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

PJETER BUDI COLLEGE

CUSTOMS AND FREIGHT FORWARDING (BA) PROGRAMME RE-ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

May 12, 2022, Online site visit



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: May 12, 2022

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Professor Magdalena Platis, PhD*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Ilirjane Ademaj Ahmeti, KAA Officer*
- *Flamur Abazaj, KAA Officer*

Sources of information for the Report:

- Self - Evaluation Report 2022 for BA in Customs and Freight Forwarding
- 45 Appendices to SER
 - Statute and Strategic Plan of the institution
 - Syllabuses for the subjects in BA in Customs and Freight Forwarding
 - CVs of the academic staff
 - Code of ethics
 - Regulations: on internal quality assurance (including questionnaires), on procedure for the development and the revision of new curriculum, on ECTS, on bachelor and master studies, on employment rules, on disciplinary actions, for scholarships, for organizing exams and students' evaluations, on the description of the job tasks, on the work of the steering board, for the Senate, on safety rules, on house order, on student registration, and for the student parliament
 - Handbooks for students and college staff, Human Development Plan
 - Employment contract and contract for students
 - List of agreements, learning objectives
 - Guidelines for presentation skills, for internship, for career development
 - Reports: weekly report for interns



- Templates for interns, for interns' evaluations KAA – The Accreditation Manual – Updated 2021
- KAA - THE MANUAL FOR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS – February 2021

Additional documents – requested by the ET:

- The students' grievance procedure (SER, page 12) with date of approval
- The list of the working groups set for different purposes since the last accreditation, and one report of a working group (or a minute) (SER, page 15)
- One report (the most recent ones) for each of the evaluation survey showed in the 28 appendices (a, b, c, d, e)
- The link where the results of the evaluations based on data collection from students, graduates and employers are made publicly available
- A statistical summary on the scholarship provided since the last reaccreditation (for all 3 scholarship categories)
- The list of the academic staff assigned as tutors for the students' practice stages in the study program
- The syllabi for the Customs Internship and for the Freight Forwarding Internship
- A statistical summary on the number of MOU for educational development and the cooperation agreements with the industry currently active (the appendix 17 is with all agreement mixed and it is in Albanian)
- One MOU with an international university and one cooperation agreement with a company
- List of channels used to provide feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments (an example of such a feedback)
- List of special situations when flexible treatment of students is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations
- Procedure of checking the plagiarisms (if any); the Code of ethics for student is the same with the Code of ethics on the webpage (<https://pjeterbudi-edu.com/en/documents/>)
- Regulation of students' transfer
- Regulation on staff employment (the link does not work - <https://111pjeterbudi-edu.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/12-Regulation-on-staff-employment.pdf>)
- List of the research publications of the latest 3 years (or link)

Additional documents received by the ET:

- Procedure for students' appeal; Regulation for organizing exams and students' evaluations; Regulation on determination of procedures for student registration; Statute of KPB



- Minutes of the working groups
- Evaluation reports – alumni, administrative and academic staff, students, link to the reports
- Statistics for allocated scholarship
- The list of the academic staff assigned as tutors for the students
- The syllabus for practical work
- List of signed MOU; MOU with industry partners; MOU with university partners
- List of channels used to provide feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments (an example of such a feedback); List of channels used_example from the student management system
- List of Special situation for flexible treatment of students
- Manual for using platform Academia
- Students' ethic code - Regulation on house order
- Regulation on the implementation of the European credit transfer system (ECTS) and Transfers
- Regulation on Employment rules and procedures of the College Staff
- List of the research publications

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of KAA, updated 2021
- Criteria of Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability

1.2. Site visit schedule

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:50	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Sabri Klaiqi Luljeta Aliu Mulaj Fitim Macani Anila Mustafa Ibish Mazreku Agron Mustafa
09.55 – 10.35	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Luljeta Aliu Mulaj Fiknete Bejta



		Qendrim Ternava Duresa Mustafa
10:45 – 11:45	Meeting with the heads of the study programme	Mahije Mustafi Artan Haziri Selbije Memeti Karemani
11:45 – 12:25	Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site)	
12:25 – 13.10	Meeting with teaching staff	Naim Huruglica Hashim Rexhepi Jeton Vokshi Valentina Sopjani
13:15 – 13:55	Meeting with students	Vlera Haxhiu Ramadan Salihu Besnik Rexhepi Leotrim Rashiti
14:05 – 14:45	Meeting with graduates	Shahadin Bajrami Rrahim Duriqi Luftrim Kadrijaj Valdete Ejupi Xheneta Dermaku
14:50 – 15:30	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Sami Mazreku Faton Dema Laura Dobruna Fisnik Visoka
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 under evaluation

"Pjetër Budi" College is a private higher education provider, established in 2005 under the name of the Private Provider of Higher Education University of Applied Sciences "Pjetër Budi" Institute for Studies in Prishtina. In 2013, the name of the institution changed into The College



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"Pjetër Budi" in Prishtina (SER, page 3). The institution is a small college in Kosovo, very specialized, currently providing only two study programmes: Currently at the BA and MA level the College offers the following study programs: Customs and Freight Forwarding (BA); and Management (MA), with three specializations in: Tourism and Hotel Management; Insurance Management; and General Management. The latest institutional accreditation was awarded in 2011, while the latest re-accreditation for the Customs and Spedicion BA programme was awarded for the period 2016-2022 (this programme was then, changed into the Customs and Freight Forwarding). The programme of Customs and Freight Forwarding has currently 61 students, meaning almost 43 % of the total number of the college students; the institution is the only provider in the country which offers a study program in Customs and Freight Forwarding (SER, pages 6 - 7). The uniqueness of the programme due to a very narrow specialization makes it of high potential for the institutional development.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

The mission of the "Pjetër Budi" College is "to adequately prepare human resources with specific scientific and professional profiles in compliance with local, regional and international labour market needs, which will contribute to the sustainable economic and social development of Kosovo and wider" (<https://pjeterbudi-edu.com/en/mission-vision/>). The mission of the Customs and Freight Forwarding BA study program is "to prepare staff with skills and knowledge which are required by the labor market for the defined profile" (SER, page 7). Therefore, the study programme has a clear mission in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.

The study program has been developed and updated on a regular basis to suit the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework; the level of study according to this framework is 6 (SER, page 8). The Customs and Freight Forwarding BA study programme is organized has a duration of three years and generates 180 ECTS. Learning outcomes are appropriate defined for each subject and associated with knowledge, abilities, and competencies (Appendix 4 – Syllabi). Professional adequate advice is considered in the delivery of the courses and the content of the subjects, as most of the academic staff has a previous industry expertise; the meeting with the teaching staff revealed the industry experience of the staff, for example as former manager of customs and member of the Chamber of commerce.

The Customs and Freight Forwarding BA study program has a clear well-defined overarching didactic concept, but this is reflected only in the courses included in the study programme. Nevertheless, the research concept of the study programme is not adequately integrated into

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teaching; for example, the list of the books considered in the literature section of the course syllabi show old books and textbooks, since 2010 and older. An example is the course of Entrepreneurship where students have only one book as basic literature since 2003 (Dr. Emeric Solymossy & Dr. Safet Merovci “Ndërmarrësia” ISBN 9951-00-060, Entrepreneurship (2003)). Moreover, SER considers the research aspects are justified by the programme capacity to deliver applied skills for the labor market (“practical skills and competence development and that the knowledge and skills acquired are applied responsibly and professionally in the workplace” – SER, page 8). ET appreciates the applied aspects of the subjects and curriculum, but these are not demonstrating the research concept of the programme. The R&D Action Plan provided (Appendix 3a of SER) does not reveal any research area for the Customs and Freight Forwarding BA programme, being general and established at an institutional level.

There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues for staff and students. These are elaborated at an institutional level and cover the development of the study programme. Many of these regulations have been provided as appendices to SER, such as – the Statute and Strategic Plan of the institution, Code of ethics, regulations: on internal quality assurance (including questionnaires), on procedure for the development and the revision of new curriculum, on ECTS, on bachelor and master studies, on employment rules, on disciplinary actions, for scholarships, for organizing exams and students’ evaluations, on the description of the job tasks, on the work of the steering board, for the Senate, on safety rules, on house order, on student registration, and for the student parliament. These are made publicly available at: <https://pjeterbudi-edu.com/dokumentet/> and at: <https://pjeterbudi-edu.com/en/documents/>. Other documents, are published in specialized sections, for example the Student handbook, in the student area at: <https://pjeterbudi-edu.com/en/students-support/>.

The college has set several regulations on ethical issues: Code of Ethics (Appendix 6 - Code of Ethics) and the Regulation on Disciplinary Accountability (Appendix 15). The code of ethics is mandatory and applies to all staff of the college – academic staff, administrative staff and students, as well as to all persons that have a college affiliation; this document is recently approved, in 2020 and besides principles, sets clear and comprehensive rules for research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities. Students also follow the rule set in the Ethic Code/Regulation on the House Order provided to ET as an additional document. Moreover, during the meeting with the teaching staff, the anti-plagiarism system in Albanian language – Academia was mentioned as a good practice several times.

The process of curriculum development is managed based on the rules defined by the Office for Academic Development, ECTS, Quality Assurance and R&D; the review of the study



programs is done on a regular periodic annual basis; the decision of the Senate regarding the development of new study programmes is sent to the Board of the College for approval. The institution has established an effective working group for the review and the development of new study programs which is chaired by a vice-rector (SER pages 8-9 and Appendix 8 Regulation on procedures for development, revision, and approval of new curriculum). The duties of the Office for Academic Development, ECTS, Quality Assurance and R&D include the organisation of annual workshops on procedures and methodology for updating current study programs and developing new programs based on the labor market needs and the organisation of annual seminars to review the BA and MA regulations for academic student mobility (Strategic Plan – appendix 2).

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Revise the syllabi annually and update the literature for each subject;*
2. *Set up a mechanism at the programme level to develop the research concept, for example, by creating a Research Plan related to the domain of the study programme;*
3. *Revise the documents published to be consistent and relevant, annually (for example, the Code of Ethics for Students is the same with the Code of Ethics and they are on the same page: <https://pjeterbudi-edu.com/en/documents/>).*

2.2. Quality Management

"Pjetër Budi" College has developed an institutional policy for quality assurance (Appendix 7 - Regulations on internal quality assurance at Pjetër Budi College). The document is comprehensive and defines the types of the evaluation activities which include: teaching and learning, research, administrative services and support services for students, international cooperation and dealing with suggestions. Training for teaching staff are clearly stated in the Action Plan for Quality Assurance (Appendix 3b). Nevertheless, there is no clear evidence that all staff participate in self-evaluations mechanisms and the provided reports (requested as additional documents – 3a – 3e do not reflect the entire staff participation in the evaluation, as they mention only percentages and not absolute figures).

The College has developed the Strategic Plan 2021-2025 (Appendix 2), as well as the Action Plan for Quality Assurance 2021 - 2025 (Appendix 3b) which is a complementary document of the Strategic Plan in the field of quality assurance. According to SER, these documents provide support for the formation of working groups, which are created for different purposes,



e.g. for updating study programs, development of new study programs, development of legal documents of the institution, strategic documents, etc; the working groups include expertise from outside the college such as: labor market representation, international expertise, when necessary (SER, page 12). Therefore, the evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes, through institutional mechanisms.

Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources; the questionnaire addressed to heads of programmes refer to professors and include issues related to the teacher's duties and his / her performance, on the ability to plan, organize and coordinate activities within the academic unit, on his capacity to take responsibility for the accomplishment of tasks (outside teaching and research) within the College, on his engagement in scientific / artistic works, conferences, and other activities etc. Professors are also evaluated by students in relationship to their teaching performance and assessment, some of the questions being related to the following statements: the teacher is prepared for the subject; the teacher is clear in the lectures; the teacher is transparent; the teacher is fair in assessment; the teacher is accurate on the hour; the teacher is creative in the development of teaching and other activities; the teacher creates activities that make the subject more comprehensible. The services and the student support provided for the Customs and Freight Forwarding BA are evaluated through another questionnaire dedicated to the efficiency of the administration and to the usefulness of the administrative services (Appendices 28 a- 28 e).

Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues, but in general, they refer to the level of respondents' satisfaction towards teaching and provided services. The Customs and Freight Forwarding BA study programme is not overall evaluated and none of the existing evaluation forms or mechanisms do not consider the learning outcomes for students. Moreover, the learning outcomes also described in the syllabuses are not paid enough attention in the reviewing process of the programme; the Regulations for organizing exams and student evaluation and the Regulation on procedures for development, revision and approval of new curriculum do not cover learning outcomes; they concentrate on ECTS and curriculum concepts (Appendix 8 and Appendix 22).

Quality assurance processes are institutionally developed and ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance. Regulations are adopted recently (most of them in 2020). Data provided by the Office of Academic Development, ECTS, Quality Assurance and R&D within the College contribute to the identification of changes that will be undertaken by the study program coordinator or College management to address issues of interest (SER, page 14). Students and staff participating in meeting confirmed that they had observed several changes in the programme development, from the title change to content change.

The institution has a clear mechanism to collect survey data from internal and external stakeholders – students, academic and administrative staff, alumni, and employers. The institution has provided as an additional document the link to the evaluation reports based on



the surveys (<https://pjeterbudi-edu.com/en/quality-assurance-document/>), but this link goes to a different information than the requested one and with old data. Therefore, survey results of these evaluations are not made publicly available, at the visit date. Moreover, the employers confirmed that they do not participate in formal evaluations or surveys, but only informal exchange of ideas. Moreover, the public link with documents include many of them but not all of them are useful, as they cannot open using the link: <https://pjeterbudi-edu.com/en/documents/> (for example, <https://111pjeterbudi-edu.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/12-Regulation-on-staff-employment.pdf>, <https://111pjeterbudi-edu.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/23-Regulation-on-systematization-and-job-description.pdf>).

The Central Commission for Quality Assurance and Management, in the process of regular evaluations, through surveys, collects students' opinions and data on areas, for example on teaching in accordance with the curriculum; conveying interactive knowledge and lessons; using of new information technology during lectures; motivating students to participate in lectures, group or individual research. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates, aspects easy to manage as the the Customs and Freight Forwarding BA study programme has a small number of students (SER, page 15). Students confirmed during the meeting that they have noticed an improvement in the recent years regarding the infrastructure.

The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses. The college pays attention to the reports that contribute to quality assurance, most of them being annually elaborated. This requirement is provided by the Regulation on Quality Assurance, Quality Assurance Action Plan 2021-2025. These reports contain details which show progress, weaknesses, and strengths (SER, page 15, and Appendix 3b).

Moreover, the quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved, as they are set at an institutional level and are following the regulations and principles. The main role in this matter is given to the working groups within the college; the institution has provided a minute of the working group, although in Albanian.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Include in the reports on all types of evaluations clear and comprehensive statistical data (for example on the number of collected questionnaires and of valid questionnaires, as well as the response rate of the participants) to observe the entire population engagement in the evaluation process;*



2. *Revise the questionnaires used in the evaluation including an overall program evaluation, as well as evaluations of different components within it which should consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students;*
3. *Revise the Regulations for organizing exams and student evaluation and the Regulation on procedures for development, revision and approval of new curriculum by considering the learning outcomes in the particular assignment, class, course, or program;*
4. *Set up a mechanism to update the database with graduate students (alumni) of the Customs and Freight Forwarding BA study programme;*
5. *Check regularly that the public documents on the website open.*

2.3. Academic Staff

"Pjetër Budi" College has a regulation for staff employment; it distinguishes the steps and criteria for hiring academic staff from hiring administrative staff. According to SER, there is a commission that evaluates the candidates according to the requirements and criteria set out in the call for teaching, scientific activities and administration. Moreover, the Council agrees on the selected candidates from a shortlist that meets the criteria (mainly includes academic achievement, research and experience), and submits to the academic senate that decides on the selection of staff based on needs. (SER, page 17, and Appendix 12). The institution has provided the version of the signed contract with the academic staff and the administrative staff, which clearly specifies the description of duties and responsibilities (Appendix 21_former of the academic staff contract and Appendix 21_example of the contract of the administrative staff) and administrative. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. The college has provided details for the 15 members of the academic staff (9 FT and 6 PT) regarding their - qualification academic title, the contract duration, the teaching workload, the number of the consultation hours and their roles in administrative activities and management of the programme.

The teaching staff comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the administrative instruction on accreditation; the Statute of the College sets out the criteria for the academic staff as well as for the promotion of the academic staff (Appendix 1). According to the regulation on staff employment, this process follows the rules established in the Law on Labor in Kosovo 03/L-212. (Appendix 14 as additional document). Within an academic year, the academic staff do not cover more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time). In fact, the working hours regulation is set in the contract: "1. The employee establishes a full-time employment relationship. 2. Full-time includes forty (40) hours per week, time extension of this fund of hours can be flexible in accordance with work



tasks. 3. The employee has the right to rest during the working day, with full uninterrupted working hours, for a duration of 30 (thirty) minutes.” (Appendix 13).

According to SER, 60 % of the academic staff is full time. The SER does not contain a clear information on the percentage of classes in the study programme that are held by the full time academic staff, but considering the subject taught described in SER, pages 24-27, Et can admit that the full time academic staff account for at least 50% of the classes of the study programme, more precisely 54 %. ET appreciates this as an approximate figure, as a subject has no name allocated (Customs Law, in the first semester) and Marta Mugaz who is in the list of staff, does not appear in the subject distribution of staff (SER, pages 17 – 18 and 24-27).

For each student group and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title. Moreover, 12 out of the 15 academic staff members have doctoral degree. In many cases, the teaching staff is a former industry expert, which generates value to the teaching and learning process.

The academic staff have several opportunities for additional professional development, for example: participation in international scientific conferences; publications in international scientific journals; organizing and participating in trainings for teaching staff (At least once a year); staff participation in workshops / conferences / training seminars in Kosovo / Region or beyond; participation in local and EU funded projects (SER, page 20). During the meeting with the teaching staff and the head of the programme, the support for staff was clearly confirmed. According to the Statute, the institution has a Professional Council for Scientific Publications and Publications and support the publication activity of the staff (Appendix 1). Teaching staff confirmed that they can work together for research purposes, but no evidence is provided on clear formal special assistance that might be given to any who are facing difficulties.

The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community or institution service. Commitment to full-time staff is determined by title and academic position: Professors, 6 hours per week; Lecturers, 6 hours per week; Regular assistants, 8 hours per week (SER, page 20). Moreover, students confirmed the teaching staff availability for consultations. In addition, an important goal has been set in the R&D Action Plan which refers to the training process for the teaching staff to develop project proposals for research work and for creating links and partnerships with other higher education institutions and economy (Appendix 3a).

The college has an institutional mechanism to collect feedback from students and from the head of the programme on the academic staff performance and reports based on the collected data are prepared (Appendices 28 and 28 d, and Appendices 3 c and 3 e from the additional documents). Nevertheless, there is no peer evaluation, and the results are not made publicly available. According to SER: “Some sensitive data is not available to the public but is available at the request of interested parties” (SER, page 21); nevertheless, a statistical format of the analysis can be created avoiding personal data in the file. Moreover, the types of the evaluations in the institutional quality assurance policy (Article 4) do not mention anything about the self-evaluation.



There is no clear evidence that strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and the quality of learning materials; in fact, the syllabi provided for the Customs and freight Forwarding BA study programme include a poor variety of teaching method, as many professors declare in this section that they use the board and computers. As a best practice, can be noted the description included in the Basics of Management syllabus: “Problem-based learning, project work in groups, student-centered active learning, based on sources learning, usage of the case study method, role-playing, classroom workshops, group presentations, the use the summaries of learning for students to record their educational experience” (Appendix 4). Learning materials recommended in the syllabi are old or very old. The library is not part of the students’ assessment (Appendix 28 c).

Teachers retire at the age of 65; if necessary, the engagement is allowed until the age of 70 if the institution faces a lack of staff. There are cases when for other commitments or other reasons and circumstances, they lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered partial-time teachers (SER page 22).

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Set up an effective mechanism to provide special assistance to any member of the teaching staff who is facing difficulties;*
2. *Consider the peer evaluation as part of the entire evaluation process and create a mechanism to collect such data;*
3. *Make the results of the internal evaluations publicly available (apart from the institutional regulations, the programme management can support a statistical format of such results to become publicly available);*
4. *Dialog with the quality assurance responsible persons in the institutional level and support the revision of the policy by including the self-evaluation and the peer evaluation in the list;*
5. *Define an internal mechanism to exchange practices between academic staff on the teaching methods.*

2.4. Educational Process Content

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. These all are described in the syllabi (Appendix 4). The BA The program in Customs and Freight Forwarding BA is clearly presented in the table, with generic



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and specific subjects for this field, with mandatory and optional courses. Specific subjects refer to those that directly contribute to the training of students for the labor market in the field, while the others are generic, such as the Economics or English.

The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The program complies with the 1st cycle of Bologna (180 ECTS), defined within the qualifications and the European System for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (ECTS).

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. The study program is the only one provided in Kosovo in the field of customs and freight forwarding and it is comparable to similar programmes in other countries of the region and the EU, for example: Southern New Hampshire University, "Seneca College" and other institutions which are part of the International Network of Customs Universities, part of which is also "Pjetër Budi" College (SER, page 35). The programme has a comprehensive international approach which refers to two areas: 1. international subjects and subjects which in their syllabi have included teaching units with international relevance. The Customs and Freight Forwarding Program curriculum includes 7 subjects with an international dimension, such as: International Trade, International Freight Forwarding, International Transport, International Financial Institutions, Insurance in International Trade, EU Policy and Legislation, International Marketing. 2. subjects which do not have a purely international character, but in each of them are incorporated teaching units with such a character. For example, in the subject of Customs Law an important chapter is dedicated to the Customs Law of the European Union, but such content is contained in almost all cases. (SER, page 36).

The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which contains: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography. Nevertheless, they are not in the same format, as some of them detail more the content and some less, they are not updated and demonstrate some confusion on what teaching method mean. Moreover, curriculum contains 6 ECTS for all subjects which is inappropriate for an efficient and performant study programme, since it was mentioned that not all subjects are specific, ones being general. For convenience reasons, the 6 ECTS for each subject is simple to be accepted, but for quality enhancement, this is not appropriate. In other words, although there are some minor differences in the allocation of hours from one discipline to another, the entire effort is the same for English, as for Economics, as for Internship and Information Technology and all of the rest. A proper allocation of ECTS which would make the difference between generic and specific disciplines would also increase the mobility programmes for students.

"Pjetër Budi" College has a regulation for bachelor studies which states the professors' obligations to announce students at the beginning of the semester the course syllabus, and their

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consultation programme (Appendix 10). The student-teacher relationship is an effective partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes, as both parties have clear obligations in their current activity. However, for example, although the teaching staff confirmed during the meeting that students are good English speakers, in the meeting with students, they were hesitating and none of them spoke English. An increased number of English hours for students would increase the student mobility, their capacity of reading English materials and more opportunities for the labor market.

Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes. Clear assessment rules are described in the syllabi. Moreover, in specific cases, special treatment for student might be considered; as described in the Appendix 11 (additional document), in such cases, students make official requests, and the certain commissions evaluate the requests and take decision depending on issue raised. In some cases, the management of the College is or the Board of College, might be also involved.

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. Student assessment is done continuously throughout the semester, through tests, seminar papers, research projects, etc (SER, page 39). Students have the mechanism to appeal in different situations, specific regulations being into force, for example: 1. Regulation for organizing student exams and evaluation which explains students the appeal procedures, according to the articles 22, and 23; 2. Regulation for students' registration include the procedures for students appeals in the article 7.4; 3. Statute of the College also contain students appeal procedures (Appendix 1 a in the additional documents).

The grading standard is consistent for each subject in the Customs and Freight Forwarding BA study programme; assessment policies are defined by the Statute and the Regulation on the Organization of Examinations and Student Assessment (SER, page 39 and Appendix 22). 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, described also in every syllabus. For example, in the Communication and Public Relations syllabus, it is stated that: "To determine the final grade: From 50 – 59 accumulated point take the grade 6 (six). From 60 – 69 accumulated point take the grade 7 (seven). From 70 – 79 accumulated point take the grade 8 (eight); the same for the Sociology discipline and others (Appendix 4).

The College applies the Regulation on the Organization of Exams and Student Assessment which specifies cases where students may have been inconsistently or unfairly graded, and they have the right to appeal, which will then be reviewed by the relevant committee and the final evaluation will be made by a committee composed of professors in the field of the given subject. In case of inconsistent assessment, after refusing the grade, the student can get a new deadline to take the exam (SER, page 40 and Appendix 1 b as additional document).

The Customs and Freight Forwarding BA study programme includes two courses with a purely practical character are: 1. Practical work in customs and 2. Practical work in forwarding (SER,



pages 40, 41). For the practical stages, there are allocated academic staff as tutors (Appendix 6, as additional document). The practice stages are allocated 6 ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports (Appendix 7 as additional document). However, the students' workload (hours per semester, ECTS) in the provide syllabus for the Customs Practical Work include only 1 week, meaning 25 hours for effective practical field work; the rest of the hours are allocated like in theoretical subjects, for lectures, theoretical and laboratorial exercises, field research, colloquiums (tests), homework, individual study (at library or at home), final preparation for the exam etc. This is inappropriate for the internship concept and their learning outcomes. The syllabus should be reconsidered in order to allocate more practical hours for students.

In order to facilitate the practice stages, the college has signed several cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units (Appendix 8 as additional document). Once again, the expertise of the teaching staff is very helpful for the students' training from a practical point of view. Recent agreements have been provided as examples, for both cooperation with the industry and with other universities (Appendices 9 and 10, as additional documents).

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Revise the syllabi annually and update the literature recommended to students;*
2. *Reallocate the ECTS according to the effective effort of study making the right difference between generic and specific disciplines;*
3. *Allocate more English hours for students;*
4. *Revise the syllabi for the practical work for students in order to allocate the majority of hours for effective practical work and not for theoretical studies and research.*

2.5. Students

The College has adopted two main regulation to clearly and formally describe the admission process that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment: for student registration and for organizing the bachelor study (the Regulation for determining the procedures for student registration and the Regulation for Bachelor Studies – Appendices 10 and 31). Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students. The criteria for the students' admission in the Customs and Freight Forwarding BA study programme are: successful completion of high school in Kosovo certified with a diploma; successful completion of primary and secondary school with at least 12 years of education certified by the relevant diploma; successful completion of primary and secondary school with



at least 12 years of education certified by the relevant diploma obtained in the outside world, if the equivalence with the Matura diploma has been made. The decision on the recognition of the diploma and its equivalent is taken by the relevant Ministry” (SER, page 43).

All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements. The concrete required documents for students to be enrolled are: the high school diploma; the Matura test certificate; the high school transcripts; the birth certificate; the copy of the ID card; and two (2) photographs (SER, page 44).

The study groups are dimensioned to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process in the Customs and Freight Forwarding BA study programme. In fact, the programme has only 61 students and the small number of students is easy to be managed.

If students require additional teaching and learning support, they can meet professors during their consultations or they can participate to additional course. SER states that “the need to organize different courses is based on the analysis of the results achieved by each student and in each subject” (SER, page 4). Nevertheless, there is no internal mechanism to provide efficient feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments.

The Customs and Freight Forwarding BA Study Program is offered with a three (3) years system and its structure include 180 ECTS. Upon completion of studies in this program, students earn the Bachelor of Arts degree of Customs and Freight Forwarding. The academic titles (Bachelor and Master) offered by the College "Pjetër Budi" are in line and are related to the European Higher Education Area, as well as the relevant documents of the Bologna Process. Based on the completion of the basic studies, students are provided with bachelor diploma bachelor and with other accompanying documents such as: Graduation certificate, grade certificate and supplement (SER, page 45). Moreover, the graduation process is clearly regulated on the basis of the Regulation on the graduation procedure of students in bachelor's studies, which is publicly available at: <https://pjeterbudi-edu.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Regulation-on-the-Graduation-procedure-of-students-in-BA-studies.pdf>. This regulations covers issues, for example: Procedures for the preparation of the bachelor thesis; Student file verification procedure; Graduation procedure; Issuance of diploma for graduate students.

Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations. Some cases have been provided as recent examples of special treatment of students: for students who have been out of Kosovo or for health reasons during the pandemic; for students who have made requests for exemption from various payments for personal health reasons or other financial and family reasons; for students who have passed the period of studies - doubled their study period, with objective reasons; for students who have forgotten or encountered some barriers to access their personal system (Appendix 11, as additional document).

Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the programme. The Office for Academic Development, ECTS, Quality Assurance and R&D collects complex data, for



example: number of students, students' profile, student progression and students drop-out rates as well as students' satisfaction with the study program services through surveys. This process is also supported by the Student Support Service and Career Development Office. Data from the two offices are used for trend analysis and further improvements. Usage of data and mechanism for improvement are described in the Regulation for Quality Assurance. (SER, page 46). Nevertheless, there is no clear evidence that records of student completion rates are included among the quality indicators, which would be very easy to be managed considering the low number of students. In fact, the quality measures considered in the Action Plan for Quality Assurance are more general than specific (Appendix 3 b) and do not specify measurable quality indicators.

Students at the Customs and Freight Forwarding BA study programme use the Acadmia platform to fight against plagiarism. The College has set a manual to help students use the software, based on concrete steps and print screens (Appendix 12, as additional document). In addition, the Statute of the college, the Code of Ethics and the Regulation on Disciplinary Responsibility are comprehensive procedures that effectively cover issues related to academic misconduct in the case of student seminar papers, diploma theses, etc (Appendices 1, 6 and 15).

Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals. Students' rights are defined by the Statute of the College, which is published on the website. Main students' rights include: the right to participate in all lectures, seminars and lessons organized in the subjects of the chosen study program, in accordance with the progress of studies; the right to use the university libraries and other services for students; the right to participate in the elections for student representatives in the bodies of the College; the right to participate regularly in the meetings of the bodies and commissions where they are appointed as members. Students also have the right to present new ideas and controversial opinions without risking losing their student place or the privileges they may enjoy from the college; the right to complain about the quality of the teaching process or the infrastructure of the college, etc. Clear mechanisms for students appeal are set in the regulation for organizing exams and for student registration (Appendices 1 a – 1 c, as additional documents).

The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents. The procedure and rules of student transfer are defined by the Regulation on the implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) which is available on the official website (Appendix 9).

Professors have mandatory consultation hours twice a week dedicated to students for any counseling related to academic activity, career planning and employment and other personal matters. In addition, the Student Parliament plays an important role in addressing the needs of students. The work of the student parliament is defined by the Rules of Procedure of the



Student Parliament (Appendix 33). This structure represents students inside and outside the college, organizes events and activities that are of high interest to students.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Create an internal mechanism to provide prompt feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments; after that, set an assistance plan to support students in their learning;*
2. *Define a set of quality indicators at the programme level considering the records of student completion rates.*

2.6. Research

According to SER: “Scientific research is the daily activity of all academic institutions that aim to be competitive in the country and beyond... Moreover, various reports show that less than 0.1% of Kosovo's GDP is invested in research and development, which is far from the goal of the European Union” (SER, page 49). In addition, the SER states that the college pays a special attention to work practices which are an integral part of the study program, where students do research in relationship to their diploma topics and seminar works. Therefore, the SER does not clearly specify scientific/applied research objectives. Moreover, the programme does not provide research topics for the institutional research plan. The Action Plan for research and development includes general objectives, for example: increasing the number of publications in the peer review journals; trained staff to develop project proposals for research work and for creating links and paternities with other higher education institutions and economy; increased international cooperation in the field of scientific research; academic staff has access to several prestigious scientific journals. (Appendix 3 a). In addition, limited resources to carry out all activities in the research related area are one of the recognized weaknesses (SER, page 53).

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. The Statute of the College set clear criteria for academic staff: for a full professor title, at least 5 main works published in international scientific journal as first author or correspondent author; for assistant professor, at least one main work, for associate professor, at least 3 major works etc (Appendix 1).

Academic staff is provided with support to publish in peer-reviewed journals, including the provision of funding for participation fees and publication fees, where required (SER, page 50). Nevertheless, there is no evidence regarding clear policies for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study

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of the program. The public link to documents in the research section of the website includes only some publications of the staff and the Action Plan in this area (<https://pjeterbudi.edu.com/en/academic-staff-scientific-publications-and-scientific-activities/>).

The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity. The list includes only the full-time staff (<https://pjeterbudi.edu.com/en/academic-staff-scientific-publications-and-scientific-activities/>).

The academic staff is supported to publish in journals, participate in local and international scientific conferences. Moreover, the College organizes annual international conferences, where college staff are encouraged to attend and contribute to the Conference and are primarily related to the field of Economics and Customs (SER, page 51). A list of scientific conferences is published on the website, as an invitation to the academic community to participate: <https://pjeterbudi.edu.com/en/scientific-conferences/>.

Research is validated through research publications. In addition, staff is also free to engage in various consulting services with companies, where they require relevant expertise (SER, page 51). The meeting with the teaching staff proved the interest of the academic staff in working with the industry sector.

Each academic staff member and researcher has the obligation to produce at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years. Nevertheless, the list on the website regarding the publications for the 9 FT show that there is a lot of room to improve the publication productivity. Moreover, ET is reserved in considering that all staff produces an average of at least 1 research publication/year for the latest 3 years. For example, professor Drita Maliqi during 2019-2021 has only one publication in 2020, while professor Elissa Mollakuqe does not clearly present in the table the publications and the year, many of the links being non-functional (<https://pjeterbudi.edu.com/en/academic-staff-scientific-publications-and-scientific-activities/>).

Academic and research staff should publish under the name of the Pjeter Budy College where they are affiliated to as full-time staff. Nevertheless, some of the papers are not clearly communicated on the website. For example, the paper with the title “From feeding-back to feeding-forward: managerial feedback as a trigger of change in SMEs” of professor Feim Blakqori does not include the affiliation of the college (<https://pjeterbudi.edu.com/en/academic-staff-scientific-publications-and-scientific-activities/>).

Academic staff is 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. Special attention is paid to the promotion and the increasing of the number of practices described in the Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 (SER, page 53).

According to SER: “Intellectual property ownership policies and procedures for the commercialization of ideas are still a challenge for all higher education institutions, at the national level. However, the institution is actively working to work on such procedures.” (SER, page 53).



In addition, students are engaged in research related activities, such as working on the data collection based on questionnaire, but there is a lot of room for improvement in this matter. Moreover, the SWOT analysis regarding the research section shows that effective awareness of the research limitations is known: lack of skills to write research projects; difficulty in publishing in international peer-reviewed journals (Kosovo is a small country); not much experience in conducting research activities; lack of international projects; lack of experienced international researchers.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Identify few scientific/applied research objectives and define few research topics/themes to be integrated in the research development plan of the institution;*
- 2. Define at the programme level what is recognized as research, consistent with the international standards and established norms in the field of customs and freight forwarding;*
- 3. Create a mechanism of best practice exchange to increase the capacity of the teaching staff to write competitive research projects;*
- 4. Increase the professor-student cooperation in research activities.*

2.7. Infrastructure and Resources

The college has appropriate space for teaching and research development. In the college offices are located the directorate, the office of the Rector, the office of the Vice-Rectors, the Office of the Secretary General, the Administration, the Office of Finance and Accounting, the Office of Quality Assurance, the Library, the Amphitheater, the Professors' Room, the IT Hall and the classrooms for teaching and learning. ET has studied the video provided by KAA and noticed that the college offers suitable learning environments for staff and students (SER, page 54). SER contains a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program till 2027 based on the income generated from the tuition fees. In this context, the plan is to increase the number of students from the planned of 100 in 2022, to 200 in 2023 and to 300 students in 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027; an increased number of students, would mean an increased income for the study programme benefit (SER, pages 54-55).

Regarding the ownership of the spaces, it is stated that the building of the College is owned by the President of the Board, that all the equipments, library and other tools and equipment for administration of the college and educational process is owned by the college. Moreover, the teaching rooms, libraries and cabinets are equipped with computers, projectors and audio,



which are easily accessible and easily accessible by teaching staff and students. The college cooperates with libraries such as: National Library and we also use the electronic library EBSCO, LOGIN, American Corner, JSTOR, BioONE, Cambridge Journals and Oxford Online. In addition, the Electronic Literature Management System - SITOS for Students is constantly updated, where manual material and videos are distributed for each change for its use (SER, page 56).

According to SER: “The College has sufficient space for more than 10% of the total number of students. Also, the number of seats for group work correspond to more than 10% of the total number of students in the study program. The College Library consists of a physical library, with books, magazines and other materials recorded in catalogs, in accordance with the fields of study, in Albanian, and in English, which are systematized in hard copy, and access proofs. in electronic libraries” (SER, page 57).

The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is not adapted to students with special needs, but as stated in SER, the institution is making continuous efforts in this matter (SER, page 57).

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Continue the efforts to adapt the infrastructure to adapted to students with special needs.*

3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

ET appreciates the effort of the faculty and program management to provide adequate documents, explanations, and clarifications to all questions during the online site visit, especially in the context of translation needed during all the meetings. Quality standards aim to help internal decisions not only in the period of the external evaluations, but during the permanent activity. Building a quality culture takes time.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program CUSTOMS AND FREIGHT FORWARDING BA offered by THE PJETER BUDI COLLEGE is substantially compliant with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation manual and, therefore, recommends to accredit the study program for a duration of 3 years with a number of 100 students to be enrolled in the program.

Expert Team

Member

(Signature)

Magdalena Platis
(Print Name)

25 May, 2022
(Date)
