



***AAB College***

**MA in MANAGEMENT STUDY PROGRAM**

**Re-accreditation**

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*March 28, 2023, Maastricht*

## Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION .....	3
1.1. Context.....	3
1.2. Site visit schedule .....	5
1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation.....	6
2. PROGRAM EVALUATION.....	7
2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration .....	7
2.2. Quality Management .....	8
2.3. Academic Staff .....	11
2.4. Educational Process Content .....	14
2.5. Students.....	17
2.6. Research.....	20
2.7. Infrastructure and Resources .....	23
3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET .....	25
1. Mission, objectives and administration .....	25
2. Quality management.....	25
3. Academic staff.....	25
4. Educational process content .....	25
5. Students.....	25
6. Research.....	25
7. Infrastructure and resources.....	25

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit: February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Expert Team (ET) members:**

- *Dr. Katalin Kovacs, chair*
- *Christoph Back, student expert*

**Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):**

- *Ms. Leona Kovaçi, KAA Officer*

**Sources of information for the Report:**

- *Self-evaluation report “SER MA Management” January 2023*
- *KAA Accreditation Manual 11.07.2018*
- *Syllabi*
- *CVs of Academic Staff*
- *Code of Ethics, the Code of Ethics of Scientific Research*
- *Regulations for Master’s Studies*
- *Regulation for Scientific Research Activities*
- *Annexes including Assessment Report of the Administrative Services Feb 2023 QAO, Financial Plan MA Management, List of Activities, Scientific Papers of all Academic Staff, Semester Work Plan, Student Evaluation Report*

***Requested documents (before and after the visit)***

- *Meeting minutes for quality management meetings (faculty/staff/students)*
- *Student questionnaire samples*
- *Strategic plan*
- *Faculty performance evaluation samples*
- *Learning Outcomes Matrix: Linking the course level outcomes to the program level outcomes*
- *Master thesis Rubric*
- *Research Development Plan*
- *Alumni survey template and results for the past three years.*

- *Employer survey template and results for the past three years.*
- *List of rooms and capacities*
- *Ownership document of the main facility.*
- *Financial plan option in case student numbers fall under 100 students per intake.*
- *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. Please note it's enough to send the info on the 20 faculty members assigned to the program.*
- *Internship rubric*
- *Link to Students' rights and obligations where it is made publicly available.*

***Received documents:***

- *Meeting minutes for quality management meetings (faculty/staff/students)*
- *Student questionnaire samples*
- *Strategic plan*
- *Learning Outcomes Matrix: Linking the course level outcomes to the program level outcomes*
- *Master thesis Rubric*
- *Research Development Plan (as part of the annual working plan)*
- *Alumni survey template and results for 2021*
- *Employer survey template and results for the past three years*
- *List of rooms and capacities*
- *Ownership document of the main facility*
- *Financial plan option in case student numbers fall under 100 students per intake.*
- *Tabular form data about FT and 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*
- *Internship rubric*
- *Link to Students' rights and obligations where it is made publicly available.*

***Not received:***

- *Faculty performance evaluation samples*

**Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations:**

- *KAA Accreditation Manual-Updated 2021*
- *KAA The Manual for External Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions*

## 1.2. Site visit schedule

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:45	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Shemsedin Vehapi, Vice Rector of AAB Medain Hashani, Dean of the Faculty Kosovare Ukshini, Vice Dean of the Faculty
09:45 – 10:30	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Furtuna Mehmeti, Head of QAO Roberta Bajrami, QA coordinator Albulena Ramadani, Head of Administration Shkelqim Miftari, Head of IT Office
10:35 – 11:35	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Management, MA	Arberesha Qerimi Xhavit Islami
11:40 – 12:25	Meeting with teaching staff	Agron Mustafa Ilir Rexhepi Donat Rexha Besime Ziberi Pranvera Dalloshi Adelina Gashi
12:25 – 13:25	Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site)	
13:25 – 14:00	Visiting Facilities	
14:00 – 14:45	Meeting with students	Linda Haliti Nazlije Geci Halimi Behar Bytyqi Endrit Haliti Eriona Rafuna Arta Abdullahu
14:50 – 15:35	Meeting with graduates	Fatbardha Dragusha Fatmir Desku Armin Bushati Xhihad Vuciterna Armanda Salihu Besnik Avdija
15:40 – 16:25	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Arian Zeka (American Chamber of Commerce) Agron Dida (Central Bank of Kosovo) Besar Blakaj (Insurance Company PRISIG) Melita Ymeraga (Melita&Partners Shpk) Sylejman Maqastena (Corporate Hib Petrol) Yll Qollaku (Maxi corporate)
16:30 – 16:40	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
16:45 – 16:55	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	Shemsedin Vehapi Medain Hashani Kosovare Ukshini

### 1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

*AAB College is the largest non-public institution of higher education in the Republic of Kosovo and in the region. AAB has 14 academic departments with 50 programs at both Bachelor and Master levels. According to the SER, there are around 17,000 students enrolled at the institution. AAB has campuses in Pristina, Ferizaj and Gjakovë. AAB also has a large number of academic staff, where the number of fulltime staff covers more than 85% of all subjects of the programs. Currently, AAB has 521 faculty members, with 329 fulltime and 192 are part time staff. As for the academic degrees, from the full-time academic staff, 156 staff hold a Doctor of Science degree.*

*The Faculty of Economics is one of the oldest and largest faculties of AAB College. The Faculty of Economics was established in 2005 when they launched their first Bachelor level program. The Master level programs followed in the Academic Year 2009/10, first on the campus in Pristina, later on two other campuses in Gjakovë and Ferizaj. The faculty aims at a diversified portfolio of programs, adapting to the local needs of the labor market while remaining in line with the mission and objectives of the college and the faculty.*

*As stated in the SER (pp. 10): “The mission of the Faculty of Economics is to provide students with a favorable environment to achieve their career and employment goals, with special emphasis on personality development through quality education in all spheres of Economics and specializations in Banking, Finance, Accounting, Auditing, Management, Marketing and Business Management. The Faculty of Economics is fully focused on providing teaching in modern, practical forms, and conforming to developments and processes in the national and international markets, so that our students can be competitive in the labor market in Kosovo, the region and beyond.”*

*In general, the faculty has defined a number of strategic objectives in support of their mission, including but not limited to increasing the number of scientific publications, further increasing the number of professors holding doctoral degrees, continued professional development of staff and faculty, and increased mobility both for students and faculty members.*

*The Faculty of Economics currently offers the following programs:*

*Bachelor level:*

*Banking, Finance and Accounting; Management and Informatics; Marketing and Business Administration.*

*Master level:*

*Banking and Finance; Marketing and Business Management; Management; Accounting and Auditing.*

## 2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

### 2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

*In the SER, the mission of the MA program in Management highlights the alignment between the labor market and the teaching and research process. The mission aims to enable students with managerial, analytical, strategic, research and creative skills in the fields of management. The program itself aids in providing conditions that will prepare students for the local, regional, and international markets. The mission of the program is aligned with the mission of the Faculty of Economics and the mission of AAB College.*

*As reported in the SER, the mission of the MA study program in Management is as follows: through the teaching and research process to align students with the demands of the labor market and the nature of business management, enabling them to transform their professional competence in the context of the development of managerial, analytical, strategic, research and creative skills in the fields of management. The program aims to provide genuine research and professional conditions that enable adequate preparation of students for the local, regional, and international labor market.*

*AAB College has clearly carried out significant amount of research with regards to the skills required in the labor market in Kosovo and when defining the learning outcomes in line with the National Qualification Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. It's commendable that they align the program with the needs of the labor market. However local and international comparability of the MA Management study program were carried out on course level and not program level, which means it's a curriculum/content comparison and not specifically level 7 outcomes comparison (although course level outcomes aim to indicate alignment with level 7 program level outcomes). There is an opportunity for AAB College to carry out outcomes level comparison as well both on the national and international scale.*

*The Faculty publishes its formal policies and guidelines, and they are made available for all staff and students (Regulations for Master's Studies document). The faculty applies the Code of Ethics, the Code of Ethics of Scientific Research as well as the Regulation on Disciplinary Procedure. All these documents are accessible on electronic platforms and are public on the AAB website.*

*The Expert Team was able to verify that the policies and regulations relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least every two years.*

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 1.1.</i> The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	X	
<i>Standard 1.2.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 1.3.</i> The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.	X	
<i>Standard 1.4.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 1.5.</i> All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	X	
<i>Standard 1.6.</i> 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	

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

#### **ET recommendations:**

1. *The ET recommends that the Faculty of Economics considers a comparison benchmark on the intended learning outcomes on program level corresponding to Level 7 of the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.*

## **2.2. Quality Management**

*AAB College has a comprehensive and well working Quality Management System. The main documents that establish the basis on which the Quality Management System operates are the Statute, the Quality Assurance Regulation, the Quality Assurance Manual, the Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026. The Quality Assurance Office operates at the central level, while the quality assurance coordinator operates at the faculty level. The Faculty of Economics has a quality assurance coordinator who actively cooperates with the central Quality Assurance Office, engaging in the continuous implementation of internal evaluation processes.*

*The Quality Assurance Manual defines the obligations and the participation of the academic staff in the quality assurance procedures. Part of these obligations among other things are the participation in self-evaluations. All academic staff must fill out a questionnaire for self-*



*evaluation once a year. Additionally, regular meetings with the head of the study program are mandatory in which syllabuses, learning outcomes, assessment forms, student assessment results and student performance in general are discussed. Member of the administrative staff are also involved in the quality assurance procedures via regular meetings and questionnaires.*

*The Strategic Plan of AAB College 2022 – 2026 ensures that the that quality assurance processes are integrated into normal planning processes. An extensive variety of questionnaires and other forms of monitoring is conducted by the Quality Assurance Office. These actions are structured in semester or annual plans. The monitoring of services as well as resources provided by other parts of AAB College are part of these plans. The most important questionnaires for the Quality Assurance of AAB College are:*

- “Questionnaire with students about the assessment of professors and subjects” which is conducted twice within the academic year, after the end of each semester.*
- “Questionnaire with students about the assessment of administrative services and infrastructure” which is conducted twice within the academic year, after the end of each semester.*
- Questionnaire with employers and the industry which is conducted every two years.*
- Questionnaire with the graduates which is conducted every two years.*

*During the meeting with the management of the faculty and the meeting with the Quality Assurance representatives, sufficient examples and explanations how the gathered data is used for further development of the program could be delivered to the ET (including evaluation results, investigation of workload for students, academic success and employment rates).*

*The relevant results of the questionnaires are published on the website of the institution.*

*The mature Quality Assurance System of AAB College can provide a good overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it. A detailed explanation was delivered to the ET during the meeting with the Quality Assurance representatives how inputs, processes and outputs are handled and how the evaluations are aligned to the learning outcomes for students.*

*During this explanation, the ET detected that the learning outcomes for students on program level are sufficiently but not fully integrated in the Quality Assurance System. This has been confirmed in the meeting with staff and faculty members. The Quality Assurance office manages the implementation and data collection and dissemination of various indirect measures of assessment including but not limited to alumni, students, and employer surveys, however program level outcomes and assessments are not clearly linked to the thesis. While the Quality Assurance office drafts the internal evaluation reports, these reports do not include the program level assessments.*

*The Quality Assurance Office compiles a comprehensive report (the Self Evaluation Report) about the overall quality of the program prior to every accreditation. The report is based on the findings of the monitoring system and contains, furthermore the actions AAB College has started or implemented based on the recommendations of prior accreditations and the SWOT analyses for each KAA standard.*

*During the meeting with the Quality Assurance representatives, AAB College was able to explain with the help of a good example (regarding to the revising of the evaluation of the student workload in the questionnaires) how the quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves evaluated and improved. While such a procedure is often part of the regulations of an institution, normally no example can be given. The ET is pleased how AAB College is revising and improving its Quality Assurance system.*

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.</i>	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.</i>	<b>X</b>	
<i>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.</i>	<b>X</b>	
<i>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.</i>	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.</i>	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.</i>	<b>X</b>	
<i>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.</i>	<b>X</b>	
<i>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.</i>	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.</i>	<b>X</b>	

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

## **ET recommendations:**

1. *While the QA system is robust, the learning outcomes for students on program level are not fully integrated in the Quality Assurance System. The ET is recommending that the Faculty of Economics fully integrates program level assessment (thesis) into their learning outcomes matrix and the QA office considers including the program level evaluation into their assessment processes.*
2. *The Quality Assurance office carries a major workload in managing the quality management of the program. The ET is recommending that the College considers either adding additional support to the QA office or allows for an even greater involvement of the faculty in the process.*

### **2.3. Academic Staff**

*It is evident from the panel discussions that the Faculty of Economics is able to support and deliver a sound academic program on Master level. According to the SER, the Faculty of Economics has 62 members, 43 full-time and 19 part-time faculty. Out of the 62, 44 have PhD degrees, and more pursuing doctoral studies and the minimum qualifications for the rest are Master level in their specialized fields.*

*It is evident from the documents reviewed and from the discussions with the academic staff members that new candidates for academic staff member positions going through the employment process are provided with all information regarding the employment (positions descriptions, workload, qualification requirements, etc. The description of duties is detailed in the Employment Contract, under article 4, Duties and Responsibilities.*

*It was also confirmed during the visit that workload requirements are implemented according to regulations (Regulation for the Systematization of Workplaces). This means that the maximum of teaching hours per week are set between 8-10 hours maximum, with the rest of the time divided between administrative activities, research activities and community service. There may also so be activities related to the planning, preparation, and implementation of specific projects in the field. In addition, professors are obliged to hold consultations with students corresponding to 2 hours per week (this should be a mix of in person and through online platform or email). Finally, Academic Staff members are assigned duties as Academic Advisors, which then requires additional tutorial hours for the students. Discussions with students confirmed the availability of Academic Staff throughout the Academic Cycle.*

*Regarding the requirement of employing full-time PhD academic staff in the field, the Faculty of Economics employs three Doctor of Science Academic Staff members with full time regular employment: Dr. Sc. Xhavit Islami, Dr. Sc. Arberesha Qerimi and Dr. Sc. Lulzim Shabani. The*

*coverage of subject areas are adequate, as full-time staff covers more than 95% of the subjects within the curriculum in the MA Management study program.*

*When it comes to the professional and academic development of staff members, the College has the Centre for Professional Training and Innovation. This Centre offers training opportunities for staff members on three levels depending on the needs of the academic staff but also depending on the level (relative to the field, performance improvement needed, promotional objectives, approaches to teaching among others). Academic Staff members have confirmed during the visit that the Faculty gives them these opportunities for development but they also have the chance to initiate and request training. This Centre is indeed crucial as it also offers advanced level training for scientific research as well, following the recommendations made by the Expert Panel from previous program evaluation.*

*Examples of training activities include but not limited to:*

- Training on “Higher education methodology from the perspective of adult learning principles” organized by QAPI, July 2022*
- Two training on “Methodologies of teaching and evaluation of students at AAB”, organized by QAPI, October 2021*
- Training on “Research based teaching” delivered by Croatian professor Melita Kovacevic, January 2022*
- Training "Research reviewing Skills" delivered by prof. Aleksandar Takovski, organized by QAPI, 2022*
- Training on “Academic Integrity” delivered by Turnitin representatives, 2020*
- Training on “Transformation of Physical Teaching to Online Teaching” delivered by CLIKS (Singapore) in November 2020. The need for this training was identified due to online learning imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.*
- Training on “Rethinking student evaluation during online teaching” delivered by CLICKS, in December 2020*
- Training on “Scientific publications” delivered by professors of the University of Ghent, 2019*
- Training on “Importance of publishing in WoS dhe Scopus” from the scholar of the year 2019 in Kosovo Dr. Dritan Vela*

*Regarding Academic staff evaluations, they are conducted on a regular basis. The evaluation is based on the Regulation for the Performance Evaluation of the Academic Staff. The regulation indicates four aspects which are self-evaluation, evaluation by the dean, evaluation by the students and peer to peer evaluation. It was confirmed during the visit the students evaluate academic staff on a semester basis while the dean meets with them annually. They are requested to fill out their self-evaluation annually as well. However, the peer-peer evaluation has not been implemented yet. Student evaluations are crucial, and the process confirmed that regular feedback is provided to academic staff members based on the student evaluations.*

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 3.1.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 3.2.</i> The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.	X	
<i>Standard 3.3.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 3.4.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 3.5.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 3.6.</i> Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	X	
<i>Standard 3.7.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 3.8.</i> Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.	X	
<i>Standard 3.9.</i> Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.	X	
<i>Standard 3.10.</i> 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:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. The ET recommends that the Faculty of Economics start the implementation of peer-to-peer evaluation in the classroom to truly showcase a robust system and allowing for a 360 assessment of academic staff performance.*

## 2.4. Educational Process Content

*The MA Management study program curriculum covers a broad range of topics and aims to align students with the labor market demands but also covers foundational business management topics, professional competencies, skill development, allowing for a seamless coverage of disciplinary, methodological, generic and research competencies. The program also offers electives, allowing students the option to choose subjects in their area of interest.*

*According to the SER, the program naturally follows the National Qualification Framework (NQF) requirements and the learning outcomes include but not limited to acquiring practical and theoretical knowledge in the field of management, developing students' skills for independent work in research within the field, developing skills for the collection and interpretation of relevant data, as well as the application of knowledge to solve problems within the field of management.*

*The MA Management program sets out several learning outcomes on program level. These are divided into knowledge, skills, and competences. There are 16 learning outcomes of the program, many of them are articulated in a complex manner. Any time, when there are several learning outcomes to be achieved, a mature system must be in place to ensure that this is not too ambitious and indeed they can showcase all the outcomes have been assessed in an appropriate manner. The Faculty of Economics was able to provide the team with the Learning Outcomes Matrix, showcasing how they assess these learning outcomes on course level. The Faculty has also shared with the team the Internship Rubric and the Master Thesis Rubric however program level learning outcomes are not specifically indicated in the Learning Outcomes Matrix. It would be advisable for the Faculty of Economics to clearly link which program level outcomes these tools assess. It would also be useful for the academic staff to ensure that course level assessments are amalgamated together in a portfolio manner.*

*The Faculty of Economics shared with the expert team the complete syllabus which then includes course level outcomes, schedules, bibliography, credits, grading, etc, adequate for Master level program delivery.*

*Based on discussions with both the academic staff and students, the teaching strategies help and support the achievement of the learning outcomes on course level. In case a student needs flexible treatment, examples were provided how they ensure they support the needs of these students. In addition, the expert team was able to verify during the visit that academic staff members use various teaching methods in the program which includes theoretical lectures but places heavy emphasis on active/participatory learning by using interactive techniques.*

*Student assessment mechanism are indicated in the syllabi but also in the Regulation for Master Studies: Articles 22 through 27. The Faculty of Economics uses a variety of assessment methods, including written exam or in-class tests, Individual Written Reports, Case Studies, Oral presentations, and Dissertation. They highlight the importance of formative assessment in the classroom, with less importance given to summative assessments.*

*One of the objectives is that the achievement of learning outcomes not only is driven by the academic staff but that students also take responsibility in the process. For this to take place, course syllabi is published on the E-Student Platform and these are discussed with the students in the first week of the semester. Students have confirmed that these discussions take place, and they are fully aware of the learning outcomes of the course. These discussions also allow for slight adjustment to the curriculum if students request it.*

*Regarding the teaching methods, the expert team was able to confirm that they indeed use a variety of methods supporting the implementation of the main didactic approach towards the achievement of student-centred learning, with emphasis on reflexive thinking and research-based teaching. Academic staff members use a variety of methods to integrate research in the program including co researching activities, data collection activities but also independent research.*

*The QAA team generates success reports after the end of each term, indicating the numbers of students registered for the exam, number of students passed and information on the grading as well. The expert team was able to verify on site that these reports are indeed reviewed on a regular manner, showcasing systematic use of information generated from student assessment. Since the reports are generated every term the Faculty of Economics is able to address any issues or inconsistencies that may happen with regards to student achievement. Nevertheless, it would be useful for the Faculty of Economics to externally benchmark the results of student assessment of the MA in Management program to ensure that the standard of work is consistent to those of similar study programs.*

*The internship (as one of the summative assessment measures) is held within the Strategic Management of Human Resources subject. Practical work for this study program (as with others at AAB College) is managed by the Careers Office. The internship is assigned ECTS credits as it is shown in the syllabus. The Faculty of Economics has signed several cooperation agreements with various companies (examples include the Post and Telecom of Kosovo, Ministry of Finance of Kosovo, Tax Administration of Kosovo, Customs Service of Kosovo, Bank NLB-Prishtina, Swiss Diamond Hotel Prishtina, Kosovo Post, Chamber of Commerce of Kosovo, Airport of Pristina, etc.*

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

15

<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 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.	<b>X</b>	
<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.	<b>X</b>	
<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.	<b>N/A</b>	
<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.	<b>X</b>	
<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.	<b>X</b>	
<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.	<b>X</b>	
<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.	<b>X</b>	
<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.	<b>X</b>	
<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 ECTS 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.	<b>X</b>	



Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units. <i>*To be inserted the overview of the program (with all areas to be filled out)</i>	X	
--	---	--

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *The ET recommends that it would be useful for the Faculty of Economics to externally benchmark the results of student assessment of the MA in Management program to ensure that the standard of work is consistent to those of similar study programs.*

## 2.5. Students

*The admission of new students in the study program is done through a public procedure. This procedure and the related criteria are determined by the Statute, the Regulation for Master's Studies as well as the legal requirements of MEST and KAA. The Statute of AAB College determines that the admission is based on public competition and on the basis of the selection procedure and assessment criteria set by the Senate of KAA. The decision to announce the competition is taken by the Steering Council. During the meetings with the students and the graduates the ET got a good overview about the admission procedure. The ET has no reason to assume, that the admission procedure is not consistently and fairly applied for all students.*

*To successfully enroll into the study program an applicant has to fulfil the following criteria:*

- *Completed the Bachelor's level of studies (at least 180 ECTS) in an accredited and recognized institution of higher education in Kosovo or abroad. (Applicants with a Bachelor's Diploma from outside of Kosovo must have it equivalent in Kosovo (from NARIC) and possess personal documentation, such as education certificates and an identity card.*
- *Completed the file with the formal documentation as defined by MEST.*
- *(when applied) successfully completed the entrance exam*

*AAB College provides very good conditions to the students regarding to the academic staff (see chapter 2.3) and facilities (see chapter 2.7). Therefore, the study groups in the study program are dimensioned to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process. In the study program the groups of students are divided in accordance with the provisions of the Statute of AAB College, where a group of students cannot have more than 60 students in theoretical lectures and no more than 30 students for practical exercises or seminars.*

*During the meetings with the students and the teaching staff, the ET got coherent explanations regarding to the feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments. Both groups are satisfied with the applied (open door) practices for feedback. The communication of the student examination results takes place no later than 7 days from the date of the exam. Students and teachers are also satisfied with this regulation (defined in the Master's Study Regulation).*

*Every student has access at any time to his academic record. Grading after the successful completion of the courses is done electronically by the professor and the totality of the student's grades constitutes the grade transcript which the student can generate from the E-Student electronic platform.*

*Regarding the topic of flexible treatment of students in special situations, AAB College was able to provide good examples of such cases and how they were handled. The two examples of pregnancy and illness of a student served for explanation of the procedures. Suitable adjustments for the date of the examination are possible if the student is applying his adjustment for special needs in due time (min two weeks prior to the examination). Additionally, the students explained to the ET that the vast majority of teachers are helpful in this situation, a case in which a student in such a special situation did not get a suitable treatment was not known.*

*The Master's Study regulation contains the rule for each professor to submit the original exam report certified by his/her signature to the administration. After the completion of the exam reports from all academic staff, the Faculty of Economics generates the success/progression report for each subject in a summary form, where for each subject, data is generated on the number of students who registered in the exam, the number of students who passed the exam, as well as the number of those who did not pass the exams. The student progression data is used as a quality indicator and is also part of the monitoring system of the Quality Assurance Office (see chapter 2.2).*

*AAB College is using the plagiarism-detection-platform 'Turnitin' which is working for English and Albanian language. The software must be used with the submission of the Master's Thesis. To pass the thesis topic to the evaluation committee, mentors are required to submit an anti-plagiarism report detailing the level of plagiarism detected in the thesis. The acceptable level of plagiarism is a score of 20%. Additionally, to the plagiarism check, during the first year of studies, students are introduced to a series of workshops related to plagiarism in the course Scientific Research Methodology to raise the awareness for academic integrity and ethical conduct. The ET is satisfied with the handling of this topic by AAB College, but an obligation should be established to check all work submitted by students with the help of a plagiarism-detection-software, not only the Master's Thesis.*

*The Students' rights and obligations are defined in the Statue of AAB College and the Master's Study Regulation. In addition to the regulations and the statute, the student's obligations are*

18

also established in the contract that the student signs when registering at the College as well as are uploaded through the electronic platform E-Student. All required topics (including the right to academic appeals) are included.

The procedures and regulations regarding to the students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs are defined in the Statue of AAB College. The transfer of students to the Master Management program is done through the transfer office that, in cooperation with the quality assurance coordinator within the Faculty of Economics, verifies the files of each candidate. Each candidate for transfer is issued a decision on transfer through which the candidate is notified of how many courses (ECTS) have been accepted by the institution where he/she has already been studying, as well as the number of additional courses he/she must take in order to transfer to Faculty of Economics.

As for consultations, the academic staff, apart from the lecture schedule, is accessible to students during counselling hours. Each member of the academic staff is obligated to be available for at least two hours per week (in the semester) for consultation. The students explained to the ET that they are very satisfied with the availability of the academic staff for consultation. Normally, the consultation can be schedule via E-Mail for the upcoming days.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 5.1.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 5.2.</i> All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	X	
<i>Standard 5.3.</i> The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.	X	
<i>Standard 5.4.</i> Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	X	
<i>Standard 5.5.</i> The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	X	
<i>Standard 5.6.</i> Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.	X	
<i>Standard 5.7.</i> Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.	X	
<i>Standard 5.8.</i> Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.	X	

<i>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.</i>	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.</i>	<b>X</b>	
<i>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.</i>	<b>X</b>	

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *The ET is recommending establishing a regulation that all work submitted by students has to be checked by a plagiarism-detection-software, not only the Master's Thesis.*

## **2.6. Research**

*As indicated in the SER, the scientific output of the Faculty of Economics is set in terms of publication of papers in Scopus-indexed journals. The ultimate objective of AAB College in general and the department as well is to increase the scientific output of the academic staff members. In order to achieve this, the faculty as also spent increased efforts in securing grants for research. The total of scientific publications at the Faculty of Economics amounts to 195 published papers among a total of 28 academic staff members.*

*With regards to the MA in Management Study program, the learning outcomes of the program reflect applied research objectives as it was highlighted in both the mission and vision of AAB but also the Faculty of Economics. The alignment is clear. The expert team was also able to verify during the visit that there is support provided for the faculty members in achieving these objectives. This is showcased by the limited teaching hours (8-10 hours maximum per week), which allows for research work to be carried out through the academic year. The research carried out by the academic staff members hence supports the objectives of the program itself.*

*The expectations for academic staff members are clearly defined in the employment contracts, where each academic staff members are required to produce at least one scientific paper in the academic year.*

*The Regulation for Scientific Research Activities document highlights the exact requirements to be met for published journal articles. This document includes scientific principles, practices, student involvement, thematic research areas and infrastructure (approvals). In addition to this the Annual Working Plan of AAB highlights under their 2<sup>nd</sup> strategic objectives the*

*following: Create an enabling system to increase the quality of scientific research through the support of staff and students for research work in order to achieve the third mission of the college and social development. This is then tracked across an implementation period with assigned responsibilities across the deliverables related to the research activities.*

*The track record of academic staff has been validated by the documents received and by the discussions on site. AAB College supplied the expert team with a complete list of publications of its academic staff members. Scientific journals where the academic staff publishes includes International Peer-Reviewed Journals such as the Web of Science, SCOPUS, EBSCO, WorldCat, etc. This requirement is part of the College's promotion criteria and as outlined in the employment contracts as well. Academic staff are also required to promote AAB College as their primary institute on social media accounts and professional networks to ensure clear linkage for research output.*

*Moreover, the employment contract also highlights the issues related to intellectual property under article 14. This was validated by the expert team during the visit.*

*Students in the program are involved and engaged in research projects and related activities. As it is expected, since the mission of the College, and the Faculty of Economics so attuned to addressing the problems of the Kosovar society and the region, the research approach is also attuned with this objective. Students, during the preparation of the Master thesis (also part of the Preparatory Seminar) choose their area of interest and specialization in line with the above. They present at student conferences but also ensure collaboration with faculty members. Hence promotion of scientific research within the student population is prevalent. The discussion with students during the visit supported the above, where the master thesis preparation was discussed in detail. As an example, early 2020, the Faculty of Economics organized an international student conference "Challenges of employment of young people in transition periods: qualification-employment-advancement". This conference included students outside of AAB College. Research is also supported within several projects, where academic staff is involved with the business sector. Interviews are carried out by industry members that employ students from the Faculty of Economics.*

*AAB College identified certain weaknesses with regards to the research activities and these include the lack of PHD study programs, obtaining research projects and limited opportunities for their staff members to pursue postdoctoral studies. Most of these are out of the hands of AAB College at this time.*

*Overall, it is certainly commendable that AAB College and the Faculty of Economics have adjusted their curriculum of this MA program to ensure that research carried out by the faculty is included in the course syllabus and that faculty and supported and promoted when meeting and exceeding the requirements for research output. Having adequate time allocated for research, having clear policies for research requirements and activities certainly ensures the alignment with the internationally expected standards but also delivers the impact that is expected for a Master level program delivery.*

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	
<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	
<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	
<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	
<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	

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

*No recommendation*

## 2.7. Infrastructure and Resources

*The program operates at the main Campus of AAB College in Pristina. AAB College provides an impressive infrastructure with very good conditions for students and the academic staff. The facilities modern, spacious and welcoming. The long-term implementation of the study program is ensured by sufficient rooms for lectures and exercises and enough human resources. Furthermore, the e-service platform of AAB is well designed and supports the students in many ways.*

*During the visit at AAB Campus, the ET was able to get a good overview on the infrastructure and resources. The 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> Campus provides sufficient well-equipped classrooms, exercise rooms, student independent reading rooms, computer laboratories equipped with sufficient software in the field of Management and Economics, lecture halls and spaces for extracurricular activities for students. The ET wants to state that the infrastructure is far above the average regarding to Higher Education Institutions in Kosovo, regarding to quantitative but also qualitative terms.*

*ABB provided the ET with two financial plans for the next five years. The first plan shows the numbers for the case that each year 200 new students are enrolled in the program, while the second plan shows the numbers for the case that each year 85 new students are enrolled in the program. Even the second plan with “only” 85 new students each years demonstrates the financial sustainability of the program.*

*Furthermore, ABB College as a whole has been audited by two external institutions. The ET has no reason to assume, that the study program is financially unsustainable.*

*AAB College owns all premises, classrooms, laboratories, software, equipment, and libraries at the main campus in Pristina. No obligations toward third parties exist. ABB College was able to show the certificate of ownership to the ET for the Campus in Pristina.*

*The number of seats in the lecture and seminar rooms are more than sufficient for the study groups of the program. Adequate IT equipment for the program is provided as well. There are 2 libraries on the main campus of AAB in Pristina. The number of seats and books in the libraries are sufficient for the study program. Furthermore, several resources for e-books can be used by the students and academic staff.*

*Flat entrances, elevators and special toilets ensure that the infrastructure and facilities on the main campus of AAB College can be used by students with special needs without any inconveniences.*

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human	X	

resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.		
<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.	<b>X</b>	
<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.	<b>X</b>	
<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.	<b>X</b>	
<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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 7.6.</i> The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.	<b>X</b>	

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

*No recommendation*



### 3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

*The International Expert Panel would like to commend the AAB College, the Faculty of Economics, its leadership, the academic staff members, and the administrative staff members for their efforts to commit to continued improvements of the MA in Management program. Proactive engagement with the Panel during the validation event was very much welcomed. The College has a systematic process in place to ensure continued quality delivery and alignment with the mission of both the College and the Faculty of Economics and its programs. Strong teamwork is evident and there was a collegial atmosphere. It is clear that the college would like to continue serving its student population to the best of its ability and that gives assurance for the upcoming cohort of students. The Quality Assurance Office provides invaluable service to the College and to the program, hence special commendation should be awarded to the team.*

*Having considered the documentation provided, the discussions with all the stakeholders and teams, the Re-accreditation Panel recommends the following:*

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Compliance level</b>
1. Mission, objectives and administration	Fully compliant
2. Quality management	Fully compliant
3. Academic staff	Fully compliant
4. Educational process content	Fully compliant
5. Students	Fully compliant
6. Research	Fully compliant
7. Infrastructure and resources	Fully compliant
<b>Overall compliance</b>	<b>Fully compliant</b>

**Compliance level: Fully compliant**

**Student quota recommended/Three or Five Years:**

**The ET recommends (re) accreditation for a period of 5 years and the student quota shall be set at 200.**

## Expert Team

**Member**



**Dr. Katalin Kovacs**

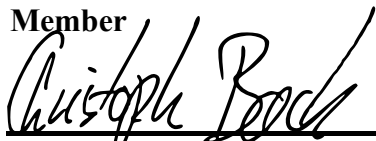
**28.03.2023**

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

**Member**



**Christoph Back**

**28.03.2023**

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)