



AAB College

**MA in MARKETING & BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
STUDY PROGRAM**

Re-accreditation

FINAL REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

April 3, 2025, Pristina

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
INTRODUCTION	3
Site visit schedule	3
A brief overview of the programme under evaluation	4
PROGRAMME EVALUATION	5
1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION	5
2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT	9
3. ACADEMIC STAFF	13
4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT	17
5. STUDENTS	22
6. RESEARCH.....	26
7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES.....	30

INTRODUCTION

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation report re/accreditation (SER) provided by the HEI (January 2025)*
- *Other documentation provided by the HEI*
 - *CV's of academic staff*
 - *Sylabusses*
 - *Other annexes*
 - *Financial Plan MA Marketing and Business Management*
 - *List of activities Faculty of Economics*
 - *List of scientific conferences of the Faculty of Economics*
 - *List of scientific publications of academic staff*
 - *Mapping of LO with subjects*
 - *Mapping of LO with teaching and assessment forms*
 - *Number of scientific publications of academic staff*
 - *Additional Documents requested by the ET*
 - *Follow up Plan MA Marketing and Business Management*
 - *Survey forms for stakeholders*
- *Website of the HEI (<https://aab-edu.net/>) as of March 2025*
- *Site visit - interviews and visit of the facilities (6th of March 2025)*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *Kosovo Accreditation Manual (Regulation (KAA) No. 04/2024) – February 2024*

Site visit schedule

Programme Accreditation Procedure at AAB College	
Programmes:	Marketing and Business Management, MA
Site visit on:	6 March 2025
Expert Team:	Prof. Dr. Olgun Cicek Prof. Sofia Gaio Mr. Christoph Back
Coordinators of the KAA:	Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Director of Department at KAA Fjolle Ajeti, Senior Officer at KAA

Site Visit Program

Time	Meeting	Participants
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09:00 – 09:50	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Prof. Ass. Dr. Medain Hashani, Dean Phd. C. Qendresa Kukaj, Coordinator for teaching
09:50 – 10:25	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Ms. Furtuna Mehmeti, Head of the QA Office Eriona Ajvazi, QA Coordinator at the Faculty level Leron Berisha, Head of IT Mejreme Millaku, Head of Administration
10:30 – 11:20	Meeting with the program holders of the study programme	Prof. Assoc. Dr. Ali Ismaili Prof. Ass. Dr. Agron Mustafa Prof. Ass. Dr. Ilir Rexhepi Prof. Ass. Dr. Shkumbin Misini
11:20 – 12:20	Lunch break	
12:20 – 13:00	Visiting facilities	
13:05 – 13:45	Meeting with teaching staff	Prof. Ass. Dr. Roberta Bajrami Prof. Ass. Dr. Pranvera Dalloshi Prof. Assoc. Dr. Besime Ziberi Prof. Ass. Dr. Xhavit Islami Prof. Ass. Dr. Adelina Gashi Prof. Ass. Dr. Fidan Qerimi
13:45 – 14:25	Meeting with students	Fitesa Asllani Bajrami Aulona Ahmeti Euresa Rexhbeqaj Drita Morina Elmedina Rama Kosovare Bytyqi
14:30 – 15:10	Meeting with graduate	Rexhep Pajaziti Labinot Krasniqi Naim Neziri Nazmie Morina Bleona Veseli Berisha Gresa Latifi Driton Rrahmani
15:10 – 15:50	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Arian Zeka Besarb Blakaj Fatos Krasniqi Sara Jashari Merita Qerimi Sylejman Maqastena
15:50 – 16:00	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
16:00 – 16:10	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	Prof. Ass. Dr. Medain Hashani, Dean Phd. C. Qendresa Kukaj, Coordinator for teaching

A brief overview of the programme under evaluation

AAB College is the largest non-public institution of higher education in the Republic of Kosovo and the region. It has 14 faculties and about 40 study programs at the BA and MA

levels. Since its establishment in 2002, AAB has steadily expanded its academic offerings, becoming a prominent educational center in the country and region.

AAB College offers teaching at the main campus in Pristina and at the two branches in Gjakovë and Ferizaj, which are accredited by the decision of the KAA and licensed by MEST. The campuses in Pristina, Ferizaj, and Gjakovë together cover over 100,000 m², which represents the largest investment in Albanian higher education. AAB is the most sought-after institution among Kosovo's higher education institutions, and it is also very attractive to students in the region. Currently, AAB has around 14,000 students. AAB College is the second-largest institution in Kosovo in terms of academic staff, with full-time employees accounting for over 85% of all subjects in its study programs. In addition to its growth, AAB College has demonstrated a remarkable level of institutional maturity in areas such as organization, management, and leadership. The college fosters a sense of belonging among its members, which enhances their commitment to quality work. This commitment is grounded in principles like academic freedom, decentralized decision-making, financial stability, and support for staff initiatives and professional development.

PROGRAMME EVALUATION

1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION

Standard 1.1 The study program is in line with the higher education institution's mission and strategic goals, needs of society and it is publicly available. (ESG 1.1)

The program aligns closely with HEI mission and addresses identified societal and labour market needs. The program explicitly maps its mission and objectives to the Faculty and College mission, ensuring a strategic fit. A thorough needs analysis was conducted via stakeholder surveys, confirming demand for the program and guiding its focus (for example, adding more digital marketing and analytics content based on feedback). The program's target enrolment (100 students per year) is justified by HEI's capacity. Overall, the program is mission-driven, publicly justified, and demand-responsive.

Program goals and learning outcomes mirror the Faculty's and HEI's strategic objectives, as evidenced by the direct mapping in SER. The program was designed based on concrete market need analysis. As stated in SER and explained in meeting with the management of the faculty, a survey of external stakeholders, 83.33% agreed Kosovo's economy needs more graduates in business management and marketing, and 100% found this program relevant for the sector's development. The program shows responsiveness to societal and industry needs, for instance, by adding stakeholders suggested topics in the syllabi. The intended cohort size (around 100

5

students/year) was set based on institutional capacity and higher education standards. HEI can comfortably accommodate students with existing facilities and staff, avoiding overextension and maintaining quality.

Standard 1.2 The study program Is subject to policies and procedures on academic integrity and freedom that prevent all types of unethical behaviour. The documents are publicly available, and staff and students are informed thereof. (ESG 1.1)

Clear, written policies on academic integrity and freedom are in place, public, and actively enforced in the program. SER lists multiple codes and regulations (Code of Ethics, Code of Ethics of Scientific Research, Disciplinary Procedures) that establish expectations for academic integrity, and it confirms these are publicly available on the HEI website. Students and staff are informed of these policies (e.g. during orientation and in syllabi). The policies cover issues like plagiarism and unethical behaviour with definitions and sanctions. In practice, Turnitin plagiarism detection is used for thesis work with a set similarity threshold of 20%, per the Code of Ethics, and an Ethics Committee is in place to handle any violations.

SER does not describe how HEI monitors the incidence of academic misconduct or evaluates how well the integrity policies work in practice. For instance, there's no data on whether plagiarism cases have occurred in the program or any statistics on academic dishonesty. The lack of such information doesn't mean issues aren't handled – it just isn't reported. Without tracking outcomes (e.g., "X plagiarism cases were detected and resolved last year"), it's harder to gauge the effectiveness of the training and policies.

Standard 1.3 Relevant information is collected, analysed and used to ensure the effective management of the study program and other relevant activities and such information is publicly available. (ESG 1.7)

HEI collects and analyses relevant information to effectively manage the study program. A electronic information system (E-SERVICE) is used to register and track academic data, supporting evidence-based decisions. SER describes this system in detail: it records student attendance, grades, exam participation, pass/fail rates, etc., and these data are regularly aggregated into reports. Such reports on student progress and success rates are reviewed in Faculty Council meetings and by the Rectorate, enabling timely interventions where needed. In addition to quantitative data, the program gathers qualitative feedback; for example, the quality assurance coordinator conducts student focus groups to evaluate study workload, and sample reports from these sessions are provided. These practices indicate an effective Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle in managing the program. Data protection measures are in place.

There is some involvement of students in the quality assurance process. As confirmed in meeting with students' meetings with students have been conducted to discuss workload and other study experience aspects. The inclusion of student voices in evaluating the program is a positive sign, as it helps ensure the program remains student-centered.

The variety of data tracked (attendance, grades, progression) indicates that the program monitors the learning process from multiple angles. This comprehensive monitoring reflects a quality culture focused on improvement.

Standard 1.4 The delivery of the study program is supported by appropriate and sufficient administrative support to achieve its goals in teaching, learning, research, and community service. (ESG 1.6)

The program's delivery is backed by adequate and well-organized administrative support structures. SER provides detailed evidence that the Faculty of Economics (under which this MA program falls) has a professional, student-centered administration. Specifically, there are dedicated faculty administrative officers assigned to support the students and academic staff of this program (two officers are allocated to the Faculty of Economics). These staff handle program administration, student inquiries, and coordination of activities, which is sufficient given the program's size. In addition, the program is supported by numerous centralized services at HEI – such as the IT department, Career Center, Library services, and other offices – all of which contribute to a smooth teaching and learning experience. HEI emphasizes an enabling environment for quality education: one of HEI's strategic development objectives is to continually improve resources and manage learning spaces efficiently (Development Plan Objective 5 on Learning Environment). Training and professional development for administrative staff are provided systematically, ensuring that the support personnel are qualified and up-to-date in their skills.

The program benefits from focused administrative attention. Two administrative officers are assigned to the Faculty (and by extension, to this program). Beyond the faculty's own administrative officers, HEI offers a wide range of support units that contribute to the program. Available services create a well-rounded support system covering academic, technical, and extracurricular needs. Students and faculty in the program can rely on these services, which enhances the overall quality of the educational process.

HEI's strategic plan explicitly includes improving the learning environment and resource management. This top-down commitment means there are policies and budget allocations aimed at maintaining high-quality facilities and services for students.

Standard 1.5 The recommendations for quality improvement of the study program from previous internal and external quality assurance procedures are implemented. (ESG 1.10)

HEI demonstrates commitment to addressing prior recommendations, as evidenced by the structured improvement report that outlines actions taken in response to external evaluations. The faculty has engaged in processes to enhance its alignment with internationalization efforts, including plans to introduce English-taught courses in the 2026/2027 academic year. Additionally, the faculty has signed cooperation agreements with four international universities and has initiated training for staff to facilitate Erasmus+ projects. The engagement in international conferences and collaborative research projects indicates an approach to enhancing the global presence of the program. HEI has also undertaken steps to improve student exchange opportunities.

Further, the faculty has implemented revisions to the curriculum based on recommendations. Updates to research methodology courses, the inclusion of contemporary marketing technologies, and the strengthening of internship opportunities show responsiveness to external feedback. The faculty has formalized internship procedures but has opted not to introduce a separate internship course. Quality assurance efforts have been enhanced through the implementation of performance indicators at the institutional level, and participation in conferences and training for quality assurance staff has increased. The IT Office has also taken steps to revise the E-Service platform and improve cybersecurity measures.

However, despite these advancements, some recommendations remain partially implemented or unaddressed. The internationalization efforts, while planned, have yet to produce tangible results in the current accreditation cycle. The faculty's decision to delay the introduction of English-taught courses until 2026/2027 means that the program remains inaccessible to international students in the short term. Similarly, while cooperation agreements have been signed, measurable outcomes in terms of student and staff exchange remain limited. The institution's reliance on physical education, based on survey feedback, has also led to the postponement of a fully online or hybrid delivery model that could enhance accessibility for international students.

Regarding research, the institution has initiated projects funded by Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, and the International Visegrad Fund, which are positive developments. However, engagement in large-scale international research initiatives remains relatively low, and there is limited evidence of faculty members leading research projects in collaboration with international institutions. While faculty members have received training on project applications, their involvement in securing and managing externally funded research remains an area for improvement.

Overall, the institution has demonstrated a structured approach to implementing previous quality assurance recommendations, particularly in curriculum development, research engagement, and international cooperation. However, the delayed implementation of internationalization efforts, the limited engagement in externally funded research indicate areas where further progress is required.

HEI must ensure that planned actions translate into measurable improvements within the current accreditation cycle to fully align with external quality assurance expectations.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Address quality assurance recommendations by prioritizing the implementation of recommendations from quality assurance evaluations and set clear timelines for internationalization efforts within the current accreditation cycle (1 year).*
- 2. Increase accessibility for international students by accelerating the introduction of English-taught courses (1 year)*
- 3. Enhance the visibility and measurable outcomes of international partnerships through active student and staff exchanges (1 year).*
- 4. Increase faculty training on securing and managing external research funds and foster collaborations with international institutions to enhance research impact (3 years).*

2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Standard 2.1 The study program delivery is subject to an established and functional internal quality assurance system, in which all relevant stakeholders are included. (ESG 1.1)

The internal quality assurance system at the HEI is fully compliant with local legislative requirements, including the Law on Higher Education and is aligned with the KAA Accreditation Manual. Additionally, it adheres to international quality assurance standards, such as the ESG, ensuring that the system is both locally relevant and globally accountable.

AAB has developed a quality assurance policy (Quality Assurance Regulation) that covers all aspects of study program delivery. This policy is publicly available on the website of KAA (<https://aab-edu.net/en/about-aab/policies-and-regulations/>), providing transparency and clarity to stakeholders about the institution's commitment to quality. The policy outlines the framework for maintaining high standards across all academic operations.

The quality assurance procedures for the study program are well-defined by internal regulations. The Quality Assurance Regulation serves as the primary document, detailing internal assessment mechanisms, instruments, and responsible bodies for quality assurance.

9

Furthermore, the Quality Assurance Guideline provides detailed descriptions of quality assurance processes for both internal and external evaluations, ensuring a comprehensive approach to quality management.

The Faculty of Economics has its own quality assurance coordinator who works closely with the Central Quality Assurance Office. This coordinator is dedicated to implementing internal assessment processes without teaching obligations, allowing for focused attention on quality assurance activities.

Quality assurance processes at AAB are structured around the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle. This cycle ensures continuous improvement by integrating planning, implementation, monitoring, and corrective action phases. The PDCA cycle acts as an early warning system, enabling the timely identification of issues and the adoption of corrective measures. This approach ensures that quality assurance is not static but dynamic and responsive to emerging challenges. While the PDC steps of the cycle are well covered by AAB, the institution has room for improvement deriving actions from the collected data.

A monitoring plan is in place to oversee the implementation of quality assurance procedures. This plan involves regular assessments through questionnaires, stakeholder meetings, quantitative indicator monitoring, and compliance checks against formal criteria set by KAA. All stakeholders are actively involved in the continuous revision of the monitoring plan, ensuring that it remains effective and relevant.

Standard 2.2 The study program is subject to a process of design and approval established by the HEI. (ESG 1.2)

The study program aligns with the mission and strategic goal of AAB. This alignment is ensured through the annual review processes (defined by the Statute of AAB College), which involve gathering input from both internal and external stakeholders.

The MA program in Marketing and Business Management, was last reviewed in 2022 in accordance with AAB Statute, Quality Regulation, and Quality Guidelines. This process culminated in formal approval by the Faculty's Teaching Council and the Senate of AAB College, ensuring that the program meets the institution's quality standards. Continuous improvement is planned through regular reviews and updates based on stakeholder feedback.

The process for developing and approving study programs is well-defined and inclusive. It involves both internal stakeholders, such as academic staff and students, and external stakeholders, including graduates and employers. Consultative meetings with these groups have led to curriculum changes in the MA program, such as making certain subjects elective and introducing new subjects like FinTech and Blockchain.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) have been developed by the Faculty of Economics in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Office. These KPIs focus on teaching, learning, student services, student progress, and academic success. Data corresponding to these indicators is regularly gathered and reported. Further work is needed to fully integrate the KPIs into the strategic planning of the Faculty, ensuring that they drive continuous improvement in program delivery.

Standard 2.3 The study program is periodically monitored and reviewed to ensure its objectives are achieved. The monitoring of the study program involves stakeholder participation. (ESG 1.9)

The MA program undergoes regular monitoring to assess its relevance to societal needs, particularly in the labour market. Employer and industry surveys are conducted every two years to evaluate the competencies acquired by graduates and their applicability in the workplace. These surveys provide insights into how well the program aligns with industry demands and allow employers to suggest new content, ensuring the curriculum remains relevant and up-to-date.

To ensure that the estimated workload and learning outcomes are achievable and realistic, the program conducts continuous surveys (at the end of each semester) and ad hoc meetings with students. These consultations assess whether the curriculum is manageable and meets students' expectations.

The Quality Assurance Office organizes focus group meetings with stakeholders, including academic staff, graduates, and employers. These meetings collect qualitative data that inform recommendations for program improvements, which are then submitted to the Faculty Management for consideration. This approach ensures that all relevant perspectives are considered in the monitoring and review processes.

The Quality Assurance Office conducts several surveys on a semesterly and annual basis to gather feedback from various stakeholders:

Type of Questionnaire	Purpose	Timeline
Student Questionnaire	Evaluates lecturers, teaching methods, and subject suitability.	Twice per academic year.
Practical Work Evaluation	Assesses knowledge, skills, and competencies gained during internships.	Once per academic year.
Administrative Services and Infrastructure	Evaluates study conditions and administrative support.	Twice per academic year.

Type of Questionnaire	Purpose	Timeline
Employer and Industry Questionnaire	Evaluates graduates' competencies and their relevance in the workplace.	Once every two years.
Graduate Questionnaire	Assesses how well the program prepares graduates for their careers.	Once every two years.

After each assessment, reports and action plans are drafted based on the collected data. These reports, along with recommendations for improvement, are forwarded to the Faculty and College management, serving as a basis for enhancing study programs, student services, and teaching and learning processes.

The information collected from monitoring processes is thoroughly analysed, and concrete actions are taken to ensure the program remains up-to-date. Examples of improvements based on stakeholder feedback include the introduction of new courses and the refinement of existing ones to better align with industry needs. While the part of collecting information is a well working mechanism, AAB College has room for improvement regarding to deriving measures from the collected information.

The results of the monitoring processes, along with the resulting action plans, are communicated to all stakeholders by publishing on the website of AAB College. (<https://aab-edu.net/en/faculties/economics/>)

Standard 2.4 All relevant information about the study program is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and is publicly available. (ESG 1.8)

AAB College ensures that all policies, regulations, and guidelines pertinent to the study program are publicly accessible. These documents are published on the official AAB website (<https://aab-edu.net/per-aab/aktet-universitare/>). This centralized location allows access for students, faculty, and external stakeholders, promoting transparency and compliance with institutional standards.

The Faculty of Economics, specifically the MA program in Marketing and Business Management, maintains a dedicated section on the AAB website (<https://aab-edu.net/en/faculties/economics/study-programs/ma-marketing-business-management/>). This section provides comprehensive information on:

- Admission Criteria: Clearly outlined to guide prospective students through the application process.
- Learning Outcomes: Defined to ensure students understand the program's objectives and expected competencies.
- Assessment Methods: Detailed to inform students about evaluation processes and standards.

- Other Relevant Information: Includes details on syllabuses, credits, final qualification requirements, pass rate, dropout rate & graduate employment rate.

This information is accessible at ensuring that prospective and current students have access to all necessary details about the program.

AAB College has implemented a robust system to ensure that all publicly available information is accurate, reliable, and up-to-date. The Public Relations Office, staffed by five professional members, is responsible for regularly reviewing and updating the website and social media content.

ET recommendations:

- 1.) *The ET encourages AAB Colleges to use the information gathered by the well working data collecting mechanisms more often to derive measures for improvement. In this way, the PDCA-Cycle would be closed more reliable and also the KPIs will be used more impactful.*

3. ACADEMIC STAFF

Standard 3.1 The study program delivery is supported by teaching staff who are recruited in line with national legislation, and internal regulations in effect, and it is based on objective and transparent procedure. (ESG 1.5)

The institution follows the required procedures of the Labor law of Kosovo. As per the KAA Accreditation Manual, ABB practices recruitment procedures through the Regulations for the selection, re-selection, and advancement of academic staff of KAA Accreditation Manual. During the interviews with faculty members, it was stated that the recruitment and the promotion process for each faculty member was clear, objective and transparent. The vacancy positions were announced on the official website and the official gazette. However, there was no evidence of announcement at international level. As per the selection process, the formation of the selection committee, reporting and decision making procedures are highlighted at the Article 59, Article 60 of the Statute. All academic staff is provided an employment contract as well as a detailed job description. Article 65 of the Statute highlights that ‘The disciplinary procedure is determined by the Code of Ethics in accordance with the present Statute and other legal acts of AAB College’.

Standard 3.2 The study program is supported by sufficient permanent academic staff who are adequately qualified to deliver the study program. (ESG 1.5)

As required by the Accreditation Manual ‘for each group of students and for each 60 ECTS, the HEI must employ at least one full-time academic staff who holds a Ph.D. degree and possesses certification in case their studies were completed abroad’ . The teaching load for one

member of the academic staff in the MA Program in Marketing and Business Administration is on average 8-10 teaching hours throughout the program. 41 full time academic staff of whom 37 own PhD holder, 4 as PhD candidate. 8 part-time academic staff of whom 4 PhD holder, 4 as PhD candidate. Each faculty member (FT and PT) do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions. The full-time faculty members composed of more than 50%. The student-to-academic staff ratio in the Faculty of Economics is 1:25, which fully complies with all local legislative requirements as well as international standards.

As a requirement of the regulation, each faculty member has a teaching load of 8 - 10 teaching hours across the entire program. Also, every academic staff assigned as a responsible person in a MA-level study program must have at least two scientific publications published on the SCOPUS or WoS platforms, a criterion fulfilled for the MA program in Marketing and Business Management. Faculty members also provide mentoring for students in their final thesis. Also actively contributes to administrative duties and community services.

Standard 3.3 The study program is supported by teaching staff who are subject to advancement and reappointment based on objective and transparent procedures which include the evaluation of excellence. The advancement of staff arises from the higher education institution's strategic goals and is in line with the legislation and internal regulations in effect. (ESG 1.5)

The basis for the promotion and reappointment of teaching staff is 'The Regulation on Election, Reelection, and Academic Advancement' of AAB. Based on the procedures stated in this regulation, the process carried out objectively and in transparency.

In 2024, several lecturers from the Faculty of Economics were promoted to the academic title of Assistant Professor. (<https://aab-edu.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Buletini-12.pdf>)

For the advancement in academic titles, academic staff members must meet specific criteria related to their scientific publications. For example, candidates must have published as the first author or corresponding author in journals indexed by SCOPUS or the Web of Science (WoS). Specifically, to achieve the title of Assistant Professor, a candidate must have at least one scientific paper; for Associate Professor, a minimum of three main papers is required; and for the title of Full Professor, a candidate must have five main papers published in the aforementioned journals.

Regarding student consultations, each professor is obliged to hold consultations with students 2 hours a week, respectively 1 hour per week in physical form and at least 1 hour per week consultations with students through the blog option (discussion) of the e-professor platform or give answers by email.

Staff evaluations based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are governed by the Staff Performance Regulation, accessible via the following link: https://aab-edu.net/per_aab/aktet-universitare/. The Faculty of Economics holds the authority to propose amendments to this regulation during its periodic revision, which is initiated at the institutional level (A2). The list of KPIs is developed and implemented collectively by the academic and administrative staff of AAB College. The Faculty of Economics continuously reviews these KPIs to ensure alignment with emerging developments and internal needs.

In 2024, the Rector's Office issued a decision to reduce the teaching workload for academic staff members with a substantial record of publications. This measure aims to support their increased participation in research projects and community engagement initiatives.

Moreover, feedback mechanisms—such as student evaluations, management assessments, peer reviews, and self-evaluations—play a significant role in the processes of academic staff promotion, contract renewal, and reappointment.

Standard 3.4 The academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is entitled to institutional support for professional development. (ESG 1.5)

Article 54 of the Statute highlights that 'AAB College undertakes the necessary actions to ensure the continuous academic and professional development of its academic staff'. The Faculty of Economics operates according to an annual work plan that focuses on training and professional development for academic staff.

Three Levels of training is provided for academic staff regarding professional and academic development. The institution has established the Center for Professional Training and Innovation (QAPI), which offers certified professional training and support services for academic staff.

In addition to the training provided by the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) Office, academic staff are actively encouraged to engage in international activities, including participation in collaborative projects and Erasmus+ exchange programs. The entire academic staff of the Faculty is involved in initiatives that include study visits and participation in international weeks hosted by partner institutions.

Academic staff are further supported by the Vice Rector's Office for Scientific Research and the Scientific Commission, which facilitate the development and execution of research initiatives. The Office for Projects plays a key role in assisting faculty members with the preparation and management of research proposals, continuously offering targeted training sessions to enhance their skills. Examples of such capacity-building programs can be found at

the following link: <https://aab-edu.net/zhvillohet-trajnimi-i-avancuar-planifikimi-dhe-menaxhimi-i-projekteve-nga-zyra-e-projekteve-dhe-qapi/>.

Specific training is also provided to academic staff on effective methods for the design, delivery, and assessment of teaching. Newly appointed instructors undergo comprehensive training programs to enhance their pedagogical competencies and to ensure they are adequately prepared for delivering study programs. Additionally, the Higher Education Institution (HEI) ensures that new staff members complete a structured onboarding process designed to familiarize them with institutional policies, teaching standards, and academic expectations.

Ongoing support is provided to all academic personnel in the development of their individual and collaborative research agendas, reinforcing the institution's commitment to academic excellence and scholarly advancement.

Standard 3.5 External associates who teach at the study program have adequate qualifications and work experience for the delivery of the study program and achievement of the intended learning outcomes. (ESG1.5)

During the interviews with the external associates, it was observed that they all have active engagement with industry and having the know-how about their respective field. The Faculty of Economics collaborates with several external associates in its Bachelor of Arts (BA) programs, particularly in the areas of economics, business, and marketing.

These associates are engaged as lecturers and bring valuable practical experience from their respective professional fields. However, in accordance with institutional hiring standards and the criteria established by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA), the Faculty ensures that all external associates meet the required academic and professional qualifications necessary for effective course delivery and achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Specifically, this includes holding at least a Master's degree (MA) in a relevant field and possessing a minimum of five years of professional experience in areas such as software engineering, information systems, or related disciplines. The list of number of publications of the academic staff is provided by AAB. There was 33 WoS publications listed for 2024.

ET recommendations:

- 1.) Should encourage the recruitment of international faculty members (3 years)*
- 2.) Enhance feedback mechanism for academic staff and students in teaching and learning practices (1 year)*
- 3.) Encourage and support academic staff for research and scholarly activities (1 year)*

4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT

The Faculty of Economics has undertaken significant revisions to enhance the integration of key research concepts into its academic programs. Specifically, the Research Seminar for Master Thesis course has been updated to incorporate these concepts during the first four weeks of instruction (A2).

Furthermore, the Faculty has revised the syllabi of several courses i.e. marketing, to include the recommended topics, ensuring alignment with current academic and industry trends. These revisions have also been formally approved by the Faculty's Teaching Council (A2).

In addition to these curricular updates, the Faculty has developed and implemented comprehensive procedures for initiating and monitoring student internships. These procedures include standardized application forms, formal internship agreements, and student evaluation forms, ensuring a structured and quality-assured approach to experiential learning.

Standard 4.1 The study program intended learning outcomes are formulated clearly, precisely, and comprehensively according to the best practices; they are aligned with the published institution's/academic unit's mission and strategic goals and are publicly available. (ESG 1.2)

The learning outcomes for academic programs have been developed in accordance with the internal regulations of AAB College, the standards and guidelines set forth by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA), and international best practices, including the ECTS Users' Guide and scholarly literature on the formulation of learning outcomes. These outcomes are articulated from a student-centered perspective, clearly defining what students are expected to know, understand, and be able to demonstrate upon successful completion of their studies. The outcomes are systematically categorized into three domains: knowledge, skills, and competencies.

Furthermore, the learning outcomes are fully aligned with the institutional mission and strategic goals, as outlined in Chapter 1: Mission, Objectives, and Administration. They are also harmonized with the specific goals and objectives of each academic program to ensure coherence and relevance.

The Master's program in Marketing and Business Management has undergone a comprehensive comparability analysis with selected regional and European higher education institutions. This international benchmarking process aims to ensure that the curriculum is compatible with the standards of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), thereby

facilitating student mobility and enhancing the employability of graduates both within Europe and globally.

The achievement of learning outcomes is assessed through a combination of methods, including written examinations, practical skills assessments, project-based work, research assignments, and oral presentations. These diverse assessment tools are designed to evaluate both theoretical understanding and the application of knowledge in real-world contexts.

Standard 4.2 The study program intended learning outcomes comply with the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework level descriptors. (ESG1.2)

The learning outcomes of the Master's program in Marketing and Business Management have been fully developed in accordance with the descriptors outlined in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). These outcomes are designed to ensure that, upon successful completion of the program, students will have acquired a comprehensive set of knowledge, skills, and broader competencies appropriate to Level VII of the NQF.

The formulation of the learning outcomes follows the tripartite structure advocated by the NQF, encompassing (i) theoretical and practical knowledge, (ii) cognitive and practical skills, and (iii) broader competencies related to autonomy, responsibility, and the application of knowledge in diverse professional contexts. This structured approach ensures that the program meets national academic standards while fostering graduates' readiness for advanced roles in the fields of marketing and business management.

The alignment of learning outcomes with Level VII of the NQF not only reinforces the academic rigor of the program but also supports transparency, comparability, and recognition within the national and European qualifications frameworks.

Standard 4.3 The content and structure of the curriculum is coherent and enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes and to progress smoothly through their studies. (ESG 1.2)

The Master's program in Marketing and Business Management at AAB College is designed to bridge the gap between academic instruction and the practical demands of the labor market. Through a comprehensive approach that integrates both teaching and research, the program aims to equip students with the professional competencies necessary for success in the business sector. Specifically, it fosters the development of entrepreneurial, analytical, strategic, research, and creative skills relevant to the fields of marketing and business management.

The program curriculum is structured to include core professional courses, general education subjects in the field of economics, courses focused on scientific research methodology, and specialized subjects in marketing and business management. In addition, a range of elective courses allows students to tailor their academic journey according to their individual interests and career aspirations within the discipline.

In alignment with the standards set by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the MA program not only lays the foundation for continued academic advancement but also prepares graduates for immediate employment in relevant industries. Upon successful completion of the program, students will have acquired a defined set of knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with the learning outcomes associated with NQF Level VII.

The program is underpinned by five core pillars that collectively contribute to its mission and the achievement of its learning outcomes: Scientific Research Methodology, Business Management, Marketing, Leadership, Application of Digital Tools in Business Management.

Together, these pillars ensure that graduates are capable of navigating the complexities of contemporary business environments, with a strong emphasis on market relevance, innovation, and strategic thinking.

Each course within the program is supported by detailed syllabi that outline weekly teaching units, clearly defined learning outcomes, assessment methods, teaching methodologies, academic policies, and recommended literature. This structured approach ensures both pedagogical consistency and academic rigor across the program.

To further enhance the practical training of students, the Faculty of Economics has established a wide range of cooperation agreements with companies and organizations in the business sector. Student internships, which are integral to all study programs at AAB College, are coordinated by the Career Office. Operating in compliance with the College's internal regulations, the Career Office collaborates closely with the Dean and partner institutions to organize, monitor, and support student internships and related professional development activities.

Standard 4.4 If the study program leads to degrees in regulated professions, it is aligned with the EU Directives and national and international professional associations. (ESG 1.2)

The MA program in Marketing and Business Management is academic program and not regulated by local laws. Therefore, standard 4.4 does not apply.

Standard 4.5 The intended learning outcomes of the student practice period are clearly specified, and effective processes are followed to ensure that learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students (if applicable). (ESG 1.2)

The MA program in Marketing and Business Management does not mandatorily include a practical work component.

Standard 4.6 The study program is delivered through student-centered teaching and learning. (ESG 1.3)

The didactic concept of the Master's program in Marketing and Business Management is grounded in the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical application. Central to this approach is the use of learning activities that result in tangible deliverables. These activities not only enable students to apply theoretical concepts in real-world contexts but also serve as tools for formative assessment, contributing to students' final grades over the course of the semester. This pedagogical model ensures that learning is aligned with contemporary business challenges and fosters the development of job-relevant competencies.

Graduates of the program are thus equipped not only with foundational and advanced theoretical knowledge but also with the practical skills necessary to navigate the dynamic and evolving landscape of marketing and business management. The curriculum includes specialized courses such as Brand Management, Digital Marketing, and Leadership, which incorporate diverse teaching methodologies including case studies, group projects, simulations, field visits for data collection, and design thinking workshops. These active learning strategies encourage student engagement, critical thinking, and teamwork.

In particular, the program emphasizes the development of applied skills through coursework that requires students to design and implement real marketing campaigns and strategic business solutions. Continuous assessment is facilitated through formative evaluation techniques such as peer reviews, reflective exercises, and in-class presentations. This real-time assessment approach allows instructors to monitor student progress, provide timely feedback, and ensure that students effectively understand and apply key concepts throughout the learning process.

Standard 4.7 The evaluation and assessment used in the study program are objective and consistent and ensures that intended learning outcomes are achieved. (ESG 1.3)

At the Master's level, the assessment of student achievement extends beyond the evaluation of academic learning outcomes to include an appraisal of students' readiness for the workplace. This dual-focus approach reflects the institution's commitment to aligning academic excellence with professional applicability. The institutional assessment strategy promotes the use of

diverse and field-relevant methods that are suited to the specific demands of marketing and business management.

Learning outcomes are evaluated through a combination of summative and formative assessment tools, ensuring both comprehensive measurement of knowledge and ongoing feedback throughout the learning process. These methods include, but are not limited to, written examinations, project-based assignments, case study analyses, oral presentations, group work, research papers, peer assessments, reflective journals, and practical exercises that simulate real-world business scenarios. This variety of assessments allows for the development and demonstration of critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, collaboration, and strategic decision-making—skills essential for success in the professional field.

Standard 4.8 Learning outcomes are evaluated in terms of student workload and expressed in ECTS. (ECTS 1.2)

Regarding student workload, the Master's program in Marketing and Business Management is structured to ensure a balanced and consistent academic engagement across semesters. Students are enrolled in four courses per semester, with each course carrying a credit value of 6 to 8 ECTS. In accordance with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), 1 ECTS credit is equivalent to 25 hours of student learning. Consequently, students are expected to manage a steady workload throughout the duration of their studies, including participation in four examinations per semester—during both the winter and summer terms.

AAB College fully adheres to the principles of the ECTS, a student-centered credit system that quantifies the total workload required to achieve the intended learning outcomes of a program. The ECTS workload encompasses all learning activities that contribute to student achievement, including lecture and seminar attendance, independent study, preparation for assignments and projects, examinations, and other academic tasks specified within individual course syllabi.

The MA program in Marketing and Business Management is internationally recognized, and the credits earned at AAB College are transferable and subject to recognition by regional and international higher education institutions. This compatibility facilitates student mobility and reflects AAB College's alignment with the standards of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

ET recommendations:

- 1.) AAB should encourage more academic staff as well as students to participate in mobility schemes (1 year)*
- 2.) Provide flexible learning pathways for students as well as introduce Microcredentials (1 year)*

3.) *Introduce more contemporary courses like social entrepreneurship and digital marketing (1 year)*

5. STUDENTS

Standard 5.1 Clear admission policies, including requirements, criteria and processes for the study program are clearly defined and are publicly available. (ESG 1.4)

AAB College clearly defines the requirements and criteria for admission to its MA Marketing and Business Management program through several key documents: the Statute of AAB College, the Regulation for MA Studies, and legal regulations from MESTI and KAA. These documents outline the comprehensive admission process and are made publicly available on the institutional website. (<https://aab-edu.net/en/about-aab/policies-and-regulations/>)

For admission to the MA program, candidates must possess a Bachelor's degree diploma from an accredited and recognized higher education institution, either domestically or internationally. This aligns with national requirements, ensuring that students entering the MA program have completed the necessary foundational studies.

The admission process for the MA program in Marketing and Business Management includes a selection procedure designed to ensure that candidates possess appropriate prior knowledge and competencies. This process is defined by the Senate and involves a public competition announced by the Governing Council. For candidates whose prior studies were in a different field, additional differential exams in the Bachelor economics program are required.

AAB College ensures that the admission criteria and process are consistently and fairly applied to all students. The selection procedure is transparent and public, administered by the Faculty Dean's Office. This transparency prevents discrimination and ensures equal opportunities for all candidates. Additionally, candidates who are not admitted may appeal to the Faculty Dean within three days, with the final decision made by the Study Commission, providing a clear pathway for addressing any concerns. The ET did not find any indication that these mechanisms are not working properly.

Standard 5.2 Student progression data for the study program are regularly collected and analyzed. Appropriate actions are taken to ensure the student's completion of the study program. (ESG 1.4)

The Faculty of Economics has established a robust system for monitoring student progress. This involves collecting and analysing student success data. Success reports are generated for each subject after each examination term and at the study program level, as stipulated by the

22

Regulations for Master Studies. These reports are reviewed by the Dean and discussed in Faculty Council meetings with academic staff to identify potential deficiencies and propose improvement measures. Such measures include additional lectures, exercises, individual or group consultations, and extra academic counselling hours.

The study program is subject to regular monitoring of student progression rates and completion rates. The Faculty Council, with input from the Dean, reviews student success results to assess whether students are meeting the expected milestones. For instance, students must secure at least 30 ECTS from the first semester to be eligible for the second semester, as per the Regulations for Master Studies. If necessary, appropriate actions are taken to address any discrepancies or low progression rates. These actions are informed by discussions in the Faculty Council meetings.

The results of regular monitoring of student progression are distributed to both staff and students. This is achieved through semester reports that document student progress data, which also contribute to the Faculty's Key performance indicators.

The study program clearly defines the progression possibilities for students, both in terms of continuing their studies and changing their study path. The MA program in Marketing and Business Management is structured to ensure that learning outcomes are logically and sequentially aligned, enabling students to build upon their previous knowledge and skills. This structured progression allows students to complete exam prerequisites, achieve remaining learning outcomes, and graduate with the required competencies. Students are informed about what they can achieve with their qualifications, providing them with clear goals and expectations throughout their academic journey.

The study program is subject to policies that facilitate the transfer or recognition of qualifications gained from other institutions. The recognition of qualifications is possible through the transfer of studies, as defined by the Statute of the AAB College and the Regulation for Master Studies (articles 9, 10, and 11). Additionally, administrative instructions at the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MEST) level outline specific time periods for transferring students from other higher education institutions or within AAB College. This framework ensures that students can seamlessly continue their studies if they choose to transfer, maintaining continuity in their academic progression.

Standard 5.3 The study program ensures appropriate conditions and support for outgoing and incoming students (national and international students). (ESG 1.4)

AAB College ensures that students are regularly informed about international exchange mobility opportunities. This is achieved through multiple channels, including email notifications, the AAB website (<https://aab-edu.net/en/>), and social media platforms.

The Office of the Vice-Rector for International Cooperation is in charge to manage the selection process for students interested in international mobility. Unfortunately, only four students from AAB College participated in exchange programs in the last three years.

AAB College has developed a Regulation for Academic Mobility, which outlines the conditions and procedures for student mobility. This regulation ensures that students from accredited universities can transfer credits and participate in academic mobility programs, both locally and internationally.

AAB College publishes all relevant information on its institutional website in English (<https://aab-edu.net/en/>). This includes details on application procedures, admission criteria, and study programs. AAB ensures that international students can access all necessary information.

While AAB College has not yet enrolled international students in its MA programs due to the primary language of instruction being Albanian, it does provide opportunities for international students to enrol in other programs. The college's regulations allow for the admission of international students who meet the minimum criteria set by local legislation, such as nostrification of documents and obtaining a residence permit. However, there are currently no dedicated academic or administrative structures specifically for international students. Currently, AAB College does not offer specific foreign language courses for international students.

Feedback from students who have participated in exchange programs is collected and analyzed. This feedback is used to identify areas for improvement in the mobility process. Because of the low number of exchange mobility, this data cannot be very supportive at the moment. AAB College tracks and reports on student participation in international mobility programs. Over the past few years, four students have participated in Erasmus+ programs, none of these students were enrolled in the MA Marketing and Business Management program.

Standard 5.4 The study program delivery is ensured through adequate resources for student support. The needs of a diverse student population (part-time students, mature students, students from abroad, students from under-represented and vulnerable groups, students with learning difficulties and disabilities, etc.) are taken into account. (ESG 1.6)

AAB College maintains a sufficient number of professional, administrative, and technical staff dedicated to supporting students in the MA program. The Faculty of Economics is specifically supported by two administrative officers who focus exclusively on assisting students and academic staff within the faculty. Additionally, numerous other offices contribute to the learning process, including the Central Administration, Software Development Office, IT Support Office, Transfer Office, and Career Office.

AAB College ensures that students are well-informed about available services through various channels. Upon registration, students receive comprehensive information and manuals that outline the services and regulations relevant to their studies. Digital tools and the institutional website (<https://aab-edu.net/en/>) are also utilized to keep students updated on all available services. The Central Student Office is in charge for disseminating this information, ensuring that students are aware of the resources at their disposal. The digitization of administrative and academic services through the E-SERVICE platform further enhances accessibility for students.

The Career Office supports the students adequately in the field of study and career opportunities. Because of the large network of AAB College with many bigger companies involved, a sufficient level of support is ensured.

AAB College has clearly defined structures and procedures for handling appeals and complaints. These are outlined in the Statute and Regulations for Master Studies, ensuring transparency for all students. Students have the right to submit complaints regarding academic, administrative, or technical issues and are entitled to fair treatment without discrimination.

The Faculty of Economics at AAB College organizes a variety of extracurricular activities designed to enrich students' academic experiences. These activities include study visits, festivals, theatre performances, workshops, conferences, debates, and guest lectures. AAB College boasts extensive infrastructure that supports both academic and recreational needs, providing ample resources for organizing these activities. Additionally, the Projects Office supports at least three student projects annually

ET recommendations:

- 1.) The ET encourages AAB College to consider the internationalization of the Study Program as more important. The number of students in the program who go abroad must increase. The proportion of incoming students is also too low. Some mechanisms, such as offering courses in English or conveying the importance of international experience in the job market, need to be integrated. The Statement “our students do not want to go abroad during their studies” cannot be an excuse. With the Kosovo-EU visa liberalisation of 2024, a huge opportunity for HEI's in Kosovo arises. This opportunity should not be neglected by AAB College. (1 year)*

6. RESEARCH

Standard 6.1. The study program aligns with the institution's/academic unit's mission and the research strategic goals.

The program's research activities align with and contribute to the institution's research strategy and mission. SER describes that the Faculty of Economics operates under HEI's Strategic Plan 2022–2026, which places a high priority on raising the quality of scientific research. In line with this, the faculty has defined specific research themes and priorities relevant to marketing and business (for example, “Sustainable Business in the Digital Age,” the impact of digital transformation on consumer behaviour, data analytics in marketing). These chosen themes indicate a deliberate research agenda that complements the program's educational objectives and addresses local industry needs. The faculty also prepares an annual work plan for research, and there are structural supports like the Vice-Rector for Science and a Scientific Committee to oversee research initiatives. All these elements fulfil the intent of having a coherent research strategy embedded in the program. However, the SER does not explicitly mention a standalone research strategy document or a detailed action plan with performance indicators for research at the program or faculty level. The accreditation standard expects a public, detailed research strategy with measurable targets, and while the program clearly follows the college's strategic goals, a specific documented strategy (e.g., “Research Strategy 2022-2025 for Faculty of Economics”) with metrics isn't evidenced in the report.

The research undertaken by staff and students in the program is guided by the broader institutional strategy. HEI's Strategic Plan emphasizes creating an “enabling system” for quality research, and the Faculty's own work plan mirrors this. This means the program's research is not ad-hoc; it's part of a mission to elevate scholarly work college-wide. Such alignment ensures that research topics and projects in the program support HEI's goals (like contributing to Kosovo's socio-economic development through research) and get institutional support.

The Faculty of Economics has proactively identified thematic priorities that are directly relevant to the program's field. By focusing on areas like digital transformation in business, consumer behavior analytics, etc., the program encourages research that is current and significant in the marketing/business management realm. These themes also likely feed back into teaching (faculty research what they teach, and teach what they research). Having set themes helps concentrate efforts and resources, and it gives faculty and students clear directions for their projects.

There are formal structures to manage and promote research. A Vice-Rector for Science along with a Scientific/Research Committee is in place. These bodies help in approving research plans, monitoring progress, and ensuring quality (for example, by vetting research proposals

or facilitating collaborations). High-level oversight like this is a strength because it integrates research management into HEI's decision-making and can allocate resources or solve problems that individual faculty cannot.

The emphasis on research is not separate from the program – it's part of its identity. The SER notes that creating an environment to fulfill the "third mission" (research and contribution to society) is a goal. In practice, this has meant encouraging research that complements teaching topics (e.g., if a course is on digital marketing, there's a research priority on digital business practices).

The most notable weakness is the absence of an explicit written research strategy with detailed action plans and KPIs. While the SER describes the strategic intent and some priorities, it does not provide specific targets. The lack of clearly specified performance indicators means it's harder to measure if the program is hitting its research objectives year over year.

Tied to the above, the SER doesn't discuss actual metrics of research performance relative to goals. The standard expects institutions to not only have a plan but also to monitor success. Some numbers are in other parts, like all faculty have at least one publication, but no aggregate figures or trend analysis.

Standard 6.2. The academic staff engaged in the study program is committed and supported to achieve high-quality research work and/or professional activity.

Academic staff in the program are well-supported and demonstrably engaged in research and professional activities. HEI has put in place incentives and support mechanisms to encourage faculty research productivity. According to the SER, and as reinforced in site visit, HEI has clear regulations governing scientific research activities and a grant scheme to reward publications.

HEI complies to national guidelines for academic staff and only those with publications in recognized international journals can be responsible lecturers for the program, and all full-time economics faculty members meet this criterion (each has at least one publication indexed in Scopus/Web of Science). This means the core teaching staff are all research-active. To facilitate this, the college provides financial bonuses or support for those who publish in high-impact venues. SER also notes that research output is a consideration in staff performance appraisals and promotions, aligning career advancement with research engagement. The faculty's research involvement is evident through their publication record and participation in conferences and projects (as listed in SER appendices). Overall, the program creates an environment where faculty are expected and enabled to contribute to their field, fulfilling Standard 6.2.

The faculty's collective research output (journal articles, conference papers, possibly book chapters, etc.) is acceptable for a teaching-focused institution. Many staff attend international conferences, and some lead or participate in thematic research projects (the SER mentions individual and collaborative research endeavours by the faculty). This active engagement means students are exposed to lecturers who are engaged with the wider academic community and are bringing fresh insights into the classroom.

The standard also considers professional engagement (like industry consultancy, professional practice) as part of scholarly activity, but the SER focuses on academic research. If any staff are more practice-oriented (which can be valuable in a business program), their contributions might not be captured by counting publications. Encouraging outputs like case studies, industry white papers, or applied research projects would also meet the intent for those who might not publish in journals.

Standard 6.3 The academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is encouraged to participate in different aspects of cooperation with national and international partners.

The program's academic staff are actively encouraged to and do participate in cooperation with both national and international partners. On an international level, the Faculty of Economics is involved in Erasmus+ exchange programs for staff and students. Faculty members have taken part in teaching or training visits abroad and the institution has hosted international colleagues, which exposes the staff to diverse academic practices and helps build an international network.

SER states objectives like encouraging participation in international projects and study visits, and enhancing cooperation with public and private institutions – and these objectives are being translated into action.

Locally, academic staff collaborate with industry and government: they organize events with local business partners, invite practitioners for guest lectures, and some faculty serve as experts or advisors for government bodies and international organizations in Kosovo. HEI has signed several Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with external organizations, indicating formal partnerships. All these activities demonstrate a culture of openness, where staff are not siloed within the college but are engaged with the wider community and global academic sphere.

While staff participate in exchanges and networking, SER does not detail many instances of international collaborative research projects or co-authored publications with international partners. The cooperation described might be somewhat limited to exchange of people and ideas, rather than jointly producing research outputs.

Standard 6.4 The teaching staff engaged in the study program has a proven record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.

The teaching staff have a proven track record of research and/or professional accomplishments in the fields that they teach, and they integrate these results into their teaching. The SER strong evidence that the faculty's research output is directly relevant to the program's subject matter (marketing, management, business) and that these outputs inform the curriculum. It notes that faculty include their publications in course syllabi and use findings from their own research projects to enrich class content. This ensures that students are exposed to the latest knowledge and real research examples during their studies. Moreover, the program encourages involving students in research: there are several instances where professors have co-authored research papers with students of the MA program. For example, the SER cites student-faculty joint publications in 2021 and 2022 on topics like performance auditing in procurement, the impact of active labor policies on economic growth, and the role of internal audit in institutional performance. These topics fall squarely within business management domains and were likely conducted as part of thesis work or research seminars, giving students hands-on experience. The variety and relevance of publications show that multiple staff members are actively researching what they teach, not just one token researcher.

The faculty's research topics closely align with the courses in the curriculum. For instance, research on auditing, economic growth policies, and business performance directly ties into subjects like financial management, economic environment, and corporate governance taught in the program. This alignment means faculty aren't researching esoteric topics unrelated to teaching – their scholarly work feeds and complements their instruction. Students benefit from this because examples, case studies, and even the worldview of the lecturer are informed by actual investigative work in the field, not just textbook knowledge.

Lecturers are actively bringing their research findings into the classroom. The SER mentions that professors include their own publications in their syllabi, which could mean students read articles or chapters written by their instructor as part of coursework. Additionally, teachers incorporate up-to-date developments (possibly their ongoing research or recent industry trends) into lectures. This practice keeps the curriculum dynamic and ensures that what students learn is at the cutting edge. It also inspires students, as they see their teachers contributing to the field and may find the content more credible or interesting ("my professor literally wrote the paper on this!").

A standout strength is the involvement of students in faculty research. The fact that there are published papers co-authored with students shows a adequate level of student engagement beyond regular coursework. Such collaboration typically means a student worked on a research project under a professor's guidance, possibly as part of their thesis or an assistantship, and their work was of such quality that it became part of a publication.

SER explicitly notes that staff update syllabi to include latest research findings which ensures the program stays relevant. Continuous renewal also keeps faculty engaged and prevents courses from becoming stale or outdated.

While the instances of student-faculty research collaboration are commendable, it's not clear if this is a common opportunity for many students or a select few. If only a handful of top students got to co-publish with professors, the majority might not have direct research involvement beyond their mandatory thesis. SER doesn't provide data on how many students participate in faculty research projects.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Develop and make publicly available a detailed research strategy document that includes specific, measurable targets (e.g., number of publications, conference presentations, funding targets). This will provide clear guidance and facilitate the monitoring of research performance at both the program and faculty levels (1 year).*
- 2. Increase support for faculty through professional development opportunities that focus on research skills, grant writing, and international collaboration (3 years).*
- 3. Increase involvement in international research projects and co-authorships with international scholars to enhance the global profile of the program and contribute to scholarly advancement (3 years).*
- 4. Increase participation in international conferences and involvement in editorial boards and international academic networks in order to boost the program's international standing and networking opportunities (3 years).*
- 5. Encourage outputs such as case studies, industry white papers, and applied research projects, especially for faculty whose strengths are more practice-oriented to ensure that the program's research outputs are diversified and relevant to industry needs (1 year).*
- 6. Develop structured opportunities for a broader range of students to engage in research projects, beyond those who might undertake them as part of thesis work. This could include research internships, summer projects, or involvement in faculty-led research teams (1 year).*

7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

Standard 7.1. The HEI ensures adequate premises and equipment for performing education processes and research. ESG (1.6)

Physical premises and equipment provided for the program are adequate and meet standards for supporting education and research activities. HEI's campus is extensive, modern, and well-

equipped. The campus offers facilities that comply with standards for higher education, providing students with a quality learning environment. The program has access to spacious lecture halls and smaller seminar rooms, all outfitted with the necessary technology to facilitate teaching.

There are dedicated IT laboratories which are particularly important for courses involving data analysis or other computer-based work. Overall space is plentiful including not just classrooms but also open study areas and theatres for events and guest lectures. Given the program's target enrolment of 100 students per year, these facilities are more than sufficient.

The premises are equipped to accommodate students with special needs. There are ramps and elevators for wheelchair access, and even resources like Braille books for visually impaired students in the library.

The infrastructure is clearly a strong point for the program, supporting both academic and extracurricular aspects of student life. There are no indications of any deficiencies in space or equipment.

Standard 7.2 The HEI ensures adequate library resources for study program. (ESG 1.6)

The library and learning resources available to the program are adequate to support the students and academic staff in the program. The capacity of the library spaces is aligned with the number of students, meaning students should generally find space to work when needed. There is a range of electronic databases and journal platforms accessible to students and staff: from JSTOR and Cambridge Journals Online to more specialized resources like the IMF eLibrary and even ASTM standards are available. There is also access to open access directories (DOAJ, DOAB) and crucially, the college has subscriptions that provide access to many Scopus/Web of Science indexed journals (through publishers like Taylor & Francis and Elsevier). This means students can retrieve the latest research articles in marketing, management, and related fields for their assignments or thesis literature reviews. One weakness comes from the fact that students and staff must use computers on the library to access main databases as VPN access is not available.

The library offers support like librarians to help with research queries, interlibrary loan services for items not available, and trainings or orientations.

The physical library facilities – reading rooms and group study rooms – are appropriately scaled for the student body. The library is open six days a week, with long hours.

It's a strength that HEI is investing in library content to ensure staff and program needs.

Standard 7.3 The study program is appropriately funded to deliver its intended educational activities and research. (ESG 1.6)

The program is backed by appropriate and sustainable financial resources. SER provides evidence of diligent financial planning: specifically, a five-year financial plan for the program has been prepared and appended, detailing projected revenues and expenses. This indicates foresight in budgeting and a commitment to the program's long-term viability. HEI has substantial tuition revenue streams, which gives it a strong financial base. SER notes that HEI generates sufficient revenue per the financial plan to guarantee the program's sustainability. In practice, this means salaries for academic and support staff, maintenance of facilities, library subscriptions, and other operational costs of the program are reliably covered. There is no indication of any financial difficulty or resource constraints affecting the program. No major capital investments were identified as needed beyond what's planned, and recurring costs seem to be planned for.

As with any tuition-driven program, there is an implicit dependence on meeting enrolment targets to hit revenue projections. The plan assumes ~100 students/year. If for some reason recruitment fell significantly, there could be a funding gap. SER did not discuss any decline in enrolment or what would happen if numbers are lower than expected. This is not a current weakness (enrolment seems stable as per needs analysis interest), but it's a risk factor.

A weakness is little percentage of funding comes from projects or other diversified funding sources. While current finances are adequate, exploring additional funding opportunities can provide extra cushion and enable growth.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Expand library digital access by implementing VPN access for library databases to allow students and staff to access resources remotely, enhancing research capabilities outside of HEI premises (1 year).*
- 2. Define a strategy to broaden funding sources alloying to diversify funding sources beyond tuition and traditional revenue streams. Explore grants, partnerships, and sponsorship opportunities to enhance financial resilience and support additional program enhancements like scholarships (1 year).*
- 3. Regularly review and adjust enrollment strategies and financial projections to ensure sustainability. Consider scenarios where enrollment might dip and plan contingency measures to maintain financial health (1 year).*

OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION	Substantially Compliant
2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT	Fully Compliant
3. ACADEMIC STAFF *Mandatory	Fully Compliant
4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT	Substantially Compliant
5. STUDENTS	Substantially Compliant
6. RESEARCH	Substantially Compliant
7.INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES *Mandatory	Fully Compliant
Overall Compliance	Substantially Compliant

The Expert Team considers that the study program MA in Marketing & Business Management Program at AAB College to be Re-accredited for a duration of 3 (Three) years with maximum number of 100 (One hundred) students per year to be enrolled in the program.

Expert Team

Member

Prof. Dr. Olgun Cicek



02.04.2025

Member

Prof. Sofia Gaio



25.03.2025

Member

Christoph Back



25.03.2025

(Print name)

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