



Republika e Kosovës

Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

**ANNUAL WORK REPORT OF THE STATE COUNCIL OF
QUALITY AND KOSOVO ACCREDITATION AGENCY
FOR THE YEAR 2024**

Pristina, March, 2025

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ACRONYMS

ADA – Austrian Development Agency

KAA - Kosovo Accreditation Agency

CEENQA - Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance

ENQA - European Network for Quality Assurance

EQAR - European Quality Assurance Register

ESG - European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance

HERAS - Higher Education, Research and Applied Science Plus

HEI - Higher Education Institution

Public HEIs - Higher Education Institutions financed by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo

Private HEI - Self-financed Higher Education Institutions

INQAAHE - International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

AC - Appeals Commission reviewing the appeals submitted by HEIs with respect to the decisions of the SCQ

NQF – National Qualifications Framework

SCQ - State Council of Quality

Law on HE - Law on Higher Education

MESTI - Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation

SER – Self-Evaluation Report

QA - Quality Assurance

AI - Administrative Instruction

WUS Kosovo - World University Service Kosova

KSAC – Kosovo Subject Area Code

1. INTRODUCTION

This document has been drafted for the purpose of annual reporting on the work of the State Council of Quality and Kosovo Accreditation Agency for the year 2024.

This Report contains information on the activities of the State Council of Quality, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, and the Appeals Commission for the one-year period.

The report reflects:

1. The evaluation and accreditation processes of higher education institutions and their study programmes at level V of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), Bachelor, Master and PhD, for the year 2024;
2. Activities and developments that contribute to the internal quality assurance of the work of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency and the functioning of the State Quality Council, as the decision-making institution of the KAA;
3. Addressing recommendations for the return of full membership to the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR); and
4. Cooperation with national and international partner institutions.

2. KOSOVO ACCREDITATION AGENCY (KAA)

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) was established by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in 2008, pursuant to Law No. 04/L-037 on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo. Since 2023, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency has been operating under Law No. 08/L-110 on Kosovo Accreditation Agency and has the status of a regulatory agency for quality assurance in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo.

KAA accredits, re-accredits, validates and monitors public and private higher education institutions in Kosovo and their study programmes. Through the accreditation process, KAA supports the development and continuous improvement of quality in higher education and thereby ensures that higher education offers in Kosovo meet comparable international standards.

The legal basis for the activity of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) is the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo¹ (No. 04/L-037, of 31.08.2011) and the Law No. 08/L-110 on Kosovo Accreditation Agency², as well as the sub-legal acts and regulations adopted by KAA. Since its establishment, KAA, acting in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG)³ has developed all standards and procedures for accreditation and published them through its official website.⁴

Accreditation includes these key aspects:

- Accreditation of higher education institutions;
- Accreditation of study programmes;
- Accreditation of branches of institutions and study programmes offered at those branches;
- Recognition/validation of international accreditation;
- Post-accreditation procedures.

In order to develop a transparent accreditation process, KAA provides the necessary documents on accreditation procedures that can be used by HEIs, as follows: KAA Regulations and Standards, KAA Guidelines for the Drafting of Self-Evaluation Reports (SER) for the evaluation of higher education institutions and their study programmes, respectively the Accreditation Manual Regulation⁵. These documents have served not only as a guide for higher education institutions for the purpose of the accreditation process, but also as a guide for internal quality assurance and management.

KAA consists of its administrative structure, which is led by the General Director, the State Council of Quality (SCQ), which is the governing and decision-making body of KAA, as well as the Appeals Commission.

KAA has tripled the number of administrative staff and expanded its working premises to ensure that accreditation and monitoring processes are carried out in compliance with the highest international standards.

¹ [Ligji nr. 04/L-037 për arsimin e lartë në republikën e kosovës \(rks-gov.net\)](http://rks-gov.net)

² [Ligji nr. 08/L-110 për agjencinë e kosovës për akreditim \(rks-gov.net\)](http://rks-gov.net)

⁴ https://www.enqa.eu/ep-content/uploads/2015/11/esg_2015.pdf

⁴ <https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/guidelines/>

⁵ <https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/accreditation/standards/>

2.1. KAA mission and goals

KAA's mission is to support continuous development and improvement of quality in higher education institutions through the external evaluation process and to assure Kosovo society that the quality of higher education is at the level of the highest international standards.

KAA goals are as follows:

- to promote, improve and increase the quality of higher education;
- to increase transparency and accountability in the higher education system;
- to improve the quality of studies in higher education institutions;
- to encourage innovative content in higher education;
- to ensure the comparability of qualifications from Kosovo's higher education institutions with those awarded by international programmes;
- to implement objectives for the integration of Kosovo into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and to contribute to its development.

The main values on which the work of KAA is based are:

Independence – KAA decisions are made independently and are reasoned in a consistent and verifiable manner;

Transparency – KAA is guided by the principles of public responsibility and accountability through an effective information policy;

Credibility – KAA organizes credible external quality assurance processes, where the academic community and society in general trust the work of KAA;

Professionalism – KAA applies high professional standards applied in Europe in external and internal quality assurance processes.

2.2. Memberships and partnerships

KAA was part of international networks for quality assurance in higher education and continues to be so also for the year 2024.

This year, KAA continues to be a member of:

- Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance -CEENQA⁶.
- INQAAHE⁷, International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education.
- ENQA Affiliate. KAA has managed to gain ENQA Affiliate status, after meeting a series of criteria which were verified by ENQA Board and then approved by ENQA Assembly in Stockholm.⁸
- KAA has become a full member of the Global Academic Integrity Network (GAIN). The Global Academic Integrity Network is a consortium of education quality and integrity agencies worldwide that join forces to combat the rise of commercial academic cheating services targeting students, and it is supported by a number of important international education bodies, such as ENQA, the European Network for Academic Integrity and ETINED.⁹

2.3. Key reforms – adoption of sub-legal acts

As a result of the adoption of the Law on KAA in 2023, a series of sub-legal acts have been approved during 2024.

The functioning and performance of KAA are directly influenced by the legal framework, including the Law on KAA, administrative instructions and specific regulations that regulate the evaluation, accreditation and internal management processes of KAA.

2.3.1. Administrative Instruction (MESTI) No. 01B-2195

Based on the Law on the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, respectively Article 28 of the said law which talks about “Accreditation procedures, criteria and standards”, and point 10 of this article which talks about “programme providers from paragraph 9 of this Article, for study programmes of non-majority communities”, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation has issued Administrative Instruction (MASTI) No. 01b-03/20¹⁰ on the assessment of the suitability of study programme providers and programmes of non-majority communities in the process of accreditation and re-accreditation of higher education institutions.

⁶ Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education. <https://www.ceenqa.org/>

⁷ The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) <https://www.inqahe.org/>

⁸ ENQA Affiliate <https://www.enqa.eu/membership-database/kaa-kosovo-accreditation-agency/>

⁹ Global Academic Integrity Network (GAIN) <https://globalacademicintegrity.network/>

¹⁰ [Udhëzimin Administrativ \(MASHTI\) Nr. 01b-03/2024](#)

Based on the aforementioned legislation, community programmes shall benefit from facilities in the accreditation and development of community programmes in their languages, starting from the academic year 2024-2025.

The purpose of this Administrative Instruction is to assess the compatibility of study programme providers, for which HEIs apply in the process of accreditation and re-accreditation, including study programmes of non-majority communities.

This Administrative Instruction is implemented by KAA for all non-majority community programmes that apply for accreditation and re-accreditation.

The purpose of this guideline is to implement the values set forth in the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, the Law on Higher Education, and the Law on Kosovo Accreditation Agency, which support non-majority communities in the field of education.

2.3.2. Regulation (KAA) No. 01/2024 on the Work of the Appeals Commission

The Regulation on the Work of the Appeals Commission of the KAA¹¹ defines the structure, functions and procedures of this body. The Appeals Commission handles appeals from higher education institutions filed against decisions of the State Council of Quality (SCQ) by ensuring a fair and transparent process when assessing these appeals.

The Commission's work procedures include deadlines for filing and reviewing complaints and the manner of gathering evidence and making decisions. The regulation also stipulates that the Commission's decisions are final within the KAA by ensuring efficiency in handling issues raised by higher education institutions.

2.3.3. Regulation (KAA) No. 02/2024 - on Internal Organization and Systematization of Jobs¹²

Based on this regulation and the new organizational chart, KAA has a professional organizational structure, in full compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), and in harmony with the new Law on KAA as well as with Kosovo legislation in general.

The new structure of KAA consists of two departments, six divisions and other supporting units. The number of approved staff of KAA shall be 32.

¹¹ <https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/ëp-content/uploads/Rregullore-per-Punen-e-Komisionit-te-Ankesave-te-AKA.pdf>

¹² <https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/ëp-content/uploads/Rregullorja-e-AKA-per-Organizimin-e-Brendshem-2024.pdf>

This Regulation creates a clear organizational structure by improving the operational efficiency of KAA and providing a clear description of duties and responsibilities, in order to increase professionalism.

2.3.4. Regulation (AKA) No. 03/2024 - on the Selection, Engagement and Compensation of External Experts ¹³

The Regulation on the Selection, Engagement and Compensation of External Experts in the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) sets out the criteria and procedures for the selection of experts participating in the evaluation process of higher education institutions. It ensures that external experts are professionals with relevant academic and quality experience, thus guaranteeing an impartial and credible evaluation process.

The process of selection is carried out through a public call and certain criteria for academic qualification and professional experience. The selection of experts is done by the SCQ, based on transparency and meritocracy. The selected experts are engaged for certain periods and must respect ethical and professional standards when evaluating academic institutions and programmes.

The compensation of external experts is set out in the regulation by taking into consideration the complexity of the evaluations and the time of their engagement. Payments are carried out pursuant to the financial provisions of the KAA by ensuring fair compensation for the experts' contribution to the accreditation process. The regulation also provides details on the coverage of expenses and principles on conflict of interest to preserve the integrity of the evaluation process.

2.3.5. Regulation (KAA) No. 04/2024 – for the Manual of Accreditation/Reaccreditation and Validation¹⁴

The Regulation is a key document that sets out the standards and procedures for accreditation, re-accreditation and validation of higher education institutions and their programmes in Kosovo. This Regulation has been drafted in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and aims at the continuous improvement

¹³ <https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/REGULATION-KAA-No.012025-ON-PROCEDURES-AND-CRITERIA-FOR-EXTERNAL-EVALUATION-BY-INTERNATIONAL-ACCREDITATION-AGENCIES.pdf>

¹⁴ https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/Manuali-i-Akreditimit-Riakreditimit-Validimit-Shqip-2024-1.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

of the quality of educational institutions in the country.

The Regulation serves as a guide for KAA, higher education institutions, international experts, and general public in the implementation of fair and transparent accreditation procedures. It defines the main responsibilities of educational institutions for ensuring the quality of the services they provide by taking into account the diversity of education systems, institutions, programmes, and students. The regulation also encourages the development of a quality culture and takes into account the needs and expectations of students, other stakeholders, and society in general.

2.3.6. Regulation (KAA) No. 05/2024 on the Process of Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions by KAA¹⁵

This Regulation is also known as the Validation Regulation. The Regulation lays down the procedures and criteria for validation in cases where a higher education institution applies for external evaluation at the institutional level or for study programmes by an international accreditation agency.

The Validation Regulation also covers cases when a higher education institution, accredited by KAA, in partnership with an international university, decides to offer study programmes in Kosovo that, in the country of origin, are accredited by international accreditation agencies.

2.3.7. Regulation (KAA) No. 06/2024 - on Fees and Payments at KAA

As provided for in the Law on KAA, the Regulation defines the amount of fees that higher education institutions in the Republic of Kosovo shall pay for accreditation, re-accreditation, validation, super expertise and post-accreditation procedures, as well as the amount of payments for international experts.

This document regulates the financial aspects of accreditation services by ensuring financial stability for KAA and transparency in the fees applied.

¹⁵ <https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/Regular-per-Procedurat-dhe-Kriteret-per-Vleresimin-e-Jashtem-nga-Agencia-Derkombetare-e-Kredititim.pdf>

2.3.8. KAA Internal Quality Assurance Policies

KAA has developed the Internal Quality Assurance Policy document, which sets out the measures and procedures to ensure internal quality within the agency. These policies are in harmony with international standards and are aim to increase transparency, accountability and continuous improvement of accreditation processes.

The KAA's internal quality assurance policies formally lay down and describe all actions that are carried out with the aim of implementing internal quality assurance. The policies serve as the KAA's main mechanism for internal reflection and are fully consistent with the KAA's commitment to establishing a functioning system that is comparable to European quality assurance agencies.

Continuous quality improvement at KAA is ensured by applying the PDCA (plan – do – check – act) cycle. The timely and regular planning and implementation of external assessment processes, in addition to that provided for by the legislation in force, is an essential indicator of KAA's performance. On the other hand, data collection through control and monitoring and the review of internal procedures are a prerequisite for continuous quality improvement. Internal assessment processes also contribute to increasing the transparency of KAA's actions towards society in general. In this respect, KAA is committed to inclusion of relevant stakeholders, whose feedback serves as an important basis for informing KAA policies.

3. STATE COUNCIL OF QUALITY (SCQ)

The State Council of Quality (SCQ) or the KAA Board is the decision-making body of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency and is responsible for taking decisions on the accreditation of higher education institutions and their study programmes.

The State Council of Quality works on the basis of the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo No. 04/L-037 and Law No. 08/L-110 on Kosovo Accreditation Agency¹⁶ and relies on the Regulation on the Work of the State Council of Quality (No. 621/18D, dated 12.06.2018).

The legislation in force enables the selection of the members of the SCQ based on professional and transparent criteria and procedures. The selected list of nominees is ratified by the Assembly of the

¹⁶ [Law No. 08/L-110 on the Kosovo Accreditation Agency \(rks-gov.net\)](http://rks-gov.net)

Republic of Kosovo. Based on the Regulation on the Work of the State Council of Quality, the SCQ sets the annual agendas for the accreditation process of HEIs, adopts the standards, procedures, and accreditation criteria, approves the teams of external experts proposed by the Director of KAA, takes decisions on accreditation, and approves the Statute and regulations of KAA.

The current composition of the SCQ is as follows:

1. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hasnije Ilazi, President;
2. Dr. Klemen Miklavic, Vice President;
3. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gëzim Tosuni, Member;
4. Prof. Dr. Maja Martinović, Member;
5. Prof. Dr. Jaakko Kauko, Member;
6. Prof. Dr. Mirlinda Batalli, Member;
7. Prof. Dr. Avni Berisha, Member;
8. Dr. Jetmir Haxhibeqiri, Member,
9. Shkurta Bajgora, student, Member;
10. Director of KAA, Mr. Naim Gashi (ex officio);
11. Mr. Ermal Sadiku, industry representative and
12. Ms. Arieta Pozhegu Vula, industry representative.

Prof. Dr. Mirlinda Batalli, Prof. Dr. Avni Berisha, and Dr. Jetmir Haxhibeqiri were elected by the Kosovo Parliament on 14.02.2024, whereas new student member Shkurta Bajgora was elected by the Kosovo Parliament on 05/12/2024.

Table 1: Main activities of the SCQ for the year 2024

No.	Description	Date
1.	As a result of the decision of the SCQ to keep the call for international experts open throughout the year, KAA has continuously received new applications for international experts and has reviewed them throughout the year.	2024
2.	SCQ has reviewed and decided on all evaluation reports of experts.	2024
3.	SCQ has reviewed all applications from HEIs and has reviewed and	2024

	processed all appeals from HEIs to the Appeals Commission.	
4.	In order to increase transparency and include all higher education stakeholders in the decision-making process, SCQ has continued with meetings with accredited higher education institutions in Kosovo.	2024
5.	SCQ met with the Conference of Rectors to discuss improvement of quality in higher education.	05.02.2024
6.	SCQ has approved the Regulation on the Selection, Engagement and Compensation of External Experts.	07.02.2024
7.	SCQ has held a workshop on the review of the accreditation manual.	25 and 26 March , 2024
8.	SCQ has approved the Regulation for the Accreditation Manual	29.04.2024
9.	SCQ and KAA hosted a team of experts from the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), as part of the assessment of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) for the implementation of European quality standards (ESG 2015).	02-04.07.2024
10.	SCQ and KAA organized the international conference on quality assurance in higher education	24.09.2024
11.	SCQ has approved the Regulation on fees and payments	08.10.2024
12.	SCQ and KAA met with representatives of higher education institutions that offer programmes in the field of arts, with the aim of discussing the determination of criteria for programme providers in this field.	22.10.2024
13.	SCQ and KAA hosted a visit from the Committee on Education, Science, Technology, Innovation, Culture, Youth and Sports of the Assembly of Kosovo	12.11.2024
14.	SCQ has set the criteria for study programme providers in the fields of arts	27.11.2024
15.	SCQ and KAA have paid visits to: Finland where meetings were held with the counterpart accreditation agency FINEEC, the Students' Union, the University of Helsinki, and the University of Tampere; ENQA Forum 2024 in Hannover; The International Conference of the Turkish Higher Education Quality	2024

	<p>Council(THEQC) where meetings were held with leaders of counterpart agencies in Europe;</p> <p>Proceedings of the Assembly of International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the 2024 Forum in Bucharest, Romania;</p> <p>Budapest, Hungary, at the counterpart MBA Accreditation Agency, where the memorandum of cooperation between the two agencies was signed.</p> <p>General Assembly of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in Malta.</p>	
16	SCQ reports to the Committee on Education, Science, Technology, Innovation, Culture, Youth, and Sports in the Parliament of Kosovo.	05.07.2024.

3.1. SCQ meetings and decisions

During 2024, SCQ has held a total of 16 meetings and 1 online voting. The below table lists the meetings held, as per their order.

Table 2: List of meetings held during the year 2024

No.	Date	Meetings
1	06-07.02.2024	120th meeting of SCQ
2	06.03.2024	121st Meeting of SCQ
3	22.04.2024	122nd Meeting of SCQ
4	29.04.2024	Extraordinary meeting 01/2024
5	20.05.2024	123rd Meeting of SCQ
6	25.06.2024	124th Meeting of SCQ

7	03.07.2024	125th Meeting of SCQ (held in the premises of the University of Prishtina)
8	22.07.2024	126th Meeting of SCQ
9	12.08.2024	127th Meeting of SCQ
10	23.08.2024	Extraordinary meeting 02/2024
11	09.09.2024	Extraordinary meeting 03/2024
12	23.09.2024	128th Meeting of SCQ
13	08.10.2024	129th Meeting of SCQ
14	01.11.2024	130th meeting of SCQ (meeting held in the premises of the University of Peja)
15	26.11.2024	131st Meeting of SCQ
16	09-10.12.2024	132nd Meeting of SCQ

For each SCQ meeting, decisions are published on the official KAA website, the official Facebook profile, and the LinkedIn profile.

3.2. The main challenges of SCQ in 2024:

1. **Recognition of diplomas from the region and beyond remains a challenge.** There is a large number of programme holders who have graduated as a doctor of science in regional countries and/or even beyond, countries with a significant lack of accreditation capacities and mechanisms according to ESG standards. Recognition of diplomas (nostrification) according to the legislation in force is not in harmony with the quality assurance mechanisms in higher education, and consequently, in addition to the formal-procedural side, it does not provide a substantive review of dissertations, thus enabling the legitimization of diplomas of dubious quality. SCQ does not possess mechanisms for excluding holders with dubious or low-quality PhD degrees from the accreditation process, which jeopardizes quality assurance.
2. **Quality of applications.** During its work, SCQ has faced poor quality applications for programme accreditation. Errors related to the selection of codes from ESAC (Erasmus

Subject Area Codes) and their non-compliance with the field of study, the inconsistency of programme courses and holder profiles with the “learning outcomes” of the programme, the poor quality of self-evaluation reports in terms of content and the quality of translation into English, are some of the problems that SCQ encounters during the review of applications and decision-making.

Based on evaluations by international experts in 2024, SCQ has identified that HEIs have shown poor performance in meeting the Research standard, as well as the Mission, Objectives, and Administration standards. Further, SCQ found that HEIs have addressed expert recommendations through activity plans more as a formality rather than as a genuine commitment to improving the situation. In general, strategic thinking is one of the major weaknesses of HEIs.

At the same time, following the changes to the E-accreditation platform, the documents uploaded on the platform by academic staff have been shown to have many shortcomings: ranging from not having uploaded documents on the platform at all, to uploading updated, unsigned documents, with unclickable links, etc.

A suchlike factual situation was presented to HEIs at the annual meeting of SCQ with HEIs.

3. **Sub-legal acts for the Law on KAA.** The Law on KAA has entered into force in July 2023 and will have a major positive impact on the KAA's activities. The drafting and implementation of sub-legal acts that will enable the full implementation of the said Law remain to be a challenge.
4. **ENQA assessment visit and application for membership to EQAR.** During 2024, a full assessment visit was paid by ENQA experts to KAA. The main challenge of SCQ and KAA has been to present the numerous achievements in such a way that international experts clearly understand the progress achieved, but above all the local context of the implementation of the standards. In this respect, during the following period, SCQ and KAA members have undertaken numerous international consultative meetings for the application to EQAR following the assessment by ENQA.

The return of KAA to ENQA and EQAR remains one of the main strategic goals of KAA also within the new KAA Strategy 2026-2031.

4. PROCESS OF EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION OF HEI-s FOR THE YEAR 2024

Institutional and study programme evaluation is a periodic activity of the KAA. This process is based on the assessment of documents submitted by the applying institution (Self-Evaluation Report) and on the findings during the on-site visit with the team of international accreditation experts. Based on the published procedures of the KAA, each HEI must demonstrate that it meets the accreditation criteria in order to obtain accreditation.

Based on the Law on KAA, each HEI that submits an application for re-accreditation/institutional accreditation of one or more study programmes must, at the same time also submit the list of academic staff, declared at KAA through the e-accreditation platform for engagement in the same HEI, within the relevant programme for the relevant academic year. The application, along with the list of staff, is subject to assessment of the fulfilment of formal criteria and following the approval by SCQ, and is included in the annual agenda of KAA for evaluation. In case of a negative preliminary evaluation of the application by SCQ, the application is rejected and is not subject to evaluation. In addition to the applications and lists of approved staff, the HEI must also bring to KAA the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) which is sent to the external evaluation team within a certain deadline prior to the physical visit.

In 2024, KAA carried out the process of evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes based on the standards reviewed in 2021 and the Regulation of the new Accreditation Manual on which HEIs should be based when drafting the SER. These standards aim to advance the overall quality of HEIs in Kosovo and focus on consolidating their internal quality assurance system.

4.1 Institutional accreditation

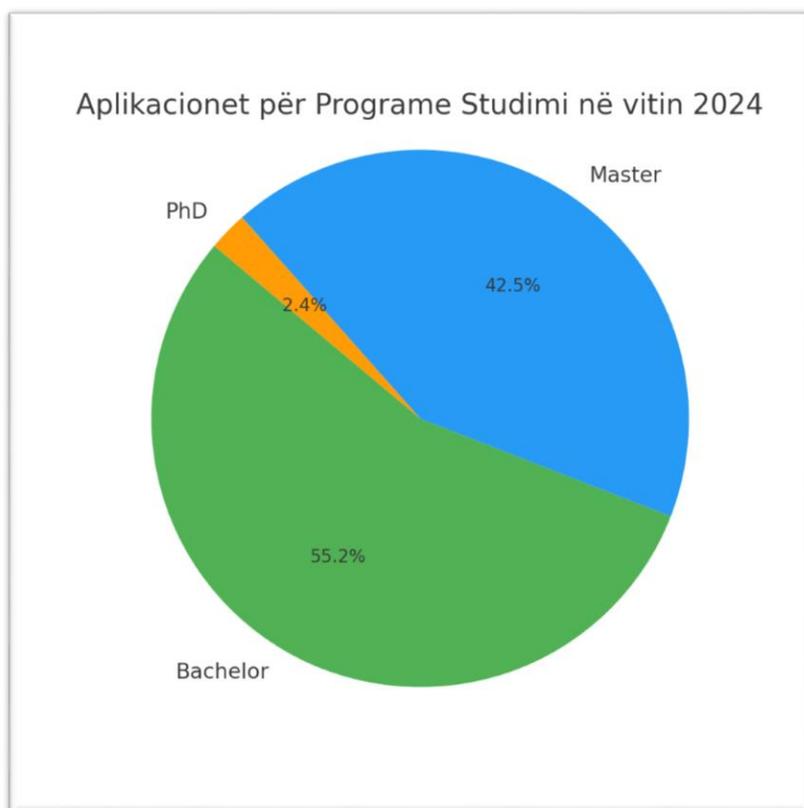
During 2024, SCQ has reviewed applications from higher education institutions for institutional accreditation/re-accreditation and accreditation and re-accreditation of study programmes.

SCQ has reviewed eight (8) applications for institutional and programme accreditation/reaccreditation; of these applications, 8 were approved for evaluation by international experts and have all been evaluated by the latter. Of the total number of applicants (8), seven (7)

HEIs were evaluated positively whilst one (1) was negatively evaluated and was denied accreditation based on the evaluation of international experts.

4.2 Accreditation at the level of study programmes

With respect to study programmes during 2024, there have been 212 applications in total, of which 117 applications were for bachelor's level programmes, 90 applications for master's level, and 5 applications for PhD programmes, which were reviewed by SCQ.

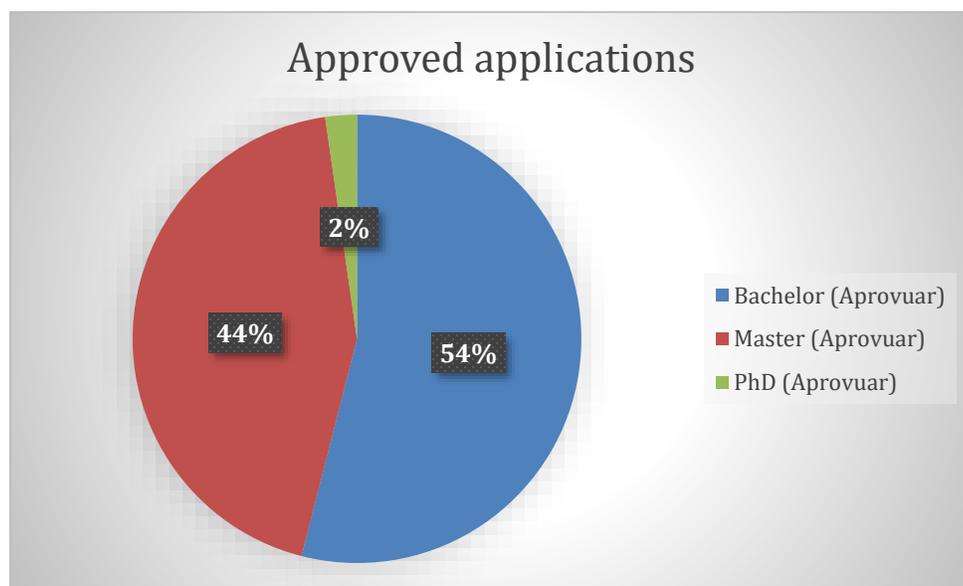


This table presents the share of applications for study programmes during 2024:

- **Bachelor:** 117 applications (55.2%)
- **Master:** 90 applications (42.5%)
- **PhD:** 5 applications (2.3%)

Based on the criteria set out in the Regulation of the Manual for Accreditation, Reaccreditation and Validation of HEIs, SCQ has approved for the incoming procedure (expert evaluation) applications for 176 programmes (95 applications for the bachelor's level, 77 applications for the master's level

and 4 applications for the PhD level), while 36 programme applications were rejected by SCQ due to the failure to meet the initial criteria.



Based on the Regulation on Accreditation, Reaccreditation and Validation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):

- Applications approved for the incoming procedure:

- Bachelor: 95
- Master: 77
- PhD: 4

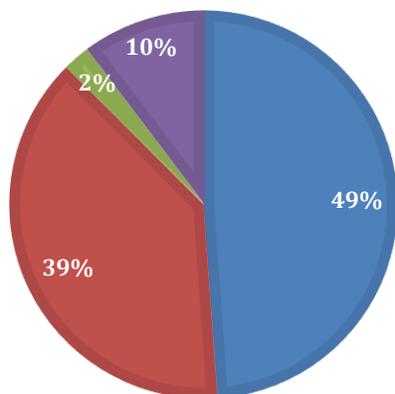
- Applications rejected for the incoming procedure:

- 36 programmes – due to the failure to meet the criteria.

Following the approval of applications by SCQ, KAA administration engaged international experts to evaluate these programmes. Upon the recommendations of international experts, SCQ accredited a total of 158 programmes, of which 86 were bachelor's programmes, 68 master's programmes, and 4 were PhD programmes. Based on the evaluation of international experts, SCQ has rejected accreditation of 18 programmes.

EVALUATION RESULTS

■ Bachelor (Aprovuar) ■ Master (Aprovuar) ■ PhD (Aprovuar) ■ Refuzuar



Summary of Programmes Accreditations – 2024

Based on the recommendations of international experts, a total of 158 study programmes have been accredited during 2024:

- 86 Bachelor level programmes
- 68 Master level programmes
- 4 PhD level programmes

Meanwhile, 18 programmes have been rejected accreditation due to the failure to meet the evaluation criteria.

All reports of international experts and SCQ decisions are published on the KAA website and are transparent to the public.

During 2024, SCQ has also approved two (2) validations based on international evaluations of study programmes in Kosovo.

5. APPEALS COMMISSION (AC)

5.1 Legal basis

AC has exercised its legal authorizations based on the Regulation of Appeals Commission 02/2019, which was approved by SCQ, and was implemented from 31.05.2019 to 05.01.2024.

On 29.06.2023, the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo adopted Law No. 08/L-110 on Kosovo Accreditation Agency, wherein the authorizations, structure, decision-making method, and other relevant aspects of the AC are specified.

In order to regulate the activities of the AC more precisely, the Regulation on AC was approved and came into effect on 05.01.2024.

5.2 Participation in drafting legislation and in conferences/workshops:

AC has participated in the international conference: *“Towards Excellence: Harmonizing quality assurance policies with institutional strategy and stakeholder engagement”*, organized in Pristina on 24 September 2024.

5.3 Structure and meetings of AC:

During the reporting period, the composition of the AC has changed, with new members being elected from among lawyers, as well as two members being re-elected from the ranks of Professors:

- a) Lirik Veselaj – lawyer/member – according to Decision **529/24 of 19.03.2024** ;
- b) Nexhat Kelmendi – lawyer/member – according to Decision **987/24 of 20.05.2024**;
- c) Ibish Mazreku – university professor/member – **according to Decision 2020/24, of 10.10.2024**;
- d) Fatos Rexhepi – university professor/member – **according to Decision 2020/24 of 10.10.2024**.

3.2 During the reporting period, respectively, on 10.10.2024, the mandate of member Kemajl Zeqiri expired.

3.2 During the reporting period, AC has held a total of **27 meetings**, specifically in the following periods:

No.	Month	Meetings
1	January	1
2	February	4
3	March	3
4	April	2
5	May	4
6	June	2
7	July	3
8	August	2
9	September	1
10	October	2

11	November	1
12	December	2
TOTAL:		27 meetings

5.4 Decision-making of AC

During the reporting period, AC has issued a certain number of decisions, specifically with the data as follows:

No.	Type of Decision Making	Number of Decisions	Appellants/Complainants	
1	Approval of the Appeal as founded	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Prishtina – Faculty of Philology • University of Peja • University of Prishtina – Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine • “UBT” College • “Universum” College • “Universum” College • University of Prishtina – Faculty of Mechanical Engineering 	
2	Partial approval of the Appeal	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Gjakova • University of Prizren 	
3	Rejection	21	Institution	Number of attempts to file appeal
			“Universum” College	2
			“AAB” College	2
			University of Gjakova	3
			“Business” College	1
			“UBT” College	2
			“Dardania” College	3
			University of Prishtina Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine	1
			University of Prishtina Faculty of Civil Engineering	2
			University of Prishtina Faculty of Mathematical and Natural Sciences	1
			University of Prishtina Faculty of Philosophy	1
			University of Mitrovica Primary Education	1
		University of Gjilan Primary Education	2	

			Criminal Law	
TOTAL: 30 Decisions				

6. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

6.1. KAA organizes training for all HEIs with regard to the use of the E-accreditation platform

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) has held training for all higher education institutions with regard to the process of declaration of the academic staff on the new E-Accreditation platform. This training was attended by quality coordinators and administrators of electronic systems in higher education institutions. According to the new Law on KAA, the declaration of academic staff in the Republic of Kosovo takes place from 1 to 31 July. The new electronic E-Accreditation platform was developed with the financial support of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) through the HEI 25 Project. KAA possesses all technical and financial resources for the maintenance and development of this system. This new platform enables the digitalization of the administration of accreditation processes in Kosovo. The Agency for Information Society (AIS), where the platform servers are located, takes care of the cybersecurity of the platform.

6.2. Workshop with HEIs on changes in the implementation of standards at the institutional and programme levels

In conformity with the Law on KAA, new accreditation/reaccreditation standards shall enter into force in 2024, which standards are in line with European ESG quality standards and the inclusion of society in the development of higher education in the Republic of Kosovo. To ensure that HEIs have clear procedures and standards for the evaluation of Accreditation/reaccreditation of institutions and study programmes, KAA has organized a training for higher education institutions (HEIs), where the Regulation of the new Accreditation/Reaccreditation Manual, the Regulation on Institutional Accreditation Standards, the Regulation on Accreditation Standards for Bachelor and Master study programmes, and the Regulation on Fees and Payments at KAA were introduced.

Representatives of the KAA presented the main changes in these regulations and at the same time answered numerous questions from participants with the aim of providing clear and accurate information, so that HEIs can work on quality assurance in accordance with the standards.

This training aimed to improve the understanding and implementation of the new standards and regulations by ensuring a clearer and more transparent accreditation process for all HEIs.

6.3. Training of international experts by KAA

Prior to starting the evaluation of institutions and study programmes, KAA organized a comprehensive training for international experts who are engaged in the process of institutional accreditation and accreditation of academic programmes.

This training focused on the latest changes in accreditation standards and regulations by aiming to provide experts with complete information on the new criteria and expectations. Participants were instructed in detail on the drafting of evaluation reports and the methodology for assessing compliance with quality standards.

6.4. Monitoring and post-accreditation procedures by KAA in HEIs

The monitoring and post-accreditation procedures by KAA related to HEIs are a key process for ensuring and improving quality in higher education in Kosovo. This process is based on the Law on Higher Education and the KAA regulations, which define the legal framework and methodology for the continuous evaluation of institutions and their academic programmes.

Monitoring aims to ensure that institutions meet the established standards and guarantee a quality education for students. In sum, the monitoring of HEIs by KAA is an essential mechanism to ensure compliance with national and international quality standards thereby contributing to the development of sustainable and competitive higher education. During 2024, KAA has monitored all HEIs in Kosovo online and also nine HEIs in physical form.

A total of 5 monitoring procedures were carried out and published on the agency's website.¹⁷

The post-accreditation procedure aims to ensure that HEIs will continuously work to fulfil the recommendations given by the expert team in the final evaluation report, during their accreditation. The post-accreditation procedure completes the full accreditation cycle.

¹⁷ <https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/monitoring/>

During 2024, three post-accreditation procedures were completed and published on the KAA website.¹⁸

6.5. Strengthening credibility through KAA transparency

Transparency is one of the main pillars for building trust and legitimacy of KAA in relation to higher education institutions (HEIs) and other stakeholders.

Through open access and continuous communication, KAA aims to provide clear and complete information on its decisions and processes. In this respect, the publication of all decisions taken by the SCQ, as well as legal and procedural documentation on the official KAA website, constitutes a key step in promoting institutional accountability and credibility.

This approach enables HEIs and all stakeholders to have direct access to the latest information on standards, regulations, and procedures, thereby contributing to improved quality and increased accountability in higher education.

Also, in order to increase transparency, all meetings of the SCQ are monitored by representatives of civil society.

6.6. Publication of thematic analysis for accreditation of programmes¹⁹

KAA, in collaboration with American expert Christine Austin, has developed the document "Thematic Analysis of Processes Involved in Accreditation/Reaccreditation of Study Programs: An Examination of Three-Years of Accreditation Processes of One Study Program" (at both bachelor's and master's levels) at three public and three private institutions in the Republic of Kosovo.

At the center of this analysis is the interaction between the accreditation standards of study programmes that govern the programme evaluation process.

In the framework of this activity, an analysis of the self-evaluation reports of higher education institutions and of the final reports of international experts engaged by KAA was carried out. This analysis included 6 institutions (3 public/3 private) over a time period of 3 years with the aim of identifying common points and differences during the evaluation processes, identifying areas for

¹⁸ <https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/post-accreditation/>

¹⁹ <https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/ë-p-content/uploads/Analiza-tematike-e-procese-ve-te-perfshira-ne-Akred-Riakre-e-Programeve-te-Studimit.pdf>

improvement, and identifying challenges as well as trends within the evaluation processes themselves.

This initiative was developed within the concept of the “Fulbright Specialist” Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding from the U.S. Government and implemented by World Learning.

During this process, KAA has built mechanisms and increased internal capacities for developing analyses and thematic reports for similar needs of KAA in the future.

7. MAIN ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS OF THE ACCREDITATION AGENCY IN 2024

7.1. Second International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

On 24.09.2024, KAA has organized the International Conference entitled: “*Towards Excellence: Harmonizing quality assurance policies with institutional strategy and stakeholder engagement*”, which was attended by over 150 participants from Kosovo and international partners, including Germany, Croatia, the United States of America, Finland, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, etc.

The representative of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) also participated and gave a speech at the conference.

This conference involved discussions by institutional leaders, experts, academics, researchers, and practitioners from the field of higher education, together with students and employers, to collectively explore the latest trends, challenges, and practices in strategic quality management in higher education institutions.

International partners have pledged their support to KAA and have appreciated its achievements in the full implementation of the European quality standards.

7.2. Assessment by the European Association ENQA

A team of experts from the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), from 2 to 4 July 2024, has assessed the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) in terms of implementation of European quality standards (ESG 2015).

The visit included interviews with KAA management and higher education stakeholders in Kosovo. The assessment shall serve as a basic document for the application for registration in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

7.3. Partnerships and memorandums of understanding

Cooperation with institutions within the country and abroad plays a key role in strengthening institutional capacities, improving the quality of higher education and increasing the transparency and credibility of the accreditation system. Through strategic partnerships and the exchange of good practices, KAA aims to strengthen its position at the national and international level.

KAA management and staff have held individual and small group meetings with representatives of HEIs in the Republic of Kosovo for the purpose of consultations and important information about the processes and services offered by KAA, to discuss the results, challenges and common tasks in increasing quality in higher education in Kosovo.

In addition to local meetings, KAA representatives have also participated in international meetings, and, on several occasions, have also signed memorandums of cooperation.

7.4. Participation in the ENQA Assembly in Malta

The ENQA Assembly held in Malta in November 2024 involved discussions on the review of European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG 2015). The new European standards shall come into effect in 2027, while member states have a transitional period for their adaptation.

On the eve of the ENQA Assembly, the KAA delegation met with the President of ENQA, the new Director of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), as well as representatives of counterpart agencies from the region and Europe. In all meetings, the European partners emphasized that KAA has made profound reforms and has marked evident progress in the

implementation of European standards, which have influenced the continuous improvement of quality in higher education in Kosovo.

During the meetings, the organization of the KAA International Conference, which was held last month in Pristina, was also highly appreciated.

7.5. Memorandum of cooperation with MAB Hungary

During the meeting with its counterpart agency in Hungary, KAA signed a memorandum of cooperation in the field of higher education quality with the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (MAB).

Both agencies have agreed to exchange information and provide mutual professional advice on activities and processes, on higher education providers operating in each country, as well as on developments in each country's higher education systems.

KAA and MAB have agreed to include evaluators or specialists from each other's systems to strengthen the international dimensions of each party's evaluation processes.

They also agreed to cooperate on mutually agreed projects and activities, for the benefit of both parties. This includes external evaluations against specific professional standards, the development of procedures, regulations, training, seminars, workshops, supporting staff mobility, and conducting research on issues related to quality assurance.

7.6. Cooperation with Finland in the field of quality assurance in higher education

Finland has a decades-long tradition of advancing quality in research universities and universities of applied sciences through auditing and a diverse range of evaluation approaches. FINEEC, the Finnish agency for increasing quality in higher education, was the main host of the KAA study visit to Finland. In March 2024, the KAA delegation visited institutions and stakeholders involved in quality assurance in higher education in Helsinki and Tampere, Finland.

One of the identified potentials for cooperation is encouraging Finnish experts to apply to join KAA external evaluation teams, as well as KAA's cooperation with representatives of Finnish student organizations. Therefore, during the visit, the KAA delegation also met with Finnish student unions that actively participate in quality assurance processes, mainly by delegating their representatives to working groups and decision-making bodies at university and national levels. The student perspective on quality is an important element of the Finnish quality culture.

7.7. KAA participates in international activities of ENQA

During December 2024, KAA staff has participated in two important international events organized by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in Brussels, Belgium.

During these activities, the KAA team also had discussions with the President of ENQA, the Director of ENQA, as well as senior leaders of counterpart agencies in Europe, regarding cooperation in improving quality in higher education.

Supported by the European Union's Erasmus+ Program, these activities have provided opportunities to improve quality assurance practices in higher education and to strengthen international cooperation.

7.8. Cooperation with AZVO-Croatia

In the framework of efforts to continuously improve quality in higher education, KAA has benefited from international experience and best practices through cooperation with the Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education (AZVO). This cooperation was part of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) project, which aims to support Western Balkan countries in strengthening quality assurance mechanisms in higher education.

Having the role of the host, KAA welcomed the delegation from AZVO, and during the meeting, the parties discussed the benefits of KAA from this project as well as the opportunities for exchanging experiences to improve accreditation and quality assurance processes.

7.9. Digital Transformation of KAA is presented as a successful example in the CEENQA magazine ²⁰

KAA was featured in the 2024 Magazine of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance (CEENQA), where a special article highlights the digital transformation of the accreditation process and the commitment to quality in higher education.

The article describes the innovative transition of KAA towards a digital platform for accreditation processes by increasing efficiency and transparency in higher education. This step represents a significant transformation that strengthens the accreditation system and approximates it with best international practices.

²⁰ <https://www.ceenqa.org/wp-content/uploads/CEENQA-Neesletter-2024.pdf>

This publication is a proof of the importance of KAA's growing international outreach and its commitment to sharing experiences and best practices with the broader quality assurance community.

8. COOPERATION AND SUPPORT FROM INSTITUTIONS AND PARTNERS

8.1. KAA Support from the 2024 HEI'25 Project

In 2024, AKA has received significant support from ADA Austria through the HEI'25 Project, aimed at strengthening higher education institutions through capacity building and improving quality assurance mechanisms. This cooperation has had a positive impact on the advancement of KAA's accreditation, monitoring and digitalization processes and operations by further approximating the higher education system in Kosovo with international standards.

Support from the 2024 HEI'25 Project has included technical assistance, training of staff and experts, development of new policies and integration of advanced practices into the accreditation system. Through this support, KAA aims to increase its effectiveness and transparency by strengthening its role as a guarantor of quality in higher education in Kosovo.

At the same time, ADA has also financially supported the digitalization of KAA services.

The process of declaring academic staff and applying for the accreditation/re-accreditation process of study programmes has been advanced and modernized during 2024 through the development of the new E-accreditation platform. The declaration of academic staff through the E-accreditation platform was carried out within the legal deadline of 1 to 31 July, when 3005 teachers of higher education institutions in the Republic of Kosovo were declared.

The digitalization of internal services of KAA has included accreditation application procedures, monitoring processes, declaration of academic staff, academic information, generation of confirmations, etc.

The accreditation software has five different types of users: KAA officials, international experts, HEI management and staff, and students. The platform has enabled interaction between different actors, according to their duties and responsibilities. At the same time, it has enabled the improvement of the quality of services, increased efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability.