

Evaluation Report
External Expert Team
University “KADRI ZEKA” (UKZ) Gjilan
Faculty of Law
2016

Evaluation Report
by the team of experts,
assessing study programme of
University “KADRI ZEKA” (UKZ) Gjilan – Faculty of Law
in the process of re-accreditation

by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency

June 10th, 2016

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1 Preamble

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) is requested by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo to evaluate all institutions of higher education which operate in Kosovo. The following experts were appointed to the team:

- Prof. Dr. Peter Parycek/ Danube University Krems (AT)
- Prof. Dr. Ksenija Grubišić/ Zagreb University (HR)

Peter Parycek was asked to be chairman of the team.

This report on the re-accreditation University "Kadri Zeka", Gjilan - Faculty of Law, Republic of Kosovo was written by the Expert team appointed by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA), on the basis of the self-evaluation of the institution and supporting documentation and a visit to the institution.

This report could not have been written without the support of the staff of the KAA in the first place, and also without a number of helpful face-to-face contacts at the University.

THE UNIVERSITY "KADRI ZEKA" GJILAN was established based on the decision of the Government of Kosovo, number 118/03 dated 6 March 2013, and approved by the Assembly of Kosovo on 30 May, 2013, with the idea of promoting and developing higher university education, scientific research, artistic creativity, training of staff to doctoral degree. The establishment of UKZ enabled the inclusion of a largest number of students from the region of Gjilan, Presheva Valley and other areas in higher university education.

Since 01.10.2010, the Faculty of Law of the University of Pristina has opened the branch of the Faculty of Law in Gjilan. The branch of the Faculty of Law in Gjilan has developed its activities in the same study program, as in the center in Prishtina. Based on the decision of the Founding Council of the University "Kadri Zeka", dated 31.10.2013, the Faculty of Law in Gjilan has been changed into the Faculty of Law within the University "Kadri Zeka" in Gjilan. Faculty of law is a study program in general law sciences whereas in the **YEAR IV** of studies respectively in the seventh and eighth semesters, it is focused on the following modules:

- Module: Constitutional and Administrative Law
- Module: Criminal Law - Module: Civil law
- Module: International law
- Module: Financial Law

The purpose of the orientation of students in modules is to get prepared for the planned field of master studies.

2 General Remarks

During the visit to the Institution the Expert Panel held meetings with the representatives of the following groups:

I. The first meeting with the expert team of accreditation and the management of the university:

- Prof. Asoc. Dr. Bajram Kosumi, Rector
- Prof. Ass. Dr. Shpresë Qamili, Prorector
- Prof. Ass. Dr. Dukagjin Leka, Prorector
- Prof. Asoc. Dr. Januz Dervodeli, Dean
- Prof. Ass. Dr. Sadik Haxhiu, Dean
- Prof. Asoc. Dr. Xhevdet Thaqi, Dean
- Mr. sc. Vaxhid Sadriu, Secretary

II. Meeting of the expert team with responsible persons for the study programme of Faculty of Law (curriculum, teaching, research, recommendations).

- Prof.Ass.Dr Dukagjin Leka
- Prof.Ass.Dr. Sadik Haxhiu
- Prof.Ass.Dr. Feti Limani
- Prof.Ass.Dr. Besfort Rrecaj (Translator)

III. Meeting with the Academic staff:

- Prof.Ass..Dr. Fejzullah Hasani
- Prof.Ass..Dr. Berat Aqifi
- Prof.Ass.Dr Afet Mahmuti
- Mr.sc. Flamur Hyseni, PhD candidate
- Mr.sc. Hafiz Leka
- Assistant Fatmire Krasniqi, PhD candidate
- Assistant Detrina Alishani
- Assistant Selim Daku
- Assistant Herolinda Murati

IV. Meeting with Students:

- Arlind Ajvazi
- Lisa Rexhepi
- Bionda Rexhepi
- Verona Bekteshi

- Lorent Hyseni
- Verona Maloku
- Rita Arifi

2.1 Management Meeting

The Management of the Faculty is full-fledged and motivated. The Faculty has an effective and functioning organizational structure. This is reflected in their statutes and other documents.

The overall strategy for the organization is missing in the SER. The following priorities were mentioned in the discussion: create students with quality knowledge; development of staff members; creation joined conferences; joined master degree with all others law faculties in the Kosovo; identification of new staff members/professors; quality assurance – decrease students and increase staff members; development of the campus. These are great activities but the link to the region and the unique profile is missing. What is the difference compared to the other Law Schools in the Kosovo?

The international and internship activities are positive activities, which have been implemented by the responsible people. They signed agreements and already organized the first study visits and internships. Currently they work on cooperation with international universities. Nevertheless a structured strategy for internationalization is missing.

Cross faculty cooperation has not been established, but would offer great potential in the current development phase of the University.

The Faculty has not yet introduced functional mechanisms for monitoring and improvement of research quality in a more systemic way.

The Faculty does not have a fully documented strategic plan.

Recommendations:

- UKZ needs to develop a unique strategy and profile based on several workshops with staff students and further stakeholder from the region, like companies, civil society organisations or politicians.
- The ongoing international activities need to be framed by an overall strategy.
- The faculty functional mechanisms for monitoring and improvement of research quality are partly implemented, as the development of quality assurance needs to strengthen and widen the scope of work of the Quality Committee, and involve all bodies and committees of the Faculty to act in line with the quality policy, by setting up a more efficient organisational connection of constituent units and services, but increase public visibility and outreach, as well.

2.2 Staff Meeting

There is a number of young staff with doctoral qualifications – these staff members have great potential.

The faculty shows very little mobility activity for teachers and students from and to other higher education institutions both, national and international.

Strategies and actions for inter-institutional cooperation at national or international level are missing; based on the ET experience more cooperation within the framework of European programs or other bilateral agreements should be possible. Nevertheless the first agreements have been signed.

Based on the discussion the expectations of the University are: teaching performance, academic contribution, extend scope through engagement in different projects and how to transform theory into practice.

University is providing budget for conferences and papers and supports PhD studies.

Recommendation:

- Define a system for monitoring and evaluation of the selection, promotion and development of teaching and research staff system.

2.3 Student Meeting

Information and communication among students is good. Students are satisfied with Professors. According to their testimonies, they are friendly, helpful, open for communication and available for students. Students find studying motivating. Overall a great experience, a bit more critical reflection in regard with the own institution would be great.

3 General Law Bachelor Programme Accreditation

3.1 Academic programmes and student management

Do the academic programmes correspond to the institution's mission statement and principles of employability?

The institution has not developed a strategic plan with fully defined goals, operational plan and monitoring mechanisms. The mission is too general with no specific institutional values emphasized and links to the region. The current Strategic Development Plan is just a starting for more precise strategic orientation.

Mission is unclear on this point as it is vague and not really specific for the institution so it is difficult to say this is less than fully implemented and one of the weak points at the current stage. There is no differentiation to other law faculties either state universities or private colleges – a different region is not an appropriate differentiation.

Vision and mission are too general and could be used by any other institutions in the region.

Are the curriculum's quality, range and academic aims appropriate according to the academic degree?

Documents provided showed that the description of the study programmes include learning outcomes, courses syllabi and the level of the learning results expected are coherent for the study programmes level. The academic title Bachelor of Law is common in Europe and is in line with the content and learning outcomes.

Are the programmes available based on an overarching didactic concept that has been adequately communicated and realized amongst the teaching staff?

The SER offers no information about didactic concept. The faculty members seem to be very experienced and motivated; students were very satisfied with the teaching quality, but nevertheless an overarching didactic concept is missing.

Do the academic degrees correspond to international standards?

The faculty did an international comparability study as foundation for the programme and compared the bachelor programmes of University of Ljubljana, University of Sarajevo and University of Sheffield. There are evidences that they have procedures for approving and revising study programmes and to define the syllabi for each study programme and teaching plans. They seem to be tuned with similar programs in the international scope but there is less evidence of realistic comparative analysis of the offered programs, to identify their

positions comparable to other renowned European institutions offering the same or similar programmes.

Does the structure of the programmes give sufficient opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis? (e.g., what is the proportion of independent study time compared to online/distance teaching or classroom units?)

The SER offers no information about independent study, reflection or analysis focus and the faculty offers no distance teaching units.

It offers limited information about theoretical and practical/experimental study in chapter 3.4.8. (P. 139), which is appropriate, but should be available in all course descriptions, which is currently not the case.

The current programme is still very similar to the law programme of the University Pristina and offers not a unique profile – it is one of many in the Kosovan education market. One possibility for differentiation is the cooperation within the University, e.g. with the computer science department. Technology is main driver for change in all aspects of our life. During the SV the faculty explained that they want to focus on criminal law. Based on the expert experience this is the common domain for specialisation at almost all other institutions. To generate an impact and differentiation the cooperation with computer science in the field of criminal justice and anti-corruption could be a possible strategy. Nevertheless this is just one idea and should provide a starting point for the internal discussion.

Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and comprehensible?

The ECTS were applied to the obligatory and elective courses. Teaching staff are aware that there remain some issues to be resolved in relation to allocation of ECTS credits. The allocation and explanation needs to be made clearly visible to students. For example, if a course attracts either 4 or 5 ECTS credits according to the programme that the student is following, then the additional student effort required for 5 ECTS credits should be visible. In chapter 3.4.9. the credits calculating is described (p. 139).

Is the workload required for the academic programme manageable for students?

Students evaluate teacher's performance and the quality of study courses through regularly questionnaires, but it is not clear to the students what happens to the results afterwards: Make the results available to students.

A work load evaluation is not established yet, which should be the case and is needed for proper credit allocation.

Are the teaching methods and the content of teaching units sufficient for the successful achievement of each programme goals and outcomes (competences and qualifications, knowledge and skills)?

The quality assurance mechanisms should ensure that in the implementation of the study programme, diverse assessment and teaching methods, including e-learning, will be used. In implementing and monitoring the study programme, attention must be given to the whole range of academic skills listed in the Dublin descriptors and Bloom's taxonomy, shifting the emphasis from solely reproducing knowledge to a more critical and creative thinking and analysis, research skills and social, intercultural communication skills.

No clear guidelines have been provided for evaluating the outputs and outcomes of the study programmes. Quality review of study programmes should also be done through student feedback.

Is the overlap of the academic content between the various curricula comprehensible and transparent?

All courses need to provide detailed information regarding learning outcomes that will inform the students about the content and assessment of courses. Whilst some courses do provide this information, it is not uniformly provided across all courses, thus making it more difficult for students to select courses and understand whether the learning outcomes have been met.

How do the admission criteria and admission processes measure up to international standards?

The admission criteria are described in the chapter 3.4.4. „Group (the target) to whom the program is dedicated“ and offers only limited information about the prerequisites, selection process, admission numbers, acceptance rate. This section needs to be more elaborated.

Is the ratio of the academic staff and the students appropriate?

The faculty member's number complies with the regulations, so they fulfil the minimum number, which leads to a critical academic staff student's ratio. The rector and the dean mentioned that they want to decrease students and increase staff members.

Recommendations:

- The development of a unique profile and strong cooperation with the other departments in the university is one of the most critical aspects. The development of

a profile and cooperation framework within the universities should be one of the main activities of the University and the faculty.

- Based on the current numbers the student numbers need to be limited for the new academic year.
- An overarching didactic concept needs to be developed together with the faculty members, communicated and further developed by iterative evaluation circles. The sufficient opportunity for independent study needs to be considered in this development process.
- Improving information systems for study programs, curricula, learning outcomes, employment opportunities, ect., taking care of its accuracy and updating the information regularly, through printed documents (brochures to share at students fairs or public events), but also on websites or social networks.
- The quality of the study programmes under review should be more assured through various quality assurance instruments, including performance ranking of faculty and staff, surveys among students, employers and alumni, peer evaluations, expert commission, methodological commission, collective discussions, etc.
- The workload needs to be evaluated, therefor the questioners at the end of the semester needs to be adapted, further qualified interviews should be made.
- Assure Quality of teaching and research activities by quantitative measures. The ranking criteria should be based on key performance indicator established at the state level. However, the process should be more focused on international and high-impact journals, involving student sin research, application of research results, participation in international conferences and seminars, social engagement and academic output, application of new teaching methods, new approaches to learning, and new methods of assessment.

3.2 Staff

Does the institution have an adequate proportion of permanent staff and appropriate proportions of permanent and external staff?

The ratio of fulltime, part-time and external faculty members complies with the regulations, but needs to be increased for insuring the high number of students.

Does the academic staff demonstrate proven ability at a high academic and didactic level and are their qualifications appropriate to the positions they hold within the institution according to the basic criteria?

The staff members are mostly well qualified and motivated for their profession. At the individual level, academic staff members should receive clear objectives regarding research outputs through their individual performance agreements.

A staff development plan and qualification agreements do not exist, which are essential corner stones for the development of a young University. During the SV the rectorate and the deans explained how the support the development, which was verified by the staff

meeting – conference fees or PhD support. But nevertheless a clear strategy and framework is missing.

Recommendations:

- Develop a strategy and framework for staff development.
- Develop a clear procedure for peer evaluations of teaching staff: Document the follow-up procedures: teaching visit each other's classes, exchange experience and ideas.
- Try to make the academic staff more international.
- Conduct a study of teaching and research staff; develop a strategic promotion plan for the next five to ten years.
- Establish a realistic yearly target for high quality international publications.
- Sign qualification agreements with your top junior staff members based on the recommended indicators, the qualification agreement should include clear goals for the staff members and support activities by UKZ/Faculty of Law.

3.3 Research and International Co-operation

Is the teaching staff involved in research activities inside or outside the institution, and do these research activities feed back into teaching/course contents?

Research should be in the focus of this transforming institution, as it is well aware, but there is no career development system, no strategy for structured conference and project participation, no planning of free time for research.

As already mentioned an interdisciplinary cross faculty research group could be an interesting differentiation to University Pristina and other institutions.

Is the extent and the quality of international cooperation in research and teaching adequate?

There should be more domestic and international research projects. The international teaching activities and cooperation sound promising, especially the idea of joined programme with Ohio University.

Are students involved in research and cooperation projects?

Students are not adequately involved in research activities.

Recommendations:

- Develop a clear faculty and department-level strategy of international cooperation – memberships in professional associations, professional co-operations with international and national experts.

- Develop a clear strategy to establish the faculty on research activities, and make sure that these activities are sufficiently integrated into teaching.
- The management needs to develop a strategic plan for improving research and publishing activity among teaching staff.
- Make international cooperation not only due to personal interest of the staff, but as a response to the needs of the study programmes. Membership in international organisations for the study programmes is needed to be in line with the global trends and achievements.
- Involve more students in research activities, and take these activities into consideration for examinations.
- Make research projects of the students of students a part of curriculum.

3.4 Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment

Does the institution have an adequate budget plan?

Does the institution have adequate buildings and specialized infrastructure for the requirements of the programme?

The budget plan is tight and offers almost no freedom for independent strategies and activities. UKZ needs to build up cooperation in the region and raise additional research funding, there for as mentioned before strong research teams need to be established.

The Space campus is adequate, but the library needs higher funding through the ministry.

Recommendation:

- The ET recommends to build one strong digital library for all University, instead of investing into very limited paper based libraries at different locations. The best case scenario would be a solution which also includes in private institutions.

3.5 Quality Management

Are the institution's programmes assessed regularly within the context of internal evaluation processes?

Institutional quality assurance system is not adequately developed. Evaluation data are not used for monitoring and improvement of teaching / learning and research.

The development strategy, quality assurance procedures, monitoring and periodical revision of programmes and qualifications have only turned out partially satisfactory as the responsibility lies with the Management of the University and of the faculty.

Recommendations:

- Give the quality assurance policy, strategy and procedures a formal and more prominent status at the faculty level. Provide opportunities for further development of quality assurance and quality culture in close cooperation with staff and students.
- Continue developing procedures for monitoring and improving the quality of the study programs offered and the research activities, with the involvement of representatives of members of the academic community, students, public and private institutions and organizations and civil society representatives.
- Establish criteria for evaluating the content and quality of the syllabus, in line with those used in other European institutions in the same field and with similar programs for teacher training and include the review of those fundamental elements based on the latest scientific findings.

3.6 Overall Recommendation

The bachelor programme “General Law” can be recommended for accreditation under the circumstances of limiting student enrolment number to 250 and increasing full time staff.