AAB COLLEGE FERIZAJ BRANCH
PROFESSIONAL BACHELOR IN PROGRAMMING

PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

May 2022, Prishtina

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 20.04.2022

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Peeter Normak*
- *Asnate Kažoka*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Arianit Krasniqi*, Senior Officer for Monitoring and Evaluation
- *Ilirjane Ademaj Ahmeti*, Senior Officer for Monitoring and Evaluation

Sources of information for the Report:

1. *The Self-Evaluation Report (including four Annexes,* SER*)*
2. *Syllabi of the subjects*
3. *CVs of the academic staff*
4. *Statute of AAB College*
5. *Regulations for Bachelor's Studies*
6. *Regulation on Quality Assurance*
7. *Regulations for Scientific-Research Activities*
8. *Rules of Procedures of the Study Commission*
9. *Rules of Procedure of the Committee for Quality Assurance*
10. *Regulation on Appointment, Re-Appointment and Promotion of Academic Staff*
11. *Code of Ethics*
12. *Regulation on Prevention of conflict of Interest*
13. *Code of Ethics for Scientific Research*
14. *Statute of Students' Union of AAB College*
15. *AAB College Industrial Advisory Board. Rules of Procedure*
16. *Regulation for Internal Communication*

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17. *Regulation on Publications*

18. *Regulation on Student Academic Mobility*

19. *Regulation for the Procedures of Initiating, Drafting and Signing Cooperation Agreements*

20. *Regulation on the Report of the Examination Results*

21. *Regulation of Work of the Centre for Professional Development and Innovation*

22. *Regulation on Disciplinary Measures and Procedures*

23. *Grant Regulation*

24. *Regulation on Student Application for Project Funding Grants*

25. *Regulation on the Description and Systematization of the Workplace*

26. *Regulation on Academic Staff Performance Appraisal*

27. *Strategic Plan 2022-2026*

28. *Regulation on Intellectual Property*

29. Video presentation of the AAB Ferizaj branch

Additional documents

1. Professional Bachelor in "Programming". Accreditation Report of the Expert Team. AAB College, 2021.

2. Development Plan of the Ferizaj branch

3. Examples of agreements with the institutions in Ferizaj region, relevant to the study program and signed by the Director of the Ferizaj branch

4. Syllabus for the Final Project

5. Minutes of the meetings of all bodies where the study program was discussed

6. 3-year plan for the implementation of the study program for the annual admission of 200 students (need for additional computer laboratories and other premises and equipment, necessary financial resources etc)

7. The total number of students and study groups in the Ferizaj branch (currently and expected for years 2023-2025).

8. Organisational chart of the AAB College Ferizaj branch (with job titles and, if possible, the names of all administrative staff) as of the moment when BA Programming will be implemented there

9. Data on the application/admission for BA Programming in AAB College Pristina from 2021 (how many applicants were there, how many were admitted)

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10. Full list of the current academic staff of AAB College Pristina that can be employed at the BA Programming at AAB College Ferizaj branch (with indicating the study courses that they are able to teach)

11. Full list of the physical library stock that is planned/ budgeted for AAB College Ferizaj for BA Programming (titles of books and number of copies)

12. Any quality assurance reports that have been produced in 2020 or 2021 for the AAB College Ferizaj branch (for other programs that are already implemented there)

13. List of issues that have been discussed by the Ethics Commission for the Faculty of Computer Science in 2020 and 2021

14. Job description of the "branch director"

15. Job description of the "program coordinator".

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *KAA Accreditation Manual*
- *The Manual for External Evaluation of Higher Education Institution.*
- *Administrative Instructions (MEST): No 15/2018 for Accreditation of Higher Education Institution in the Republic of Kosovo.*

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1.2. Site visit schedule

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:30 – 10.15	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	• Jusuf Qarkaxhija, Dean of the Faculty • Granit Curri, Secretary General
10.20 – 11.00	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	• Ersan Hamdiu, QA Coordinator • Zija Rexhepi, Head of Administration
11:10 – 11:50	Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site)	
11:50 – 12.50	Meeting with the heads of the study programme:	• Lauresha Ramadani • Samir Jakupi • Nida Santuri • Leron Berisha
12:55 – 13:40	Meeting with teaching staff	• Laurik Helshani • Krenar Kepuska • Donat Rexha • Edon Bublaku • Shkelqim Miftari • Edlira Qefalia
13:50 – 14:35	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	• Agon Demiri • Ermir Bunjaku • Leutrina Bajrami • Fatos Stavileci • Besar Spahija • Zekri Pozhari
14:35 – 14:45	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
14:55 – 14:55	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	• Jusuf Qarkaxhija, Dean of the Faculty • Granit Curri, Secretary General

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1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

AAB College was established in 2002 and is currently the largest non-public higher education institution in Kosovo. Beside of the main campus in Prishtina, the college has branches in Ferizaj and Gjakova. These branches have undergone institutional accreditations in 2011, 2013, 2019 and 2022. While the study programs and academic staff are unified, i.e. the branches do not have unique study programs and do not have their own academic staff, the administration of the College is to certain extent decentralized, for example, staff recruitment and advancement, the management of physical resources, transfer of students, etc. belong to the responsibilities of the branches.

The mission of AAB College as stated in the *Statute of AAB College* is the following: "*AAB organizes student-centred diversified and quality studies, engages in quality applied and theoretical research, and provides services to the community and industry for purposes of providing transformational experiences for the full development of students, staff, social and economic partners and society at large.*"

The mission statement of the Ferizaj branch is: *"To develop the full potential of young people and adults from this region by providing access to higher education and to contribute to regional development by strengthening active cooperation with the community and the industry of the Ferizaj region."*

The branches offer study programs which to a large extent are the same as the study programs of the respective Faculty of the main campus in Prishtina. The *Professional Bachelor in Programming* study program is already offered by the Faculty of Computer Science (FCS, or *Faculty*) in Prishtina and the content offered in Ferizaj will be identical.

Therefore, this study program is essentially under dual management: the content and substantive implementation of the study program is the responsibility of the Faculty, but the organizational issues related to it are within the competence of the branch.

The mission of the Faculty is "*to prepare students for a globalized technology and information society, through advanced theoretical and practical teaching as well as through advanced scientific research in the most important fields of technology. FCS combines an interdisciplinary core with specialized studies that enable students to solve complex and focused problems as well as prepare them for a career in an industry-based society*".

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FCS has the following strategic objectives:

- to strengthen the quality of studies through the advancement of teaching and learning strategies;

- to support development and research projects of staff and students in order to increase the relevance of studies;

- to advance working conditions through innovation and use of new technologies in order to develop the quality of technological and research services;

- to improve the infrastructure of laboratories which responds to the increasing demands and changes of information technology;

- to design curricula and enable the most professional literature so that the latest information technology trends can be incorporated in the study programs.

The teaching process in the branch is monitored according to the same conditions and criteria established in the central campus in Prishtina. The study program is managed in the branch by the Study Program Coordinator Lauresha Ramadani who interacts closely with the Dean of FCS as well as with the Quality Coordinator at the Ferizaj branch and with the central Quality Assurance Office.

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2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

1.1. The mission of the study program is "*to contribute to the development of professional staff with the latest knowledge and practices in the field of programming, which serve the labour market and society not only in the country but also in the international arena by developing software products and providing quality solutions in software development*". Since the mission of the branch is to give access to people from the region to higher education and to contribute to regional development, it can be concluded that the mission of the study program is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the AAB College Ferizaj branch. The AAB College Ferizaj branch Development Plan 2022 – 2026 states that each study program offered in the branch individually corresponds to the characteristics of the region.

1.2. The development of the study program has followed the same procedures as in all other branches of AAB College. As the study program was adopted by the FCS Teaching Council, the whole teaching staff was involved in its development, as well as the companies with whom AAB College has signed cooperation agreements. The ET would, however, recommend to digitalise all meeting minutes to ensure that the documentation related to program development and revision is easily manageable. The study program was several times updated after discussions with the stakeholders and the recommendations from program accreditation in AAB College central campus were taken into account. Some of the employers ET met were involved in the development of the study program. Their suggestions were taken into account in compiling the study program.

1.3. The main didactics concept bases on the combination of theory and practice: problem-based approach, literature reviews and analyses, research projects (both individual and group-based) and presentations as well as formative assessment are heavily used.

1.4. Formal policies, guidelines and regulations are uniform throughout the AAB College. The following regulations deal with recurring procedural or academic issues: *Statute of AAB College*, *Regulation for Bachelor's Studies*, *Regulation on Quality Assurance*, *Regulation on Student Academic Mobility*, *Regulation on Disciplinary Measures and Procedures*, etc. The main documents are publicly available on the university website

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(https://aab-edu.net/en/about-aab/policies-and-regulations/). However, some important documents are still not publicly available (for example the *Regulation of Internship at the AAB College*). However, the ET must note that the information on the AAB College Ferizaj branch, although published on the AAB web page, is not easily accessible for an external reader.

1.5. The main document regulating the ethical conduct is the *Code of Ethics*. This document considers the core values, the principles and rules of ethical conduct, the Ethics Committee as well as the measures against ethical violations. There is an additional *Code of Ethics for Scientific Research.* This document applies to the whole AAB College.

1.6. All AAB College regulations that were available to the ET have been adopted or amended within the past three years and this is confirmed by the SER and approval/ revision dates included in the documents. The competence to amend these documents lies with the central bodies of the university, not FCS or the branch. However, it has to be noted that some documents (for example the templates of questionnaires) did not contain the date of their approval.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	+	
Standard 1.2. 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.	+	
Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.	+	
Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.	+	
Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	+	
Standard 1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.	+	

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Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Publish online all the most important regulations of the college also in English.*

2. *Ensure that the information on AAB College branches and study programs is easily accessible on the AAB College website for an unfamiliar reader.*

3. *Include a timestamp/date of approval or revision in all internal regulatory documents published on the AAB College website.*

2.2. Quality Management

2.1. The main bodies of quality assurance in the College are *Quality Assurance Committee* and *Quality Assurance Office*. Key persons ensuring that quality assurance processes will be applied to the study program are: 1) Quality assurance coordinator of Ferizaj branch and 2) Quality assurance coordinator at the CSF. Person in charge of the content matters of the study program is always the dean of respective faculty, in this particular case the Dean of FCS. The regulatory documents stipulate quality assurance requirements for all structures involved in teaching in one or another way (the Senate, the rector, deans, academic personnel, administrative personnel). Students' involvement in the quality assurance processes is conducted primarily through questionnaires that are mandatory to be filled in at the end of each semester. Staff members compose yearly self-evaluation reports where they – among other aspects – have the opportunity to make suggestions for quality improvement.

2.2. Both the administrative and academic processes are unified in all branches of the AAB College. The following tools of quality assurance are used: questionnaires for undergraduate and graduate students, academic staff, administrative staff, for employers of graduates, for industry and for students who have dropped out; weekly meetings of the academic staff in the Dean's office; training of academic staff in teaching methodology and course development; semester reports at the end of each semester etc. According to the *Regulation on Quality Assurance*, the quality assurance procedures are applied throughout the whole educational process and involves all stakeholders in and outside the AAB College. Quality assurance is conducted according to the plan of activities which includes different evaluations and assessment procedures. Questionnaires are developed and will be handled by the central Quality

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Assurance Office. AAB College also conducts focus group meetings where also students are involved.

2.3. While the study program Programming at the AAB College Ferizaj branch is not implemented yet, the experience in existing curricula can be used to determine whether quality assurance processes cover all aspects of program design and implementation. Questionnaires and focus group interviews are the main instruments used for quality assurance. The questionnaires target all major stakeholders and deal with all significant aspects of program planning, delivery and support services (including administrative and technical services). Questionnaires are used for the evaluation of the courses, of the academic personnel, of practical work, of the infrastructure and of student support services. The ET learned that currently there is no consistent system for surveying students on their internship experience but the AAB College plans to introduce such surveys. The Quality Assurance Office ensures the proper administration of the quality assurance processes.

2.4. The questionnaires for students focus on the quality of the subjects. The quality issues related to the study program as such belong to the competence of the Council of the Faculty. Some assessments are conducted by the Quality Assurance Office centrally at the College. The following activities of the quality process of the study program are foreseen: 1) analysis of similar study programs, 2) identifying trends and challenges, 3) analysis of the market and industry needs, 4) meetings with alumni and representatives of the companies, 5) review of the study program based on all analyses listed above.

2.5. The *Quality Assurance Regulation* of the AAB College states that one of the responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Office is to ensure that Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) as well as other applicable documents in the European Higher Education Area are widely implemented within the institution. However, the fact that there is no single person in the department responsible for the substantive quality of the curriculum is a clear quality risk. The ET also did not learn of any particular performance indicators that would be defined for the study program level, for example, the drop-out rate or the satisfaction rate of students, with a certain standard/ target defined for every year/semester.

2.6. The questionnaires for students are mandatory for students at the AAB College and are filled in at the end of each semester, the questionnaires for academic and administrative staff are conducted once a year and questionnaires for graduates, employers and industry every two years. Questionnaires for graduating students and questionnaires for students who withdraw from studies are completed continuously.

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However, the results of these evaluations are not made publicly available – neither on the internal electronic platform of the AAB College, nor on the website.

2.7. The Quality Coordinators of the Ferizaj branch and FCS through involving the Quality Assurance Office compile reports based on the data that are collected from the questionnaires. These reports together with recommendations will be sent to the management of the FCS and the AAB College (to the Quality Assurance Office). These recommendations serve as a basis for improving the study programs, student services, teaching and learning, etc. While this information was stated in the SER, the ET did not learn of any particular examples of such reports neither for the Ferizaj branch in general nor for the FCS.

2.8. The document *Regulation on Quality Assurance* sets out the requirement for the Quality Assurance Coordinator to assist the dean in compiling semester reports at the end on each semester as well as in conducting internal evaluations for accreditation purposes at least once every three years.

2.9. The fact that a significant number of the latest versions of the documents came into force in the last three years shows that the quality assurance arrangements for AAB College in general and also for the study program are regularly evaluated and improved. Most of the regulations relating to quality issues were revised in 2021 including the Regulation on Quality Assurance, the Manual on Quality Assurance, the template for student questionnaire.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.	+	
Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.	+	
Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	+	
Standard 2.4. Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.	+	

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Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.		**+**
Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.		**+**
Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.	**+**	
Standard 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (e.g. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.	**+**	
Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.	**+**	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Nominate* **one** *academic staff member of FCS as a curator of the study program who has the full responsibility on the quality of that study program. The curator will then form a permanent council of the study program, including representatives of employers, partners, students, graduates and some key academic staff including other heads of the study program. The task of the council will be to propose recommendations for further improvements of the study program based on surveys of all stakeholders, international development trends of the academic area and the needs of society. The authority and responsibilities of the curator should be explicitly defined in the university regulations.*

2. *Develop a list of indicators and specific targets for every semester/year that would be monitored for the professional bachelor in Programming on a regular basis and include the related analysis in quality assurance reports.*

3. *Publish the reports resulting from the quality assurance procedures both on the website and the internal portal of the AAB College while respecting the privacy of the teaching staff and students.*

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4. *To compile summary reports based on the survey results and statistical data both on the study program and the FCS level and ensure that the findings (recommendations) of these reports are taken into account in the development processes.*

2.3. Academic Staff

3.1. The employment of staff for the AAB College Ferizaj branch is a process organized from the centre in Prishtina in accordance with the *Statute of AAB College*, the *Regulation on Appointment, Re-Appointment and Promotion of Academic Staff* as well as other relevant documents. However, for accreditation purposes each study program implemented at the Ferizaj branch has to have dedicated program holders/ heads (study program coordinator for the branch is selected among them) and a full list of teaching staff that will deliver the study program in Ferizaj. The job descriptions are included in the *Regulation for Systematization of Jobs*. The SER contained a complete list of full-time and part-time academic staff where for each person scientific degree, academic title and workload is indicated. The courses taught are listed in another table.

3.2. Legal requirements set for teaching staff are met: the employment of academic staff is done in full compliance with the Law on Labour, the *Statute of AAB College* and the *Administrative Instruction on Accreditation of HEI*s. All 23 teachers announced for the study program have at least a master's degree.

3.3. The formal requirements concerning employment of academic staff by other institutions are met – all full-time teachers have indicated in their publications AAB as their only employer. According to the CVs, no academic staff member has more than two teaching positions. Of the 23 academic staff members who have at least one course in the study program, 21 are listed in the SER as having full-time position at AAB College; all full-time staff members who have registered in Google Research portal have listed AAB College as their employer.

3.4. The vast majority (more than 90%) of teachers have full-time employment, and consequently, they cover the vast majority (more than 90%) of the courses.

3.5. According to the *Administrative Instruction on Accreditation of HEI's in Kosovo*, Standard 3.5 is not fully applied to professional programs which lead to a professional diploma. However, AAB has employed five full time staff members with at least five years professional experience.

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3.6. The teaching staff teaching in AAB College Ferizaj branch can use all services that AAB College provides for additional professional development of teaching staff. AAB College has established and operationalised for this purpose the Center for Professional Advancement and Innovation. Staff training programs are divided into three levels – basic, professional and advanced levels. The Individual Professional Development Plan consists of four parts: 1) Personal goals and objectives, 2) Personal analysis, 3) Development plan, 4) Measures to achieve the goals/objectives. The SER lists a number of trainings that have been offered for the academic staff in the recent years. Young researchers and lecturers are encouraged to pursue their doctoral studies while retaining their teaching duties at the AAB College.

3.7. The responsibilities of teaching staff are defined in the *Statute* of the AAB College, in the *Regulation on Systematization of Jobs of AAB College* and other documents. These include among other responsibilities the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service. A list of activities organized by the academic staff of FCS was attached as an appendix to the SER.

3.8. The evaluation of academic staff is based on three components, namely the self-assessment of academic staff, the students' assessment and the assessment by the dean. Self-assessment is form-based, and is conducted once a year. Assessment by students is anonymous and is conducted through electronic questionnaires that students complete at the end of each semester. Dean's assessment is based on the self-evaluation reports of the academic staff. However, no regular development interviews are conducted – the face-to-face discussion takes place only if the dean finds it necessary to discuss some aspects presented in the self-evaluation report. The results of evaluations, however, are not made public. The ET learned that the AAB College plans to start publishing them in a generalized form in the newsletter. The system of peer-evaluation is designed, but not implemented yet.

3.9. The Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 sets development of teaching/learning resources and learning environment as belonging to the priority areas of the College (one of the five strategic goals) – three measures are for the development of academic staff in accordance with their needs for quality student-centred teaching and two measures for digitalization of teaching as well as for improving the capacities for a qualitative implementation of digitalized teaching forms in teaching. Improving the quality of learning materials were not explicitly mentioned in the strategy documents. Nor was it addressed by the SER or other college documents available to ET.

3.10. There are no retired teachers – the average age of full-time teaching staff is about 40 years.

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Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.	+	
Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.	+	
Standard 3.3. 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.	+	
Standard 3.4. At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.	+	
Standard 3.5. For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.	-	-
Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	+	
Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.	+	
Standard 3.8. 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.		+
Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.		+
Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	+	

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Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Introduce mandatory yearly development interviews of the academic and non-academic staff by their superiors that would be based on the self-evaluation reports by the staff.*

2. *Introduce peer-evaluation by the academic staff and publish the overall results (analysis) of the evaluation of the academic staff at least on the internal portal of the AAB College.*

3. *State the development of learning materials as one of the priorities of the AAB College in the strategy documents, and provide the necessary resources for their development in the budget of the College.*

4. *Stipulate in the College documents the obligation of teachers to ensure the quality of learning materials.*

2.4. Educational Process Content

4.1. The first three semesters of the study program have the same structure – four mandatory and two elective courses from which every student selects one. In the fourth, fifth and sixth semesters, there are three mandatory courses instead of four. Every course has the size of 6 ECTS except two semester projects (both have 12 ECTS) and the Final Project (10 ECTS). The general conception and composition of the study program is reasonable. The following conclusions can be drawn from the submitted documents and conversations with lecturers, students, alumni and employers of alumni:

    4.1.1. The content of the study program is broader than one might expected from its name (here, the name *Programming* refers to *Computer Programming*) covering also some aspects that belong to the scope of Software Engineering (especially some aspects of process development).

    4.1.2. A mandatory course *Business Analytics Programming* is based on Python programming language. At the same time the basics of Python is included as a topic in the *Data Science with Python* elective course.

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4.1.3. The share of courses on Web development is relatively small: *Web design*, *Web Framework* and *User Interface Design* are elective courses. On the other hand, *Web Application Programming* and *Web Services Programming* are mandatory. The following problems may appear:

- The students who have not taken the *Web Design* course have difficulties in passing the *Web Application Programming* and *Web Services Programming* courses?

- The *Web Framework* course considers server-side framework (*Laravel*) only. Students are not able to apply client-side frameworks like *Angular* or *React*.

It was explained to the ET (and the students confirmed this) that necessary topics of web programming and frameworks are covered by other subjects (primarily in the *Web Architecture* course).

4.1.4. There is no internship foreseen in the curriculum of the study program. During the discussions it was claimed that students will in fact have an internship while conducting the Projects and the Final Project. However, this option is not mentioned in the syllabi of these subjects.

4.1.5. The syllabus for the Final Project was submitted to the ET only as part of the additional information. The ET considers that the syllabus is very brief and has to be supported with methodological guidelines for producing the final project that would include the mandatory structure, rules for the content and formatting etc.

Employers were of the opinion that since international IT communication is in English and a large number of IT companies are international, students could be encouraged to write their thesis (written part of the final project) in English. They also expressed their readiness to give more lectures to students on the development trends in the field and the activities of companies in this field.

4.2. Although the analysis of compliance of the study program with the *National Qualifications Framework (NQF)* and the *Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EQF)* is not conducted (it is simply claimed that the competences are in accordance with these frameworks), the study program and its expected learning outcomes comply with the EQF level 6.

4.3. The study program has 21 learning outcomes. The subjects are in general in a logical flow and have relatively thorough lists of learning outcomes as well. Some concrete aspects are discussed in section 4.1. On the other hand, the interests of the employers were much wider than it is possible to accommodate in one study program – aspects of

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infrastructure, smart city solutions, digital transformation and Industry 5.0 were mentioned.

4.4. The syllabi contain all the necessary components and were submitted in electronic form. They are in general detailed enough to get an adequate understanding on the content and other aspects of the subjects.

4.5. The language in which the study program will be offered is Albanian.

4.6. As the study program is not implemented yet in the AAB College Ferizaj branch, it is not possible to rate adequately the quality of student-teacher relationship. However, the student-teacher relationship seems to be very good in the AAB College Prishtina branch. AAB College has emphasised its student-centred approach several times in the SER and regulatory documents. Moreover, according to the syllabi, teachers are going to explain the content of the course, the requirement, assessment and other features of the course at the first lecture.

4.7. The policies and regulations in the AAB College are unified, so are the teaching strategies. The College has adopted a student-centred approach. Students are supposed to be engaged in interactive way of learning where students have small projects and periodic presentations, discussions and other interactive methods. Teaching methods are thoroughly described in the syllabi. On the other hand, description of assessment methods is completely missing in some syllabi.

4.8. The mechanisms and related issues of student assessment are stated in the *Regulations for Bachelor's Studies*. Students can also propose changes in the assessment methods. However, the description of assessment in the syllabi varied a lot: while in the majority of cases the assessment was explained quite thoroughly, in some cases only the percentages of different elements of assessment (participation and engagement, homework, project/seminar, tests, final exam etc) were given.

4.9. The grading system that is used in all Balkan countries is used. The grades are 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 where 5 marks failing and 6 -10 are positive. The passing level is 50% as widely used in Europe. After the end of semester, students' success rate for each course is presented in form of a report.

4.10. The report that is composed at the end of semester contains – among other – the following data: the number of students who have applied to enter the exam, the number of students who have taken the exam, the number of students who have passed the exam, as well as the number of those who failed. These reports are analysed by the administration and additional measures are taken if necessary.

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4.11. As already mentioned in section 4.1.4, the curriculum of the study program does not contain an internship. Nevertheless, the students are provided opportunity to have an internship within the Project courses on 4th and 5th semester as well as during the Final Project. However, it turned out that securing an internship to all students is a challenge. One of the reasons for this may be the fact that internships are managed by Career Office, which may not have sufficient contacts with sectoral institutions. It should be noted that the learning outcomes of the two project courses are identical. This raises the question of what additional knowledge, skills and competencies students will acquire within the framework of the subject Project in the 5th semester.

4.12. According to the SER, the FCS and the Ferizaj branch has signed cooperation agreements and Memorandums of Understanding with several institutions. The ET was presented with several examples – agreements with the municipalities of Ferizaj, Kacanik, Viti, Shtime, agreement with the Post of Kosovo Ferizaj branch, agreement with KosInvest and ELKOS that operate also in Ferizaj. Some agreements have been signed for the Faculty of Economics in Ferizaj, some for the AAB College in general.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 4.1. The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.	**+**	
Standard 4.2. The study program 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.	**+**	
Standard 4.3. 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.	**+**	
Standard 4.4. 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,	**+**	

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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.		
Standard 4.5. 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.	-	-
Standard 4.6. 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.	+	
Standard 4.7. Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.	+	
Standard 4.8. 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.	+	
Standard 4.9. 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.	+	
Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or KAA inconsistently assessed.	+	
Standard 4.11. If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.		+
Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.	+	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

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ET recommendations:

1. *Clearly indicate in the curriculum that an internship is foreseen in the study program and update the syllabi of the Project courses accordingly.*

2. *Ensure that the internship, if foreseen by the curriculum, is provided to all students of the program.*

3. *Ensure that there are written methodological guidelines for producing the final project, in addition to the syllabus for the course.*

4. *Ensure that the assessment methods in syllabi are described in a unified way.*

2.5. Students

5.1. General principles of admission are stated in the *Statute* of the college and the general procedures are stated in the *Regulation for Student Registration.* The decision for admission and enrolment of new students for each academic year is taken by the Senate. The procedures and conditions for admission to bachelor studies are stated in the *Regulation for Bachelor's Studies*. The Faculty Council decides about the criteria. Admission to the studies is done on the basis of a public call and admission criteria and procedures for new students will be applied to all students regardless of their background.

5.2. Students enrolled must have completed high school, have successfully passed the Matura test and possess personal documentation including the school certificates, identity cards, etc. Applications can also be submitted online.

5.3. The number of study places for the first year is supposed to be up to 200. The maximum number of students on lectures is 60, and 20 for exercises. This allows to use the necessary individual approach and interaction with students. However, this requires a certain number of teaching staff that can accommodate this number of students (4 groups for lectures and 10 groups for exercises).

5.4. For feedback to students on their performance, mainly regular communication means are used including the e-Service platform. Feedback in the AAB College is provided on a regular basis during the courses. In accordance with the Regulation on Bachelor's Studies, the communication of student evaluation results is done no later than 7 days from the date of the exam.

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5.5. The AAB College has established an e-Service platform to which students have individual access. This platform records individual student achievements and contains all materials and information needed to pass the courses. Grading is done electronically for each course and a transcript of records can be generated at any time.

5.6. The scheduling of exams is set by the Central Administration of the AAB College. The Senate of the college may decide to announce additional terms for exams. According to the SER, in cases where students need an extension of deadlines or change of exam date, these requests are always approved.

5.7. At the end of each exam period, an evaluation report for students' performance is generated through the E-service platform. The report contains statistical information about the number of students present in the exam, the percentage of those who passed the exam as well as of those who failed. These reports will be submitted to the Dean's office and to the Office of the Vice-Rector for Teaching, analysed and evaluated.

5.8. The AAB College has not fully implemented any plagiarism detection software, and checking originality of students' written texts is not regulated. However, the AAB College is currently in the implementing phase of a plagiarism detection software *Turnitin*. There already have been trainings for academic staff about the usage of this software.

5.9. The rights and obligations of students and issues of non-academic conduct are stated in the *Statute* of the AAB College as well as in the *Regulation on Studies* which are publicly available documents. Obligations are also provided under the contract which the student signs upon enrolment in the AAB College, as well as through the electronic platform E-Student. The procedure for possible complaints is described in the *Regulations for Bachelor's Studies*.

5.10. The students' transfer is regulated in the *Statute* of the AAB College and in the *Regulation for Bachelor's Studies*. All students' rights and obligations are made publicly available. The transfer of students to the program Programming would be done through the institutional Transfer Office which in cooperation with the FCS quality assurance coordinator verifies the files of each candidate. According to the Statute of AAB College, transfer candidates must spend at least one academic year at AAB College prior to their graduation. The mobility is regulated in the *Regulations on Student Academic Mobility*.

5.11. Each member of the academic staff has two hours per week, specified for individual meetings / counselling with the students. In cases where the requests for meetings are high, the academic staff is obliged to hold even more consultations per week with students, either physically or online, through electronic platforms. An academic staff

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would be appointed as an academic advisor who helps students with the difficulties they encounter while studying in the Programming study program.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	**No**
Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.	**+**	
Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	**+**	
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.	**+**	
Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	**+**	
Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	**+**	
Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.	**+**	
Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.	**+**	
Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.		**+**
Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.	**+**	
Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.	**+**	
Standard 5.11. 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.	**+**	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

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ET recommendations:

1. Regulate the plagiarism detection mechanisms and measure their efficiency.

2.6. Research

6.1. The research objective of the AAB College Ferizaj branch is written in the Development Plan: "*Promote the research culture at the branch through the increase of research work*." The study program does not have a specific applied research objective. The syllabus of the Final Project was provided to the ET but it is very brief and general, without specifying the methodological approach to the Final Project. There are two projects in the study program that are mandatory and "must be of a research nature or a project that will have a practical realization at the end of the semester." This means that the project bases on a thorough study of the topic, and at the end the student prepares an analytical report. On the other hand, the learning outcomes of these two projects are identical. This means that, formally, no added value is expected from the second project.

6.2. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities and performance in relation to these expectations are specified in the work contract, in the *Statute of the College,* in the *Regulation for Scientific Research and Activities* and in the *Regulation on Appointment, Reappointment and Promotion of Academic Staff*.

6.3. The purpose, principles, good practices and the fundamentals of research of the academic staff and of students are determined in the *Regulation for Scientific Research Activities*.

6.4. Academic staff teaching in a professional bachelor study program do not necessarily have a proven track record of research results. Instead, they must have at least five years of professional experience in the field of teaching.

6.5. There are no publication requirements for academic staff teaching in a professional bachelor study program.

6.6. There are no research requirements for academic staff teaching in a professional bachelor study program. However, the research of some teachers is quite active.

6.7. There are no publication requirements for academic staff teaching in a professional bachelor study program. Nevertheless, some teachers have a relatively good track record of publishing.

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6.8. The academic staff within the FCS publishes papers under the name of the AAB College.

6.9. It has been claimed that since teachers are professionals, it is common practice to share their professional experience with students during the teaching.

6.10. Procedures for the development and commercialization of intellectual property are stated in the *Regulation on Intellectual Property*. Issues relating to intellectual property are also foreseen in the Employment contract of academic staff, Article 14, which stipulates that intellectual property rights in any work that is done or created by the employee during the employment relationship (during the hours and in the workplace) shall be counted as the employer's work. Intellectual property issues are also regulated on the national level.

6.11. Students' research activities take place primarily in the framework of the preparation of the Final Project, where students usually plan and implement a project carried out within a company.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 6.1. The study program 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.		+
Standard 6.2. 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.	+	
Standard 6.3. 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 program.	+	
Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.	+	
Standard 6.5. 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.	-	-

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Standard 6.6. Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.	-	-
Standard 6.7. 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.	-	-
Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.	+	
Standard 6.9/6.8. Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.	+	
Standard 6.10. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	+	
Standard 6.11. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.	+	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Involve also teachers of professional educational programs in the research activities of the AAB College, especially for applied research.*

2. *Define the learning outcomes related to the research competencies, in particular for the subjects "Project" and "Final Project".*

2.7. Infrastructure and Resources

7.1.   The AAB College Ferizaj branch has a modern infrastructure on an area of about 6112m^2. There are 16 classrooms with a capacity of 30 to 80 seats and other rooms (computer labs, library, space for independent work etc). The students can also use services offered by the central offices of the College in Prishtina. For communication with the administration, an electronic platform e-*Student* is mainly used. However, the furnishing of the rooms could be more student-friendly - there is a lot of free space in the college that could be used by students outside of school hours.

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7.2. The financial plan of the study program was provided as part of the additional information. It is based on 200 students as the foreseen number of enrolment in the first year. In 2022/23 academic year, the income is to a large extent (92,83%) based on the student fees. The main expenditures are related to salaries for academic staff (46,58% of the income) and investments in science, laboratory equipment and computers (25% of the income). In the upcoming years the share devoted to investments in science, laboratory equipment and computers increases. The implementation of such a study program, which is largely practical, and in which a large part of the teaching should take place in computer classes for up to 20 students at a time, requires a fairly good laboratory base. In any case, it should be incomparably larger than what the AAB College Ferizaj branch currently has and needs, especially when there will be students from three intakes (2022, 2023, 2024).

7.3. AAB College owns all the buildings and practically all the equipment it uses.

7.4. Professional Bachelor in Programming study program is practical. Therefore, a sufficient number of computer classes is required. The existing two computer classes will not be enough to train 200 students, especially in the coming years when students from two or three admissions study at the same time. Moreover, the *Development Plan of AAB Ferizaj Campus for 2022-2026* does not foresee an increase of the number of computer classes.

7.5. The library and library services were described in the SER only partially – electronic resources were described thoroughly, but not the rooms, number of seats in reading and group work rooms, physical books, other services the library offers. According to the students, there is a shortage of textbooks in Albanian. As part of the additional information, the ET was presented a list of physical books available for Programming students at the AAB College Ferizaj branch. However, the list includes only titles of books for each subject (that fully correspond to the literature included in syllabuses) but not the number of copies available.

7.6. The facilities (including toilets) in the AAB College Ferizaj branch are appropriate for people with special needs. If necessary, students are assisted by the administrative staff or by the coordinator of the study program.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 7.1. 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 taken into account.	+	

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Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.	**+**	
Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years: a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process; 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.	**+**	
Standard 7.4. 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.		**+**
Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; 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.	**+**	
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.	**+**	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

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ET recommendations:

1. *For further development of the infrastructure, design the space distribution and furnishing in such a way that it allows conducting necessary amount of practical work in computer labs, small group seminars and discussions.*

3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

AAB College intends to open a new academic field in its Ferizaj branch, which will require extensive additional spatial and technological resources. Unfortunately, the college has not provided the necessary additional resource analysis for this. Based on the available data, it is certainly not possible to recommend opening the admission to the planned level (200 students per year). Given the practical nature of the proposed study, it would be necessary to provide computer labs for at least half of the students, i.e. at least 100 additional computers in the first year, the number of which will be increased accordingly over the next two years. Based on the available resources, the number of admissions could be a maximum of 90. Even then, the number of computer labs should be increased in the coming years. The number fixed by the ET is also related to the admission statistics in the Programming program in AAB College in Prishtina for 2021 that show that for the 125 study places available there were 133 applicants only.

Another recommendation concerns the name of the study program. Since the content of the study program is much broader that just programming (or coding), *Software Development* would be a much more adequate name for the study program (not *Software Engineering*, because some important aspects of software engineering are not properly covered).

Overall compliance:

Standard	Compliance level
1. Mission, objectives and administration	Fully compliant
2. Quality management	Substantially compliant
3. Academic staff	Substantially compliant

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4. Educational process content	Substantially compliant
5. Students	Substantially compliant
6. Research	Substantially compliant
7. Infrastructure and resources	Substantially compliant
Overall compliance	**Substantially compliant**

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program Professional Bachelor in Programming offered by AAB College Ferizaj branch is *Substantially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *to accredit* the study program for a duration of *3 years* with a number of 90 students to be enrolled in the program.

Expert Team

Member

Peeter Normak
_____
(Signature)   (Print Name)   (Date)

Member

Asnate Kazoka

Asnate Kažoka
_____
(Signature)   (Print Name)   (Date)

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