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UNIVERSITY AAB COLLEGE OF PRISHTINA

Master (MA)
in
ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING

RE-ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

June, 2024
Iasi, Romania & Bucuresti, Romania

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 21th May 2024

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Ph.D. Alexandru TUGUI*
- *Ph.D. Natalie Aleksandra Gurvitš-Suits*
- *Horia Onica (student expert)*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Lenda Hyseni, Senior Evaluation and Accreditation Officer, KAA*
- *Ilirjana Ademaj Ahmeti, Head of Division for Evaluation and Accreditation, KAA*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *The Self-Evaluation Report (January 2024 - including 111 Annexes);*
- *The interviews in site with the management of the faculty, the quality assurance representatives and administrative staff, the heads of the study programme, the teaching staff, and employers of graduates and external stakeholders;*
- *AAB College webpage,*
- *Annexes of SER:*
 - *Folder “CVs of academic staff”: 52 CVs;*
 - *Folder “Publications of academic staff”: 40 Lists;*
 - *Folder “Syllabuses”: 15 Subjects;*
 - *Folder “Other annexes” with:*
 - *Financial Plan MA Accounting and Business*
 - *List of activities Faculty of Economics*
 - *LO Matrix Accounting and Auditing*
 - *Minutes of the meeting with focus groups*
 - *QAO Working Plan 2023_2024*
 -
- *After the visit in site the Expert Team (ET) members asked the next supplementary documents:*

a. General Documents

GD.01: The evolution of the number of students in the last 3 years on all study programs of the Faculty of Economics.

GD.02: Statistics on the evolution of international mobilities for students and staff in the last 3 years

GD.03: The last two annual action plans of the Faculty (current one and immediately previous one).

b. Previous Recommendations from the report of 2021

R:1.01. Specific research plans for the last academic year (2022-2023),

R:1.02. Research activity report for the last academic year (2022-2023),

R:2.03. Examples of thesys graded with Turnitin,

R:2.04. Detailed guides for students and teachers on the use of anti-plagiarism software,

R:3.05. Documents of the revised Strategic Plan,

R:3.06. Lists of adjusted indicators,

R:3.07. Evaluation reports on their implementation,

R:4.08. Reports of participation in quality meetings,

R:4.09. Questionnaires and feedback from academic staff involved in quality assurance processes.

R:5.10. Revised questionnaires,

R:5.11. Evaluation reports of survey results regarding the feedback from students.

R:6.12. Lists of translated literature,

R:6.13. List of partnership agreements for the translation of materials,

R:7.14. Detailed lists of categories of students with special needs

R:7.15. Facility assessment reports,

R:7.16. Accessibility improvement plans.

c. SER (2024)

Standard 1.1.

DS.1.1.01: University charter

DS.1.1.02: The Curriculum of the A&A Program, as approved by AAB and displayed on the web page of the faculty/university, from which its mission can be derived.

Standard 1.6.

DS.1.6.03: Documents certifying that all policies, regulations, and procedures have been reviewed within the past two years (Exemple).

DS.1.6.04: Documents that describe plans to update and amend policies and regulations.

DS.1.6.05: Links to attachments that include updated policies, terms of reference, and disclaimers.

DS.1.6.06: Minutes of meetings where revisions to policies and regulations were discussed and approved.

Standard 2.1.

DS.2.1.07: Quality Assurance Manual

DS.2.1.08: Exemple of document(s) attesting to staff participation in self-evaluation processes, including feedback forms completed by students and colleagues.

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DS.2.1.09: Exemple of Minutes of meetings where self-assessments and improvement plans were discussed and approved.

DS.2.1.10: Links to annexes that include examples of self-assessments and assessment reports.

DS.2.1.11: Exemple of document(s) describing improvement plans based on the results of self-assessments.

Standard 2.7.

DS.2.7.12: Example of assessment results analysis reports, student workload investigation and graduate employment.

Standard 2.8.

DS.2.8.13: The periodic reports on the overall quality of the program A&A.

Standard 3.8.

DS.3.8.14: The last Analysis report regarding the evaluation of academic staff by students, self-evaluation, and evaluation by the dean.

Standard 3.9.

DS.3.9.15: The strategic plan of the AAB College.

DS.3.9.16: Other documents regarding the Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.

Standard 4.10.

DS.4.10.17: Extras from Regulations and Methodologies/Procedures where we can find "actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or KAA inconsistently assessed".

Standard 5.4.

DS.5.4.18: Please present to us the „mechanisms for assistance if needed” from the point of view of Regulations/Methodologies/Procedures (extract and link to these).

DS.5.4.18: Evidence of implementation of this mechanism for assistance in practice.

Standard 5.5.

DS.5.5.19: Example of Academic Record.

Standard 5.6.

DS.5.6.20: Extract from the Regulations/Methodologies/Procedures on this subject (including the link).

Standard 5.7.

DS.5.7.21: Example on this subject.

Standard 5.9.

DS.5.9.22: The public link with this Regulation.

Standard 6.1.

DS.6.1.23: The research development plan of the Faculty.

DS.6.1.24: A document from which it can be concluded that the A&A study program has assumed research objectives in accordance with the objectives of the research plan of the faculty.

DS.6.1.25: Document(s) specifying budget allocations for research, including funding for research projects, conferences and staff development.

DS.6.1.26: Annual or semi-annual reports documenting research activities, publications, conferences and other achievements.

DS.6.1.27: Document(s) showing the allocation of logistical and human resources for the research, such as equipment available, laboratories used and support staff.

Standard 6.2. & 6.7.

DS.6.2.28: The report of Analysis of the fulfillment of research tasks by full-time teachers at the level of the Study Program for the three years.

Standard 6.3.

DS.6.3.29: The document with the information about „Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.”

Standard 6.6.

DS.6.6.30: The document with research is validation.

Standard 6.9/6.8.

DS.6.9.31: A list with the integration of research results of teachers' research in their teaching information (some examples, if case).

Standard 6.11.

DS.6.11.32: A list with the students from A&A program engaged in research projects and other activities (some examples, if case).

Standard 7.3.

DS.7.3.33: Documents in accordance with points a) b) c) d).

Standard 7.5.

DS.7.5.34: An appropriate document with these all information for points a), b), c), d), and e).

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluation

- Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of Kosovo Accreditation Agency, 2021.

1.2. Site visit schedule

In Table no. 1, we present the schedule of the visit on – site at the AAB College.

Table no. 1 Schedule

Time	Meeting
09:00 – 09:45	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated
09:45 – 10:45	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Banking, Finance and Accounting. BSc, 180 ECTS (room 1) Dr. Natalie Gurvitch
	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Accounting and Auditing, MSc, 120 ECTS (room 2) Dr. Alexandru Tugui Horia Onita, Student Expert

Time	Meeting
10:40 – 11:30	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff
11:30 – 12:20	Lunch break
12:20 – 12:50	Visiting Facilities
12:50 – 13:35	Meeting with teaching staff
13:35 – 14:20	Meeting with students
14:25 – 15:15	Meeting with graduates and external stakeholders
15:15 – 15:20	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts
15:20 – 15:25	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program

1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

The program *Accounting and Auditing* (AA MA), which is evaluated, it is organized in the Faculty of Economy (FE) from the AAB College of Prishtinë. The MA AA program has been successfully running at AAB College for the past three years since its introduction. The MA AA is available to all students who have completed an undergraduate degree (BA) in Economics at the Faculty of Economics of AAB College. Established in 2002, AAB College operates multiple campuses accredited by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency and licensed by the Kosovo Ministry of Education and Science. AAB College comprises several faculties offering study programs at both the Bachelor's and Master's levels. According to AAB College's website (<https://aab-edu.net/en/about-aab/mission-and-vision/>), the vision of AAB College is formulated as follows:

“AAB is a lead institution applying innovative approaches in higher education, research, and technology and offering transformational experiences to its students and students contributing to personal and societal development in the age of globalization.”

In accordance with art. 3 of the Statute of the AAB College (*DS. 1.1.01*), the assumed mission is formulated as follows:

“AAB organizes student-centered diversified and quality studies, engages in quality applied and theoretical research, and provides services to the community and industry for purposes of providing transformational experiences for the full development of students, staff, social and economic partners and society at large.”
(*DS. 1.1.01 University Charter*).

From the public official presentation (<https://aab-edu.net/en/faculties/economics/study-programs/accounting-and-auditing/> DS 1.1.02) of the AA MA we understand that the *“purpose of the Accounting and Auditing study program is to provide a quality post-university program*

that is in accordance with the highest academic and scientific standards, and which prepares students for advancement in the labor market capable to work according to the international standards of accounting, financial reporting and auditing.”

In the structure of AAB, we identified 14 faculties and 39 study programs in which are studying over 14.000 students. The faculties included in AAB are:

- Faculty of Mass Communication;
- Faculty of Law;
- Faculty of Economics;
- Faculty of Architecture;
- Faculty of Dentistry;
- Faculty of Radiology;
- Faculty of Computer Science;
- Faculty of English Language;
- Faculty of Nursing;
- Faculty of Psychology;
- Faculty of Public Administration;
- Faculty of Physical Culture and Sports;
- Faculty of Social Science;
- Faculty of Arts;

AAB College conducts educational activities (SER, 2024, p. 5) at its primary campus located in Pristina, as well as at its branch campuses in Gjakovë and Ferizaj. These campuses have received accreditation from the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) and are licensed by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST). Collectively, the campuses in Pristina, Ferizaj, and Gjakovë encompass more than 100,000 square meters, marking the most significant investment in Albanian higher education.

From the SER (2024, p. 8), we understand that the Faculty of Economics is among the oldest and largest faculties at AAB College. Established in the 2005/06 academic year, the faculty welcomed its first cohort of Bachelor’s students at the Pristina campus, later expanding to include campuses in Gjakovë and Ferizaj. The Master’s program was introduced in the 2009/10 academic year. The Faculty of Economics offers a variety of study programs tailored to meet local labor market needs as well as the development policies and objectives of AAB College. Since its inception, the faculty’s mission has been to create a supportive environment that enables each student to reach their career aspirations, emphasizing personal development and high-quality education in all areas of economics, including specializations in banking, finance, accounting, management, marketing, and business.

Currently, the Faculty of Economics offers the following Academic Programs (SER, p. 8):

- Management, BA, 180 ECTS, accredited for the period October 2023 – September 2026;

- Banking, Finance and Accounting, BA, 180 ECTS, accredited for the period October 2021 – September 2023;
- Marketing and Business, BA, 180 ECTS, accredited for the period October 2021 – September 2026;
- Management, MA, 120 ECTS, accredited for the period October 2023 – September 2028;
- Marketing and Business Management, MA, 120 ECTS, accredited for the period October 2022 – September 2025;
- Accounting and Auditing, MA, 120 ECTS, accredited for the period October 2021 – September 2024.

From the SER (p. 9) the expert team (ET) is understanding that the mission is *"to prepare students with the knowledge, analytical and innovative competencies, in the fields of Economics, namely in Banking, Finance, Accounting, Auditing, Management, Marketing and Business, who are competent for the labor market in Kosovo, region and wider."*

Regarding the structure of study program in AA MA in the first year is designed to offer mandatory subjects from the field of Accounting and Auditing as well as other mandatory and elective subjects. All the subjects included in the AA MA's program are comparable and equivalent to the topics from programs from international universities (SER, 2024, p. 16). Currently, the Faculty of Economics consists of 52 academic staff members, with 38 serving full-time and 14 part-time. Among the full-time faculty, 34 hold Doctor of Sciences degrees. The Master (MA) in Accounting and Auditing program, which aligns with Level VII of the NQF qualification framework, is up for re-accreditation. This program is delivered over two years of full-time study in the national language and comprises 120 ECTS credits.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

The institutional evaluation consists of 7 subheadings through which the administration, organisation and management of the institution, as well as teaching and research are assessed.

2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

AAB College (hereinafter referred to as AAB or College) is the first private higher education institution in Kosovo (<https://aab-edu.net/en/about-aab/about-us/>). The College was founded after the Kosovo War, during a time of emerging new socio-economic and cultural conditions for the citizens of Kosovo, effectively ending the long-standing educational monopoly in the country. According to the art. 3, from the *"Statute of AAB College"*, the AAB's mission is:

"AAB organizes student-centered diversified and quality studies, engages in quality applied and theoretical research, and provides services to the community and industry for purposes of providing transformational experiences for the full

development of students, staff, social and economic partners and society at large.”.
(DS. 1.1.01 University Chart: Statute of AAB College, p. 1)

From the documents assigned to the SER (p. 16), the mission of AA MA consists of "*applying contemporary teaching approaches to develop competitive professionals in the labour market in the field of accounting and auditing with advanced theoretical knowledge, research and practical skills that contribute to the improvement of accounting and auditing practices and who have a direct impact on increasing transparency and improving standards in the financial sector and wider society*".

This mission assures reaching of AA MA's aim "*to equip students with advanced theoretical and professional knowledge in the field of accounting and auditing, and with skills of independent scientific research, who are competitive in the local, regional and international labor market, and who contribute to corporations and the business community through problem-solving strategies and decision-making*" (DS.1.1.02 The Curriculum of the AA, <https://aab-edu.net/en/faculties/economics/study-programs/accounting-and-auditing/>).

To reach the mission of the AA MA program, the expert team (ET) identified the following learning outcomes (LO) were established (DS.1.1.02 The Curriculum of the AA, <https://aab-edu.net/en/faculties/economics/study-programs/accounting-and-auditing/>):

- *“Define, describe and demonstrate advanced knowledge, at the scientific and practical level of accounting theory and auditing based on scientific research methodology;*
- *Know the methods of cost calculation, techniques for short-term and long-term decision-making, different methods of inventory evaluation and other aspects of business decision-making;*
- *Know the audit process, the professional responsibility of auditors and the content and meaning of internal and external auditors' reports;*
- *Present and implement strategic plans for maximizing corporate profits;*
- *Create financial statements, consolidated financial statements, based on international financial reporting standards and analyze those statements according to the most advanced methodology;*
- *Analyze financial information, calculate performance indicators and interpret various aspects of operations based on available reports;*
- *To work independently, plan and organize goals in the implementation of international accounting and auditing standards;*
- *Apply advanced knowledge related to professional ethical issues of accounting and auditing.*
- *Be able to make strategic decisions and solve problems for corporations;*
- *To apply, monitor and control the tax legislation according to the requirements of the state authorities for the needs of corporations;*

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- *Demonstrate the ability to communicate with management, the audit firm's client, employees, creditors, representatives of state institutions and agencies;*
- *Work efficiently as a team member, showing competent and professional demeanor and modesty, critical thinking, and understanding and respecting cultural differences;*
- *Demonstrate the ability to communicate and transfer accounting issues to people with different educational profiles, experience and communication styles;*
- *They recognize the need and ability to deal with continuous professional development and lifelong learning."*

The ET considers that the AA MA study program mission complies with the overall mission statement of the AAB. The LOs are well defined, intending to follow the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA), having a clear connection with the aim and mission of the AA MA program. At the level of the Faculty of Economy it is a good culture for the respect and implementation of regulations and instructions of the AAB College, which are in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area.

After international analysis regarding other master programs in the field of accounting and auditing, following the discussion with the National Audit Office, with industry representatives and experts, and with the students of the MA Accounting and Auditing program, it was proposed and approved the Study Plan of AA MA which is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Study Plan of AA MA Program

First year				Second Year			
Subject:	L	E	E*	Subject:	L	E	E*
Semester 1				Semester 3			
Methodology of scientific research	2	2	8	Auditing and Assurance	2	2	8
Public Audit	2	2	8	International Standards on Auditing	2	2	8
International Accounting Standards IAS	2	2	8	E-Audit	2	2	8
<i>Computerized Accounting</i> <i>Advanced Accounting</i>	2	1	6	<i>Advanced Performance Management</i> <i>International Financial Reporting</i> <i>Standards IFRS</i>	2	1	6
Semester 2				Semester 4			
Financial Reporting	2	2	8	Master thesis			30
Performance Management	2	2	8				
Financial Management	2	2	8				
<i>Laws and Advanced Taxes</i> <i>Corporate Reporting</i>	2	1	6				

In accordance with DS.1.1.02 on the official web page of the AA MA program (<https://aab.edu.net/en/faculties/economics/study-programs/accounting-and-auditing/>) the ET identified a other list of subjects for the Semester 1 (see Figure 1), with different subjects (Theory of accounting and auditing: 2/2/8, and Governance, Risk and Ethics: 2/2/6)

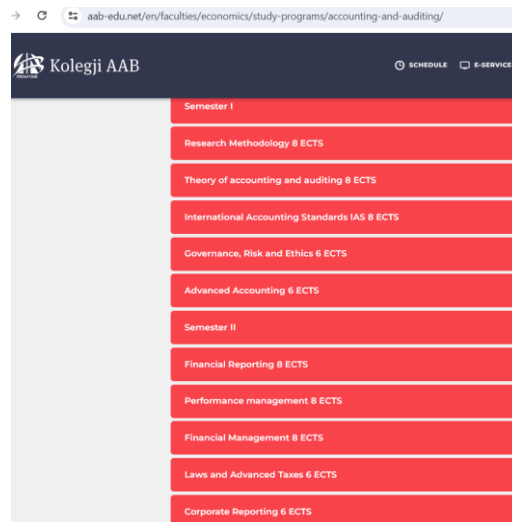


Figure 1: Official web page of AA MA

The ET considers that it is necessary to explicitly present the AA MA-related information on the program/faculty/College web page.

From the content analysis of syllabuses' subjects (folder *Syllabuses*) included in the Study Plan (<https://aab-edu.net/en/faculties/economics/study-programs/accounting-and-auditing/> and SER p. 38), corroborated with the discussions had with the students, professors, and alumni on the topic of research and integration of research in the didactic process, the ET appreciates as partially achieved the aspect regarding the "*well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.*"

The documents analysed and the information collected during the discussion sessions with the students and the professors show that the AA MA program is now fully operational. AA MA's necessity has been confirmed from the meeting with employers, indicating a significant demand for this master's degree among numerous companies whose financial reports require annual auditing. Employers have emphasized the importance of aligning their activities with international professional standards in accounting and auditing. The positive feedback from these meetings highlights the active participation and valuable contributions of stakeholders, who acknowledge the urgent need for sustainable, professional, and consolidated reporting. Statistics show that there are approximately 12,000 businesses in Kosovo but only 992 certified accountants, creating an apparent demand in this field. Some stakeholders are willing to contribute to the program by sharing their professional practices and delivering lectures, with many top management representatives noting the presence of AAB College graduates and interns in their companies. However, during the visit, employers mentioned the importance of soft skills like working under pressure, leadership, and critical thinking, as well as digitalization and analytical skills, which could be considered while formulating the learning outcomes of the program.

The ET emphasizes that regarding formal policies and regulations, the ongoing study programs (including AA MA) are supported by various regulations that are publicly accessible on the AAB College website at <https://aab-edu.net/per-aab/aktet-universitare/>, as you can see below:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Statute | 19. Regulations for academic mobility of students |
| 2. Regulations for Bachelor Studies 2021 | 20. Regulations for cooperation agreement procedures |
| 3. Regulations for Master Studies 2021 | 21. Arrangement for systematization |
| 4. Quality Assurance Regulations 2021 | 22. Regulations for the report on the exam result |
| 5. Regulations for the operation of the project development office | 23. QAPI work regulations |
| 6. Regulations for Scientific-Research Activity | 24. Regulations for the disciplinary procedure |
| 7. Work Regulations of the Studies Committee | 25. Regulations for grants |
| 8. Work Regulations of the Quality Commission | 26. Regulations for compensation of teachers |
| 9. Regulations for the advancement of academic staff | 27. Regulations for student projects |
| 10. Code of Ethics 2021 | 28. Regulations for evaluating the performance of academic staff |
| 11. Regulations for the prevention of conflict of interest | 29. Regulations for election, re-election and advancement of academic personnel |
| 12. Scientific Research Ethics Code | 30. Regulations for Bachelor Studies 2024 |
| 13. Rules of procedure of the Senate | 31. Regulations for Masters Studies 2024 |
| 14. Statute of the Students' Union | 32. Quality Assurance Regulation 2024 |
| 15. Rules of Procedure of the Industrial Advisory Board of the AAB College | 33. Code of Ethics 2024 |
| 16. Regulations for communication | 34. Regulations for the procedure of the thesis of the bachelor's degree |
| 17. Regulation of doctoral studies at AAB | 35. Working regulations of the Scientific Council |
| 18. Regulations for publications | |

Regarding the ethical aspects, in SER (2024, p. 20), the ET identified the list of codes in this mater, as you can see below:

- Code of Ethics at the adress <https://aab-edu.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/10.-Code-of-Ethics.pdf>;
- Code of Ethics in Scientific Research at the address <https://aab-edu.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/12.-Code-of-Ethics-of-the-Scientific-Research.pdf>;
- Regulation on Disciplinary Procedure at the address <https://aab-edu.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/24.-Regulation-on-Disciplinary-Measures-and-Procedures.pdf> .

After the analysis of documents included in SER (2024, p. 20) related to the ethical topic, the ET appreciates that numerous documents address ethical conduct within HEI, starting with Article 64 of the AAB College Statute, which asserts that “*The academic staff’s work is guided by the standards of professional, academic and scientific ethics and by the principles of respect and non-discrimination against students, colleagues and other persons involved*”. Article 117 further states that “*Academic staff, non-academic staff, and students must, under the Law on Higher Education and internal legal acts, behave in compliance with the general principles of*

ethics such as integrity, honesty, truth, transparency, respect for others, equality, objectivity, etc.”. The Code of Ethics governs the implementation of these principles, applicable to both academic and non-academic staff and students. Any breaches of ethics, as outlined in the Code of Ethics, are reported to the Ethics Commission, which includes a minimum of three members. Additionally, it was confirmed during the visit that instances of unethical behaviour by students/professors are submitted to this Committee for further examination.

During the on-site visit and discussions with students and academic staff, it became evident that they are highly knowledgeable about these documents and regard them as crucial, ensuring their strict adherence. It was also clarified that all policies, regulations, terms of reference, and responsibility statements related to program management and delivery are reviewed every two years and updated to adapt to evolving circumstances. All these aspects were proved through the supplementary documents sent to ET in the folders "*DS. 1.6.03 Documents certifying that policies and regulations are reviewed*", "*DS. 1.6.04 Documents that describe plans to update and amend policies*", "*DS. 1.6.05 Links to attachments that include updated policies*", "*DS. 1.6.06 Minutes of meetings where revisions to policies and regulations were discussed*".

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	X	
Standard 1.2. Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.	X	
Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.	X (75%)	
Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.	X	
Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	X	
Standard 1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.	X	

Note: The number 0.75 means compliance level of this particular standard which is met only partially

Compliance level: 95,83% - Substantially compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. *Explicitly presenting information related to the AA MA program on the program's, faculty's, and College's web pages;*
2. *Continuously adapting the Learning Outcomes (LOs) to the specific trends of digital transformation;*
3. *Increasing the integration of research findings into courses/lectures' content.*

2.2. Quality Management

In terms of the Quality Management process, the Faculty of Economics designates a quality assurance coordinator, one of 14 total coordinators, responsible for managing various study programs, organizing academic staff meetings, and reviewing syllabuses. This coordinator works closely with the central *Quality Assurance Office* at AAB College, which is led by an experienced professional. In the process of Quality Assurance (QA) AAB College respects the *Statute of AAB College* (<https://aab-edu.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/1.-Statute.pdf>), *Regulation on Quality Assurance* (<https://aab-edu.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/4.-The-Quality-Assurance-Regulation.pdf>), and Strategic Plan 2022-2026 (<https://aab-edu.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/AAB-College-Strategic-Plan-2022-2026-web-page.pdf>).

The AAB College's website shows that the Quality Assurance at AAB aims to incorporate standards and principles set by the Bologna Process. In accordance with *Quality Assurance Guideline* academic staff participates in the process of QA through (SER, 2024, p. 22):

- “-Through regular meetings, in which syllabuses, learning outcomes, assessment forms, student assessment results, and student performance in general are discussed. Also, such meetings focus on the sharing of good practices and the deepening of intercollegiate cooperation;*
- By completing the questionnaires where the academic staff evaluates various components of the functioning of the faculty, the AAB College, academic and scientific support, etc., and gives recommendations for improvement;*
- The academic staff is subject to assessment by students twice within the academic year; assessment data, together with student recommendations, are regularly discussed and serve as an essential basis for change or improvement;*
- The academic staff is part of the permanent and provisional academic bodies; also, the academic staff is an active participant in all workshops or working groups for policy-making and strategic planning at the faculty and institutional level;*
- The academic staff are also bearers, otherwise called responsible persons of the study program, who are assigned to one of the study programs in which they teach, and their commitments mainly serve the process of external evaluation, namely accreditation;*
- The academic staff is subject to performance evaluation based on four components to increase performance and achieve excellence in teaching and research.”*

Administrative and managerial staff actively participate in quality assurance procedures through various methods, including regular meetings, drafting, evaluating, and continuously

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monitoring work plans. They complete questionnaires to assess the college, share best practices, and participate in academic and other committees.

After the visit to AAB College, the ET required the following supplementary documents to evaluate standard 2.1.:

- DS.2.1.07: Quality Assurance Manual
- DS.2.1.08: Example of document(s) attesting to staff participation in self-evaluation processes, including feedback forms completed by students and colleagues.
- DS.2.1.09: Example of Minutes of meetings where self-assessments and improvement plans were discussed and approved.
- DS.2.1.10: Links to annexes that include examples of self-assessments and assessment reports.
- DS.2.1.11: Example of document(s) describing improvement plans based on the results of self-assessments.

The College sent to ET all the documents solicited, except the fourth component of staff performance “peer to peer review” which is still not operational. This aspect also resulted from the discussion with professors of AAB College.

The quality assurance processes at AAB College are well-structured, demonstrating a clear commitment to continuous improvement that extends beyond the requirements of external evaluations. These processes are effectively integrated into the regular planning framework. The inclusion of quality assurance activities in the Strategic Plan of AAB College 2022-2026 indicates a well-thought-out approach. The Quality Assurance Office and the quality coordinator at the faculty level meticulously design and implement annual and semester work plans. This structured approach ensures regular and systematic evaluations through various mechanisms, such as biannual student questionnaires on teaching and administrative services, annual questionnaires with academic staff, biennial surveys with industry employers and graduates, and yearly evaluations of student practical work. The proactive engagement with students through ad hoc focus group meetings to address their needs, along with the continuous monitoring and reporting of syllabi implementation and online platform usage, underscores a solid quality assurance system. The emphasis on standardizing and harmonizing program plans and regular training for staff in curriculum and teaching methodologies highlights AAB College's dedication to maintaining good educational standards. Overall, the thorough and consistent execution of these quality assurance activities, as detailed in the QAO annual work plan, reflects a strong institutional commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. In SER is included an example of the QAO annual work plan is attached as an appendix to this report (p. 23).

The quality assurance processes in the Faculty of Economics effectively assess various aspects of the delivery and planning of the study program. Through the procedures provided by the Quality Assurance Regulation and the Quality Assurance Manual, several key areas are addressed and evaluated for the revision of the MA study program in Accounting and Auditing:

- The review process of the study program ensures a comprehensive approach by collecting inputs from all relevant stakeholders and obtaining formal approval from academic bodies.
- The program meets external legal and statutory requirements regarding the number and qualifications of academic staff.
- The study program's commitment to continuous improvement is evident in maintaining and enhancing infrastructural conditions, laboratories, and other learning resources. These improvements are not arbitrary but are based on the evolving program requirements, ensuring that the program remains adaptable and relevant to the needs of

the students and the industry. Syllabi are updated before the start of each academic semester.

- Teaching and learning are evaluated through student questionnaires focusing on subjects and lecturers.
- Administrative services and infrastructure are assessed via student questionnaires.

Moreover, the pivotal role of the Quality Assurance Office is evident as it not only plans but also actively participates in focus group meetings with students, academic staff, graduates, and employers. These meetings serve as a platform to gather qualitative data, leading to the formulation of recommendations for faculty management. These recommendations are then considered during the drafting and revising of the study program plan, underscoring the Quality Assurance Office's significant contribution in the program's continuous improvement.

During the visit, the ET obtained positive feedback from students, professors, and all involved parties at the faculty, departmental, and Quality Assurance Office levels confirms that these QA processes are practical and valuable. This collaborative approach ensures that the study program remains relevant, good quality, and responsive to all stakeholders' needs.

The quality evaluations at the Faculty of Economics provide a comprehensive overview of the program's quality, addressing various components and considering inputs, processes, and outputs. The evaluation process, through its systematic reviews and assessments, is a testament to our commitment to continuous improvement and alignment with academic and industry standards. This not only ensures the program's relevance but also inspires a sense of progress and development among our stakeholders.

Based on the information in the SER (p. 24) and discussions with students, professors, administration, and QA staff, it is evident that these evaluations are thorough and effective. They incorporate feedback from multiple stakeholders to ensure that the program meets external legal and statutory requirements and continuously advances in infrastructure, learning resources, and academic staff qualifications.

The Quality Assurance Office conducts regular focus group meetings with students, academic staff, graduates, and employers to gather qualitative data. These meetings lead to actionable recommendations forwarded to the Faculty management for consideration in the program's planning and revision processes.

Furthermore, the evaluations emphasize updating syllabi before each academic semester, monitoring teaching quality through student questionnaires, and assessing administrative services and infrastructure. This integrated approach ensures that the program remains relevant and of high quality, continuously adapting to the needs of the labor market and the educational environment.

Overall, the commitment to quality evaluations at AAB College demonstrates a robust institutional focus on maintaining and enhancing the educational experience, ensuring that the program delivers on its objectives and meets the evolving needs of its stakeholders.

The evaluation processes described ensure that the minimum quality criteria are consistently met while driving continuous improvement in the quality of study programs. These criteria are defined in the quality assurance regulation and national legislation for quality assurance and accreditation. Continuous improvement is guided by the objectives outlined in the College's strategic plan, which aims to advance the quality system by incorporating European best practices and adapting them to AAB College's specific context.

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Based on the information in the SER (p. 25) and its annexes, as well as discussions with students, professors, leadership, and QA staff, it is evident that these evaluation processes are effectively implemented. Feedback from these stakeholders confirms that the QA processes are well-regarded and contribute significantly to maintaining high standards and enhancing the quality of educational offerings. The collaborative approach ensures that the study programs remain relevant and continuously improve to meet the needs of all stakeholders involved.

The Faculty of Economics at AAB College demonstrates a robust approach to collecting survey data from students, graduates, and employers, ensuring comprehensive feedback that informs continuous improvement. This systematic collection of survey data is crucial for maintaining high educational quality and relevance standards. The results of these evaluations are intended to be made publicly available, fostering transparency and accountability within the institution. According to the information provided in the SER (pages 25-26), the survey processes involve various stakeholders and cover critical aspects of the educational experience. These evaluations are designed to gather valuable insights from students, graduates, and employers, which are then used to enhance the academic programs and support services offered by the College.

However, it was noted that not all reports were found at the mentioned web address. While the site AAB College Student Evaluations provides some information, the reporting needs to be more consistent and cover all the evaluations described in the table on pages 25-26. This indicates an area for improvement regarding the systematic publication of evaluation reports. Despite this, the commitment to collecting and utilizing survey data from key stakeholders is evident. The ongoing efforts to involve students, graduates, and employers in the evaluation process contribute significantly to the quality assurance framework of the College. By addressing the gaps in the systematic publication of these reports, AAB College can further enhance its transparency and demonstrate its dedication to continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement.

The internal quality assurance system at AAB College plays a crucial role in guiding decision-making and strategic planning and improving study programs. The Quality Assurance Office, in collaboration with faculty coordinators, drafts reports based on questionnaire data after each assessment. These reports, which include recommendations for improvement, are forwarded to the management of both the Faculty and the College, serving as a basis for enhancing study programs, student services, and teaching and learning practices.

However, the evidence (corroborated with SER) suggests that Standard 2.7 must be partially met. The supplementary documents, "*Minutes from the ad hoc meeting with students of MA AA program*" and "*Survey data from the graduates 2021*," offer examples of assessment results analysis. While these documents demonstrate the collection and consideration of feedback, they do not explicitly detail how this feedback has been utilized to improve the study program. Additionally, concrete evidence is needed to show how the student workload investigation and graduate employment data have been integrated into program enhancements.

To fully meet this standard, it would be beneficial to provide more comprehensive documentation that clearly illustrates the use of evaluation results, student workload investigations, and graduate employment data in the continuous development and

improvement of the study program. This would ensure a more transparent and thorough approach to quality assurance and program development at AAB College.

The ET appreciates that the College ensures that comprehensive evaluations of the study program are conducted at least once every three years, coinciding with drafting the self-evaluation report for the re-accreditation process. These evaluations incorporate preliminary recommendations from international accreditation experts, depending on the intended time frames for achieving these recommendations. This periodic review ensures a thorough assessment of the program's strengths and weaknesses, contributing to improving overall program quality. In this subject, ET solicited a supplementary document regarding “DS. 2.8.13 Periodic reports on the overall quality”, and the College sent a folder with “Minutes of the meeting with focus groups including MA AA”, “Note on periodic reports on the overall quality”, “Universiteti AAB Mail - Fakulteti Ekonomik_Monitoring of electronic platform and syllabuses”, “Universiteti AAB Mail - First monitoring of the electronic platform and syllabuses”, “Universiteti AAB Mail - Second monitoring of the electronic platform and syllabuses”, “Universiteti AAB Mail - Updated monitoring report about the electronic platform and syllabuses”.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.	X (0.75)	
Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.	X	
Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	X	
Standard 2.4. Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.	X	
Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.	X	
Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.	X (0.5)	
Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.	X (0.5)	
Standard 2.8. 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.	X	
Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.	X	

There are 7.75 out of 9 standards, which can be assessed at the programme level with the correspondence of 86,11%.

Compliance level: 86,11 % - Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Implementation and operationalization of peer-to-peer review staff performance evaluation.

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2. *A complete analysis of the requirements of the standards regarding which periodic reports are necessary must be made from the perspective of quality assurance and their publication by the requirements in the field.*
3. *The systematization in the form of reports of the feedback provided by students and graduates in specific reports of integrating this feedback to improve the study program.*

2.3. Academic Staff

According to SER (2024, p. 27), “*The Faculty of Economics has 52 members of its academic staff, 38 of whom are employed full-time and 14 part-time. Of the academic staff with full-time employment, 34 hold the academic degree of Doctor of Sciences, while the rest are in doctoral studies,*” meaning that members of academic staff comply with the legal requirements regarding the occupation of teaching positions, which are included in the Administrative Instruction on Accreditation. Table from SER (p. 31) provides detailed information about the full-time (FT) and part-time (PT) academic staff, including name, qualification, academic title, duration of official contract. The Regulation for the Systematization of Workplaces (<https://aab-edu.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/21.-Regulation-on-sistemization-of-the-work-Kolegji-AAB.pdf>) stipulates a description of work duties as well as terms and conditions of employment. From the evaluation results that approximately 73% of the academic staff are full-time employees. Additionally, the teaching workload for the MA AA program teaching staff averages 8-10 hours per week, suggesting that full-time staff likely cover at least 50% of the program's classes.

The AAB College has developed a transparent and well-stipulated staff recruiting and management policy, including formal regulations describing the terms of employment of the teaching staff; during the meeting, it became evident that all potential candidates for working in the AAB are provided with complete descriptions of the advertised position as well as terms and conditions of employment, which are clear and transparent to everyone. The election of the teaching staff is based on several criteria, including their educational and research activity and contribution to society.

The Administrative Instruction for Accreditation of KAA requires that each group of students and every 60 ECTS HEI (Higher Education Institution) should employ at least one full-time lecturer with a Ph.D. degree. In AAB College, out of full-time academic staff, 34 hold a Doctor of Sciences degree, meaning that in the case of groups of 20-30 students, this criterion is fulfilled for the evaluated study program. The teaching workload for the MA AA program teaching staff is an average of 8-10 teaching hours throughout the program; academic staff is also well aware of the fact that having retired at the age limit or for other reasons, they would lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time ones. This policy ensures that the institution maintains a clear distinction between full-time and part-time teaching roles, aligning with institutional regulations and maintaining the integrity of teaching positions.

During the visit, the teaching staff members confirmed that the academic positions' qualifications were well-defined and clearly explained. The expert panel noted that the university staff has proper qualifications aligned with the valid requirements and is professional and dedicated to student-oriented teaching. The staff is available for consultations in class 2 hours per week - 1 hour per week offline and at least 1 hour online. Also, in the form of tutoring, academic advisors assigned to the evaluated study program provide weekly student consultations. Consultations may also be arranged on request. During the on-site visit, students also mentioned the availability of teaching staff members for consultations. Academic staff also contributes to the curriculum design by making related course changes after discussions with the administration and labor market representatives.

The academic staff of the evaluated study program does not cover more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time) within one academic year. During the meeting with academic staff representatives, it was confirmed that the HEI strictly follows this, and all members are verified via a special system.

Through the Center for Professional Training and Innovation (QAPI), the HEI plays a crucial role in the professional development of its teaching staff. QAPI organizes mandatory training in pedagogical competence and teaching skills and offers certified professional training and support services for academic staff. QAPI's programs for professional advancement cover key areas: didactics of higher education, scientific research projects and methodology, and the management of higher education organizations.

Funds from the budget are allocated for regular staff training, and plans should be prepared and submitted to the Head of the Study Program at the beginning of the academic year. During the last two years, academic staff members have attended numerous conferences, training, and workshops, which were also confirmed during the visit. The most important ones are the following training:

- *“Assessment of research papers”* organized by QAPI, 2024.
- *“Project planning”* organized by QAPI, 2024.
- *“Planning developmental projects – advanced training”* organized by QAPI, 2023.
- *“Student’s assessment based on competences and grades construction”* organized by QAPI, 2023.
- *“Integrating research work in the teaching process”* organized by QAPI, 2023.
- *“Methodology of higher education from the perspective of adult learning principles”* organized by QAPI, 2023.
- *“Communication and connection of research with public policies”*, organized by QAPI 2023.
- *“Ethical code of conduct for administration staff and others”*, organized by QAPI 2023.

During the meeting, it was mentioned that the results of the activities mentioned above were disseminated among colleagues and shared with students. HEI also supports teaching staff publishing their scientific research results in WPS and Scopus. However, no additional financial remuneration for publication in highly-rated academic journals is implemented.

The academic staff evaluation is a comprehensive and fair process, conducted regularly in three different ways. It includes a regulation based on performance once a year by the administration, twice a year by students via survey, and once a year in the form of self-evaluation. This transparent process ensures that all voices are heard and all perspectives are considered. The last method, self-evaluation, involves submitting a list of intended activities at the beginning

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of each academic year and assessing their achievement at the end. The form is of a descriptive character, and the expert panel recommends creating a self-evaluation matrix for academic staff members, stipulating levels of activity and competency, with activity or performance achieved ranked on a numerical scale. Introduce a peer review system where academic staff can observe each other's classes and provide constructive feedback on teaching practices. This can foster a culture of continuous improvement and professional development.

The results of the evaluation performed by students are made available, further enhancing the transparency of the process.

The workload of the teaching staff is reasonable, with a maximum number of hours set according to their position within the university, allowing time for research and educational innovations. All academic personnel are expected to engage in scientific activities, including publishing in scholarly journals, participating in conferences, and collaborating on projects with students and other institutions. However, given the current teaching workload, academic staff involvement in scientific research activities is relatively low. Responsibilities of all teaching staff, particularly full-time staff, include engagement in the academic community, community service in projects, Erasmus trips, community training, etc.

The academic staff members implement student-oriented teaching by creating a learning environment where students are actively involved in their learning process, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. This is achieved by introducing learning methods such as quizzes, seminars, teamwork, case studies, etc.

The SER, (2024, p. 30), claims, "The main strategic objective of the AAB College, and therefore of the Faculty of Economics, is "to build and consolidate the culture of creative teaching and quality assessment of students based on the student-centered approach and the autonomous work of students." During the visit, it was mentioned that syllabuses are updated on a regular basis, and significant changes are usually made after the accreditation. The quality of lectures, seminars, and practical lessons conducted by academic personnel involved in the program is systematically checked via student surveys.

The expert panel recommends reviewing the learning outcomes of all course syllabi using Bloom's taxonomy six-level classification. This involves making the outcomes measurable by reducing their number and using specific terms like "define," "identify," or "create" while avoiding vague terms such as "know" and "understand." Ensuring that learning outcomes are not substituted with the course content or main topics covered is essential. Additionally, a review of the basic literature is necessary for several courses due to the rapidly changing content. Modern and relevant literature, less than 10-15 years old, should support these changes. Including scientific articles from highly rated academic journals as additional literature would also be beneficial.

AAB College regularly invites visiting professors from abroad to conduct short seminars and experienced professionals from the finance and banking sectors to organize field trips to companies. However, during these on-site visits, students have expressed a desire for more such lectures. To address this, the college could organize Erasmus weeks in line with the

Erasmus+ program, making the experience more engaging and beneficial for students and academic staff.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.	X	
Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.	X	
Standard 3.3. Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.	X	
Standard 3.4. At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.	X	
Standard 3.5. For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.	X	
Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	X	
Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.	X	
Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occurs on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.	X	
Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.	X (0.5)	
Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	X	

Compliance level: 94,44% Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Consider creating self-evaluation matrix for academic staff members stipulating levels activity and level of competency, activity or performance achieved ranked at numerical scale.
2. Review learning outcomes in accordance with Bloom's Taxonomy principle for all courses reducing their number and avoiding substitution of course topics.

3. *Review the list of basic and additional literature for all courses in terms of relevance keeping up to date with the rapidly changing study content of the course.*
4. *Consider inclusion of scientific articles in high rated academic journal as mandatory and additional literature for each course.*
5. *Consider attracting more visiting lecturers from abroad and more industry representatives.*

2.4. Educational Process Content

According to the SER, page 16, the mission of the Faculty of Economics is "*to prepare students with the knowledge, analytical and innovative competencies, in the fields of Economics, namely in Banking, Finance, Accounting, Auditing, Management, Marketing and Business, who are competent for the labor market in Kosovo, region and wider*". While the mission of the MA Accounting and Auditing program is defined as follows: "*by applying contemporary teaching approaches to develop competitive professionals in the labour market in the field of accounting and auditing with advanced theoretical knowledge, research and practical skills that contribute to the improvement of accounting and auditing practices and who have a direct impact on increasing transparency and improving standards in the financial sector and wider society*".

The Study Plan of the MA AA program's details has been provided in SER (2024, p. 38) and contains 15 subjects in the field of auditing and accounting or closely related, as follows:

1. Methodology of scientific research (Mandatory: 8 ECTS);
2. Public Audit (Mandatory: 8 ECTS);
3. International Accounting Standards IAS (Mandatory: 8 ECTS);
4. Computerized Accounting (Elective: 6 ECTS);
5. Advanced Accounting (Elective: 6 ECTS);
6. Financial Reporting (Mandatory: 8 ECTS);
7. Performance Management (Mandatory: 8 ECTS);
8. Financial Management (Mandatory: 8 ECTS);
9. Laws and Advanced Taxes (Elective: 6 ECTS);
10. Corporate Reporting (Elective: 6 ECTS);
11. Auditing and Assurance (Mandatory: 8 ECTS);
12. International Standards on Auditing (Mandatory: 8 ECTS);
13. E-Audit (Mandatory: 8 ECTS);
14. Advanced Performance Management (Elective: 6 ECTS);
15. International Financial Reporting Standards IFRS (Elective: 6 ECTS).

The ET appreciates that the Study Plan of the MA AA program study contains nine mandatory subjects and six elective subjects. 13 subjects are professional subjects, a subject is closely

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related, and a subject is related to scientific research. Compared with the study plan for 2021, the ET observes an important update solicited by employers and students in previous meetings. In this context, the ET recommends considering the idea of designing a new oriented toward theoretical and practical content (not only on standards), a single subject with IAS/IFRS, the transformation of "advanced" subjects from elective to mandatory, a single subject regarding "Performance Management" or substitution with "Financial Management", the reduction the number of ECTS from 8 to 6 and a number of hours/week from 2/2 to 2/1 or 1/2, migration the subject "Computerized Accounting" toward Bachelor program, including a subject "Fundamentals of financial auditing" and "Procedures of financial auditing", changing the philosophy from mandatory subject toward elective and facultative subjects, integration in the study plan subjects as: "*Fundamentals of business valuation*", "*Financial diagnosis*", "*Advanced managerial accounting*", "*Procedures of accounting consolidation*", "*Company reorganization accounting*", "*Environmental accounting*", "*Accounting of non-banking financial companies*", "*Accounting for public institutions and credit institutions*", "*Ethical issues in the practice of accounting*", "*Economic diagnosis*", "*Ethics and academic integrity*", "*Internship/Practice*", "*Research period/preparation of the dissertation*", "*International accounting*," and "*Information systems audit*".

This program provides a comprehensive understanding and diverse skills in accounting and auditing field, covering both theoretical and practical perspectives. The MA Accounting and Auditing program focuses on equipping graduates with advanced theoretical knowledge, research skills, and practical competencies, while encouraging the use of modern technology and promoting ethical responsibility. By integrating theory with practice, it prepares professionals to contribute significantly, improve practices, and lead innovation in the fields of accounting and auditing. The program addresses the challenges in Kosovo's dynamic financial system by introducing demanded courses such as *International Accounting Standards*, *Public Audit*, *International Standards on Auditing*, and *E-Audit* in an active business environment for the audit and accounting field. It effectively combines lectures and practical exercises, offering specialized, general, and elective courses in accounting and auditing to help students specialize and stay current with international standards in accounting, auditing and financial reporting.

According to SER (2024, p. 34), graduates of the Program MA Accounting and Auditing should acquire the following knowledge, skills, and competencies:

According to SER graduates of the Program MA Accounting and Auditing should acquire the following knowledge, skills and competencies:

Knowledge:

- describe international accounting and auditing standards, identifying the main changes and their applications in professional practice;
- analyse current scientific studies in accounting and auditing to derive trends and predictions for future practices;
- explain and interpret legal and tax rules applicable to corporations, determining their effects on financial reporting strategies;
- synthesize information from financial reports and create case-based models to illustrate performance management techniques;

- evaluate computerized accounting and e-auditing systems to improve control processes and transparency;
- apply the principles of security and risk management in different internal and external audit scenarios.

Skills:

- interpret financial data to identify trends and potential anomalies that may indicate hidden issues or opportunities;
- communicate audit findings and financial analysis through detailed reports and interactive presentations;
- uses various accounting and auditing software to collect, process, and present financial information.

Competences:

- develop and implement an audit plan that uses a range of research methods to assess the integrity of financial data;
- carefully apply professional rules and ethics in the audit process and the preparation of financial reports;
- manage and coordinate audit teams and projects to ensure the achievement of objectives responsibly and in accordance with industry standards.

In general, the ET concludes that the learning outcomes identified for the evaluated program are coherent with the program's aim. The VII Qualification Level Description of National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area address the main descriptions formulated and divided into knowledge, skills, and competencies.

During the meeting with stakeholders, the implementation of IFRS standards into the accounting study process was mentioned among the program's unique features. The ET recommends strengthening this position by agreeing with ACCA or CIMA professional bodies to have several exams from the MA AA program be regarded as part of the further certification by these organizations, which would add value to the program and make it even more attractive for prospective students.

The study program volume is 120 ECTS, taught in the Albanian language for two years full-time. The methods of study organization used by the College in the program's implementation are student class (contact) work and independent work with a ratio of approximately 50%/50%.

Calculation of ECTS means students engage in the study process for up to 40 hours per week, including lectures, homework, seminars, individual work (at the library or home), and exams or other assessment activities. During one academic year, a student needs to complete 60 ECTS to finish the year. Each course is assigned a certain number of credits from 6 to 8 ECTS, with one ECTS equaling 25 teaching hours. This structure also means that students undergo four exams for the relevant subjects within one semester, and their workload is consistent throughout their study period. The student's progress is measured via midterm exams and is

monitored by academic and administrative staff throughout studies. In the fourth semester, the study plan includes only the master thesis for 30 ECTS.

Regarding the structure of the study program, the team of experts appreciates that the subjects could be more optimized in relation to the learning objectives and outcomes. Under these conditions, the ET could not identify a logic regarding the subjects proposed by the Study Plan. It is difficult to understand that the practice is part of the "Auditing and Assurance" discipline when it must be individually identified as the number of hours and content. Although a comparative analysis was carried out with other similar programs in Europe (SER, pp. 18-20), we note that subjects such as "Basics of Auditing" are not covered at the bachelor's degree, for example, to enter the Master's degree directly in e-Audit and Public Audit. The same can be said about accounting. Thus, the optional "Computerized Accounting" discipline was introduced to the Master's degree, which generally should have been done in the bachelor's degree. All this analysis was made in context on the syllabi attached at the SER (2024).

Another problem is identified in connection with the disciplines of "Performance Management" (mandatory) and "Advanced Performance Management" (elective). As a rule, the Master Program insists on "Advanced" and not the "basics." We notice an overlap in the "Financial Reporting" and "International Financial Reporting Standards" disciplines.

It's important to note that a single discipline of 'Methodology of scientific research' may not be sufficient for Master's students to acquire comprehensive research skills. These observations lead us to recommend that in the fourth semester, it should be considered to introduce a discipline of 'Research Project and Master Thesis Preparation,' 'Ethics in research and Academic Integrity,' and 'Practice' alongside the 'Master Thesis. '

Furthermore, it's crucial to integrate IT disciplines into the program to adapt to society's digital transformation. This could include disciplines such as "fintech," "data analysis, and AI," which are increasingly becoming essential in various industries.

The team of experts recommends a complete revision of the study plan, avoiding overlaps and integrating new technological trends.

To ensure students take responsibility for achieving learning outcomes, syllabuses are published on the E-Student learning platform before each semester and discussed during the first week. This allows students to become familiar with and suggest modifications to the topics. Additionally, a consultation system is in place for weekly meetings between students and professors to discuss learning process issues. During the first lecture, the academic staff gives students a detailed course overview, explaining the main teaching methods, assessment criteria, learning outcomes, and the course structure. Assessment criteria chosen by the academic staff depend on the course structure and may be organized in the form of written tasks, verbal presentations, seminar papers, etc. The electronic testing method was introduced recently, and pilot testing was conducted within the course Marketing and Business. Appropriate training was organized so academic staff and students could gain a good overview of this innovation.

The course syllabus contains information on assessment methods and criteria that are consistent with LOI and strictly followed by the teaching staff. Article 108 of the Statute of the AAB College stipulates assessment types, methods, organizational processes, and criteria. All courses included in the evaluated study program have their syllabuses stipulating the number of credits, learning outcomes, teaching methods, assessment system, criteria, the thematic content of studies, and the distribution of classes, seminars, and applicative activities, as well as mandatory and recommended literature. However, the expert panel noted that for several courses, the literature was quite outdated, and the newer version of the text should be used, for example:

- **Subject: Advanced accounting**

1. Prof. Dr. sc. Shefket Jakupi, "Kontabiliteti i avancuar" Ulqin, 2016
2. Sotiraq Dhamo, "Kontabiliteti i avancuar" Tiranë, 2009
3. Prof.asoc.dr.Rrustem Asllanaj:"Kontabiliteti financiar", Prishtinë, 2013

- **Subject: Scientific Research Methodology**

1. Sokoli, L. (2016). Methods of scientific research. Tirana: Institute of Sociology. Retrieved from <https://bukinist.al/sq/shkence/3666-metodat-e-kerkimit-shkencor.html>
2. Xhaferi, B. (2015). Introduction to Econometrics. Tetovo: Arbëria Design.

- **Corporate Reporting**

ACCA, Financial Reporting, (2016)

Financial Reporting and Analysis, Lawrence Revsine, Daniel Collins, et al. 2017 Published by McGraw-Hill Education

- **E-Auditing**

1. Virtual Communication and Remote Auditing, J.P. Russell, Shauna Wilson, 184 pages, Published 2013, Dimensions: Pocket Guide, ISBN: 9781953079947
2. The recommended textbook is "Auditing & Assurance Services-A Systematic Approach" (by Messier, Glover & Prawitt, Ninth Edition, 2014), ISBN: 978-0-07-786233-6

The ET recommends updating the literature for the courses taught under the present study program and including references other than international standards in the literature, even references from scientific international databases.

Students can perform practical work during courses in the subject "Auditing and Assurance"; the respective syllabus provides details of the practical work. Students get an opportunity to get valuable experience working in a company and understand reality in the accounting and auditing field. For this purpose, numerous agreements have been concluded with companies like Post and Telecom of Kosovo, the International Airport of Prishtina, the Tax Administration of Kosovo, the Customs Service of Kosovo, the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce, NLB Bank in Prishtina, and TEB Bank. Regulations for initiating, drafting, and signing cooperation agreements are available at the HEI website: <https://aab-edu.net/en/about-aab/policies-and-regulations/>.

The bank branch "PriBank" is located on the AAB College premises, and the expert team could visit it during the on-site visit. Also, cooperation with Melita Partners was signed to teach students how to use the QuickBooks program - one of the leading software in financial management and accounting, contributing to the graduates' successful employment. During the meeting, the representatives of the companies outlined the importance of professional practice. Therefore, the ET recommends integrating practical work as a separate subject with corresponding ECTS in the curriculum.

The ET finds that the learning objectives for each category of aims and outcomes effectively reflect the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities expected of graduates. These objectives are well-balanced. The program predominantly employs interactive teaching methods, such as case studies, projects, group and individual assignments, etc., used in student assessments and exams. During the visit, the stakeholders noted that the current version of the program could benefit from incorporating more soft skills-related courses like working under pressure, leadership, and critical thinking.

The student-centered teaching approach involves close collaboration between the faculty and students, characterized by ongoing dialogue and equitable partnership. Teachers act as mentors and facilitators, encouraging discussions, consultations, and professional guidance. Students and alumni confirmed this approach during the on-site visit.

AAB College has developed a Regulation on Disciplinary Measures and Procedures applicable to academic staff, non-academic staff, and students for treating unethical behavior and unfair and biased treatment of students, stipulating the complaint process and the further actions to be taken. This document is publicly available on the HEI website <https://aab-edu.net/en/about-aab/policies-and-regulations/>, and during the on-site visit, the expert teams ensured that relevant stakeholders were well informed of this regulation.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 4.1.</i> The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.	X (0,5)	
<i>Standard 4.2.</i> The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.	X (0,5)	
<i>Standard 4.3.</i> The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific	X (0,5)	

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.		
<i>Standard 4.4.</i> The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.	X	
<i>Standard 4.5.</i> If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.	N/A	N/A
<i>Standard 4.6.</i> The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.	X	
<i>Standard 4.7.</i> Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.	X	
<i>Standard 4.8.</i> 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.	X	
<i>Standard 4.9.</i> Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.	X	
<i>Standard 4.10.</i> Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or KAA inconsistently assessed.	X	
<i>Standard 4.11.</i> If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.	X	
<i>Standard 4.12.</i> In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units. <i>*To be inserted the overview of the program (with all areas to be filled out)</i>	X	

Compliance level: 86,36% Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Consider conducting a thorough review of the study plan in the future to address potential overlaps and integrate new technological trends, aiming for alignment with industry standards and ongoing digital transformation. Include modern demanded courses such as Fintech, Data Analysis and AI, and incorporate IFRS accounting standards into the Financial Accounting and Reporting course.*
2. *Review and update the basic and additional literature for all courses to ensure relevance and currency, incorporating newer editions and references from international scientific databases.*
3. *Introduce additional disciplines in the fourth semester, such as "Research Project and Master Thesis Preparation" and "Ethics in Research and Academic Integrity" to strengthen research skills.*
4. *Integrate professional practice as a separate subject with corresponding ECTS credits in the curriculum to provide students with valuable hands-on experience.*
5. *Enhance the program's position by establishing agreements with professional bodies like ACCA or CIMA to have certain exams from the MA AA program recognized as part of further certification.*
6. *Consider attracting representative of employers as guest lecturers to strengthen the practical aspect of the study program.*
7. *Consider attracting more guest lecturers from abroad to ensure the internalization aspect of the study program.*

2.5. Students

The Faculty of Economics applies a public and transparent admission of new students, with relevant procedures outlining responsible structures, processes, and admission criteria. The process is coordinated by the Dean, with the overarching regulations being determined by the Steering Committee and the Senate of the AAB College. Applicants can submit their application online or in person, and appeal procedures are in place. To enroll in the Master's program, candidates have to comply with the following cumulative criteria:

- have completed the Bachelor's level of studies (of at least 180 ECTS) in an accredited and recognized institution of higher education in the country or abroad;
- complete the entrance exam;
- complete the file with the formal documentation as determined by MEST;

During the study program, the students are divided into three series of lectures, consisting of 60 students, while between 20 students are part of a group for practical exercises or seminars. The College has established transparent procedures in relation to the assessment of students, as detailed in the Regulation for Master Studies. Continuous evaluation involves regular assessment of students' participation in lectures, assignments, presentations, laboratory

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exercises, and other activities, while summative evaluation typically includes final exams or major projects. The degree to which they contribute in the final grade of each student is determined, for each subject, in the course syllabus, which is easily accessible to students. The summative assessment takes place at the end of the semester. While there are general provisions in the syllabus regarding the modality of examination, the ET recommends revising the syllabus to include more specific information about how the summative assessment is conducted to ensure better understanding from students and, thus, predictability.

The College enforces the regulations that ensure that the results of the examinations are communicated to the students promptly and produce proof in this regard through the E-STUDENT portal. According to the study regulation, this should happen seven days after the examination. The professor grades students electronically after they complete the subjects, and the totality of the student's grades constitutes the grade transcript.

Students dissatisfied with their grades can appeal to the Dean within three days, leading to the formation of a review commission to reassess the evaluation. The students whom the ET interviewed had shown sufficient knowledge of this procedure. However, two elements should be further considered by the College: on one side, while the discussions with the institution revealed that there is a statistical collection of data in relation to student achievement (the percentage of students sitting the exam, the percentage of students passes and the grades), there seems to be no systematic analysis of the distribution of grades in class. The faculty generates the success report for each subject in a summary form. According to the list of indicators for quality assurance, the overall average grade for the program, the average grade of the three years of studies per cohort, the average grade of the year of studies and the average grade of the regular exam deadlines for June, September and January are all indicators related to quality assurance, but not the distribution of grades itself. Therefore, the ET recommends that the academic staff discusses the distribution of grades, determines benchmarks (for example the Bell's curve) and analyses potential impact of misalignment.

Secondly, the College mentions that students can request consultation hours with staff as a follow-up to the assessment to receive feedback on their performance. The number of students requesting feedback upon evaluation is also considered a quality assurance criterion. In terms of follow-up to exams, the only situation mentioned by students was as a consequence of failing the exam, with the possibility to resit it and, if needed, to reattend the classes, without specific examples of concrete assistance methods that the College offers in a structured manner. Therefore, the ET recommends a more generalized process where, at particular intervals (half of the semester, end of semester), the teachers offer, by default, feedback to students on their performance and areas of improvement and direct them to further assistance if needed. Furthermore, the ET recommends including student assessments based on learning outcomes in the Center for Professional Development and Training modules.

In relation to the official records certifying student academic results, the College has shown proof of reliable recording through the online platform. Furthermore, students have easy access,

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through digital means, to these records and facile access to them through services on campus. In the same manner, the Quality Assurance department ensures data collection on student completion rates and, in correlation, student drop-out rates and considers it in the quality assurance mechanism. In this sense, unusual trends have not been identified in the normal progression of student studies.

To ensure flexible treatment of students, the Self-evaluation report mentions two elements: flexibility in scheduling the exam for the class of students ('depending on the demands of the students and the lecturer, the timetable can be updated two weeks before the start of the exam period') and flexibility in the assessment method ('students, in consultation with the lecturer, can select the assessment form, provided that the student meets the syllabus requirements'). On the former element, the extent to which the assessment method can be adapted is limited as the requirement is to be included in the syllabi. The ET believes that the College should be more overarching in ensuring flexibility of studies through ensuring adaptation based on individual (justified) requests (for example, mobility or medical condition) that cover both formative and summative assessments, as well as flexibility in terms of integrating procedures on recognition of prior learning.

The student rights and obligations are included in the Statute of the College and the study regulations, which are accessible on the website. Students are also informed of the organization of studies during the Open Days at the beginning of the study cycle. However, the discussion with students revealed relevant knowledge gaps about their rights, including when student elections take place, the duration of the mandate, what regulations are in place for accessing grants or scholarships, or what the follow-up is after the evaluation of teaching by students. This may also be caused by the fact that the student rights are scattered through various documents, expanding beyond what is written in the two documents mentioned above. Therefore, the ET recommends that the College, in collaboration with the Student Union, create a Student Rights Charter, including academic rights, social rights, and participation rights of students in a detailed manner, and promote this charter widely to students, beyond making it accessible.

For transfer of students, which cannot occur in the first or last semester, the candidates apply for transfer and have their ECTS credits recognized. The institution communicates what disciplines have to be additionally taken for conditional transfer.

Students' academic work is protected against plagiarism through preventive and corrective policies. Students are provided with information describing academic integrity and conduct principles in the first course of the class and the syllabi. In the first year of their studies, students are introduced to a series of workshops related to plagiarism in the Business Communication and Academic Writing course. The use of software programs is also described and explained in depth. Professors and lecturers must use anti-plagiarism programs for assignments, essays, and other texts written during the courses offered. The acceptable level of similarity (mentioned

in the SER as 'plagiarism') is 20%. In this sense, the only solution mentioned during interviews is to change the content of the thesis to decrease the level of similarity without other potential avenues. In this context, the ET recommends that access to plagiarism software is also guaranteed to students.

Finally, the academic staff is available through weekly consultation hours for students to provide tutoring, which has been transparently communicated to students. They also confirmed the availability of other communication procedures, especially through the Electronic Student platform or via email. The academic staff receives training from the Pedagogical Centre on tutoring, and the Careers' Office is also available for support in terms of career guidance.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.	X	
Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	X	
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.	X	
Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	0.5	
Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	X	
Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.	0.5	
Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.	X	
Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.	X	
Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.		X
Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.	X	
Standard 5.11. Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.	X	

Compliance level: 81,81% Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Increasing the participation of students in Erasmus programs, both outcoming and incoming.*
- 2. The ET recommends the revision of the syllabus to include more specific information about how the summative assessment is conducted, to ensure better understanding from students and, thus, predictability.*

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3. *The ET recommends that the academic staff discusses the distribution of grades, determines benchmarks (for example the Bell's curve) and analyses potential impact of misalignment.*
4. *The ET recommends a more generalised process where, at specific intervals (half of semester, end of semester) the teachers offer by default feedback to students on their performance and areas of improvement and directs them to further assistance if needed.*
5. *The ET would also recommend including student assessment, including assessment based on learning outcomes, in the list of modules offered by the Center for Professional Development and Training.*
6. *The ET believes that the College should be more overarching in ensuring flexibility of studies, through: ensuring adaptation based on individual (justified) requests (for example mobility or medical condition), that covers both formative and summative assessments, as well as flexibility in terms of integrating procedures on recognition of prior learning.*
7. *The ET recommends that the College, in collaboration with the Student Union, creates a Student Rights Charter, including academic rights, social rights and participation rights of students in a detailed manner, and promotes this charter widely towards students, beyond making it accessible.*
8. *The ET recommends that access to plagiarism software is also guaranteed to students.*
9. *The ET recommends increasing the number of opportunities for non-formal learning, including volunteering and its recognition, for the development of soft skills.*

2.6. Research

The Faculty of Economics from AAB has an annual work plan that reflects the strategic objectives of the AAB College Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026. The study program AA MA assumes the institutional strategic plan of the Faculty of Economics, which is committed to "*creating an enabling system for increasing the quality of scientific research through the support of staff and students for research work to fulfill the third mission and contribute to social development*" (SER, p. 42). During the discussions with professors and the management of the Faculty of Economy, we understood that there is a research plan. Research activity in the field of AA MA was included in the mission of the AA MA study program.

The ET requested as additional documents after the visit, "*DS. 6.1.23 The research development plan of the Faculty*", "*DS. 6.1.24 Report for the fulfillment of research tasks*", and "*DS. 6.1.25 Budget allocations for research*". The Faculty of Economics sent to experts "*Plani Vjetorë i Punës Fakulteti Ekonomik 2024-2025*" in Albanian language, "*Research activity report for the last academic year 2022 2023*", "*Research topics covered by staff*", and "*Financial Plan MA Accounting and Auditing*". The budget for research in the "*Financial Plan MA Accounting and Auditing*" is not allocated for a precise topic/theme of research.

From the content analysis of the Program mission and aim corroborated with learning outcomes and the discussion with students and professors, the expert team's members can't

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delimitate a clear research objective for the AA MA program. In this context, the standard “*The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives*” is partially achieved.

Regarding the expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities (SER p. 42: each academic staff member must conduct at least one scientific paper within the academic year and engage in other cooperation projects), from the "DS. 6.1.24 Report for the fulfillment of research tasks", file "Research activity report for the last academic year 2022 2023", we identified 23 professors, from the total of 50 professors, without a paper/year published in the period 2020-2023. This means that the criteria are not followed every year by the management of the department, the faculty, and the university, and no systematic measures are taken to increase the interest in research among teaching staff.

The ET identified that some of the 52 teachers participated in more than one conference per year, while four did not attend any conference in the last four years. Under these conditions, not publishing scientific articles and not participating in established scientific conferences leads to the impossibility of transferring current knowledge in AA MA courses.

Related to standard 6.3., ET requested “*DS.6.3.29: The document with the information about „Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program*”. For this document, from the AAB we received “*DS 6 3 29 Regulations-for-scientific-research-activities*” and “*OD Policies for defining what is recognised as research*”. From the last document we understand that the AAB considers that the policy in this matter is formulated in

- Statute, Chapter VI, article 112;
- Regulation on Scientific Research Activities, Articles 5 and 6;
- Regulation on Election, Re-election, and Advancement of Academic staff, articles 6 to article 11.

After a content analysis of this document, the ET appreciates that it is impossible to consider these articles as policies of recognition as research for publication. Thus, the document outlines various research activities at AAB College, including thematic research, collaborative projects, and individual research by academic staff. However, it does not specify the metrics used to recognize research, such as impact factors or other performance metrics. While the Regulation on Scientific Research Activities and related policies provide a structured framework, they lack explicit definitions of required research metrics. Therefore, the criteria for Standard 6.3 are only partially met. The policies must clearly define recognized research activities and required metrics, such as impact factor, h-index, citations per paper, Journal Citation Reports, and Altmetric Scores, aligning with international standards and norms to fully satisfy this requirement.

The ET analyzed the CVs of 52 academic staff provided in the folder "CVs of academic staff" in correlation with the subjects' Syllabuses for evaluating standard 6.4. "*The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity*". From this evaluation results, only one professor has been included in the list of references. In these circumstances, the ET considers the standard partial accomplished.

In terms of the scientific journals where academic staff publish, AAB College adheres to the Administrative Instruction of MEST No. 01/2018, which outlines the principles for recognizing international peer-reviewed journals. The platforms and journals recognized under this instruction were all evaluated with a coefficient of 1, including Web of Science, SCOPUS, EBSCO, WorldCat, and DOAJ. Consequently, only academic staff who meet the criteria for scientific publications specified by this MEST instruction are eligible for promotion to educational titles. In accordance with the analyzed documentation (folder *Publications of academic staff*), the ET appreciates that the academic staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad. From the supplementary document "*DS. 6.1.24 Report for the fulfillment of research tasks*", file "*Research activity report for the last academic year 2022 2023*," we identified a list with two projects of research financed by AAB in 2021/2022 and a list with seven projects after 2020 funded by other sources. In this context, the ET considers that the number of projects is low for the academic community of the Faculty of Economics, which has, as a result, a limited number of publications.

Regarding the standard 6.6 "Research is validated ...", from the SER (2024) there are no mentions of technological transfer through consulting centers, science parks, or other validation structures. No such clues resulted from the discussions with the teachers, management, and quality staff. In the list of research's results ("*DS. 6.1.24 Report for the fulfillment of research tasks*", file "*Research activity report for the last academic year 2022 2023*,") we identified a number of national and international conferences in the field of AA MA, where participated academic staff involved in this program. After the visit in AAB, ET required the following documents "*DS. 6.6.30 The document with research is validation*" and we received the following files "*DS 6 6 30 Regulations-for-scientific-research-activities*" and "*The document with research is validation*". From this second file result, the methodology to evaluate the research inside of AAB, and not the external validation from the part of the research community. In this context, the research validation is partial, and the ET considers that standard 6.6 is partially accomplished.

Full-time academic staff at AAB College are required to publish papers on behalf of the institution. Additionally, their contracts mandate that they affiliate their accounts on social, scholarly, and professional networks—such as Scopus, Google Scholar, Academia.edu, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other platforms—with AAB College, identifying it as their primary

employer. This ensures their academic contributions are visibly linked to the institution, enhancing the college's scholarly presence and reputation.

Discussions with professors and the management of the Faculty of Economics and the MA in Accounting and Auditing program reveal that academic staff are encouraged to integrate their research and scholarly activities into their teaching. Faculty members often include recent research developments relevant to their courses, providing students with up-to-date knowledge and practical insights. This practice enhances the learning experience by exposing students to current research and developments in the field. The effort to combine teaching with research activities demonstrates the faculty's commitment to maintaining a good standard of education and supporting academic growth.

The policies at AAB College regarding intellectual property are clearly defined and well-established. According to Article 14 of the academic staff contract, intellectual property rights for any work related to or created by the employee during their employment are considered the employer's property, ensuring complete protection for the institution. Additionally, in 2022, AAB College introduced a comprehensive Regulation on Intellectual Property and the Commercialization of Ideas, publicly available on the institutional website. This regulation provides clear procedures for commercializing ideas developed by staff and students, demonstrating the college's commitment to fostering innovation and supporting the practical application of research and creative efforts. These measures reflect a robust framework for managing intellectual property and promoting the commercialization of innovative ideas within the institution.

Students at AAB College are primarily introduced to research through the subject of Scientific Research Methodology and other courses requiring independent work. MA students in Accounting and Audit are mandated to prepare an independent and original master's thesis in their final year. Beyond the thesis, there have been instances where students and lecturers from the Faculty of Economics have collaborated on research and joint scientific works. Student conferences have also been organized to promote scientific research and exchange experiences, helping students expand their social and scientific networks.

However, not all students have comprehensively confirmed their involvement in research activities. Despite this, AAB College has provided evidence of student engagement in research through a list of publications co-authored by master's students. These include:

1. Bushat, A.; Dalloshi, P., 2021, "Does Performance Audit Recognise Improvements in Procurement Activities Leading to Enhanced Value for Money?", *Journal of Accounting, Finance and Auditing Studies*, DOI: 10.32602/jafas.2021.037
2. Rexha, D; Ziberi, B; Hetemi, A; Gorda, E., 2022, "The Impact of Active Labour Policies on Economic Growth," *Corporate Governance and Organizational Behavior Review*, Volume 6, Issue 1, DOI: 10.22495/cgobrv6i1p14
3. Gallopeni, Shahini K; Rexha, D; Hashani, M., 2022, "The Importance of Internal Audit in Increasing Performance of Microfinance Institutions: The Case of the Developing Country," *Corporate Governance and Organizational Behavior Review*, Volume 6, Issue 3, DOI: 10.22495/cgobrv6i3p11

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4. Kida, N; Morina, V; Morina, J; Ukshini, K., Vesa Morina, 2024, "What is the Perception of Foreign Investors about Economic Factors? A Study of Foreign Companies in Kosovo", Migration Letters, Volume 21, No. 4, pp. 1150-1184

These examples demonstrate the involvement of some students in meaningful research activities, reflecting AAB College's commitment to integrating students into the research community.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 6.1.</i> The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.	X (0.5)	
<i>Standard 6.2.</i> 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.	X	
<i>Standard 6.3.</i> Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.	X (0.5)	
<i>Standard 6.4.</i> The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.		X
<i>Standard 6.5.</i> The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.	X	
<i>Standard 6.6.</i> Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.	X (0.75)	
<i>Standard 6.7.</i> Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.	X (0.75)	
<i>Standard 6.8.</i> Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff.	X	
<i>Standard 6.9/6.8.</i> Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.	X	
<i>Standard 6.10.</i> Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	X	
<i>Standard 6.11.</i> Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.	X	

There are 8.50 out of 11 standards, which can be assessed at the programme level with the correspondence of 77,27%.

Compliance level: 77.27% Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Ensure that clear research objectives are defined and integrated into the MA AA program, with sufficient financial and logistic resources allocated to achieve these objectives.*

2. *Motivating all academic (“regular” and “engaged”) staff to publish in the journals indexed WOS, minimum 1 paper in a three-year period.*
3. *Encourage academic staff to publish in international journals and participate in prestigious conferences, establishing clear policies and metrics for recognizing research outputs.*
4. *Expand opportunities for student involvement in research through collaboration on projects, regular conferences, and workshops.*
5. *Continue efforts to encourage academic staff to regularly improve the content of courses by including state of the art scientific findings and results.*

2.7. Infrastructure and Resources

According to SER page 61 “The Bachelor of Science in Banking, Finance, and Accounting program is offered on the Pristina campus, which covers about 40,000m² and is equipped with classrooms of different size, exercise rooms, seminar rooms, rooms for independent reading of students, computer laboratories equipped with relevant software in the field of economics, offices for administrative staff, sanitary units, recreational spaces for students, etc. In 2022, AAB added about 10,000 m², which is available for the teaching process of the Faculty of Economics. All spaces, classrooms, laboratories, software equipment, and libraries are the property of AAB and are not for rent”.

The Faculty of Economics has large premises of high quality, spacious classrooms, sporting facilities, campus etc. Classrooms are equipped with all necessary facilities and can be transformed from traditional lecture style to group work community. All the academic staff is in offices which are solid spaces for independent scientific work which are equipped with computers, internet, printer/scanner. On the first floor there are modern offices for the student union, a career office, IT-support office and other administrative staff. Also, there is enough space for academic staff to meet students and provide consultations as well as for students to take a break and get relaxed.

During the onsite visit the expert panel visited all the stated premises and classrooms, which are equipped with computers, projectors, rooms for the academic staff, offices of supporting staff, sporting facilities and the library. The expert panel concluded that facilities are modern and relevant for studies. It is also worth noting that College management in general and the faculty in particular make valuable efforts to update them as fast and as much as possible keeping them up to date with students needs and latest technological developments. The library has 150 reading places, some are equipped with computers, books are available on site and online as well as access to databases like STOR, EBSCO, Edward Elgar, DOAJ— Directory of Open Access Journals, SCIENCE COMMONS—Open Access Law Journal, BioOne Research Evolved, IOP Electronic Journals, Oxford Reference, OECD iLibrary, Directory of

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Open Access Books, The New England Journal of Medicine, ASTM COMPASS, IMF eLibrary, e-Duke Journals Scholarly Collection, and eIFL Kosovo Consortium. etc. However, interviews with students it became apparent that they are not actively using foreign language electronic resources, seems like they are either unaware of their availability or this is not demanded by the teaching staff.

Library is open every weekday from morning to evening. The number of seats in the reading rooms and the rooms for group work corresponds to 10% of the total number of students for the BSc Banking Finance and Accounting study program. Teaching materials cover at least 50% of the subjects and disciplines provided within the study program.

There are also computer classrooms equipped with professional software used in the teaching process, during the on-site visit students expressed their satisfaction with the offered facilities and services. In order to evaluate facilities and infrastructure and get ideas for their improvement HEI conducts surveys on a regular basis. A member of the administrative staff is responsible for the management of the infrastructure and facilities and being also in charge for their regular maintenance.

There are several recreation areas in the building, big enough considering the number of students involved in the evaluated study program and a student canteen in the building, offering good variety of food at affordable prices as well as several small shops selling miscellaneous goods and coffee and snack machines.

During the on-site visit the expert panel concluded that present economic infrastructure is adapted to meet the needs of students with disabilities. There is a parking lot next to the college premises, flat entrances, elevators, toilets, emergency exits, ramps and all required facilities for students with special needs. During the visit it was mentioned that additional resources can be attracted in case the disabled students would require them.

The expert panel has reviewed a financial plan at the level of the study program that would define main revenues and expenses demonstrating the sustainability of the study program, also, being a largest private HEI in Kosovo College management believes to generate enough revenue to ensure sustainability of the study process in general and for the stated study program in particular. The budget of HEI is adjusted and evaluated on a regular basis and financial reports of HEI are assessed by the independent auditor, auditing company from Croatia - BDO and KKRF (Kosovo Council for Financial Reporting). However, current version does not provide linkage with QA process and which in the opinion of expert team will enable a more strategic and data-driven approach to decision-making, ensuring that resources are allocated to priority areas that align with institutional goals and quality standards.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 7.1.</i> The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.	X	
<i>Standard 7.2.</i> There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.	X (0,5)	
<i>Standard 7.3.</i> The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years: a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process; b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence; d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.	X	
<i>Standard 7.4.</i> The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.	X	
<i>Standard 7.5.</i> The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years; d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for; e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.	X	
<i>Standard 7.6.</i> The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.	X	

Compliance level: 91,66% - Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Consider enhancing the effectiveness of college planning and resource allocation, by integrating the planning processes for financing and investment with the Quality Assurance assessment.*
2. *Enhance active usage of foreign language resources and scientific databases by students.*

3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

Based on the research of the extensive documentation submitted and an on-site and online visit to the Faculty of Economics from AAB College of Prishtinë (AAB), the Expert Team for the re-accreditation process prepared this report based on the defined Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of KAA (updated 2021) and gave an overview of the current situation. AAB College is a private institution that has an important role for the local but also regional higher education landscape. The teaching and administrative processes of the Faculty of Economics are appropriate to the needs of students and the general goals of the proposed study program, MA *Accounting and Auditing*, which are also in line with the mission and strategic goals of the Faculty and the College.

In the context of this evaluation, the ET emphasizes the following contextual aspects of the mission:

1. The AAB College of Prishtinë is a private institution.
2. The study program MA AA is implemented in the Faculty of Economics, AAB College of Prishtinë.
3. All the standards of quality regarding the study program were evaluated based on documents attached initial at SER (2024), on the discussions during the visit in site, and on the supplementary documents solicited after visit.

However, there are several improvements that are necessary in order to further implement and improve the quality of the evaluated study program:

- Continuously adapt the Learning Outcomes (LOs) to reflect digital transformation trends.
- Increase the integration of research findings into course content.
- Implement and operationalize a peer-to-peer review system for evaluating staff performance.
- Systematize and publish periodic student and graduate feedback reports to improve the study program.
- Review learning outcomes per Bloom's Taxonomy principle for all courses, reducing their number and avoiding substituting course topics.
- Review and update all courses' primary and additional literature to ensure relevance and currency, incorporating newer editions and references from international scientific databases.
- Consider conducting a thorough study plan review to address potential overlaps and integrate new technological trends, aiming for alignment with industry standards. Include modern demanded courses such as Fintech, Data Analysis, and AI.
- Integrate professional practice as a separate subject with corresponding ECTS credits in the curriculum to provide students with valuable hands-on experience.
- Consider attracting more visiting lecturers from abroad and industry representatives to strengthen the practical and international aspects of the study program.
- Ensure that clear research objectives are defined and integrated into the MA AA program, with sufficient financial and logistic resources allocated to achieve these objectives.

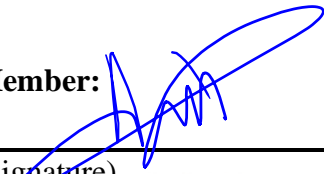


- Encourage academic staff to publish in international journals and participate in prestigious conferences, establishing clear policies and metrics for recognizing research outputs.
- Expand opportunities for student involvement in research through collaboration on projects, regular conferences, and workshops.
- Enhance the effectiveness of college planning and resource allocation by integrating financial planning with Quality Assurance assessments.
- Conduct a complete analysis of the requirements of the standards regarding necessary periodic reports from the perspective of quality assurance and ensure their publication by the required standards.

Considering the documentation provided and discussions with the program development team, the ET gave the following compliance levels:

Standard	Compliance level
1. Mission, objectives and administration	95,83% - Fully compliant
2. Quality management	86,11% - Substantially compliant
3. Academic staff	94,44% - Fully compliant
4. Educational process content	86,36% - Substantially compliant
5. Students	81,81% - Substantially compliant
6. Research	77,27% - Substantially compliant
7. Infrastructure and resources	91,66% - Fully compliant
Overall compliance	Substantial compliance

The Expert Team wants to point out that, in general, the self-evaluation report is well written, which has facilitated the accreditation process. However, for several standards, important information and more details were missing and without evidence and those were obtained through the request for additional documentation.

In conclusion, in line with the Manual requirements, the Expert Team considers that the study program MA in Accounting and Auditing is Substantially compliant with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation and recommends **to re-accredit** the MA Accounting and Auditing for **three years**, with maximum enrolment of **80 students per year**.

Expert Team		
Member: 	PhD. Alexandru TUGUI	20.06.2024
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)
Member: 	Ph.D. Natalie Aleksandra Gurviš-Suits	21.06.2024
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)
Member: 	Horia Onita (student expert)	24.06.2024
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)