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**AAB COLLEGE
FACULTY OF MASS COMMUNICATION**

MASS COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM (BA) PROGRAM

RE-ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

19 May, Zagreb, Croatia – Riga, Latvia



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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| 1.1. Context..... | 3 |
| 1.2. Site visit schedule | 5 |
| 1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation..... | 5 |
| 2. PROGRAM EVALUATION..... | 9 |
| 2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration | 9 |
| 2.2. Quality Management | 12 |
| 2.3. Academic Staff | 16 |
| 2.4. Educational Process Content | 20 |
| 2.5. Students..... | 25 |
| 2.6. Research..... | 31 |
| 2.7. Infrastructure and Resources | 36 |
| 3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET | 40 |



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 13 April 2022

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Dr. Damir Jugo*
- *Mārtiņš Upmacis (Student Expert)*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Arianit Krasniqi, KAA Officer*
- *Ilirjane Ademaj Ahmeti, KAA Officer*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-Evaluation Report AAB College, Faculty of Mass Communication, Mass Communication and Journalism BA Program, January 2022.*
- *KAA Accreditation Manual, 2021.*
- *The Manual for External Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions, February 2021.*
- *Syllabi of the Study Programme Courses.*
- *Staff CV's (Full Time).*
- *Regulation for the Organization of Master Studies, AAB College, July 2017.*
- *Code of Scientific Research of AAB College (no precise date).*
- *Regulation on the description and systematization of the workplace, AAB College, June 2019.*
- *Regulations for Scientific-Research Activities, AAB College, December 2021.*
- *Rregullore për Avancim të Personelit Akademik, AAB College, January 2013.*

Additional Documents:

- *AAB College Strategic Plan 2022-2026, AAB College, January 2022.*
- *Independent Auditor's Report of AAB College, BDO Kosova L.L.C., 19 April 2019.*
- *Independent Auditor's Report of AAB College, BDO Kosova L.L.C., 10 April 2020.*
- *Independent Auditor's Report of AAB College, BDO Kosova L.L.C., 7 April 2021.*
- *Cooperation Protocol between AAB College and Radio Televizionit te Kosoves (RTK), September 2021.*



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- *Cooperation Protocol between AAB College and Institut Demokraci per zhvillim, September 2021.*
- *Cooperation Protocol between AAB College and ATV Prishtine, September 2021.*
- *Cooperation Protocol between AAB College and Klan Kosova, September 2021.*
- *Cooperation Protocol between AAB College and Kosovo Journalist Association, September 2021.*
- *Cooperation Protocol between AAB College and Zero Positive Publicies, October 2021.*
- *Cooperation Agreement between AAB College and Municipality of Fushe Kosove, June 2018.*
- *Cooperation Agreement between AAB College and Municipality of Gjakova, September 2018.*
- *Cooperation Agreement between AAB College and Municipality of Mitrovica, June 2018.*
- *Cooperation Agreement between AAB College and Municipality of Peja, May 2018.*
- *Cooperation Agreement between AAB College and Municipality of Gjilan, May 2018.*
- *Cooperation Agreement between AAB College and Municipality of Prizren, May 2018.*
- *Formal Performance Appraisal Example, AAB College, Faculty of Mass Communication, September 2021.*
- *Student Internship Assessment Form, AAB College, Faculty of Mass Communication, January 2022.*
- *Meeting Minutes from the Consultation Process with the Alumni, AAB College, Faculty of Mass Communication, January 2021.*
- *Meeting Minutes from the Consultation Process with the Industry Representatives, AAB College, Faculty of Mass Communication, January 2021.*
- *Sample of the Employment Contract (Professor), AAB College, 2022.*
- *Sample of a Student Assessment for the Academic Staff, Language Culture Course, AAB College, Faculty of Mass Communication (no precise date).*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *Standards and Performance Indicators for external quality assurance; Accreditation Manual of KAA, 2021.*



1.2. Site visit schedule

| Programme Re-accreditation Procedure at AAB College | |
|---|---|
| Programme: | Mass Communication and Journalism, BA |
| Online site visit on: | April 13, 2022 |
| Expert Team: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Damir Jugo • Martins Upmacis |
| Coordinators of the KAA: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arianit Krsniqi, KAA Officer 2. Ilirjane Ademaj Ahmeti, KAA Officer |

Site Visit Programme

| Time | Meeting | Participants |
|----------------------|--|--|
| 09:00 – 09:45 | Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hasan Saliu, Dean of the Faculty 2. Granit Curri, Secretary General |
| 09:50 – 10:50 | Meeting with the heads of the study programme | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hasan Saliu 2. Gazmend Abrashi 3. Rexhep Suma |
| 10:50 - 11:45 | Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Furtuna Mehmeti, Head of QAO 2. Zija Rexhepi, Vice Rector for Administration 3. Nusret Bilallaj, Head of IT |
| 11:45 – 12:30 | Meeting with teaching staff | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ilire Zajmi 2. Adriatik Kelmendi 3. Mentor Shala 4. Resul Sinani 5. Ardita Reçi 6. Arber Geci |
| 12:30 – 13:15 | Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site) | |
| 13:15 – 14:05 | Meeting with students | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Edon Gerbani 2. Nora Gjuzi 3. Nazmi Berisha 4. Loreta Zharjani 5. Antea Tyrbetari 6. Armand Hoti |
| 14:10 – 15:00 | Meeting with graduates | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arian Lumezi 2. Berat Kostanica |



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| | | |
|----------------------|--|---|
| | | <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Amire Qamili Collaku4. Majlinda Kovaçi5. Agrina Sadiku6. Beatrise Culaj7. Vlora Ademi |
| 15:05 – 15:45 | Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Drin Ejupi2. Naile Demaj,3. Hyre Tejeci4. Gent Efendija5. Sabri Musliu6. Enis Veliu |
| 15:45 – 15:50 | Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts | |
| 15:50 – 16:00 | Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Hasan Saliu, Dean of the Faculty2. Granit Curri, Secretary General |



1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

AAB College is the largest non-public institution of higher education in the Republic of Kosovo and in the region. It was established in 2002, initially with a unique program in Journalism and Mass Communication and continued further with the accreditation of study programs in the field of forensic sciences in cooperation with the Public University of Sarajevo. AAB College continued to expand as an institution of higher education by continuously offering study programs in various fields, thus, becoming a relevant academic institution in the country and in the region. Currently, AAB consists of a total of 14 faculties with study programs at both BA and MA levels. AAB College offers teaching in its main campus in Prishtina, and in the two branches in Gjakova and Ferizaj, as accredited by decision of KAA and licensed by MEST.

The Faculty of Mass Communication (FKM) is an academic unit within AAB College that offers study programs of bachelor level (BA) and master level (MA), respectively level 6 and level 7 according to the NQF. At the BA level, FKM offers a study program: 1). Mass Communication - Journalism, with a duration of 3 years and 180 ECTS, of level 6 NQF. At the MA level, FKM offers two study programs: 1) the two-year Mass Communication and Journalism program, with 120 ECTS, level 7 according to the NQF and the two-year master program in Media Production with 120 ECTS, level 7 of NQF (for which we are not applying for reaccreditation). The BA and MA programs in Mass Communication were accredited by the Accreditation Agency in 2009 and then re-accredited in 2010, 2013, 2016 and are now in the process of re-accreditation after the last five-year accreditation (2016-2021).

As can be learned from the SER, FKM has developed the following strategic objectives:

- To provide students with contemporary teaching for advanced and specific interdisciplinary theoretical knowledge related to the field of journalism, media production and studies in media and communications;
- To provide qualified and specialized academic staff in the field of media and communications;
- To increase scientific knowledge in the field of media and communications through publications, conferences and scientific projects;
- To offer students the best conditions to follow professional practices in both AAB media and other media in Kosovo;



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Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

- To prepare students for employment and career advancement in local, regional and international media markets;
- To enable students to apply theoretical knowledge and practical skills independently in practicing the profession;
- Create opportunities and involve students to actively attend discussions and scientific conferences and creative products;
- Involve students in discussions on public issues through the organization of discussions with media and social actors;
- To enable student's participation in international activities and projects related to communications and to enable mobility;
- To engage students in local and community projects for the application of academic knowledge and practical skills as a contribution to society.

As noted in the SER, the main institutional aim of FKM is to prepare journalists and media operators with advanced knowledge and skills as well as public communication experts with specific knowledge and skills, who by entering the labour market would contribute daily to the betterment of society.



2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

The mission statement of the BA study program is defined very clearly in the SER: *“To prepare competitive professionals for the media market, institutions and organizations in Kosovo and beyond, with advanced knowledge and skills acquired through scientific research, who are able to contribute to a democratic society through truth reporting”*. The expert panel considers it as professionally formulated mission statement that is focused not only on preparation for the labour market but also involves a philosophical category (truth). AAB College’s mission statement is as follows: *“AAB organizes student centered and diversified studies, engages in quality basic and applied research, and partners with community and industry to provide transformational learning experiences enabling development of the full potential of the students, staff, social and economic partners and the society”*. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the AAB College and adjusts it to the content and level of the BA program.

There is a working group at the AAB College that ensures that the quality of different parameters of the BA study program is on a high level, including learning outcomes. The working group consists of communications and media scholars, and journalism professionals. The working group has analysed the industry, alumni, and current student proposals for the mass communication and journalism program and carefully filtered learning outcomes. Every study course description contains information about the learning outcomes of the study course that are expressed in the form of knowledge, skills, and competences. In the SER the AAB College claims that the learning outcomes of the study program reflect the requirements of the level 6 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Based on the information provided in the SER and meeting with the management of the study program and teaching staff of the study program during the visit, the expert panel considers that the study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept. Both concepts aim to combine theoretical knowledge with the practical one, for general and specific training for new technologies and channels and communication platforms, that are demanded by the labour market. It has to be noted that the didactic concept is described in more detail than the research concept. It seems understandable since this is a bachelor level study program.



There are formal policies, guidelines, and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues at the AAB College. These are available for all stakeholders in a specific section “Policies and regulations” on the website of the AAB College, where the list of several documents is provided. Without specific permission or authentication, the expert panel had access to all 27 documents in Albanian and in English. One of the main documents in this list is the Regulation on Bachelor Studies, which contains a lot of valuable information for students and academic staff.

According to the opinions received during the meeting with the academic staff and students, there is a common understanding that ethical conduct in research, teaching, and assessment, and ethical conduct in all academic and administrative activities is defined and sanctioned under the Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethics in Scientific Research. Both documents are available on the website of the AAB College. Students confirmed that there is a system in place that detects plagiarism in the AAB College and that ensures there is no plagiarism in the students' work and proper measures are taken, if needed.

According to the SER, “*policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibilities regarding program management and distribution are reviewed at least once every three years.*” It caught the attention of the expert panel, because of the formal demand of the KAA that *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.* The management of the faculty during the visit explained that regulations regarding the study program are revised every year, but regulations on the AAB College’s level are revised more rarely than every two years in order to keep the stability of the institution. While the revision of institutional level policies formally does not comply with the KAA requirement, the revision of program level policies complies, therefore the expert panel has judged this standard as compliant, at the same time making a recommendation for further development.

| <i>Standard</i> | <i>Compliance</i> | |
|--|-------------------|-----------|
| | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> |
| <i>Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.</i> | X | |



| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <i>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.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made available publicly to all staff and students.</i> | X | |
| <i>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.</i> | X | |
| <i>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.</i> | X | |

Compliance level: Full compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. To consider the meaning of the word “international” in the mission of the study program, since the study program is implemented not in English, but only in Albanian.*
- 2. To find a way how to revise the policies, regulations, terms of reference, and statements of responsibilities regarding program management and distribution at least once every two years and keep the stability of the institution at the same time.*
- 3. To make a more self-critical SWOT analysis and to find more than one weakness related to the study program rather than the situation in Kosovo.*



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

2.2. Quality Management

There are several main documents that regulate quality assurance procedures of programs within the AAB College such as the Regulation on Quality Assurance, the Quality Assurance Guideline, and the Strategic Development Plan of the AAB College. The Faculty of Mass Communication has a quality assurance coordinator who actively cooperates with the central Quality Assurance Office. The Faculty of Mass Communication ensures that all staff members participate in their own evaluation and quality improvement processes, by holding regular meetings with academic staff where syllabi, learning outcomes, assessment forms, assessment results as well as overall student performance are discussed. The academic staff is also involved in the self-assessment processes through questionnaires conducted by the Quality Assurance Office.

The management of the AAB College has introduced a number of internal mechanisms which are integrated into the regular planning processes aimed at evaluating and improving the quality of study programs. The central Quality Assurance Office and the quality coordinators at the Faculty level work on the basis of semester work plans. These usually include a lot of regular activities, for example training for colleagues in the field of curriculum, teaching methodology, that convinced that expert panel that evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into the normal planning processes. In the meeting, the expert panel noticed that there is no procedure how to measure whether the mission of the study program is achieved.

There are at least five quality assurance processes carried out through questionnaires and / or focus groups at the Faculty mentioned in the SER in order to deal with aspects of program planning and delivery. For example, the evaluation of administrative and technical services, respectively the conditions of study and how these services facilitate and support the student learning process.

Quality Assurance Office does very serious work in order to ensure regular, periodic evaluation processes with a special and clear focus. For example, recently, in the context of the pandemic outbreak, a number of questionnaires were conducted to evaluate the online learning process and evaluation as well as the applied digital platforms. A special working group was organized



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

to analyse the industry, alumni, and current student proposals for the mass communication and journalism program and carefully filtered learning outcomes.

The minimum criteria for the study program are defined under the Quality Assurance Regulation of the AAB College and the legislation on Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Kosovo, while continuous improvement is achieved based on the objectives set out under the Strategic Plan of the AAB which aims to enhance the quality system based on the best European practices that correspond with the AAB College's quality assurance system as well. It was said in the meeting with the quality assurance representatives that the accreditation processes create a significant burden for the higher education institutions in Kosovo and the AAB College needs to act wisely to find a balance between accreditations and other processes.

There are several questionnaires used in the AAB College with a defined regularity, which makes a good system for getting feedback from main stakeholders. For example, last year the Quality Assurance Office conducted a questionnaire with graduates as well as a questionnaire with employers/industry. So the expert panel can confirm that survey data is being collected from students, graduates, and employers. Nevertheless, the results of these evaluations are provided only to several representatives of the AAB College but are not publicly available.

In order to achieve the strategic objectives set out under the strategic plan, the management of the AAB college provides financial support. The results of internal evaluations and reports prepared by the Quality Assurance Office serve as a guide for the decision-making and strategic planning of AAB College and the improvement of study programs. Based on the results of internal evaluations the Faculty of Mass Communication has changed and improved several issues: provided additional hours of lectures and exercises, reduced or increased the number of students in groups, offered foreign language courses, reviewed syllabuses, and adapted them.

The BA study program Mass Communication and Journalism received five-year accreditation (2016-2021) in the last re-accreditation process, so the last self-evaluation report on the overall quality of the study program was done five years ago. Several specific reports prepared by the central Quality Assurance Office are done regularly, for example, reports on the basis of the data generated from the above questionnaires, semester reports after the end of the semester, and monitoring student success reports. However, the AAB College does not ensure



that the reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (e.g. every three years) and indicate program's strengths and weaknesses.

The Quality Assurance Office ensures that all quality assurance and evaluation processes are reviewed based on the circumstances within the Faculty of Mass Communication and based on the changing needs and requirements of the academic community. Some changes have been implemented until 2021, for example, the Regulation on Quality Assurance has been revised and an action plan for quality assurance has been drafted.

| Standard | Compliance | |
|--|------------|----|
| | Yes | No |
| <i>Standards 2.1. All staff participate in self-assessment and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their field of activity.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 2.2. Evaluation and improvement planning processes are integrated into normal planning processes.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and distribution, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 2.4. Quality assessments provide a summary of quality issues for the overall program, as well as the various components within it; assessments consider data, processes, and outcomes, paying attention to student learning outcomes.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure that both required standards are met and that there is continuous performance improvement.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 2.6. Study data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these assessments have been made available to the public.</i> | | X |



| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <i>Standards 2.7. The results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for the further development of the study program. This includes assessment results, student workload investigation, academic success, and graduate employment.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg every three years) for review within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.</i> | | X |
| <i>Standards 2.9. Quality assurance arrangements for the program are regularly evaluated and improved.</i> | X | |

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. To find a way on how to measure is the mission of the study program reached.*
- 2. To find a way on how to make the results of surveys of students, graduates and employers publicly available, at least part of them.*
- 3. To prepare reports on the overall quality of the program periodically (e.g. every three years) and analyse program's strengths and weaknesses within these reports.*



2.3. Academic Staff

A careful analysis of the SER, along with the discussions during the site visit shows that the analysed HE institution is able to deliver the level of teaching and learning experience for students which is required for a bachelor of arts study program. The AAB College's official Regulation for Systematization of Jobs (June 2019) as well as the example of work contract with professors that was requested after the site visit and received accordingly, clearly show that detailed job descriptions for all positions, primarily academic ones are provided and available to potential candidates as well as currently employed staff in the HE institution.

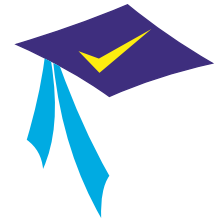
The BA study program's SER included a tabular form data with necessary information about the academic staff profiles and their workload. The Faculty of Mass Communication employs a total of 21 teaching staff members, 16 of them full time and 5 part time. A total of 8 employees have Ph. D. degrees, 7 of them in the field of communication and media studies. The number of teaching staff is clearly harmonized with the Administrative instruction on Accreditation which requires an HEI to have 1 fully employed full time professor for every 60 ECTS within the study program. In the case of the BA Mass Communication and Journalism which is a 3-year study program with a total of 180 ECTS credits, the evaluated HE institution has directly dedicated 4 professors with Ph.D. titles in the field of mass communication to the program. The teaching load for an average member of the academic staff is 4-8 teaching hours throughout the study program. None of the teaching staff members has a teaching engagement in another HE institution.

Regular or fully employed teaching staff covers 70% of the courses included in the study program curriculum. It is also important to note that the staff-student ratio within the study program is 1:11 for each academic year, which enables an appropriate level of attention that professors can address to students. The necessary number of teaching staff is corresponding also when student groups are analysed.

Teaching staff in the whole HE institution is provided with abundance of training opportunities. The SER lists 10 trainings that were organized for the FKM staff on various academic topics such as internal quality assurance systems, research-based teaching, publishing strategies in WoS and Scopus, academic integrity, Transformation from Physical to Online Learning, Rethinking the evaluation of students in online teaching, Drafting a scientific article and the Importance of publications in WoS and Scopus. All these activities are being operationalized



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

by a separate organizational unit of the AAB College that FMK is a part of, Center for Professional Advancement and Innovation (QAPI). Hyperlinks to the AAB College website is included in the SER that provide news articles and photos of the mentioned organized trainings. Although the HE institution does not cover Ph.D. studies tuition fees for its teaching staff that has not yet obtained this level of education, the management of the institution explained that they support their employees that are in the process of obtaining their Ph.D. (currently 2) in various ways such as ensuring flexible (or even halved) working hours and direct financial support for research and publishing scientific papers.

In addition to their teaching engagements, members of the academic staff are expected to participate in different aspects of the academic process, such as planning, preparation and implementation of projects in their field of expertise, such as organizing debates or awareness raising among students regarding important social issues. Student consultation process is explained in detail in the SER, as well as during the site visit.

According to the SER, academic staff evaluation by students is organized regularly, on a semester basis. At the same time, a six-performance factor analysis is conducted by the dean's office. Based on such evaluation, activities are organized to advance the teaching process, especially for the teaching staff that was badly graded by students. Although this process is explained in detail in the SER, there is no evidence that the reports are made publicly available. It is important to note that during the site visit the representatives of the QA office as well as the representatives of graduates provided the expert panel with concrete examples of negative remarks given by students on account of a certain professor which was communicated and addressed appropriately by the HE institution.

The management of the HE institution explained to the expert panel during the site visit how the procedure of regular quality assessment or evaluation of the teaching staff is conducted. After the site visit, the expert panel was provided with examples of the Dean's evaluation of the teaching staff which indicates a serious level of commitment to improvement of individual employees. Also, the expert panel was provided with the Strategic Development Plan of the AAB College from which it arises that the institution has a coherent strategic approach or strategy in general for quality enhancements of the study program and the HE institution as a whole.



| <i>Standard</i> | <i>Compliance</i> | |
|---|-------------------|-----------|
| | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> |
| <i>Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions for 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 services, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.</i> | X | |
| <i>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.</i> | X | |
| <i>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.</i> | X | |
| <i>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 Ph.D. title or equivalent title in the case of artistic / applied science institutions.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of the teaching staff, especially full time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.</i> | X | |



| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <i>Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer, and superior's evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available?</i> | X | |
| <i>Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.</i> | X | |
| <i>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.</i> | X | |

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The institution should continue with meticulous evaluation of the teaching process through the Quality Assurance Office following standards of quality and continuously improve the curriculum as well as all aspects of the study program.*
- 2. The Institution should develop concrete short and long-term strategies for quality enhancements that would include improving the teaching strategies adopted by the teaching staff as well as continuous improvement of the quality of learning and teaching materials.*
- 3. Develop clear strategies and procedures and for tackling negative professor evaluations depending on their severity and make them publicly known to all teaching staff in advance.*



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2.4. Educational Process Content

The content of the BA study program Mass Communication and Journalism covers a broad range of topics and qualifications that are required of journalists and communication experts. The program has a strong focus on various aspects of journalism and its numerous genres, techniques as well as field of their application. Besides professional content directly related to journalism, the program also contains courses that give the students a broader approach to journalism, such as media management, political communication and democracy, communication ethics etc. It can be said that the curriculum dominantly leans to journalism at the expense of mass communication. For example, courses such as advanced public communication or public relations and corporate communication could find its place within the curriculum at the expense on some of the courses which go into depth of journalism field. The legitimacy of such approach could be found in the fact that Kosovo media market is in a strong expansion as well as the fact that this study program's students find jobs and most of them start working even before they finish their studies.

The SER contains sufficient information about the structure of the study program, as well as its compatibility with the NQF and the EQF, especially in terms of its compliance with level 6 of both instruments. Also, the learning outcomes reflect the indicators of the above-mentioned level of the NQF and EQF and without a doubt enable students to sustain necessary knowledge and at the same time develop their skills which will be required when they enter the labour market.

It can also be noted that the disciplines in the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and that they meet the defined competencies at a general level. The intended learning outcomes are provided and presented in the SER in three different sections: knowledge, skills and competencies and they contain sufficient clarifications and comprehensible specificities.

Attached to the SER are syllabuses for each of the courses offered within the study program. Most of the syllabuses are created in a proper level of quality and contain all necessary data. They clearly define the purpose of the course including the course goals and student achievement prospects, they outline the program that the course covers week-by-week and clearly outline the learning outcomes in three different sections: knowledge, skills and competence. The syllabuses include the detailed description of the assessment process that seem to be done in accordance with the learning outcomes and adapted to the teaching

20



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Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

methods, as well as the literature which students are expected to overcome and use while preparing their exams.

The HE institution mentions in the SER that it applies the student-centred learning approach and promotes student-professor collaboration. Although the qualifications in the SER are quite general, during the site visits students were full of praise for the level of commitment of their professors, their availability for feedback and positive attitude towards them in general. The SER also mentions a certain consultation system which enables students to maintain weekly appointments and discussions as well as a E-Student electronic platform which enhances the pace of accurate communication between lecturers and students. When it comes to teaching strategies, the description offered in the SER is austere and very general.

When addressing student assessment mechanisms, it is possible to say they are presented in a logical and comprehensive way, both in the SER and in the attached syllabuses provided. The SER notes that the evaluation strategy includes different components such as standard written tests, assignments, seminars, presentations from independent work, interpretations or creation of a media product, different projects and essays. The usual share in the student's grade from lecture participation and belonging activities are up to 10%, while the share of the final exam usually amounts to 40% of the overall grade. No information about the objection of students against inadequate or inconsistent assessment was provided in the SER, but the at the same time a very detailed procedure is described for monitoring student success rates for each course within the study program. The SER clearly describes the procedure what happens if the achievements of students are not satisfactory or adequate.

Unlike the MA program that is offered by the same HE institution, internships / professional practice is an integral course of the study program curriculum. Two courses deal with the internship; Practice-Genres (2nd year) and Professional Internship (3rd year), both of which offer enough possibilities for the students to try their hands in practice of TV journalism, online journalism, or radio. The only question that could be raised in this field is the lack of possibilities for the students to gain practical experience in mass communication part of the study program content, such as public communication, public relations, political communication or for example social networks. This issue was raised during the site visit. The HE institution explained that they have a high level of cooperation with various municipalities in Kosovo where their students can gain practical PR experience. The HE institution provided the expert panel with examples of cooperation agreements with a number of municipalities.

21



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim
Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

The SER also notes that all the internships belonging to AAB College study programs are being supported and coordinated by the Career Office which organizes, supervises and assists students.

One of the areas in which the study program content has room for improvement is the field of management or business administration. The expert panel believes that future journalists as well as communication or public relations professionals should possess a basic level of management, finance and business administration knowledge and skills. Although the management and the teaching staff believes such content is already included in the curriculum through various courses such as Media Management or TV Production, the expert panel is of opinion that it should be included as journalist often tend to become editors and later enter the management structures of media outlets, taking positions that require of them sophisticated management knowledge including the basics of finances and business administration.

Finally, the level of cooperation with institutions/organisations/practical training units seems to be organized very well. The HE institution mentions all relevant media outlets as partner organizations with which a partnership agreement is signed as well as various municipalities of Kosovo. It cooperates with practically all serious media in the country, several of their key journalists and editors being included in the study program's teaching process. The expert panel had a chance to meet some of them during the online site visit and gained the impression they are very satisfied with the level of cooperation as well as the students and graduates who eventually become their employees. It can be noted that this fact ensures an abundance of opportunities for students to obtain practical experience outside of the institution which, combined with the resources of the HE institution such as TV and radio studios as well as a national broadcaster operating within the AAB College itself seems very valuable to the students. As previously mentioned, the HE institution provided the expert panel with a number of examples of cooperation agreements between AAB College and different media outlets.

However, it can be said that the HE institution's management should consider including more organizations where students can learn more about practical aspects of public relations, primarily from the private sector in their partner portfolio.



| <i>Standard</i> | <i>Compliance</i> | |
|---|-------------------|-----------|
| | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> |
| <i>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.</i> | X | |
| <i>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.</i> | X | |
| <i>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.</i> | X | |
| <i>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, 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.</i> | X | |



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| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>n/a</p> | |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>X</p> | |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | | <p>X</p> |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>X</p> | |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>X</p> | |
| <p><i>Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.</i></p> | <p>X</p> | |



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| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>X</p> | |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>X</p> | |

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The program administrators are advised to include in the program more content related to the mass communication and public communication. More courses like advanced public communication or PR tools and techniques as well as corporate communications could improve the broadness of the program and add to its quality.*
2. *The program is advised to develop a coherent teaching strategy which contains a variety of teaching and learning formats that are appropriate for different types of learning outcomes, types and levels of competencies and different student groups.*
3. *Continue improving the importance and share of internships within the study program, consider and evaluate the possible increase of ECTS credits awarded to the practical courses and continue to broaden the scope of partner organizations where students can acquire practical experience and skills that will prepare them for the labour market.*
4. *Wherever within the study program possible, include more practical learning outcomes within in all courses. Instead of analytical assignments such as writing essays, the*



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Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

syllabuses should contain real practical assignments such as strategy or campaign creation etc.

- 5. The program should include at least one course that should integrate disciplines of management, finances, and business administration. Although this is a BA program focused on educating future journalists, it is essential to understand that these individuals will often become editors, managers and even CEO's of various media outlets and will benefit seriously of such knowledge and skills provided to them.*



2.5. Students

Both on BA and MA study programs the Faculty of Mass Communication applies a clear and transparent student admission procedure that is approved on the institutional level. The Statute stipulates that the decision for admission and registration of new students for each academic year must be taken by the highest academic body – Senate. The expert panel identified a special chapter for students on the website of the AAB College that is available in Albanian and English. In this chapter there are several subchapters, for example, New Students, Registration, Apply Online, Student’s Service, Students Handbook, and Current Students.

Applications for bachelor level study programs are made in two ways – online on the website <https://aab-edu.net/en/students/new-students/registration/> or directly at the administration of the AAB College. In order to enrol in the BA study program in one of both ways, students must have completed high school, have successfully passed the Matura test, and possess personal documentation including the school certificates, identity cards, etc.

The expert panel discussed the number of students in the lecture groups and in the exercise groups and found out that there are 50-60 students in one lecture group, but the lecture group is split into two smaller groups for exercises. This complies with the Statute of AAB College that defines that the group of students per academic staff inside a class may not exceed the number of eighty students in theoretical lectures and forty students in practical exercise classes.

The expert panel understands from the study course descriptions that every study course has clearly and individually defined assessment methods so students have full information on how exactly they can get a grade. Regulation for the Bachelor Studies defines that communication of the exam result is made no later than seven days after the exam. The grading is done electronically by the professor and the summary of the student grades consists of the transcript of records which the student can generate from the system at any time. Students evaluated this e-service as very appropriate during the visit.

The expert panel finds in the SER, that the scheduling of exams is set by the Central Administration of the AAB College. However, in cases where students have requests for extension of deadlines or change of exam date, within the provisions of the regulation, these requests are approved. Academic staff and students in the meetings with the expert panel



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Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim
Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

confirmed that it is possible for students to discuss with academic staff the deadlines of exams if there is an objective reason in place.

Regarding the student completion level records, the AAB College has provided the expert panel with information in the SER. At the end of each exam period, an evaluation report for students' performance is generated in the form of a summary through the E-service platform. This type of 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 are sent to the Office of the Vice-Rector for Teaching, who analyses and evaluates each case.

There is a Code of Ethics and a Code of Ethics in Scientific Research that helps to ensure that the work submitted by the students is original. Both documents are available on the website of the AAB College and easily accessible to every student, every academic staff member, and every stakeholder. The staff of the AAB College uses the Turnitin programme for checking students' paperwork. During the visit, the expert panel received a confirmation that the academic staff knows the procedure for situations, where plagiarism is detected. During the visit, the academic staff claimed that they teach students how to avoid plagiarism and the expert panel received information that the issues related to plagiarism would be solved on the Faculty's level.

The rights and obligations of students are set out under the Regulation for Bachelor's Studies, that regulates students' rights for appeal, as well as under the Statute of the AAB College. Both documents as well as other documents are public and transparent to the students and other parties and available in a specific section "Policies and regulations" on the website of the AAB College, where the list of several documents is provided. Without specific permission or authentication, the expert panel had access to all 27 documents in Albanian and in English. Students confirmed during the visit that they are well aware about the documents available on the website.

The transfer of students between higher education institutions and study programs is clearly regulated in the Statute of the AAB College. The transfer of students to the programs of Communications is done through the Transfer Office which in cooperation with the quality coordinator within the Faculty verifies the files of each candidate. Each candidate who undergoes the transfer process is firstly issued a transfer decision. This decision notifies them on how many of the courses (ECTS) that they have already taken at the other institution have

28



been accepted and the number of additional courses they need to take in order to transfer to the Faculty.

According to the SER, each member of the academic staff has two hours per week, specified for individual meetings/counselling with the student. 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 through electronic platforms. Students informed the expert panel during the visit, that consultations usually are available after the grade is published in the e-service.

Overall, the expert panel concludes that the study program is in compliance with all standards defined by KAA for this section. However, the expert panel learned about several areas for improvement. In the SWOT, one of the weaknesses indicated by the AAB College was the low English proficiency of the students. During the site visit, the expert panel learned that among the AAB College representatives there is a contradicting awareness of the Alumni club and also the graduates expressed need for international exchange of experience for students. Although the area is judged as “fully compliant”, the expert panel has made several recommendations related to these areas of improvement.

| Standard | Compliance | |
|--|------------|----|
| | Yes | No |
| <i>Standards 5.1. There is a clear and officially accepted admission procedure at the institutional level that the study program respects when organizing student recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied to all students.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation degree or other equivalent study document, as required by the MEST.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 5.3. Study groups are dimensioned in order to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 5.4. Students' feedback on their work and the results of the assessments is given immediately and is accompanied by support mechanisms if necessary.</i> | X | |



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| <i>Standards 5.5. The results obtained by students throughout the study cycles are verified by the academic record.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is provided in relation to the official deadlines and requirements in the program and for all examinations.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 5.7. Student completion level records are kept for all courses and the program as a whole and are included in the quality indicators.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that the work submitted by the students is original.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 5.9. The rights and obligations of students are made available to the public, promoted to all concerned and applied equally; these will include the right to academic appeal.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 5.10. The transfer of students between higher education institutions, Programs and study programs is clearly regulated in the official internal documents.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standards 5.11. Academic staff is available at ample scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate teaching aid to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.</i> | X | |

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. To improve the English proficiency of students.*
- 2. To inform students about the Alumni club and its benefits.*
- 3. To organize international experience exchange for students.*



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2.6. Research

AAB College and therefore Faculty of Mass Communication profiled itself mainly as a teaching institution. However, it is noted in the SER that part of its vision is to become a scientific centre as well, which is defined as a strategic objective in the Scientific development Plan. The SER also notes that AAB College formulated a new Regulation for Scientific Research in December 2021 and that it promotes the publication of scientific research in journals indexed in WoS and Scopus among its employees. However, the SER does not contain sufficient information on the existence of a strictly defined research objectives or research plan for the AAB College, Faculty of Mass Communication or the evaluated study program itself.

When assessing individual approach to employed teaching staff, the SER notes that scientific research activities are obligatory for all regular staff members at AAB College and that even employment contracts stipulate that each member of the academic staff is obliged to produce at least one scientific paper within a year and engage in other scientific projects. Is it however unclear what happens if an individual fails to deliver its proscribed minimum level of published scientific papers or research work. The HE institution also has a Regulation on the election, re-election and advancement of the academic staff which regulates academic staff advancement and promotions within the institution and the AAB College which it is a part of. The discussion with the academic staff during the site visit showed that they are familiarized about the criteria for evaluating and promoting staff and finds them realistic and achievable.

The SER addresses 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.*) very briefly and does not provide enough information for the expert team to conclude that the HE institution is compliant with its demands.

It is visible from the SER that the HE institution publishes its double-blind peer reviewed scientific journal *Thesis*. Also, the institution regularly organizes scientific conferences on topics closely related to the field of the evaluated study program. It also participates in organization of joint conferences with HE institutions from the region. It is also worth noting that all the activities from the field of organizing such events are documented and publicly communicated which is important for the public recognition of the institution as a scientific-



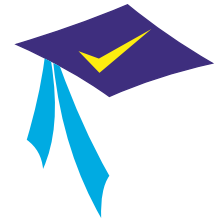
oriented one. The SER includes a list of all conferences organized by the institution as well as those where the institution participated as an organizational partner.

An analysis of the publication topics published by fully employed staff in their CV that were provided together with the SER shows their scientific work and research is in line with the field of the evaluated study program, as well as courses they teach within it. It can be said that their research is validated mainly through various scientific and applied research publications, as well as different scientific conferences that the HE institution organizes or co-organizes together with other relevant HE institutions, mainly from the broader region.

Statistical overview of the number of published papers of the employed staff shows that only three of them (Hasan Saliu, Resul Sinani and Gent Begolli) produced the required average number of one publication per year for the last three years. It is therefore necessary for the HE institution to tackle this issue and to develop ways on motivating fully employed staff to publish their scientific or applied research to fulfil these criteria.

Policies for ownership of the intellectual property are clear and simple; the fact they belong to the HE institution is included in the work contract of the fully employed staff. At the same time, it is possible to conclude that the students are included in the various research activities of the institution and the study program. The list of such activities with links to the news published on the AAB College's website are provided in the SER. At the same time, it is unclear from the SER and after the site visit whether and how the teaching staff is encouraged to include their research in their teaching.

| <i>Standard</i> | <i>Compliance</i> | |
|---|-------------------|-----------|
| | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> |
| <i>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.</i> | | X |



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| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>X</p> | |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>X</p> | |
| <p><i>Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.</i></p> | <p>X</p> | |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>X</p> | |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>X</p> | |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | | <p>X</p> |



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| <i>Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standard 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.</i> | | X |
| <i>Standard 6.9. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.</i> | X | |
| <i>Standard 6.10. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.</i> | X | |

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. FMK should create and adopt official research priorities and research plan which would result with a clear focus of research activities in a specific field such as mass communication, journalism, or public relations.*
- 2. The HE institution should continue to organize regular scientific conferences and similar events on its own as well as together with other relevant scientific and HE institutions in the region and from abroad.*



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim
Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

3. *The HE institution should develop a clear action plan on how to increase the number of published papers and other publications, with the main aim of achieving the requested number of average published publications per person per year.*
4. *Provide clear policies for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of the study program.*
5. *Provide clear policies that will encourage teaching staff to include their published and conducted research in their teaching process.*



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

2.7. Infrastructure and Resources

There is no doubt that AAB College and its FKM possess the most modern infrastructure and offers more than sufficient conditions for its students. The total amount of physical space that AAB College possesses in its three campuses is more than 60.000 m². The Faculty of Mass Communication operates in AAB's Prishtina campus and has 2 dedicated administrative staff members who service students and the academic staff in terms of administrative support. Besides these two administrative offices, at the disposal of FKM, its students and academic staff are the central offices of the AAB College that are shared among all of its institutions: Central Administration, Office for Software Development, Office for IT Support, Transfer Office and Career Office. It can be noted that the level of digitalization of the HE institution is on the high level, which was emphasized and praised by various stakeholders such as current and former students during the site visit. The institution's digital platform e-Student serves all stakeholders with relevant documents, regulations and practically provide all necessary information for students and academic staff members.

AAB College is described in the SER and by its management during the site visit as the largest non-public HE institution in Kosovo which generates sufficient revenue through various sources such as tuition fees and other payments by students, commercial services, funds of the Ministry budget of Kosovo, donations, gifts and grants, use of AAB's intellectual property, contracts with various organizations etc.

No financial plan in a form of a document was submitted to the expert panel, however during the site visit the management of the institution explained thoroughly that issues related to finances and finance management are in the domain of the rectorate of the AAB College that, as a private institution, does not disclose financial information and plans publicly. Considering the impressive level of the HE institution's infrastructure which is more than sufficient, the fact that they are owned by the institution and the fact that the financial viability was ascertained in the assessments of various independent auditors such as BDO (Republic of Croatia) and KCFR (Kosovo Financial Reporting Council), the expert panel is of opinion that the institution fulfils the Standard 7.2. The expert panel was provided with Independent Auditor's Reports of the AAB College for the years 2019-2021 respectively.



AAB College has plenty of lecture halls, laboratories, reading rooms, amphitheatres and most importantly for a study of mass communication; radio station, editing rooms, directing rooms, and several TV studios. Besides this infrastructure essential for the academic process, the institution also has sport halls, recreational spaces and other special spaces for students. At the institution’s Prishtina campus, there are 2 libraries for students that meet the needs of students, academic staff and other users. The libraries have enough reading space, organized in separate reading rooms which ensure that correspond with 10% of the total number of students of FKM’s programs. It is worth noting that that AAB has prepaid access to J-STOR where all users have full access to different academic journals. These resources are available to both students and the academic staff of the HE institution.

Although the site visit was conducted online and the expert panel was provided only with the video of the AAB’s campus; its size, equipment and the general impression is that the AAB’s infrastructure is impeccable.

| <i>Standard</i> | <i>Compliance</i> | |
|--|-------------------|-----------|
| | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> |
| <i>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.</i> | X | |
| <i>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.</i> | X | |
| <i>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:</i> | X | |



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| <p><i>a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;</i></p> <p><i>b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;</i></p> <p><i>c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence;</i></p> <p><i>d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.</i></p> | | |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | X | |
| <p><i>Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:</i></p> <p><i>a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;</i></p> <p><i>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;</i></p> <p><i>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;</i></p> <p><i>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;</i></p> <p><i>e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.</i></p> | X | |



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Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
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| <i>Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.</i> | X | |
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Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

The Expert Panel has no recommendations in this Section.



3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The Expert Team can commend the evaluated HE institution regarding the SER as well as the conduct during the site visit that was organized online. The SER as a document was written in a very professional manor and in very good English language with almost no grammatical, technical or formatting errors. Also, it is possible to note that the atmosphere during the online site visit was very positive, with a notable sense of teamwork and sense of belonging to the HE institution and its program. All that seems very promising for the current and the future students of the study program and the HE institution. Having considered the provided documentation and after the discussions with all stakeholder groups during the site visit, the Expert Team recommends the following assessment:

| Standard | Compliance Level |
|--|-------------------------|
| Mission, objectives and administration | Fully Compliant |
| Quality Management | Substantially Compliant |
| Academic Staff | Fully Compliant |
| Educational Process Content | Substantially Compliant |
| Students | Fully Compliant |
| Research | Substantially Compliant |
| Infrastructure and resources | Fully Compliant |
| Overall Compliance | Fully Compliant |

The overall compliance level is assessed by the experts at the level of fully compliant.

However, the following recommendations need to be considered in relation to the accreditation of the program:



- 1. The Faculty for Mass Communication should adopt an official procedure (perhaps in form of a Regulation) for checking, testing and harmonizing the content of the study program with the needs of the labour market in regular intervals (maybe every two years). The procedure should include HE institution's all relevant stakeholders such as employers, experts in the field of media and public communication as well as institution's alumni. This kind of procedure would have a positive impact on the study program's content and its constant compatibility with the needs of the labour market.*
- 2. The expert teams suggest to the HE institution to consider slight changes / improvements in the study program in the next period of reaccreditation. The BA program in Mass Communication and Journalism should include at least one management course that would provide students with the basic knowledge and skills in the fields of business administration / finances and would prepare them for various management functions which they will have the opportunity to perform in different stages of their careers.*
- 3. One of the weaker spots of the HE institution is research so it should develop a clear action plan on how to increase the number of published papers and other publications, with the main aim of achieving the requested number of average published publications per person per year. One of the approaches could be to start a comprehensive process of creating individual development plans for each of the fully employed academic staff, that would include research, publication publishing and conference participation plan for each fully employed professor or other member of the teaching staff.*

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers the Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication and Journalism study program performed by AAB College's Faculty of Mass Communication is fully compliant with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation Manual and, therefore, recommends accrediting the evaluated study program for a duration of five years with 150 students to be enrolled to the program.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim
Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

Expert Team

Member

(Signature)

Dr. Damir Jugo

(Damir Jugo)

19.05.2022.

(Date)

Member

(Signature)

Mārtiņš Upmacis (Student Expert)

(Mārtiņš Upmacis)

19.05.2022.

(Date)