



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

***UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA “HASAN PRISHTINA”
FACULTY OF MATEMATICAL NATURAL SCIENCE
Department of Geography
Geography BSc***

REACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

July 2022., online



TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1. Context.....	3
1.2. Site visit schedule	4
1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation	5
2. PROGRAM EVALUATION.....	7
2.1. Mission, objectives and administration.....	7
2.2. Quality management	9
2.3. Academic staff	10
2.4. Educational process content.....	11
2.5. Students.....	13
2.6. Research.....	15
2.7. Infrastructure and resources	16
3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET	18
1. Mission, objectives and administration.....	18
2. Quality management	18
3. Academic staff	18
1. APPENDICES (<i>if available</i>).....	19



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: Visit at the department was carried out as an all-day online interview on May 17th, 2022. Previously, all relevant material had been made available, including SER, CVs etc.

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Associate Professor Thomas Theis Nielsen, Ph.D. Roskilde University, Institute of People and Technology.*
- *Juraj Bogat, student expert*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

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

Sources of information for the Report:

- *All the available material has been used and forms the background of this evaluation. As stated above, this includes the SER, CVs of all teachers, syllabus of the education.*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *Standards and performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation manual of KAA, February 2021.*



1.2. Site visit schedule

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:50	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Idriz Vehapi (Dean) Vice deans Sefer Avdiaj Kajtaz Bllaca Avni Berisha
09.55 – 10.35	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Besnik Loxha (Head of Office for Academic Development) Iilir Mazreku (coordinator of Academic development FMNS) Artan Alidema (IT)
10:45 – 11:45	Meeting with the heads of the study programme	Florim Isufi Arsim Ejupi Valbon Bytyqi
11:45 – 12:25	Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site)	
12:25 – 13.10	Meeting with teaching staff	Ibrahim Ramadani, Mimoza Dushi, Ferim Gashi, Fitim Humolli, Ferat Krasniqi Shpejtim Bulliqi
13:15 – 13:55	Meeting with students	Ilijana Elezaj, Anitë Krasniqi Ajete Shala Aulon Curri Viola Gacaferri
14.05 – 14:45	Meeting with graduates	Faruk Foniqi Qendresa Zeneli Fatmir Bytyqi



		Bleona Shehu Egzona Grajqevci
14:50 – 15:30	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	- Avni Kastrati - Helena Camaj - Fadil Bajraktari - Qamil Feka Melihate Idrizi
15:30 – 15:40	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
15:40 – 15:50	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation

The study programme of Geography is a part of the faculty of Mathematical Natural Sciences at the University of Prishtina. The geography programme is one out of 5 programmes at the faculty, the others being: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

The overall specific objectives of the university are listed in the SER as follows:

- To act as an institutional and leadership centre for advancing the knowledge, creative ideas and science in the Kosovo higher education system,
- To have a leading the role in the development of education, science, culture, society and economy of Kosovo,
- To actively participate in the process of promoting civic democracy,
- To create and support the highest standards in teaching and learning, scientific research as well as in and artistic creativity,
- To utilize its resources in the most efficient way,
- To maximize the cooperation and participation in higher education activities at national, regional, and international level,
- To adapt to European standards,
- To be fully integrated into the European Higher Education Area, the European Research Area
- and to undertake the appropriate reform steps needed to achieve this mission.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

In the following report the expert team will use the concept of constructive alignment as a background to comments on the structure of the program. Hence, the expert team will return to the alignment of learning outcomes at different levels of the education and comment on how learning outcomes and study content aligns to meet the outcomes of higher levels. Hence, the objectives of the university become the starting point.

The expert team finds the educational programme to be a very relevant and well-structured education at the University of Prishtina. At an overall level, the educational program is characterized by an enthusiastic and proficient teaching staff and the students respond equally enthusiastic. In the SER all standards are commented on in a relevant manner and while the expert team finds room for improvement in the educational programme, the overall impression is very good.



2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The objectives of the geography education are presented in the SER and is listed as

- Prepare students with deep knowledge about fundamental concepts in the field of geography in natural and social sciences.
- That students have an advanced level of understanding of natural geography, social geography, geo-economy, spatial and regional planning, environment ect.
- To develop professional writing skills, obtaining information, statistical analysis of data, presentation of results, problem solving and group work that are needed for employment.
- Ability to provide advice and expertise to relevant institutions and organizations.
- Prepare students for the next cycle of studies.
- To advance the position of Geography fields.

Whereas the learning outcomes of the study program are presented as

- Demonstrate theoretical, scientific, and practical knowledge in the field of Geography and other sciences of nature,
- to have originality in the application of acquired knowledge and practical understanding of finding and solving problems and acting independently in the planning and implementation of research,
- Critically analyses scientific theories, models, concepts, and techniques from the fields of Geography.
- Search for scientific and professional literature for the research field needs,
- Reads critically and evaluates the results of qualitative and quantitative research from the relevant field.
- Communicates efficiently and convincingly, in oral and written form,
- Designs problem-solving projects in the relevant fields,
- Provides advice and expertise in the field of Geography.

The learning outcomes of the geography programme are relevant and precisely formulated and gives a clear direction of for the programme. However, some of the learning outcomes

7



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

may be formulated at a higher with a higher complexity than may be warranted by a bachelor programme. This may particularly be the case for learning outcomes such as “critical analyses [of] scientific theories, models and concepts” or actually designing problem-solving projects. While these learning outcomes are certainly relevant, they may be more applicable to a master programme than to a bachelor programme.

Furthermore, with a point of departure in the critical alignment as stated above, it seems appropriate to observe that some of the learning outcomes of the geography programme are not easily identified in the objectives of the university. Obviously, there cannot be a complete alignment between the objectives of the university and the learning outcomes of the individual academic programmes, but it seems appropriate to suggest some overlap between the two and possibly even to suggest that a geography program is uniquely situated to accommodate many of the more overarching outcomes of the university.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Based on the above comments, it is recommended that the geography department enters into dialog with the faculty as well as facilitates an internal process whereby the learning outcomes of the bachelor program can be scrutinized and possibly adapted somewhat to conform to the ideas and principles of the university. See also point 2.4 below*



2.2. Quality management

As part of the quality management practices, clear policies and procedures are described in the SER. As part of the SER a SWOT analyses is provided and here, amongst the weaknesses, it is identified that there are “Insufficient funds to address the weaknesses identified during the evaluation process”. While not being an observation that necessarily is addressed solely to the study programme, but also to the faculty and the university management, it must be a significant comment that deserves the attention of the university.

A further comment directs itself towards tables 3, 4 and 5 as presented in the SER. Here we find the number of students graduation from the bachelor program, the planned number of students and the number of students dropping out. With 160 students planned it suggest that around 55 students are allowed into the geography programme each year. Of these an average (2018-2020) of 15 students graduates each year. This would indicate that 40 students every year are not active students and are in effect taking up space and resources at the program, but with out following the academic program. This tendency was indeed confirmed during the interviews, and it was clear that the programme has no viable solution to this situation.

Apart from these two observations the expert team have no further comments.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. That the geography programme enters formal negotiations with the faculty and/or university in order to assure necessary funds for addressing results of internal as well as external evaluation processes.*
- 2. The expert team recommends that the geography programme approaches the university in order to address this accumulation of inactive students. This is clearly an issue out of the reach of the programme and should probably be addressed at university level.*



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

2.3. Academic staff

As part of the work of this report, all relevant staff members have submitted their CV. We have no further comments to the staff, their proficiencies or their portfolios.

It does however deserve attention, that many of the staff members find it difficult to communicate in the English language. While it remains a minor issue in relation to the work of his report, it must be recognized that this must be identified as part of the enclosed SWOT analysis. The lack of proficient English speakers among the staff will seriously limit the choice of literature to be presented to the students; it may be a stumbling block in the communication with the students concerning the content of academic articles and it may also hamper the mobility of students.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. We recommend that the study programme discuss and adopt a policy to assist teachers at the programme to further their mastery of the English language and such ensuring that the students are presented with contemporary and relevant, international research.*



2.4. Educational process content

The expert team find the geography programme to be relevant, well-structured, and generally characterized by a high level of enthusiasm and professional zeal. The programme, as it is presented in the SER, is a very encompassing programme that spans all relevant topics, from cosmography to GIS, via statistics to migration studies. Each of the components are presented in the SER in a precise and relevant manner and the structure is very clear. There are relevant policies and procedures in place and the expert team have no comments apart from the observations listed below.

From a professional point of view and as a geography teacher with a substantial amount of experience in the field of education evaluation, learning outcomes etc., the expert team cannot help raising the issue of width vs depth. With a syllabus this broad and inclusive it remains a challenge also to ensure the depth in the academic level necessitated by the learning outcomes of the full program.

Further, it is not clear how the learning outcomes of the very broad programme supports the learning outcomes and objectives of the full program. Just to give an example (and it should be understood as an example): The course in principles of geology (p 21-22 in the SER) offers the following learning outcomes:

- Explain the origin of the Earth and its main geophysical, geochemical and geodetic characteristics
- Identify the properties of minerals and rocks
- Explain the function of internal geological processes and mineral formation processes
- Interpret external geological processes by explaining the field observations.
- Understand the process of creating Earth relief
- Understand the role of fossils and the relationships between rocks (strata) in interpreting the relative age of rocks

It remains unclear how these learning outcomes contributes to the learning outcomes as outlined for the full programme. It could very easily be, that the members of the expert team have misunderstood details in the exhaustive material and as stated above, this is merely an example of something that seems to be systemic in the syllabus.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The expert team finds the geography programme to be fully compliant but wishes to encourage the staff to enter a process of reviewing learning outcomes in the syllabus to confirm to the ideas and concepts of critical alignment. A very useful tool in this process is the competency matrix. We encourage the staff to work on a **competence matrix** to ensure constructive alignment in the education and ensure that the learning outcomes of the programme is indeed expressed by the syllabus, but also to ensure, that the learning outcomes of the programme is aligned with the objectives of the university and ensures transparency and achievement of the university.*



2.5. Students

Student enrolment process seems to be fair and transparent to all interested applicants. Candidates are aware of all the conditions and requirements in order to successfully apply and enrol thanks to Departments' engagement in the form of high school visits and student fairs.

Study groups are well dimensioned with respect to the lecture type. Lecturers provide the students with all the basic information regarding the lecture and their workload, obligations, and completion conditions.

Student rights seem to be met and the students themselves confirm that there are no disputes of any kind, and even if there is, they are aware of the proposed mitigation mechanisms. Inclusion and tolerance are also one of the great advantages that the students possess. Professors and students work together, cooperate, and have maximum respect to each other. Professors are available to students in their office hours, after the lectures and even via online modes of communication.

Students also actively participate in exchange programs, and they have a lot of internal mechanisms at their disposal who help and guide them through the process.

In general, BA students are eager to study, full of optimism, they are engaged with their studies and their professors, they understand and apply what they learn. They are also tolerant and openminded, curious and interested – a great start of an academic citizen.

However, the expert team is somewhat critical towards standard 5.8 where the “students are guided by supervisors to pay attention in order to avoid plagiarism”. The expert team realizes that measures are in place where students are guided to avoid plagiarism, yet the team finds the limited effort of guidance somewhat substandard: The students are just beginning to get a grasp of academic writing and some (unintentional) plagiarisms are bound to happen. Obtaining a plagiarism software might be a good way to address and remove those mistakes form early on. And while some part of the students will not continue with academic work, it is still important to implement this awareness to help them think more critically later. Moreover, the same software might also help professors with their research.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

In conclusion, the programme is fully compliant with this area: students are happy, their rights are met, professors and students have great communication and rapport. The lack of plagiarism detection software is the only downfall, but the expert team is aware that obtaining it might be a problem if it is just one department in question.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Obtaining a plagiarism detection software in order to assist students and avoid unnecessary issues of plagiarism. While the expert team realizes that plagiarism software is both expensive to obtain and to maintain, it is recommended that the educational programme enters into a dialog with the university in order to secure such procedures.*



2.6. Research

The research profiles of the academic staff are relevant and at an acceptable level. However, as noted above, there may be a need to broaden the language proficiency in order to ensure easy access both to publication, but also towards the adaptation of material, especially in English.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *See recommendation 1, section 2.3.*



2.7. Infrastructure and resources

While most of the standards are met today, some of them will be met when the Department moves to the new FMNS building that is being built. As a part of a University of Pristina, the Department has no financial independence and therefore the ET cannot comment on it.

The general and special equipment seems to be in order, with enough components and unique pieces to support the quality of exercises and lectures. The classrooms are big enough to accommodate all the study groups, but the expert team did not get any input on the quality of those said classrooms.

The department is strongly advised to procure new ways of obtaining newer literature and online database access. The current situation is that professors go above and beyond in order to provide relevant literature for their classes, which is a practice that should not be tolerated. Students and professors must have access to a variety of resources to better understand or deepen the knowledge in the fields they are interested in, and it is the Departments responsibility to enable that. The aforementioned language barrier might also be reduced with more foreign language literature, because it implies an active usage of foreign language, hence better understanding.

It is also concerning that the faculty premises are adapted to the students with special needs. The expert team is aware that this is a big infrastructural investment and it therefore expects this problem to be properly addressed and resolved with the new FMNS building.

In conclusion, the ET is substantially compliant with this area. Most of the standards are met, but a good part of them is not. While we truly believe that the infrastructural issues will be resolved with the new building, the literature access is something that must be dealt with as soon as possible.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

ET recommendations:

- 1. It is recommended that the number of relevant and newer resources, both in online environment and library (see also recommendation 2.3.1) is increased in the future.*
- 2. The programme should ensure that infrastructural issues with classrooms is addressed, and proper measures are taken to resolve any issues in relation to accessibility etc.*



3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The overall impression that the ET got is that the department is heading in the right direction, even though there are some elements that can and should be improved. The newly announced building seems like a good place for a fresh start where the recommendations from this report can be implemented.

Academic staff is engaged both with the research activities and the students, which is observable from the first glance at the published works and in first interactions with the students. Feedback mechanisms are set in place, and even though the Quality Assistance mechanisms are not that popular with students, they still get valid feedback.

Students are happy, intrigued and curious about their field of study and they seem to be growing up into true academic citizens.

Standard	Compliance level
1. Mission, objectives and administration	Substantially compliant
2. Quality management	Fully compliant
3. Academic staff	Substantially compliant
4. Education process content	Fully compliant
5. Students	Fully compliant
6. Research	Fully compliant
7. Infrastructure and resources	Substantially compliant
OVERALL COMPLIANCE:	<i>Substantially compliant</i>

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program in geography offered by Faculty of Mathematical Natural Sciences at the University of Prishtina is ***Substantially compliant*** with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends ***to accredit*** the study program for a duration of **5 years**, with student quota of **70 students**.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

1. APPENDICES (if available)

Expert Team

Chair

(Signature)

Thomas Theis Nielsen, Ph.D

(Print Name)

06.07.2022.

(Date)

Member

(Signature)

Juraj Bogat

(Print Name)

06.07.2022.

(Date)