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Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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## **AAB College**

LLM in Administrative and Constitutional Law, 60 ECTS  
(re-accreditation)

## **REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**



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*13 May, 2022*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit: 11.05.2022**

#### **Expert Team (ET) members:**

- Professor Stephen Shute, University of Sussex, Brighton, England
- Student Expert: Stefan Marius Deaconu

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

- Leona Kovaçi
- Arianit Krasniqi
- Ilirjane Ademaj Ahmeti

#### **Sources of information for the Report:**

- Self-Evaluation Report
- Staff CVs
- Syllabus
- Interviews During the Site Visit
- University Web-pages
- KAA Accreditation Manual

#### **Additional requested documents:**

- Accreditation Assessment Reports from Previous Evaluation

#### **Criteria used for institutional and programme evaluations**

- Mission, objectives and administration
- Quality management
- Academic staff
- Educational process
- Students
- Research



- Infrastructure and resources

## 1.2. Site visit schedule

The Expert Team had a series of online meetings with staff, students, and employers at the University AAB College on Wednesday 11 May 2022. The meeting with senior members of the Faculty included the Vice-Rector for Teaching and the Dean of the Faculty of Law. The schedule of the meetings was as follows:

### Site Visit Programme

| Time          | Meeting   | Participants  |
|---------------|---|---|
| 11:40 – 12:40 | Meeting with the head of the study programme:   |   |
| 12:45 – 13:30 | Meeting with teaching staff   |   |
| 13:30 – 14:15 | Lunch break   |   |
| 14:15 – 15:05 | Meeting with students   |   |
| 15:10 – 16:00 | Meeting with graduates  |   |
| 16:05 – 16:45 | Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders   |   |
| 16:45 – 17:30 | Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated; Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff | Vice-Rector for Teaching<br>Dean of the Faculty of Law<br>Quality assurance staff |



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

Established in 2002, AAB College is the largest non-public institution of higher education in the Republic of Kosovo. The College began by offering a Study Programme in Journalism and Mass Communication. It then established a second Study Programme in Forensic Sciences in cooperation with the Public University of Sarajevo. After that, it continued to expand. It now has a total of 14 Faculties with Study Programmes at both BA and MA level. It offers teaching at its main campus in Prishtina, and at two branches, in Gjakova and Ferizaj. The Self-Evaluation Report states that more than 97% of its academic staff are employed full-time and their qualifications align with the requirements of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency.

The Faculty of Law, which was established in 2005, is the largest of the 14 Faculties in AAB College. It has three departments: the Constitutional/Administrative Law Department; the Criminal Law Department; and the Civil Law Department. Since it was created, the Faculty of Law has increased the number of fields of study it offers and the number of academic staff it employs. Its mission is to prepare qualified lawyers with the knowledge and skills they need to enter the labour market so that they can contribute to the shaping of legal policies and the functioning of the legal system in the Republic of Kosovo and beyond.

The Faculty of Law has 39 professors, of which 23 are full-time and 16 are part-time, with 31 of the 39 holding a Doctoral degree and the other eight possessing a Masters degree. More than half of the subjects within the curricula of the Study Programme are covered by full-time professors. Recruitment procedures for academic staff and academic advancement processes in the Faculty of Law conform to the institutional policies and regulations of AAB College, which are available on the College's website. They also comply with the laws of the Republic of Kosovo.

The Faculty of Law offers Study Programmes at Bachelor (LLB) and Masters (LLM) level. It has three Study Programmes at Masters Level: in Administrative and Constitutional Law; in Civil Law; and in Criminal Law. Each of these Masters Study Programmes has 60 ECTS credits across one academic year. The BA Study Programme and the LLM Study Programme in Criminal Law were reaccredited in 2020 for a period of five years, from 2020 to 2025. The LLM Study Programmes in Civil Law and in Administrative and Constitutional Law are undergoing their reaccreditation procedures for the first time this year (2022), after their initial accreditations in 2019.

The Faculty of Law has developed the following strategic objectives: (i) To provide students with contemporary teaching for advanced and specific theoretical knowledge related to the field of law and its sub-fields; (ii) To provide qualified and specialized staff in the field of law and its sub-fields; (iii) To increase scientific knowledge in the field of law through publications, conferences and scientific projects; (iv) To offer students the best study conditions in order for them to be prepared for careers in the local, regional and international labour market; (v) To create opportunities and encourage students to actively attend scientific discussions and conferences in the field of law and interdisciplinary fields; (vi) To enable the participation of students in international activities and

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projects related to law and to promote mobility; and (vii) To engage students in local and community projects for the application of academic knowledge and practical skills as a contribution to society.

AAB College has recently decentralised its administrative structure to give Faculties greater autonomy and the Deans' Offices now carry responsibilities which were formerly managed at the level of the Rectorate. The devolved functions include (but are not limited to): (i) staff recruitment; (ii) staff advancement; and (iii) the management of physical resources. Budgetary responsibilities, however, remain with the Rector's office and are not devolved to Faculties.

The Self-Evaluation Report prepared by AAB College explains that the transfer procedures for students, the supervision of practical work, the management of quality, and the supervision of the teaching processes and student activities are managed at the level of the Faculty. The duties and responsibilities of Faculty management are set out in the Statutes and Regulations of AAB College which are available on AAB College's website. The Faculty of Law has a Teaching Council, a Master Study Council, a Dean, and a Quality Assurance Coordinator. The Teaching Council is the highest academic entity. It includes members of the academic staff and representatives from the administration and study body, as follows: Dean; Vice-Dean; full-time academic staff; two student representatives; and one representative from the administration. Its role is to provide advice and proposals to Senate on the academic issues. The Master Study Council approves Masters' dissertation topics and oversees the evaluation and approval of project proposals and dissertation evaluations and defences.

The Self-Evaluation Report states that the Faculty of Law has made significant progress in the area of research and notes that one of the strategic objectives of AAB College is 'the improvement of the quality of scientific research and other research-related activities'. AAB College's *Development Plan* has the strategic aim of supporting the development and the research of staff and students in the College with the aim of increasing the relevance of students' studies and improving the working conditions of the College's academic staff. The College wishes to establish 'a culture of excellence, innovation and use of new technologies in order to develop the quality of educational and research services'.

## 2. PROGRAMME EVALUATION

### 2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

The LLM in Administrative and Constitutional Law consists of a total of 60 ECTS credits. Its aim is to ensure that every student has an education which allows them to attain their career goals. More specifically, the Mission Statement of the Faculty of Law for the LLM states that it seeks to 'prepare qualified lawyers through contemporary studies and scientific research who contribute to the shaping of legal policies and the functioning of the legal system in the Republic of Kosovo and beyond'. Kosovo



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clearly requires legal experts with capabilities of this kind. Without these lawyers, it will be hard for Kosovo to continue to develop as a country.

The LLM in Administrative and Constitutional Law is designed to equip students with knowledge of the latest developments in the field. Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their competences, knowledge, and research skills through seminars, research projects, and practical work, as well by drafting their Master theses. The aim is to prepare the students to contribute constructively to legal issues in the exercise of their professional activities in society.

The mission of the LLM in Administrative and Constitutional Law is 'to encourage innovations within the Study Programme as well as to support scientific research, in order to enable students to develop and advance the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to become specialised lawyers in the field'. This Study Programme also aims 'to enable students to correctly interpret the Constitution and other legal acts and apply the constitutional provisions and laws during the exercise of public functions, administrative activity, or the leadership of constitutional justice institutions as well as in other public bodies in the administrative field'.

The Self-Evaluation Report explains that the goals of the Study Programme for the Masters in Administrative and Constitutional Law are fully in line with the overall Mission Statement of the Faculty of Law and the *Mission Statement* and *Strategy* of AAB College. **Standard 1.1** is thus **met**.

The first accreditation of this Study Programme was in 2019. Since then, it has undergone an ongoing process of evaluation and review. Like the LLM in Civil Law, its development is considered at Teaching Council meetings at the end of each semester, with 'recommendations for possible changes or additions' made, including issues such as updating the syllabuses, lecture topics, and teaching methods. A long discussion and review which was held at a meeting in June 2021 and two Working Groups were established to review and update the two Master Programmes which were in the process of re-accreditation, namely the Administrative and Constitutional Law Study Programme and the Civil Law Study Programme. The aim of the Working Groups was to ensure that the Study Programmes continued to offer contemporary courses which are: (i) in line with the current level of development of Constitutional, Administrative, and Civil law but also have comparability with the same or similar Study Programmes offered in prestigious European universities; (ii) in harmony with the Kosovo political, social and cultural context; and (iii) provide useful professional modules for the labour market and the Kosovo context.

In carrying out their reviews, the Working Groups consulted with a wide range of stakeholders. They also considered Masters Programmes offered by national, regional and European universities, such as the University of Prishtina, the University of Zagreb, and the South Eastern European University, and the Programmes offered in other EU counties, such as Austria, Germany, and France.

Following the review by the Working Group for the Administrative and Constitutional LLM Study Programme, Comparative Administrative Law was introduced as mandatory subject with five ECTS;

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Administrative Contract was introduced as elective subject with four ECTS; and Introduction to the Anti-Discrimination Law was introduced as elective subject with four ECTS.

The learning outcomes of the Study Programme meet the skills and competencies of the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. Reports on the performance of the Study Programme are reviewed annually and then considered by the Law Faculty's Council which directs what actions, if any, must be taken by the Head of the Study Programme. **Standard 1.2** is thus **met**. The Expert Team commends the Faculty on these developments which will help ensure the continuing relevance of the Study Programme.

**Standard 1.3** is also **met**. The curriculum is closely linked to practice and is appropriately constructed. As the Self-Evaluation Report explains, there are activities which enable students to apply in practice the theoretical knowledge they have gained during their studies. The Study Programme is strengthened by the requirement to write research papers and the requirement to produce a piece of in-depth research for Thesis.

**Standard 1.4** is **met**. The Study Programme conforms to the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo and to the University's own academic policies, guidelines, and regulations. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations which deal with recurring procedural or academic issues and these are made publicly available to staff and students on electronic platforms such as E-SERVICE. The *Regulation on Master Studies* for AAB college has been recently revised (2021) and is a public document.

**Standard. 1.5** is **met**. The Self-Evaluation Report explains that the University has a clear legal framework in the form of its *Ethics Code* and its *Code of Ethics in Scientific Research*. These *Codes* govern ethical behaviour in teaching, assessment, and research. They were revised in 2021 and stipulate that academic staff in the Faculty of Law must behave 'in accordance with contemporary standards of higher education', must act 'honestly' and in accordance with the value of 'truth', must 'act in accordance with academic freedom by respecting the diversity of opinions, ideas and methods', and must 'stimulate the development of critical, free and creative thinking'. The evidence available to the Expert Team suggests that staff and students comply with these internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, and assessment in all academic and administrative activities.

The Study Programme is monitored on a regular basis. In 2021, AAB College went through 'a process of evaluating and reviewing' its Statutes and other Regulations in order to 'update and supplement them according to the needs and requirements of the entire academic community'. The Expert Team was satisfied, from what it saw, that all policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the Study Programme are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances. **Standard 1.6** is thus **met**.



The English language proficiency of Masters students is an issue. The Expert Team therefore recommends that this be addressed by the Faculty of Law and that there be a demonstrable improvement achieved by the time of the next accreditation.

| Standard  | Compliance |    |
|---|------------|----|
|   | Yes        | No |
| <i>Standard 1.1.</i> The Study Programme mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.  | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 1.2.</i> Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area    | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 1.3.</i> The Study Programme has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.  | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 1.4.</i> There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.   | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 1.5.</i> All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.   | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 1.6.</i> All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the programme are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances. | X          |    |

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant.

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. It is recommended that the University addresses weakness in the English language proficiency of Masters students. This must be resolved by the Faculty of Law with a demonstrable improvement by the time of the next accreditation.*



## 2.2 Quality Management

AAB College states, in its Self-Evaluation Report, that quality assurance is extremely important to it. The College has developed internal regulations which define the quality assurance procedures for all Study Programmes within the College. Within the Faculty of Law, an overarching framework for the Quality Assurance processes has been established and this is in line with the general procedures of the College as determined by the *Regulation on Quality Assurance, Quality Assurance Guideline, and Strategic Development Plan of AAB College*. Together, these documents define the criteria for the evaluation and review of Study Programmes.

There is a central Quality Assurance Office in the College and there are Quality Assurance Coordinators in each Faculty. The main structure for Quality Assurance is the Office, which is independent and carries out its own internal evaluations to ensure teaching and learning in Study Programmes is at the right level and that there is a process of continuous improvement. At the Faculty level, there is a Quality Assurance Coordinator who actively cooperates with the central Quality Assurance Office. The roles and responsibilities of each part of this matrix are well defined, coherent, and public, as are the composition of the structures (see <https://aab-edu.net/en/about-aab/the-central-quality-assurance-office/>). However, whereas at institutional level students' formal involvement is defined, at the level of the Study Programme things are less consolidated. This translates in little participation apart from answering questionnaires.

The Self-Evaluation Report notes that: 'Over the past few years, AAB has made efforts to establish a coherent line of cooperation between the Rectorate, the Dean's Offices, the academic staff, the students, the administration and other external parties relevant to the College'. The Self-Evaluation Report also notes that the management of AAB College has taken care to ensure that quality assurance is 'not [just] a formal process which begins and ends with the accreditation process carried out by KAA, but is rather as an ongoing process which is part of the daily planning and management of the College'. The Expert Team commends the College for this approach.

The Faculty ensures that all law staff participate in their own evaluation and quality improvement processes. It holds regular meetings with academic staff where syllabuses, learning outcomes, assessment forms, assessment results, and overall student performance are discussed. Academic staff are also involved in the self-assessment processes run through questionnaires issued by the Quality Assurance Office. These questionnaires report on how far academic staff have met their goals for the previous semester in relation to teaching; how much research they have done; and how satisfied they are with the opportunities provided by the College for their overall professional development.

The Expert Team was satisfied that all staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity. **Standard 2.1** is thus **met**.

**Standards 2.2, 2.4, and 2.5** are also **met**. The evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into the normal planning processes. The Expert Team was satisfied that quality evaluations



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provide an overview of quality issues for the Study Programme as well as of different components within it and that the evaluations consider inputs, processes, and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students. The academic staff confirmed that the support they get from the Quality Assurance team is oriented on their professional development. The Expert Team was satisfied that the Quality Assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.

In addition, **Standards 2.7 and 2.9 are met.** The results of the internal Quality Assurance system are taken into consideration for further development of the Study Programme and this includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success, and employment of graduates. The Quality Assurance arrangements for the Study Programme are also regularly evaluated and improved. The Expert Team note that, since the LLM is a one-year Study Programme, it is vital to intervene as quickly as possible to adapt it where necessary to student requirements and changing labour market conditions.

However, even though there are written procedures regarding the development of Quality Assurance strategies, the Expert Team concluded that the overall design could be improved. In this matter, the relationship between the Council and the Quality Assurance Office could be redefined. So far, at Faculty level, Quality Assurance analysis is undertaken primarily by the Quality Assurance Office, with the stakeholders as an input/focus group. Faculty Management should also consider whether, with so many questionnaires, both students and graduates are experiencing 'survey fatigue'. At various points during the meetings with the College's representatives, and in Self-Evaluation Report, the Expert Team got a sense that some parts of Quality Assurance process were applied by rote. Shifting to a more proa-active co-creation paradigm, with a decisive role of both interpreting results and determining actions by the Council, could improve efficiency, legitimacy, and involvement of stakeholders. The Expert Team was therefore not satisfied that Quality Assurance processes deal with all aspects of Study Programme planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution. There is also a lack of transparency in terms of how responsibilities are divided between the Central Administration of the College and the Faculty. **Standard 2.3 was thus not met.**

**Standard 2.8 is met** and **Standard 2.6 is partially met.** Questionnaires as tool of assessing quality are regularly and generally used. They measure different relevant issues. For example, an assessment may include measuring student satisfaction with the College in general, including counselling, courses offered, quality of teaching, and workload. However, these questionnaires may not be fit for purpose in all the cases. The Expert Team encourages the College and the Faculty to develop further tools (active ad hoc focus groups, debates, benchmarking) to measure student satisfaction within the Quality Assurance system, together with a scoreboard of indicators across measures. The results, presented in the scoreboard, should then be made public, in order.

The results of Quality Assurance processes are discussed with the management of the Faculty and a chart of consequences for different kind of results in the assessment, and the actions which should be

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taken by the Faculty management, should be approved. For example, discussions may be organised with any member of the academic staff who receives scores below a threshold. However, these appear to be on an ad-hoc basis and are not arranged in any systematic way. Furthermore, the results are not published on the College’s website. They should be made public regularly and should be discussed with students as well, since according to the information obtained during the online site visit, students would not appear to have access to the results of the Quality Assurance activity. Thus, together with presenting the measures taken, the Faculty of Law should enhance the participation of students in the process.

In contrast, the participation of alumni in the Quality Assurance process has increased since the last accreditation. According to the discussions the Expert Team had, graduates are periodically involved in different activities within the Faculty of Law, including being consulted through questionnaires in internal evaluations. The Expert Team would highlight here a previous recommendation of expanding the involvement of stakeholders from questionnaires to other tools.

Also, it is important to formalize the personal relationships between representatives from the Faculty of Law and different stakeholders, even though they are graduates from the same Study Programme or the same faculty.

In terms of Quality Assurance planning, the central Quality Assurance Office and the Quality Coordinators at the Faculty level work on the basis of semester work plans. The semester work plan is correlated with the Annual Evaluation Plan. There have been improvements shown as a result of evaluation processes, leading to corresponding adjustments to the Study Programme. Some examples offered are: providing additional hours of lectures and exercises; reducing or increasing the number of students in groups; offering foreign language courses; and reviewing and adapting syllabuses.

Substantial evaluative work is mentioned, especially when drafting the Self-Evaluation Report for accreditation. However, based on the accreditation system in Kosovo, this is a rather long timeframe. Therefore, the Expert Team suggests a thorough and broad evaluation process every two years. Finally, we appreciate that it was confirmed that the transition from on-site classes to online education required adaptations in the Quality Assurance process as well.

| Standard   | Compliance |    |
|--|------------|----|
|  | Yes        | No |
| <i>Standard 2.1.</i> All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity. | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 2.2.</i> Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.                              | X          |    |



|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <i>Standard 2.3.</i> Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of Programme planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.  |   | X |
| <i>Standard 2.4.</i> Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall Programme as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes, and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students. | X |   |
| <i>Standard 2.5.</i> Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.  | X |   |
| <i>Standard 2.6.</i> Survey data is being collected from students, graduates, and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.   |   | X |
| <i>Standard 2.7.</i> Results of the internal quality assurance system have been taken into consideration for further development of the Study Programme. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.    | X |   |
| <i>Standard 2.8.</i> The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the Programme are prepared periodically (e.g., every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses   | X |   |
| <i>Standard 2.9.</i> The quality assurance arrangements for the Programme are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.   | X |   |

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant.

**Expert Team recommendations:**

- 1. It is recommended that the relationship between the Council and the Quality Assurance Office should be redefined, shifting to a co-creation paradigm, with a decisive role for both interpreting results and determining actions to be the responsibility of the Council. This should improve efficiency, legitimacy, and involvement of stakeholders.*
- 2. It is recommended that the Faculty of Law should shift towards both informal and formal cooperation with different stakeholders, and the formalities should be signed with the representatives.*
- 3. It is recommended that the Faculty of Law and the College further develop the assessment tools (active ad hoc focus groups, debates, benchmarking, etc) within the Quality Assurance system and develop a scoreboard of the indicators to be monitored and by which tool. The result in the scoreboard should be made public without any other hesitance.*
- 4. It is recommended that accountability is enhanced by making public the assessment of*

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*students, graduates, employers at Study Programme level, as well as the reports and action plans of the Faculty of Law.*

5. *It is recommended that a chart of consequences for different kind of results in the assessment be developed and that the actions which should be taken by the Faculty of Law management should be approved.*
6. *It is recommended that the involvement of students and other stakeholders in the Quality Assurance processes be enhanced. Compared to the institutional level, at the level of the Study Programme involvement is rather tokenistic, mainly as an input group than full members taking ownership of the process.*
7. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law conduct a substantial internal review (similar to that in the Self-Evaluation Report) on a two-year basis.*

### 2.3 Academic Staff

**Standards 3.1 and 3.2 are met.** According to the Self-Evaluation Report, the Faculty of Law has 39 members of academic staff, of which 23 are full-time and 16 are part-time. The average number of students per full Professor is 35 students. The weekly teaching load for each member of academic staff is eight hours. Candidates for academic positions are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. These descriptions are governed by the *Regulation on Systematization of Jobs* of AAB College. The processes for the selection and appointment of academic staff have been developed according to the Kosovo Law on Higher Education as well as the University's rules and procedures governing academic titles.

**Standards 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 are also met.** It was confirmed that, of the regular members of the academic staff, none is engaged for more than four hours in teaching for other institutions. It was also explained that 70% of the subjects within the curriculum of the Study Programme are covered by the 'regular academic staff'. This accords with the requirement set out in **Standard 3.4** that 'at least 50% of the academic staff in the Study Programme are full-time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the Study Programme'.

Under the regulations of AAB College, students cannot be taught in a group which is larger than 70 students. For the LLM in Administrative and Constitutional Law, the Faculty has employed one full-time professors with a degree of Doctor of Science in the field. There are opportunities for the professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any staff who are facing difficulties. The advancement of the staff is supported through training, workshops, and lectures related to teaching and research. During conversations with management, the Expert Team were told of the establishment in October 2021 of a new Centre for Professional Development at AAB College. This is to be based on three pillars: Teaching; Research; and Administration and Management. There are to be three levels: Beginner; intermediate; and Advanced. This is a very welcome development and the Expert Team commends AAB College for its introduction.



**Standards 3.7 and 3.8 are met.** Professors organize consultations sessions with students for two hours per week, one hour of which can be through an online blog using the E-SERVICE platform. Academic staff are also responsible for the planning, preparation, and completion of student projects and for organising visits by students to relevant external institutions, as well as other extracurricular activities. The College has an internal quality assurance system, according to which, after the end of each semester, academic staff are subject to evaluation by students. As the Self-Evaluation Report explains, this assessment is completed electronically and is anonymous. The results are collated, through a database, by the Central Quality Assurance Office and submitted individually to each staff member. Additional training is provided for academic staff who receive poor evaluations from students or management.

**Standard 3.9 is met.** The strategies for quality enhancement include improving teaching and improving the quality of learning materials. **Standard 3.10 is also met.** The retirement of Professors at 65 is in line with Kosovo practice and the structure of the State Funded Pension scheme. Each member of academic staff who reaches the retirement age of 65 changes their status from full-time Professor to part-time Professor. However, there is a question whether it is wise, in a country where there appears to be a substantial shortage of high-quality academic staff with genuinely international research profiles, to force the retirement of all academic staff at 65. Many countries have now concluded that that is not only wasteful of talent but also age discriminatory.

The analysis in the Self-Evaluation Report correctly identifies the need for more visiting academic staff from outside Kosovo. The Expert Team recommends that this weakness is addressed before the next accreditation.

| Standard  | Compliance |    |
|---|------------|----|
|   | Yes        | No |
| <i>Standard 3.1.</i> Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the Study Programme under evaluation. | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 3.2.</i> The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.  | X          |    |



|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <i>Standard 3.3.</i> Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.   | X |  |
| <i>Standard 3.4.</i> At least 50% of the academic staff in the Study Programme are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the Study Programme.  | X |  |
| <i>Standard 3.5.</i> For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the Study Programme, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions. | X |  |
| <i>Standard 3.6.</i> Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.   | X |  |
| <i>Standard 3.7.</i> The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.   | X |  |
| <i>Standard 3.8.</i> Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.                               | X |  |
| <i>Standard 3.9.</i> Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.   | X |  |
| <i>Standard 3.10.</i> Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.  | X |  |

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant.

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. It is recommended that the College and the Faculty and the State of Kosovo consider whether a more flexible approach might be adopted to the compulsory retirement of all full Professors at 65.*
- 2. It is recommended that the Faculty of Law seeks enhances the number of visiting academic staff from outside Kosovo who come to the Faculty and that this weakness be addressed before the next accreditation.*



## 2.4 Educational Process Content

**Standard 4.1 is met** as the Study Programme is modelled on qualification objectives, including acquiring disciplinary, methodological, and generic skills. As indicated above, a one-year Study Programme makes it difficult to integrate multiple perspectives, including artistic competencies. Still, there is a strong ethos among both teachers and students concerning the importance of the LLM in Administrative and Constitutional Law for the judicial system of Kosovo, which also serves civil society (as several graduates that work in this field confirmed us).

**Standard 4.2 is met.** The Study Programme complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. It is based on the approach adopted by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The learning outcomes are set according to Level 7 of the NQF, providing practical and theoretical knowledge and developing student skills for: (i) independent research work within the field of study; (ii) the collection and interpretation of relevant data; and (iii) the application of problem-solving within the field.

**Standard 4.3 is met.** The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical order and meet the definition of the general and specific competencies and are compatible with Study Programmes and curricula delivered within the EHEA. The Faculty of Law uses Bloom's revised taxonomy when deliberating on learning outcomes. Students are assessed effectively on what they have learned. Nevertheless, the Faculty should try to improve the delivery of further soft skills, not only critical thinking (rather through environment than some parts of a discipline, which could suit well the majority of the learners).

For instance, even though the Study Programme is for only one year, students could acquire digital skills.

**Standard 4.4 is met.** As indicated in the Self-Evaluation Report and in the meetings with the staff, alumni, and students, AAB College embraces a student-centred learning philosophy. The curriculum has analytical syllabuses that comprise essential aspects such as the learning outcomes, distribution of the classes and seminars, students' assessment system, and the minimal bibliography. Students' knowledge, skills, and competencies, acquired throughout the LLM Study Programme in Administrative and Constitutional Law, are well explained in the Self-Evaluation Report. The curriculum has appropriate analytical syllabuses which comply with the National Qualifications Framework.

**Standard 4.5 is met.** The Study Programme is offered in Albanian. Students are not mandated to take an entrance exam in English. Nevertheless, as the SWOT analysis for students mentioned, sometimes students lack a sufficient English language level. It is essential that the Faculty of Law works to increase its efforts in this area by offering on-demand English courses and increasing the percentage of the



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bibliography that is in English where possible. Also, some English lessons focused on legal vocabulary in the field of Administrative and Constitutional Law should be introduced.

**Standard 4.6 is met.** Students often stressed that they have a close relationship with their lecturers where each part assumes the responsibility for the learning outcomes. As mentioned before, AAB College has a student-centred learning philosophy. This was mentioned several times in the Self-Evaluation Report. Students are instructed on the learning outcomes of each course from the beginning of the semester. Syllabuses are disseminated to the students through the E-service platform even a week before the semester's opening. That allows them to get familiarised and to understand faster what the course entails. There is also a system of weekly appointments and discussions between students and their professors which allows discussions when needed. Also, the E-Student platform permits more rapid and precise contact between professors and students.

**Standard 4.7 is met.** As stated in the Self Evaluation Report, teaching in the Faculty of Law is usually practised with groups of students. The Self-Evaluation Report also underlines the fact in an Masters Study Programme more independent work from students is required and also that students are required to conduct more research than at BA level. Students are accustomed to the teaching strategies used and their connection with the learning outcomes. In the online meetings, students underlined the fact that there is a large degree of flexibility towards their needs.

**Standard 4.8 is met.** As stated in the Self Evaluation Report, AAB College has an institutional approach to embrace a variety of evaluation methods. Therefore, assessments are designed to help students make the connection between the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired throughout the Study Programme. There are several forms of assessment. These include exams, research projects, work assignments and presentations. We found, both from the Self-Evaluation Report and from the meetings with students that the latter receive constant feedback from the lecturers. Students highlighted that their professors are open to communication through different means from the beginning of each course.

**Standards 4.9 and 4.10 are met.** Students receive success reports for each subject in a summary form after each examination period. For this reason, the Expert Team concluded that there is a reliable mechanism to verify the standards of student achievement. Also, these reports are sent to the Office of the Vice-Rector for Teaching, which conducts analysis and evaluates each case in cooperation with the Dean of the Faculty. If needed, there are precise interventions for each student. A benchmarking process was developed to compare learning outcomes with the Faculty of Law from at least the University of Pristina and the University of Zagreb. The Self-Evaluation Report provides sufficient assurance to the Expert Team that the Faculty of Law can take adequate measures for students that encounter problems during the assessment.

**Standards 4.11 and 4.12 are met.** As this is a Study Programme across one year, there is no designated practice period in the study plan. Nevertheless, students are entitled to have visits to the courts and the administrations of public and private institutions at different levels. These have a clearly stated objective to enhance students' research skills in the field of Administrative and Constitutional Law.

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Also, they can use the theoretical knowledge that they acquire in the Study Programme. The Faculty of Law partners which the Expert Team met online during the site visit represented some of the most respected and important stakeholders in Kosovo's Administrative and Constitutional field. Along with this, AAB has several partnerships with institutions such as the Kosovo Municipal Association, Kosovo Judiciary Committee, Kosovo Prosecution Committee, Kosovo Correctional Service, Kosovo Chamber of Lawyers, Kosovo Ombudsperson, Kosovo Forensic Institute, and Kosovo Chamber of Mediators.

| Standard  | Compliance |    |
|---|------------|----|
|   | YES        | NO |
| <i>Standard 4.1.</i> The Study Programme is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.   | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 4.2.</i> The Study Programme complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.   | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 4.3.</i> The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.   | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 4.4.</i> The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation. | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 4.5.</i> If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.  | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 4.6.</i> The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning   | X          |    |



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| outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.   |   |  |
| <i>Standard 4.7.</i> Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes Programmes are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in Programme and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.  | X |  |
| <i>Standard 4.8.</i> Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.  | X |  |
| <i>Standard 4.9.</i> Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison, with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.   | X |  |
| <i>Standard 4.10.</i> Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.  | X |  |
| <i>Standard 4.11.</i> If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organizations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program. | X |  |
| <i>Standard 4.12.</i> In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organizations/practical training units.  | X |  |

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant.

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. It is recommended that AAB College and the Faculty of Law take some steps to improve the English language skills of the Study Programme graduates by the time of the next accreditation. Among these measures, it is recommended that the Faculty of Law offers on-demand English courses and includes an extended number of international references in the syllabus where possible.*
- 2. It is recommended that the Faculty of Law provides some English lessons focused on legal vocabulary.*
- 3. It is recommended that the Faculty of Law should consider further developing soft skills acquisition within the study plan, particularly in the area of digital skills.*



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## 2.5 Students

**Standards 5.1 and 5.2 are met.** The LLM in Administrative and Constitutional Law Study Programme applies the institutional-level policies from AAB College on student admissions. There is a clear and transparent procedure that states that the AAB Senate should decide for admission and registration of new students in June or July, depending on the decision for accreditation by KAA. AAB College announces the competition for the admission of new students at the MA level. The Expert Team recommends moving the notification of admission criteria and other relevant information earlier, thus guaranteeing candidates have more time to make their decision. Procedures imply that all students enrolled in the Study Programme will possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent documents of study as applicants must prove that they have graduated from a BA in Law (240 ECTS) Study Programme.

**Standards 5.3 and 5.4 are met.** The Faculty of Law from AAB College respects the provision of the Administrative Instructions and the KAA Accreditation manual as lectures do not exceed more than 80 students per group. Also, exercises are organised with no more than 40 students per group, as in practice, there are usually 25 students per group. Students have described an educational environment that leads to an effective and interactive teaching and learning process. During the online meetings, we learnt that students received prompt feedback on their performance. Also, they received feedback on the results of assessments, as stated before. It was clear from the Self-Evaluation Report and the Expert Team meetings that there was effective ongoing communication between staff and students. There is also a mechanism of assistance that has already been described. As there is a request to increase the number of study places, the Expert Team strongly recommends that the study groups should be kept as small as achievable for the teaching staff.

**Standards 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 are met.** The Faculty of Law demonstrates throughout the Self-Evaluation Report that student results are certified by the academic record. There is a Regulation for Masters Studies that indicates that the communication of student evaluation results should be made no later than seven days from the exam date. There is also a clear grading scale done electronically for each course. Transcripts of records can be generated at any time, as stated in the Self-Evaluation Report. There is also evidence of flexible treatment of students in special situations, in line with the scheduling of exams that are set by the Central Administration of the College. Generally, all requests are approved. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses within the Study Programme and included among quality indicators. After each exam period, an evaluation report for students' performance is generated in summary throughout the E-service platform. The report contains statistical information (e.g., total number of students that participated in the exams or the percentages of those who passed or failed).

**Standard 5.8. is met.** AAB College has several policies to ensure that students supply original work and avoid plagiarism. However, this is more work to do in this area to ensure that the work submitted by students is original. The cooperation agreement with Turnitin is a major step forward as are the two



pieces of training for the staff. The Expert Team strongly recommends that the software be freely available for students and adequate support is provided for its use.

**Standards 5.9 and 5.10 are met.** Students from AAB College have rights and obligations that are set out in the Regulation on Studies and the Statute. Both documents are public and transparent to the student and other parties. The Regulation on Studies requires students to know the rules of the College. Part of the rights and obligations are also included in the study contract. Nevertheless, several more rights and obligations reside in other documents (e.g., Regulation on Educational Processes, Assessment etc.). The Expert Team strongly recommends that all rights and obligations should be in one document which is made publicly available and disseminated to students at the beginning of each Study Programme. Nonetheless, students seem to be familiar with their rights and obligations. Transfers are regulated accordingly to the Statute and the Administrative Instruction at the level of MEST. Nevertheless, as this Study Programme covers only one year and, as transfers are not allowed in the first and last semester, transfer is in fact impossible.

**Standard 5.11 is met.** During the online site meetings, the students mentioned frequently that the academic staff are available at sufficient scheduled times to consult and advise when asked. Students can consult with their professors for at least two hours per week (one hour within the Faculty of Law premises and at least one hour through the blog option of E-Service). As stated in the Self-Evaluation Report, student consultation 'does not only include consultation time after exams but also includes any other time within the semester that is necessary for the student such as for exam preparation, preparation for seminar papers, etc.'

The Expert Team strongly recommends improving the careers advice and orientation for students. As the labour market in Kosovo is difficult to manage for young graduates, orientation tips and advancing steps into a career should be provided not only by the teacher but also by the administrative staff.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and online learning in the last years, psychological support should also be offered through the administrative staff. Even though lecturers have a strong connection with students, we urge the Faculty of Law to take further steps to provide support in this area.

Students should also receive support to attend international events such as conferences. As study mobilities are hard in a one-year Study Programme, at least some virtual mobilities or events should be promoted too. Research skills should also be enhanced to promote their transition to a PhD study programme if there is a desire for this.

| Standard  | Compliance |    |
|---|------------|----|
|   | YES        | NO |
| <i>Standard 5.1.</i> There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the Study Programme respects when organizing | X          |    |



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| students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.  |   |  |
| <i>Standard 5.2.</i> All students enrolled in the Study Programme possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.  | X |  |
| <i>Standard 5.3.</i> The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.  | X |  |
| <i>Standard 5.4.</i> Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.  | X |  |
| <i>Standard 5.5.</i> The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.  | X |  |
| <i>Standard 5.6.</i> Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the Study Programme and to all examinations.                                   | X |  |
| <i>Standard 5.7.</i> Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the Study Programme as a whole and included among quality indicators.  | X |  |
| <i>Standard 5.8.</i> Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.  | X |  |
| <i>Standard 5.9.</i> Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.                             | X |  |
| <i>Standard 5.10.</i> The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs are clearly regulated in formal internal documents.   | X |  |
| <i>Standard 5.11.</i> Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning. | X |  |

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant.

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. It is recommended that candidates for the LLM Study Programme receive more time to prepare themselves for the admission process.*
- 2. It is recommended that anti-plagiarism software be made freely available for students. AAB College should provide adequate support to students in its use and adopt clear procedures in this regard too.*



3. *It is recommended that all rights and obligations should be consolidated in one document which is publicly available and disseminated to students at the beginning of each Study Programme.*
4. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law improves the advice and orientation of student regarding their careers. Both academic and the administrative staff should provide orientation tips to help students advance their steps into a career.*
5. *It is recommended that administrative staff offer psychological support to help students after the Covid-19 pandemic where necessary.*
6. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law works to increase student attendance at international events such as conferences or (virtual) mobilities.*

## 2.6 Research

**Standard 6.1** is **met**. The Study Programme has defined research objectives which reflect policies at the level of the Rectorate of the College. As the Self-Evaluation Report explains, although AAB College has developed its profile mainly as a teaching institution, it also wants to become a 'scientific centre' and the College's *Strategic Plan 2022-2026* aims to create 'an enabling system for increasing the quality of scientific research through the support of staff and students for research work in order to achieve the third mission and social development'.

The College states in its Self-Evaluation Report that it has established 'a scientific development plan as well as various policies and regulations'. It claims these have 'resulted in an increase of research activities at an institutional scale'. It also claims that the quality of research at AAB College has improved and is in a 'process of constant advancement'.

In accordance with Kosovo Regulations passed in 2018, the international grant structures at AAB College 'promote the publication of scientific research in journals indexed through the recognized databases of Web of Science (Clarivate) and Scopus'. The College has put in place 'an institutional fund for science and research' which awards 'yearly grants for the 10 best multidisciplinary scientific research projects that include the participation of at least two MA level students and diploma theses'.

The mission of the Faculty of Law for research is aligned to College's mission. The Faculty of Law has the goal of promoting 'the academic quality of research and scientific output'. Research at the Faculty of Law is conducted through the Centre for Legal Studies, which operates within the AAB Research Institute. The Faculty organises conferences as does the broader College, and 13 Faculty members have participated in regional or international scientific conferences.

The Faculty of Law has produced a *Development Plan* through which it aims to increase student participation in scientific research by utilizing student mobility with partner universities and with constitutional and administrative justice institutions in Kosovo. This *Development Plan* sets out the



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following actions: (i) Establishment of a club for young researchers; (ii) Support for potential postdoctoral researchers and graduate students; (iii) Organizing local and international thematic scientific conferences; (iv) Creating research competitions for awards that address important social or community issues; and (v) Implementation of interdisciplinary projects of interest to AAB.

**Standards 6.2 and 6.3 are met.** Expectations for the involvement of teaching staff in research and scholarly activities are specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria. There are also policies defining what is recognized as research and there are benchmarks which are set against international standards and established norms in the field of Study of the Programme.

Scientific research is a contractual obligation for all regular academic staff members at AAB College and is linked to the *College's Staff Development Policies and Procedures*. Employment contracts stipulate that each member of academic staff is obliged to produce at least one scientific paper within a year and to engage in other scientific research projects. The participation of staff in research is taken into account in the processes for staff advancement and governed by the *College's Regulation on the Selection, Re-selection and Advancement* which stipulates that, to achieve promotion, staff should have papers published as first author or correspondent author in journals indexed on Scopus or Web of Science platforms. As the Self-Evaluation Report notes, the *Regulation* complies with MEST Administrative Instruction No. VI/2018 on the Principles of Recognition of International Review Platforms and Magazines. AAB College has established its own journal: *Thesis*. This is a double-blind peer-reviewed journal. It was created in 2017 with an ISSN number from Croatia. It can be accessed online. The Self-Evaluation Report notes that the editorial board for *Thesis* has applied for indexing in the Scopus database and is awaiting confirmation of this from the Scopus authorities. AAB College also has its own publishing house which publishes research and textbooks. Nonetheless, there is still further work to do to ensure the quality of the outputs and engagements from the Faculty of Law is further raised.

**Standard 6.4 is met.** The Self-Evaluation Report provides CVs for the teaching staff. These show that, in general, the academic staff involved in delivering the Study Programme have a record of research which connects with the topics they teach. **Standard 6.5 is also met.** The University is taking steps to provide support for publications and conferences and the Law Faculty provides opportunities for both academic staff and students to develop their research skills. Academic staff in the Law Faculty are publishing their work in 'specialty magazines' and are presenting their research at 'conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc'. But there is no doubt that there is more the Faculty of Law and AAB College generally need to do in this area. The Faculty of Law stated in the meeting with the Expert Team that both research and internationalization were weaknesses at AAB College, as they were at all Kosovo Higher Education Institutions.

**Standards 6.6 and 6.7 are met.** Academic staff are cooperating with a few academics at some other European universities and with legal practitioners from relevant institutions of Kosovo. But it is a challenge to ensure that, in line with **Standard 6.7**, each academic staff member produces (at least an

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average) one research publication per year, *if* one includes the need for that publication to be of high-quality at a genuinely international level.

**Standard 6.8** and **6.9** are **met**. Academic staff in the Law Faculty publish under the name of the institution, AAB College, to which they are affiliated as full-time staff. As the Self-Evaluation Report observes, the contract of employment for the academic staff at AAB College obliges them to promote the College in all their social network accounts, such as google scholar, academia.edu, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, by introducing/identifying the College as their primary employer. The research these academic staff do is included in the teaching content of the Study Programme. The Self-Evaluation Report explains that intellectual property rights in any work related to or created by the employee during the employment relationship is counted as the work of the employer (see Article 14). Research is also, as the Self-Evaluation Report explains, conducted in accordance with the legal provisions established by the University and existing laws that govern intellectual property.

**Standard 6.10** is also **met**. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities and are involved in research through the Masters thesis. Following a recommendation made during the previous accreditation process, the ECTS credits attached to the thesis is about to be reduced from 20 credits to 15 credits. Lowering the credit value of the thesis will allow additional space to be made in the curriculum for the introduction of new courses such as IT Systems, Trade Marks, and International Trade. However, the Expert Team was told in the meetings it had with staff that AAB College does not publish the Masters theses on its website, although the theses are placed in the library. It is therefore recommended by the Expert Team that this should change and the College should, from now on, publish all its Masters theses on its website. This will be good for the Masters students, good for the research profile of AAB College, and good for Kosovo more generally. It is notable that the Masters students the Expert Team met supported the idea.

However, only a minority of academic staff gain access to research funding and there is no doubt that there is a long way to go before the Faculty of Law can claim to have a genuinely international research profile. It is very important therefore that the Faculty of Law moves to a position where not only the paperwork is appropriate but the *quality* of the research outputs improve. While recognising the challenges and limitations that the Law Faculty and indeed the broader University face in this regard, the Expert Team recommends that this is prioritised over the next accreditation period. The Faculty of Law needs to continue to drive forward its research mission and enhance the opportunities it provides for its staff to be involved in research, putting energy and resources into this area. It is good practice to ensure that all research staff produce not just an annual research plan but take a longer-term perspective, via a five-year research proposal, in which they set out what they are looking to achieve during that longer period and what support they might need for that, including any additional training needs they might have.

| Standard | Compliance |
|----------|------------|
|----------|------------|



|   | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| <i>Standard 6.1.</i> The Study Programme has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives. | X   |    |
| <i>Standard 6.2.</i> Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.  | X   |    |
| <i>Standard 6.3.</i> Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the Programme.  | X   |    |
| <i>Standard 6.4.</i> The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.  | X   |    |
| <i>Standard 6.5.</i> The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.                      | X   |    |
| <i>Standard 6.6.</i> Research is validated through scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.   | X   |    |
| <i>Standard 6.7.</i> Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.   | X   |    |
| <i>Standard 6.8.</i> Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.   | X   |    |
| <i>Standard 6.9.</i> Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.   | X   |    |
| <i>Standard 6.10.</i> Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.   | X   |    |



**Compliance level:** Fully compliant.

**ET recommendations:**

1. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law continues to drive forward its research mission and enhance the opportunities it provides for its staff to be involved in research.*
2. *It is recommended that AAB College should, from now on, publish all its Masters theses on its website.*
3. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law improves the training it makes available in research methods and the time it makes available for research.*
4. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law introduces a process whereby all research staff produce not just an annual research plan but take a longer-term perspective, via a five-year research proposal, in which they set out what they are looking to achieve during that longer period and what support they might need for that, including any additional training needs they might have.*
5. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law pays close attention to the **quality of the research outputs of its academic staff** to ensure they are recognised as of genuinely international standard.*

## 2.7 Infrastructure and Resources

**Standard 7.1** is **met**. The adequate long-term implementation of the Study Programme is ensured as regards premises, human resources, and equipment. Due to the pandemic, of course, the Expert Team was not able to conduct a site visit offline. However, the University submitted all the required information regarding the infrastructure and the equipment.

The infrastructure of the AAB College, and accordingly of the LLM programme, is impressive. The resources are modern, digitized, adapted to student needs, and diverse. It is not a surprise, therefore, that students are very satisfied with the campus infrastructure. All the infrastructure is the property of AAB College and the finances of both the College and the Faculty are stable and sustainable.

There are sufficient rooms for lectures and seminars, and they are equipped adequately. AAB College also offers other amenities, such as student corners, quiet reading rooms, cafeteria, sports halls. In the Central Administration building, several offices have been established, such as the Office for Software Development, Office for IT Support, Transfer Office, and Career Office. Furthermore, the College is actively investing to improve its facilities further. For example, in 2021, AAB College added about 10,000m<sup>2</sup> of additional space which is available to the teaching process of the Faculty of Law. The Expert Team commends the College for these efforts and recommends that, as it further drives up the quality of its estate, it engages in close consultation with students, staff, and other key stakeholders regarding what their views on how the facilities might best be improved.



**Standard 7.2 is met.** There is a financial plan at the level of the Study Programme that would demonstrate the sustainability of the Study Programme for the next period. **Standards 7.3, 7.4, and 7.5 are also met.** The number of seats in lecture rooms and seminar rooms available to students reflects the number of students studying on the LLM. Students also have access to a library which in terms of facilities it is comparable to international standards. The AAB library has support services for all users, including Referral Desks. The number of seats in reading rooms and the number of seats in group work rooms corresponds to 10% of the total number of students for the LLM program in Administrative and Constitutional Law. Also, the teaching materials cover at least 50% of the subjects and/or disciplines which are foreseen within the curriculum of the Study Programme. The Expert Team recommends that the teaching materials should cover, albeit in a limited number, all the documents mentioned in the bibliography within the syllabuses. Students have access to international journals as well, since several platforms, such as Edward Elgar, EBSCO, DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), SCIENCE COMMONS - Open Access Law Journal, are available. Based on the platforms described, more focus should be put on providers that offer more prestigious law-oriented academic journals.

**Standard 7.6 is met.** According to the Self-Evaluation Report, the buildings are partly accessible to students with disabilities. The Expert Team recommends that AAB College creates a formal strategy for inclusion of students with disabilities. The College could also consider whether this might include a partial fee waiver as well as physical accessibility.

| Standard   | Compliance |    |
|--|------------|----|
|  | YES        | NO |
| <i>Standard 7.1.</i> The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also considered.  | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 7.2.</i> There is a financial plan at the level of the Study Programme that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.  | X          |    |
| <i>Standard 7.3.</i> The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the Study Programme submitted for evaluation, it possesses the following, for the next at least three years:<br>a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;<br>b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;<br>c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence; | X          |    |



|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.  |   |  |
| <i>Standard 7.4.</i> The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the specialty disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.  | X |  |
| <i>Standard 7.5.</i> The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the Study Programmes:<br>a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the Study Programme;<br>b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the Study Programme;<br>c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign specialty literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or specialty courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years;<br>d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for;<br>e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission. | X |  |
| <i>Standard 7.6.</i> The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the Study Programme is adapted to students with special needs.   | X |  |

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant.

**ET recommendations:**

1. *It is recommended that the teaching materials should cover, albeit in a limited number, all the documents mentioned in the bibliography within the syllabuses.*
2. *It is recommended that more focus should be put on providers which offer more prestigious law-oriented academic journals.*
3. *It is recommended that the College should provide a formal strategy for inclusion of students with disabilities. The College could also consider whether this might include a partial fee waiver as well as physical accessibility.*

**3 FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

The Expert Team would like to thank both the Faculty of Law and the Vice-Rector for their engagement with us during the re-accreditation process and for care and attention that was given to the Self-Evaluation Report.



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Having considered all the documentation provided and discussed it during the day-long virtual visit, the Expert Team has come to the following conclusions:



| Standard                                  | Compliance Level    |
|---|---------------------|
| 1: Mission, Objectives and Administration | Fully Compliant     |
| 2: Quality management                     | Partially Compliant |
| 3: Academic Staff                         | Fully Compliant     |
| 4: Education Process Content              | Fully Compliant     |
| 5: Students                               | Fully Compliant     |
| 6: Research                               | Fully Compliant     |
| 7: Infrastructure and Resources           | Fully Compliant     |
| <b>Overall Compliance</b>                 | Fully Compliant     |

**The Overall Compliance is assessed by the Expert Team as at the level of Fully Compliant.**

**The Student Quota recommended is 60 for Three Years.**

The Expert Team makes the following 27 Recommendations which must be considered fully by the Faculty of Law and the broader College:

- 1. It is recommended that the University addresses weakness in the English language proficiency of Masters students. This must be resolved by the Faculty of Law with a demonstrable improvement by the time of the next accreditation.*
- 2. It is recommended that the relationship between the Council and the Quality Assurance Office should be redefined, shifting to a co-creation paradigm, with a decisive role for both interpreting results and determining actions to be the responsibility of the Council. This should improve efficiency, legitimacy, and involvement of stakeholders.*
- 3. It is recommended that the Faculty of Law should shift towards both informal and formal cooperation with different stakeholders, and the formalities should be signed with the representatives.*
- 4. It is recommended that the Faculty of Law and the College further develop the assessment tools (active ad hoc focus groups, debates, benchmarking, etc) within the Quality Assurance system and develop a scoreboard of the indicators to be monitored and by which tool. The result in the scoreboard should be made public without any other hesitance.*
- 5. It is recommended that accountability is enhanced by making public the assessment of students, graduates, employers at Study Programme level, as well as the reports and action plans of the Faculty of Law.*
- 6. It is recommended that a chart of consequences for different kind of results in the assessment be developed and that the actions which should be taken by the Faculty of Law management should be approved.*
- 7. It is recommended that the involvement of students and other stakeholders in the Quality Assurance processes be enhanced. Compared to the institutional level, at the level of the Study Programme involvement is rather tokenistic, mainly as an input group than full members*



- taking ownership of the process.*
8. *It is recommended that the Faculty conduct a substantial internal review (similar to that in the Self-Evaluation Report) on a two-year basis.*
  9. *It is recommended that the College and the Faculty and the State of Kosovo consider whether a more flexible approach might be adopted to the compulsory retirement of all full Professors at 65.*
  10. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law seeks enhances the number of visiting academic staff from outside Kosovo who come to the Faculty and that this weakness be addressed before the next accreditation.*
  11. *It is recommended that AAB College and the Faculty of Law take some steps to improve the English language skills of the Study Programme graduates by the time of the next accreditation. Among these measures, it is recommended that the Faculty of Law offers on-demand English courses and includes an extended number of international references in the syllabus where possible.*
  12. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law provides some English lessons focused on legal vocabulary.*
  13. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law should consider further developing soft skills acquisition within the study plan, particularly in the area of digital skills.*
  14. *It is recommended that candidates for the LLM Study Programme receive more time to prepare themselves for the admission process.*
  15. *It is recommended that anti-plagiarism software be made freely available for students. AAB College should provide adequate support to students in its use and adopt clear procedures in this regard too.*
  16. *It is recommended that all rights and obligations should be consolidated in one document which is publicly available and disseminated to students at the beginning of each Study Programme.*
  17. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law improves the advice and orientation of student regarding their careers. Both academic and the administrative staff should provide orientation tips to help students advance their steps into a career.*
  18. *It is recommended that administrative staff offer psychological support to help students after the Covid-19 pandemic where necessary.*
  19. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law works to increase student attendance at international events such as conferences or (virtual) mobilities.*
  20. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law continues to drive forward its research mission and enhance the opportunities it provides for its staff to be involved in research.*
  21. *It is recommended that AAB College should, from now on, publish all its Masters theses on its website.*
  22. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law improves the training it makes available in research methods and the time it makes available for research.*
  23. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law introduces a process whereby all research staff produce not just an annual research plan but take a longer-term perspective, via a five-year research proposal, in which they set out what they are looking to achieve during that longer*



*period and what support they might need for that, including any additional training needs they might have.*

24. *It is recommended that the Faculty of Law pays close attention to the **quality of the research outputs of its academic staff** to ensure they are recognised as of genuinely international standard. It is recommended that the teaching materials should cover, albeit in a limited number, all the documents mentioned in the bibliography within the syllabuses.*
25. *It is recommended that the teaching materials should cover, albeit in a limited number, all the documents mentioned in the bibliography within the syllabuses.*
26. *It is recommended that more focus should be put on providers which offer more prestigious law-oriented academic journals.*
27. *It is recommended that the College should provide a formal strategy for inclusion of students with disabilities. The College could also consider whether this might include a partial fee waiver as well as physical accessibility.*

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the LLM Administrative and Constitutional Law Study Programme offered by AAB College is fully compliant with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation Manual and, therefore, recommends it be accredited for a duration of three years with 60 students per annum to be enrolled on the programme.



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### Expert Team

#### Member

|                                     |                                      |                              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Stephen Shute</b><br>(Signature) | <b>Stephen Shute</b><br>(Print Name) | <b>1 june 2022</b><br>(Date) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|

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#### Member

|   |  |                              |
|---|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Stefan-Marius Deaconu</b><br>(Signature) | <b>Stefan-Marius Deaconu</b><br>(Print Name) | <b>1 June 2022</b><br>(Date) |
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### Expert Team

#### Members

**Professor Dr Stephen Shute**

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Signature

Stephen Shute

1 June 2022