their autonomy and critical ability in decision-making processes.



2. The AE involves students in the curriculum preparation process. Moreover, the curriculum development process pays attention to student mobility, controlling the respective programs in other higher education institutions to facilitate exchange programs.
3. Teachers use more participatory methods such as seminars and workshops, presentations, laboratory exercises and experiments, simulations, visits to companies, internships etc, are widely implemented and appreciated by the students.

During the pandemic in 2020/2021, the studies were conducted mainly online. The platforms used for online teaching/learning were: Google Meet and Google Classroom. In general, the AE managed well with the challenging times, some more practical courses (e.g., sewing) needed to be postponed and completed later.

The graduation rate in 2020/2021 was slightly higher than a year before (75 vs 61), although the drop-out was also a bit bigger: 9 students in 2020/2021, compared to 3 students in 2019/2020. The review panel heard several times that one of the main reasons for drop-out is emigration.

The AE asks feedback from students twice a year – after every course – and uses it in the monitoring process (see above). The interviewed graduates and employers ensured that they had very frequent contacts with the AE, although they have not been asked for any formal feedback. Industry representatives have been invited to some roundtables related to curriculum development.

The panel was informed that due to several restrictions, there are very limited options for staff and students to participate in exchange programs and other events abroad. On the other hand, according to the SER, not all students speak English or any other foreign language which also limits the international contacts to a great extent.

ET recommendations:

1. *AE is recommended to monitor differences (teaching and assessment methods, qualification of staff etc) in the programs and address them accordingly.*
2. *Students should be better informed about the appeals procedures.*



3. *AE should make every effort to support the professional development of its academic staff (e.g., teaching and assessment methods etc).*
4. *The graduates and employers should be contacted/surveyed systematically and the results of their feedback implemented into quality assurance activities.*

2.7. Research

As mentioned earlier in this report, the AE is a higher education institution of applied arts and therefore no fundamental research is applicable there. However, targeted and measured creative activities and publications should be a natural part of this kind of institution.

The AE has developed Research Strategic Plan 2022-2027 that has three objectives:

- Strengthen support required for students and teachers to deliver high impact outcomes;
- Advance the profile and awareness of research successes locally, nationally and internationally;
- Develop and implement processes, procedures and tools to help ensure the Academy's strategic research plan is implemented.

The supporting actions, following the objectives, are very general and no indicators/benchmarks are provided. Moreover, in the main strategy – Strategic Plan 2022-2027 - there is only one reference to the research-related activities: “*Undertake research projects proposed by, or relevant to, local and regional communities, (including those relating to regeneration, disadvantaged groups, and environmental problems) where sources of funding are available*”.

The AE has allocated 15,700 euros in 2022 for research and staff development, another 21,000 for fashion shows and exhibitions, and 23,300 for inventory and equipment. At the moment, the review panel finds that the planned allocation is sufficient for a small organization such as AE, although, when the revenue from the requested grants increases, the research revenues should increase as well. There seem to be sufficient human resources in place to both carry out and support the research/creative activities.

Research in the AE is validated through artistic projects, mainly fashion shows and related projects.



Aa great part of the teaching staff are entrepreneurs in creative industry and therefore it is difficult to differentiate between the AE and individual projects. The list of research outcomes that the AE provided the review panel, indicated, though, that not all staff members have recently been involved in any research or creative projects. In some cases, projects even from 1990-s were presented, and many outcomes cannot be named as projects or publications - either they were not related to the artistic field of the teacher, or they only involved moderation of a seminar etc.

The teachers use their practical experience in teaching. Neither the SER nor the interviews indicated that the research/creative activities are taken into account in the (self-)assessment and promotion of teachers.

The ethical principles in research are safeguarded with the Code of Ethics and respective structures (see 2.4). The review panel did not find any policies for ownership of intellectual property.

ET recommendations:

- 1. AE should develop a research strategy that is coherent with its mission and strategic plan and provides clear goals with expected outcomes and indicators.*
- 2. AE should develop policies and procedures for research/creative activities: what projects and publications are validated as research; what are the expectation to teachers in research performance; how research is taken into account in evaluation and promotion.*
- 3. Policies should be established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.*

2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development

The AE will invest continuously in enriching departments with competent and professional academic staff. However, staff related policies and procedures are not centralized in the form of an employment handbook and made available for staff during their induction period. Candidates for employment are not provided with full position descriptions and conditions of

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employment. Only once the candidate has been selected, the job description will be presented as an annex to the contract. However, there is no evidence that staff are given specific KPIs to reflect measurable expectations they have to meet.

During the employment, the Academy implements fair, impartial, equal and non-discriminatory treatment in order to prevent discrimination based on race, gender, language, family status, political opinion, ethnicity, disability, age and other legally protected status.

There are two regulations, related policies and procedures that are made available for staff during their induction period, these two regulations are:

- Staff recruitment regulation (<https://akademiaevolucion.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/RECRUITMENT-OF-ACADEMIC-STAFF-REGULATION-min.pdf>)

- Regulation on labour relationship (<https://akademiaevolucion.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/REGULATION-ON-LABOR-RELATIONSHIP-min.pdf>)

Both are available in our official website.

Generally, the staff employed in the institution hold the relevant qualifications so that they are able to effectively manage educational, research activities and administrative processes. However, there are some mismatches across the administration, where the institution should give supplementary attention, as mentioned in other sections of the present report.

The institution has not developed a staff performance review policy/procedure that reflects all instruments dedicated for the evaluation of each category of staff, the impact each instrument outcome has on the overall annual score and their impact on promotions, contract-related decisions, incremental pay, etc.

As mentioned under standard 7, the ET has observed during the site visit that there is evidence of staff being given appropriate and fair opportunities for personal and career



development. However, this is not part of a planned approach, with coherent needs identified for certain areas that are prioritised and the institution does not assess the impact of the training staff are going through.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Performance evaluation criteria and processes for performance evaluations needs to be clearly specified and research component has to be included in the criteria. These information should be communicated with all the staff in advance.*
- 2. AE should clearly state the performance results and if not satisfactory level than establish clear requirements for improvement and monitor the progress*

2.9. Student administration and support services

The AE`s students' admission requirements are clearly specified and developed in accordance with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)`s laws and are included in the Student Handbook, Regulation for Bachelor studies, the Regulation for Master studies.

Complete information about the institution, the range of the programs and courses, program requirements, services are available before application on the AE`s website. However, the scholarship opportunities, tuition and the administrative fees are not available on the AE`s website neither in the application form.

AE does not have formal students` orientation program, but during the first week, the newly enrolled students are introduced to the Student Handbook which is perceived as a manual for all they need to know about the institution.

Scholarships can be provided for special categories of students (excellent students, students in difficult financial situations, etc.), as specified in the Student Handbook. Moreover, AE is committed to seeking opportunities for the reduction of tuition fees for certain categories of students. The criteria for awarding scholarships are set by the Executive Board in cooperation with the Academic Board.

The Electronic Student Management System and the Administrative and Academic Staff (SEMSA) do provide opportunities for following the student enrolment; gradings; student payment; quality assurance and evaluation; competencies and teaching contents and the working of the library. However, from the available documents and evidences it cannot be



concluded that the collected data are used for quality assurance purposes and for supporting decision-making.

The student appeal procedure is specified in the Student Handbook, but to a limited extent, covering only the right to appeal in case of dissatisfaction from grade, without any other aspects.

The Code of Ethics regulates academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms, but is mostly covering the academic staff activities. In addition, AE does not have software for checking the originality of their staff and students' work.

Despite the fact that the QA system includes students' surveys it is not covering all students' services. The students' services are monitored by the QA office, as specified in the QA Regulation. However, AE does not have specific formal plans for the improvement of the student services, despite the fact that the management is trying to update the services regularly.

Student and Stakeholder Counselling through the Service Career & Alumni Services Office is provided for the students. Due to the positioning of the AE mostly on a national level, and their alumni, the students have many opportunities for employment. Finally, the ET would like to give acknowledgment to AE for the professional support that they are providing to their students, which was highlighted also by the students.

Recommendations:

- 1. AE should publish information for the scholarship opportunities, tuition and administrative fees should be available and easily accessible on their website and in the online application forms.*
- 2. AE should develop a formal orientation program, despite only sharing the Student Handbook.*
- 3. AE should develop specific formal plans for improvement of the student services that will be regularly followed and monitored by the QA Office.*
- 4. AE should ensure psychological counselling services are made available with easy access for students from any part of the institution.*
- 5. AE should ensure continuous informing and feedback to the students for the regulations included in the Students Handbook and the Code of Ethics should be ensured. The Academy can include the Student Council in this process.*



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2.10. Learning resources and facilities

AE operates in a regularly maintained and clear five floors building located in Prishtina, as the ET had the chance to see through the submitted video that presents the AE`s facilities. Different studios, computer lab, library, auditoriums, classrooms and teachers` offices equipped with learning resources needed for teaching and learning and computer equipment are available onsite. Despite AE`s library, access to electronic learning materials throughout several online databases and virtual international libraries is also provided. Moreover, AE is cooperating with the Contemporary Arts Library in Prishtina and other local libraries. The working hours of the library as AE share are from 08 am to 8 pm only during the working days. However, there are no evidence that the AE`s library is available for extended hours beyond normal class time. The information for the working hours of the library cannot be found on the AE`s website also.

Electronic access through the Electronic Student Management System and the Administrative and Academic Staff (SEMSA) are also available for the academic staff and students followed by software for the Academy`s accounting. During the visit, ET learned that the technical support has been provided in the last two years for staff for using the information and communication technology in different formats, which is appreciated by the academic staff.

AE supports and fosters independent learning and when student disclose a disability or learning difference AE appoints specialist to support the students. However, the facilities and learning resources are not adjusted for the needs of students and staff with disabilities or other special needs, as can be concluded by the video provided for the premises and the discussions during the site visit.

The QA Office has the task to report on the progress of administrative and academic progress of the Academy including the students` surveys for the quality and process of studying, and the monitoring of the services provided to the students and professors by the administration. However, the surveys for students and professors should specifically request feedback about the facilities.

The Academy does not have dormitories, recreational spaces, and a cafeteria.



Finally, the online site visit the participants with whom the ET met assessed the facilities and resources as satisfactory, but also as something that must be enlarged and as something on which more emphasis should be given if the Academy wants to enrol more students in the future.

Recommendations:

- 1. AE`s library should be available for extended hours beyond normal class time and when needed.*
- 2. AE should take into consideration and plan adjustments to the facilities for the needs of students and staff with disabilities or other special needs.*
- 3. The evaluation surveys for students and professors should specifically request feedback about the facilities and the technical equipment.*

2.11. Institutional cooperation

Positioning AE as a partner and professional higher education institution on a national and international level seems to be important for AE, as can be included by the SER and the information obtained during the site visit.

Institutional Cooperation Policy is the AE`s document that regulates the institutional and international cooperation between AE and local and foreign universities, colleagues and other educational institutions and governmental agencies has been adopted. The Policy appoints the Executive Director as an official signatory to all Memorandums of Understanding, Cooperation and Supplemental Agreements that are used as forms for framing the cooperation. Moreover, the SER shares that the Executive Director indeed is leading the institutional cooperation. On the other side, despite the specification in the SER that AE supports institutional cooperation even through financing several projects, the Institutional Cooperation Policy does not contain a resource allocation section which the ET highly recommends.

During the site visit, it was clear that AE is putting cooperation high in their priorities. In that regard, AE is working towards the creation of partnerships and building a portfolio for institutional cooperation with both educational national and international institutions and industry.

AE organizes short one-month courses for different target groups from the Department of Fashion Design at the Academy from 2010 until 2020 (due to the pandemic) which proves to



be effective and very popular. Several other events and workshops are organized regularly followed by public presentations of students` work can be seen on the Academy`s website.

AE is promoting and encouraging international exchanges and involvement in social activities among its staff and students, but not financially. As reported in their SER, AE does not have funds for financial support of students and staff to participate in exchange events and programs. Cooperation agreements with institutions from Italy, Romania, France, Thailand and others. However, the numbers of staff and students who are part of exchange programs are still low, mostly due to financial issues and visa regulations.

According to the document Evaluation of Academic Staff Regulation, the engagement and contribution to the community through involvement in the different projects is evaluated in the process of evaluation of the academic staff (Article 16). The same is confirmed in the SER, specifying that the contribution to international cooperation is part of the indicators for the assessment of the academic staff. Despite the fact that AE is supporting and encouraging international cooperation, there is no specific evidence that assistance is provided for teaching staff to develop collaborative agreements and projects with the international community.

Industrial Board is established as a body expected to assist and advise AE in its efforts to provide study programmes close to the industry`s needs. It is a practice to invite members from the Industrial Board in research projects and for lecturing, as the ET learned during the site visit by the employers of graduates and external stakeholders.

AE is extremely proud of its alumni as the ET learned during the site visit. On AE`s website, there are information about the yearly meeting between the Academy`s staff and the alumni, which is also highlighted in the SER. Moreover, on the website, there is a specific tab for the Alumni covering information for them and for their work.

Recommendations:

1.AE should consider appointing additional member from the management to be responsible for institutional cooperation and internationalization. Moreover, AE should set specific and measurable goals and plan reallocation of resources for such activities that should be included in the already existing documents.

2.AE should provide specific financial and technical assistance for teaching staff to develop collaborative arrangements with the international community. In addition to this, AE should



from a fund for international exchanges for funds that will support the academic staff and students to participate in international exchanges, programmes, conferences and others.
3.AE can establish an Alumni club where the Alumni members will be included, that will serve as consultation body, but also as drivers for new developments.

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND JUDGEMENTS OF THE ET

Overall compliance:

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

According to the KAA Accreditation manual, in order to be granted a positive decision for institutional re/accreditation, every education provider has to demonstrate at least a **substantial compliance** level in the overall judgment. Therefore, failure in meeting at least an overall substantial compliance level entails delaying, withdrawing, suspending or denying accreditation.



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In conclusion, in line with the Manual requirements and based on average **Substantially compliant**, the Expert Team recommends the institution to be accredited for **3 years**.

Expert Team

Chair

	PROF.DR OLGUN CICEK	14 FEB.2022
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	PhD. MAIKI UDAM	14 FEB.2022
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	Ms. MARIJA VASILEVSKA	14 FEB.2022
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)
