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Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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AAB College

LLM in Civil Law, 60 ECTS
(re-accreditation)

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM



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15 April, 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 23.03.2022

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Professor Stephen Shute, University of Sussex, Brighton, England
- Student Expert: Horia Serban Onita

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- Leona Kovaçi
- Shkelzen Gerxhaliu
- Arianit Krasniqi
- Flamur Abazaj

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 Evaluations
- Additional Documents Relating to Request to Increase the Intake from 50 to 100 Students

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 23 March 2022. The meeting with senior members of the Faculty included the Vice-Rector for Teaching; the Dean of the Faculty of Law; and two Vice-Deans of the Faculty of Law. The schedule of the meetings was as follows:

Site Visit Programme

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:45	Meeting with the Management of the Faculty where the programme is integrated	- Shemsedin Vehapi, Vice-Rector for Teaching - Veton Vula, Dean of the Faculty - Fatmir Qollakaj, Vice-Dean - Mentor Lecaj, Vice-Dean
09.50 – 10.35	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	- Furtuna Mehmeti, Head of QA - Ganimete Ismajli, Faculty's QA Coordinator - Zija Rexhepi, Head of the Administration - Nusret Bilallaj, Head of IT
10:45 – 11:45	Meeting with the Heads of the Study Programme:	- Skender Gojani - Egzonis Hajdari
11:45 – 12.25	Lunch break	
12:25 – 13:10	Meeting with teaching staff	- Majlinda Belegu - Nora Osmani - Albana Pasjaqa - Muhamet Binaku - Isuf Ahmeti - Jusuf Jahmurataj



13:15 – 14:00	Meeting with Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Aida Hoxha- Rita Elshani- Urona Qeska- Lirie Hoti- Albert Ahmeti- Xheladin Krasniqi- Ajnur Oraça
14:10 – 14:55	Meeting with Graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ymer Berisha- Asdren Selmani- Gazmend Mehmeti- Mirjeta Kastrati Selimi- Eduard Aiu- Flaka Vitaku
15:00 – 15:45	Meeting with Employers of Graduates and External Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Faton Fetoshi- Bislim Gashi- Ardiana Bejtullahu- Amer Aliaj- Besnik H. Aliu:- Ruzhdi Osmani- Diellza Mujaj
15:45 – 15:55	Internal meeting of KAA Staff and Experts	
15:55 – 16:00	Closing meeting with the Management of the Faculty and Study Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Shemsedin Vehapi, Vice-Rector for Teaching- Veton Vula, Dean of the Faculty- Fatmir Qollakaj, Vice-Dean- Mentor Lecaj, Vice-Dean

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.



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The Faculty of Law, which was established in 2005, is the largest of the 14 Faculties in AAB College. It has three departments: the Criminal Law Department; the Civil Law Department; and the Constitutional/Administrative 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 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 with 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 Civil Law; in Administrative and Constitutional 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 Constitutional and Administrative 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 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

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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 Civil 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 'provide to students [with] advanced theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of Civil Law, as well as a high level of mastery of skills in scientific research [which allow them] to present professional opinions on numerous legal [matters] ... which directly contribute to the fairest solutions in practice'. Kosovo 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 Civil Law is designed to equip students with knowledge of the latest developments in the field of Civil Law. As the Self-Evaluation Report explains, 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 civil legal issues in the exercise of their professional activities in society'.



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The Self-Evaluation Report also explains that the goals of the Study Programme for the Masters in Civil 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, as the Self-Evaluation Report explains, 'undergone an ongoing process of evaluation and review'. 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. The Self-Evaluation Report identifies a particularly long discussion and review which was held at a meeting in June 2021 and the establishment of two Working Groups to review and update the two Master Programmes which were in the process of re-accreditation, namely the Civil Law Programme and the Constitutional and Administrative Law 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 countries, such as Austria, Germany, and France.

As a result of the Working Group's review of the LLM in Civil Law, five new subjects were added to the curriculum and two subjects were merged into one. The Self-Evaluation Report is therefore right to state that the Study Programme in Civil Law 'has been revised 30% in accordance with the Accreditation Manual'. The new subjects that have been added to the LLM are: (i) Scientific Research Methodology and Seminar Paper (arising from a merger of two subjects from the previous Study Programme); (ii) International Arbitration; (iii) Compensation for Non-pecuniary Damage; (iv) Trademarks; (v) IT Law; and (vi) Advanced Company Law.

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 internships and other activities which enable

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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, as the Self-Evaluation Report explains, 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. The Self-Evaluation Report states that, 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.

Finally, the SWOT analysis in the Self-Evaluation Report identifies as weaknesses: (i) that ‘students have limited research skills’; and (ii) that the ‘English language proficiency of Master[s] students’ is weak. The Expert Team therefore recommends that these issues be addressed by the Faculty of Law and that there be a demonstrable improvement achieved in both these areas 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:

- It is recommended that the University addresses the two area of weakness identified in its SWOT analysis in the Self-Evaluation Report: (i) that 'students have limited research skills'; and (ii) that the 'English language proficiency of Master[s] students' is weak. Both these issues must be resolved by the Faculty of Law and there must be a demonstrable improvement in both these areas 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

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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 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.



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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.

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 undergone primarily by the Quality Assurance Office, with the stakeholders as an input/focus group. Shifting to a 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. **Standard 2.3** was thus **not met**.

Standards 2.6 and **2.8** are also **not met**. The Expert Team was not satisfied that survey data were being fully collected from students and employers and that the results of these evaluations were always made publicly available. Nor was the Expert Team satisfied that the institution always ensures that reports on the overall quality of the Study Programme are prepared periodically for full and appropriate consideration within the institution, indicating its strengths and weaknesses.

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.

Another tool used is the semesterly assessment of student success reports, which is key to understanding the impact of the measures taken in the previous evaluation cycle. Quality management includes assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the LLM in Civil Law. However, the Expert Team suggests a more realistic approach, since the SWOT within the Self-Evaluation Report appears rather optimistic in comparison with the aspects raised during the online discussions. For example, the only weakness the Quality Management section refers to is the insufficient interest of students, which is also defined as a strength.

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 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

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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 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, 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.

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: Partially 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 and the College further develops the assessment tools (active ad hoc focus groups, debates, benchmarking, etc) within the Quality Assurance system, as well as developing a scoreboard of the indicators to be monitored and by which tool. The result in the scoreboard should be made public.*
- 3. It is recommended that a more realistic approach be adopted within the Quality Assurance processes, since the SWOT within the Self-Evaluation Report appears rather optimistic in comparison to the aspects raised in the online discussions during the site visit.*
- 4. 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.*
- 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 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 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 on the LLM in Civil Law 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. The Self-Evaluation Report confirms that, of the regular members of the academic staff, none is engaged for more than four hours in teaching for other institutions. The Self-Evaluation Report also explains 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 Civil Law, the Faculty has employed two full-time professors with a degree of Doctor of Science in the field of Civil Law. 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.

However, during the interviews with academic staff, there was confusion as to whether there was a formal 'You said; We did' feedback mechanism within the Faculty of Law or AAB College more generally. Negative comments need to be shown to have been followed up and the Expert team recommends that the Faculty of Law and AAB College review this area. The Faculty's academic staff said in the meeting the Expert Team that there was further work to do on developing a 'culture of criticality' within the student body. It is recommended that the College and the Faculty work to instil a culture of constructive criticism within the study body and review the College's 'You said; We did' feedback mechanisms for students after questionnaire responses have been analysed. Students should be systematically told how negative comments have been followed up. These results should also be published on the College's website.

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 SWOT 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	X	



teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the Study Programme under evaluation.		
<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 College and the Faculty work to instil a culture of constructive criticism within the study body and review the College's 'You said; We did' feedback mechanisms for students after questionnaire responses have been analysed. Students should be systematically told how negative comments have been followed up. These results should also be published on the College's website.*
- 3. 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. The Study Programme is modelled on qualification objectives, including developing the students' capability to take up adequate employment and contribute to civil society. It also aims to advance the students' personalities. It offers specialist options in various key areas. As the Self-Evaluation Report explains, it seeks to equip students with competent skills in the field of Civil Law so that they can respond to the demands of the labour market and 'contribute to the improvement of the market in Kosovo'.

The course is designed to respond to the fact that harmonization of Kosovo legislation with that of the European Union is one of the strategic goals of the Republic of Kosovo. The Faculty of Law has sought to design specific courses within the Study Programme which prepare students for these processes. Once students have completed the Study Programme, they will, as the Self-Evaluation Report explains, be able 'to conduct advanced legal analysis, write legal documents, and do specific research in the field of Civil Law'.

The Study Programme is confined to students who have already completed studies at BA level with four years of study and 240 ECTS. It is offered to students who have graduated from the Faculty of Law at AAB College and other accredited HEIs. During their studies, students are encouraged to integrate their knowledge and skills to serve 'their communities, career advancement, postgraduate studies and lifelong learning'. The Study Programme 'develops the general competencies of each student for personal development and fulfilment, for active citizenship, for social inclusion as well as for employment' and provides specific skills for the Civil Law field.

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)



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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.

Standards 4.3 and 4.4 are met. The Self-Evaluation Report provides a detailed list of the skills and competencies that students on the Study Programme will acquire. The disciplines within the curriculum are structured logically and are compatible with other Study Programmes and curricula delivered in the EHEA. Students begin with the most fundamental competencies and then move on to more advanced knowledge, through a series of compulsory and elective courses. In the first semester, they are allowed to choose one of the two courses offered. As the Self-Evaluation Report explains, all the courses in the Study Programme have clearly-defined learning outcomes. Performance and assessment criteria are also clearly set and assessment is always based on learning outcomes. There are detailed and appropriate syllabuses for each subject on the Study Programme and these are drafted according to the standards of AAB College. The course material includes 'aims, contents, a weekly programme together with the relevant topics and the assigned literature for reading, learning outcomes, teaching methodology, assessment forms and academic policies'. The disciplines within the curriculum have appropriate analytical syllabuses and successful completion of the Study Programme provides students with knowledge, skills and competences in line with the National Qualifications Framework.

Standard 4.5 is met. The Study Programme in Civil Law is offered in Albanian. Students have not so far been required to take an entry exam in English. During the interviews with academic staff, the Expert Team was told that students have a 'basic understanding of English' and that some of the Study Programme's materials were in Albanian but others were in English. However, the SWOT analysis in the Self-Evaluation Report notes as a weakness that: 'Students do not have sufficient academic proficiency in English'. This is something that both the Faculty and AAB College generally will need to address as a matter of urgency. By the time of the next accreditation, the Faculty and the College must explain the measures they have taken to improve the situation and demonstrate a marked improvement in the English language skills of the graduates of the Study Programme.

Standard 4.6 is met. As the Self-Evaluation Report explains, the Faculty of Law adopts a 'student-centred learning approach and promotes student-professor collaboration'. On the first day of each semester, students are reminded of the learning outcomes for each course. The syllabuses are distributed to students through the E-SERVICE platform a week before the beginning of the semester. This allows them to read in advance the content of the module and provides them with an opportunity for student feedback regarding any possible changes to the syllabus. It also prepares them to complete the evaluation forms at the end of the semester. The Faculty of Law has, additionally, created 'a consultation system' for students through 'weekly appointments and discussions with their Professors in order to discuss issues related to the learning process'. There is an electronic platform, E-Student, which contributes to faster and more accurate 'communication between lecturers and students'. The Expert Team were satisfied that the student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes responsibility for reaching the learning outcomes and that these learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students and their relevance to the students' development is explained.

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Standards 4.7 and 4.8 are met. Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes the Study Programme is intended to develop and the strategies of teaching and assessment set out in Study Programme are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students. Students' assessment is done in a thorough manner, according to different procedures determined at institutional or Faculty level, such as the *Regulation on Studies, Regulation on Organization of Master Studies, Master Thesis Guidelines, Citation of References and Academic Sources, and Regulation on Good Academic Conduct*. The syllabuses are detailed and give the student a fair overview of the way the assessment is linked to the teaching and learning process, together with other relevant information, such as on citation. In terms of information provided by the syllabuses, a recommendation would be to increase the number of international references, even in the courses which focus on national law. Moreover, since the assessment is based on these international references as well, providing some English lessons focused on legal vocabulary is recommended. Students are told about the assessment mechanism, together with the learning outcomes, at the beginning of the course and in the syllabuses. There is a focus on continuous assessment, with different types of evaluation during the semester being attributed around 30-40% of the final grade. Learning outcomes are assessed using written exams and practical skills assessment exams, project work, research works, assignments and presentations. Intermediate tests summarize the knowledge and performance of the student in weeks 7 and 15. The form of the exam depends on the specifics of the subject. It is possible to conduct an examination in the form of essays, tests, surveys, discussions, oral presentations and discussions. If there are multiple choice questions, then they may not be above 20% of the total grade of each course. Bearing in mind the more research-oriented nature of the LL.M., the Expert Team recommends making more use of research papers and applied research projects for assessments. During the site visits, students were pleased with the fairness of the evaluation methods. Furthermore, the broad range of tools for assessment is relevant to ensure the acquisition of all relevant skills and competences. However, there are several courses for which the syllabuses are very general regarding the manner in which the final exam for the course is conducted. The Expert Team recommends providing a similar approach to all courses, with a detailed explanation on how the final exam is conducted. Students receive formative feedback during lectures, seminars, during working hours or via email. Even though during the site visit there was a confirmed availability, the Expert Team recommends establishing a formal faculty-wide policy on giving students feedback at the end of each course, along with the final grade.

Standard 4.9 is also met. There are appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms used for verifying standards of student achievement. The Faculty uses Turnitin to check papers for possible plagiarism. However, this software is available only to academic staff and solely for the thesis. The Expert Team therefore recommends extending the availability to students and the implementation to all academic papers. Subsequently, different kind of reports are available to academic staff in order to ensure a full image of the final exam results, evaluating the efficiency of the mechanisms in place. Student-teacher relationships are well developed, with students praising the availability of academic staff when comparing the programme with similar ones in the country. Taking into consideration the



student/teacher ratio, this is expected. Continuous improvement of the teaching strategies is proven at course level, with different feedback mechanisms embedded in the Quality Assurance procedures in order to ensure that academic staff have all relevant information to act properly and to deliver student-centred learning. The teaching process also uses multimedia technology, which includes videos, photos, animations, sounds, etc. Seminars and tutorials complement the lectures and are usually held once a week. The shift to online learning happened smoothly, according to all parties involved in discussions during the site visit. However, the Expert Team recommends creating an overarching framework to deal with teaching and learning strategy, taking into consideration both an estimation of human resources needs and the proliferation of emerging teaching innovations at European level, which don't seem to be part of the internal discussions yet. Student workload is adequate, with students attending five courses within one semester and the number of course credits varying from 4 to 7 ECTS per course. On the other side, there is no workload evaluation explained or provided in the Self-Evaluation Report, which would be important in order to determine the allocation of ECTS.

Standard 4.10 is met. There are several types of support given to students in order to mitigate learning issues, including when standards of student achievement are not met. The Faculty has appointed for each group of studies an academic advisor who provides academic counselling to students about the examinations, literature, and research work. For those prone to dropout, we recommend both adaptive measures to stay connected to the Faculty during the third semester. This action, together with preparing for the thesis since the first semester and remedial learning activities based on a faculty level approach, should improve their condition.

Standards 4.11 and **4.12** are met. Regarding internships, the Faculty provides a full range of opportunities for students. There are several partnerships approved, such as with the Kosovo Municipal Association, Judiciary Committee, Prosecution Committee, Chamber of Lawyers, and Law Academy. The Expert Team has two recommendations on this area. First, contrary to good practice at European level, the practice element is not given any ECTS. Second, the majority of partnerships are with public authorities. Given the content of the LLM, further cooperation with private sector, including in the internship domain, is expected. This would also feed 'on the ground' knowledge, since graduates mentioned a need for more practical activities such as contract writing. Finally, the Expert Team recommends increasing the role of the Career Office in making the arrangements for practice stages.

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	X	



capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.		
<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 outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.	X	
<i>Standard 4.7.</i> Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes 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 ECTS 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 urgent steps to improve the English language skills of the graduates of the Study Programme and by the time of the next accreditation be able to explain all the measures they have taken to improve the situation.*
2. *It is recommended that the Faculty increases the number of international references, even in the courses which focus on national law.*
3. *It is recommended that, since the assessment is based on international references as well as national references, the Faculty provides some English lessons focused on legal vocabulary.*
4. *It is recommended that the Faculty makes more use of research papers and applied research projects for assessments.*
5. *It is recommended that the Faculty provides a uniform approach to all courses with a detailed explanation on how the final exam is conducted.*
6. *It is recommended that the Faculty establishes a formal Faculty-wide policy on giving students feedback at the end of each course.*
7. *It is recommended that the Faculty creates an overarching framework to deal with teaching and learning strategy, taking into consideration both the estimation of human resources needs and the proliferation of emerging teaching innovations at European level.*
8. *It is recommended that, for those prone to dropout, measures are introduced to help students stay connected to the Faculty during the third semester.*
9. *It is recommended that the Faculty set an ECTS for practice stages and ensures further cooperation with private sector, including in the internship domain, and increases the role of the Career Office in making the arrangements for practice stages.*



2.5 Students

Standard 5.1 is met. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure that the Study Programme uses when organizing student recruitment. The admission procedures are public, well established, consistently applied, and fair to all applicants. The Statute of AAB College stipulates that the decision for admission and registration of new students for each academic year must be taken by the Senate. In June or July of the respective year (depending on the decision regarding accreditation by KAA), AAB College announces the competition for the admission of new students at Masters level. The Expert Team recommend moving the announcement of admission criteria and other relevant information earlier, thus ensuring candidates have more time to make their decision.

In addition, applicants must provide proof that they have graduated from a BA Programme. **Standard 5.2** is thus met as the procedures mean that all students enrolled in the Study Programme will possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study. Students who have completed four years of study in a BA Study Programme other than Law and who have accumulated 240 credits must undergo five differential examinations in the basic subjects of the field of Civil Law. Maintaining the door open for candidates with non-law background is an asset of the Study Programme.

Standards 5.3 and **5.4** are met. The study groups are defined properly and guarantee a student-centred, effective, interactive learning approach. Also, feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed. According to the Self-Evaluation Report, lectures do not exceed more than 80 students per group, whereas exercises are organized with no more than 40 students. In practice, however, it is stated the organization of exercises occurs with no more than 25 students per group. Taking into consideration the small number of places the LLM offers each year, the Expert Team recommends that group size be kept as small as is feasible for the teaching team.

Standards 5.5, 5.6, and **5.7** are also met. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record. There is flexible treatment of students in special situations: the Study Programme offers peer-to-peer consultations to students who required extra support from the teaching staff. In addition, individual study plans are designed if there is a need for that. Finally, records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the Study Programme as a whole and included among quality indicators. The Faculty has in place a reliable electronic management system for students, which provides relevant data for students and statistics for management. Attendance in classes is monitored, since attendance is a criterion for being able to enter exams. Student completion rates are also monitored through the electronic evaluation processes, with a report produced by the E-Service platform. The results are used both by management and academic staff. The LLM gives flexibility to students in terms in of periods of exams and allowed repetitions, taking into consideration special needs by students. Despite this, the Regulation is rather generic in terms of actual adaptations. The Expert Team therefore recommends having in place specific policies for a gradual approach regarding student special needs. This way students would better understand



the support they are given and the design would be more coherent. The scheduling of exams is set by the Central Administration of the College. Cases where students have requests for extension of deadlines or change of exam date are treated on an ad-hoc basis. The communication of student evaluation results must be done no later than 7 days from the date of the exam and there is an official appeals procedure.

Students are informed about their rights and obligations in different ways. Every year, after new students' enrolment, the College organizes Information Days and an orientation programme. Furthermore, students are given information in the first meeting with the Dean and told that they can also contact their student representatives. The approach set out in the Self-Evaluation Report, however, is rather obligation-based, which is different than that more usually found in the European landscape. Elections for student representatives are open, public and well promoted and the Student Union is active. However, the Expert Team recommends approving a distinct Charter on Student Rights and Obligations, which would include Regulations on student representation. So far, the provisions are scattered in different procedures and in the Student Union Charter.

Standards 5.8 is not met. Effective procedures are not being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original. As we have seen in the commentary under standard 4.9 above, the Faculty uses Turnitin to check papers for possible plagiarism but this software is available only to academic staff and solely for the thesis. The Expert Team therefore recommends extending the availability to students and the implementation to all academic papers.

Standards 5.9 and 5.10 are met. Students are familiar with their rights and the way they are regulated. There is the opportunity for inter-university transfer, as well as moving to University of Pristina under an agreement that existed with that university. There weren't any complaints regarding the transfer procedures made by students during the online site visit, and the Regulation is public on the College's website.

Standard 5.11 is met. Academic staff are available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning. Students have the right to receive feedback, both during semester and after the exam. In addition, students on the LLM Civil Law have the opportunity to consult with their Professors at least two hours per week, respectively one hour per week within the Faculty premises and at least one hour per week through the blog option. After the pandemic, psychological consultations should be available as well. One main issue for students, which was mentioned in the previous evaluations as well, is the lack of sufficient opportunities for student mobility. Even though for a 60 ECTS LLM this is not a custom, the focus should be maintained, since little progress has been made. Another recommendation by the Expert Team is that the Faculty of Law should provide more support for students in LLM taking part in international conferences.

Standard	Compliance
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	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 students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.	X	
<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 the Faculty and AAB College move the announcement of admission criteria and other relevant information earlier in the year, thus ensuring the candidates have more time to make their decision.*



2. *It is recommended that the Faculty puts in place specific policies for a gradual approach regarding student special needs.*
3. *It is recommended that AAB College consider approving a distinct Charter on Student Rights and Obligations, which would include regulations on student representation.*
4. *It is recommended (as also recommended above) that the Faculty extends the availability of Turnitin to students and extends its use by Faculty to all academic papers.*
5. *It is recommended that, in addition to other forms of student support, psychological consultation should be made available.*
6. *It is recommended that the Faculty maintain a strong focus on developing the capacity to provide international mobility for students.*
7. *It is recommended that the Faculty provide more support for students on the LLM to take part in international conferences.*

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 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.



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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 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 'speciality 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.

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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 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	



Standard 6.10. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.	X	
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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 improves the training it makes available in research methods and the time it makes available for research.*
4. *It is recommended that the Faculty 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 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 and epidemiological reasons, of course, the Expert Team was not able to conduct 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, according to Self-Evaluation Report, AAB College has added about 10,000m² 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 program for the next minimum three years. **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 Civil 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 focused 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. However, there is no direct statistics on hand. A recommendation of the ET is to 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.

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: a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;	X	



b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence; 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 speciality 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: a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the Study Programme; 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; c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years; 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; 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.*



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

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.

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	Substantially Compliant
6: Research	Fully Compliant
7: Infrastructure and Resources	Fully Compliant
Overall Compliance	Fully Compliant

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

The Student Quota recommended is 100 for Three Years.

The Expert Team makes the following 35 Recommendations which must be considered fully by the Faculty of Law and the broader College:

- 1. It is recommended that the University addresses the two area of weakness identified in its SWOT analysis in the Self-Evaluation Report: (i) that ‘students have limited research skills’; and (ii) that the ‘English language proficiency of Master[s] students’ is weak. Both these issues must be resolved by the Faculty of Law and there must be a demonstrable improvement in both these areas 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 and the College further develop the assessment tools (active ad hoc focus groups, debates, benchmarking, etc) within the Quality Assurance System, as well as developing a scoreboard of the indicators to be monitored and by which tool. The result in the scoreboard should be made public.*
- 4. It is recommended that a more realistic approach be adopted within the Quality Assurance processes, since the SWOT within the Self-Evaluation Report appears rather optimistic in comparison to the aspects raised in the online discussions during the site visit.*
- 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.*
- 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 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 a 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 College and the Faculty work to instil a culture of constructive criticism within the study body and review the College's 'You said; We did' feedback mechanisms for students after questionnaire responses have been analysed. Students should be systematically told how negative comments have been followed up. These results should also be published on the College's website.*
11. *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.*
12. *It is recommended that AAB College and the Faculty of Law take urgent steps to improve the English language skills of the graduates of the Study Programme and by the time of the next accreditation be able to explain all the measures they have taken to improve the situation.*
13. *It is recommended that the Faculty increases the number of international references, even in the courses which focus on national law.*
14. *It is recommended that, since the assessment is based on international references as well as national references, the Faculty provides some English lessons focused on legal vocabulary.*
15. *It is recommended that the Faculty makes more use of research papers and applied research projects for assessments.*
16. *It is recommended that the Faculty provides a uniform approach to all courses with a detailed explanation on how the final exam is conducted.*
17. *It is recommended that the Faculty establishes a formal Faculty-wide policy on giving students feedback at the end of each course.*
18. *It is recommended that the Faculty creates an overarching framework to deal with teaching and learning strategy, taking into consideration both the estimation of human resources needs and the proliferation of emerging teaching innovations at European level.*
19. *It is recommended that, for those prone to dropout, measures are introduced to help students stay connected to the Faculty during the third semester.*
20. *It is recommended that the Faculty set an ECTS for practice stages and ensures further cooperation with private sector, including in the internship domain, and increases the role of the Career Office in making the arrangements for practice stages.*
21. *It is recommended that the Faculty and AAB College move the announcement of admission criteria and other relevant information earlier in the year, thus ensuring the candidates have more time to make their decision.*



22. *It is recommended that the Faculty puts in place specific policies for a gradual approach regarding student special needs.*
23. *It is recommended that AAB College consider approving a distinct Charter on Student Rights and Obligations, which would include regulations on student representation.*
24. *It is recommended (as also recommended above) that the Faculty extends the availability of Turnitin to students and extends its use by Faculty to all academic papers.*
25. *It is recommended that, in addition to other forms of student support, psychological consultation should be made available.*
26. *It is recommended that the Faculty maintain a strong focus on developing the capacity to provide international mobility for students.*
27. *It is recommended that the Faculty provide more support for students on the LLM to take part in international conferences.*
28. *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.*
29. *It is recommended that AAB College should, from now on, publish all its Masters theses on its website.*
30. *It is recommended that the Faculty improves the training it makes available in research methods and the time it makes available for research.*
31. *It is recommended that the Faculty 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.*
32. *It is recommended that the Faculty 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.*
33. *It is recommended that the teaching materials should cover, albeit in a limited number, all the documents mentioned in the bibliography within the syllabuses.*
34. *It is recommended that more focus should be put on providers which offer more prestigious law-oriented academic journals.*
35. *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 Civil 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 100 students per annum to be enrolled on the programme.



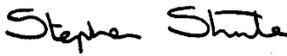
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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

Expert Team

Member

Stephen Shute		21 April 2022
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

Horia Serban Onita		21 April 2022
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)
