HEI'25
Higher Education Intervention 2025

ORCA
organizata për rritjen e cilësisë në arsim

MONITORING REPORT OF THE STATE QUALITY COUNCIL AND THE KOSOVO ACCREDITATION AGENCY



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“Our Father, who art in heaven, give us the power to keep our mouths shut when we have nothing to say. And give us the patience to think before we write! Inspire us with a sharp sense of justice to speak not only without bias, but to also act thus! Save us from the traps of grammar, distortions of language and errors of typing. Amen!”
[Faik Konica]

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ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

KAA – The Kosovo Accreditation Agency, is an independent Agency whose primary mission is the evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions and their study programs

SQC – The State Quality Council is a policymaking authority and the decision taking authority in KAA; it is comprised of nine members, three of which are international

HEI – Higher Education Institution

Accreditation – Formal recognition that a higher education institution and its study programs fulfil internationally recognized quality standards, through which the official status of a higher education institution and its study programs is set for a period of time

ENQA – European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

EQAR - European Quality Assurance Register in Higher Education

Institution – Any institution or other authority authorized to offer educational services in higher education

Public institution – Institution founded by the government of the Republic of Kosovo

Program – Study program that leads to a qualification or a diploma, that is given by a higher education institution

Appeals Commission – The authority which treats and reviews the appeals submitted against the SCQ decisions, comprised of three permanent and two reserve members.

MESTI – Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation

INTRODUCTION

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency and the State Quality Council, during 2022, managed to gain the status of associate member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and are continuing their efforts to regain full membership in the European Quality Assurance Register in Higher Education (EQAR).

During 2022, the KAA and SQC have worked in fulfilling the recommendations that contribute to the improvement of quality of higher education institutions. These improvements directly impact the situation of education in our country in general and in the position of this Agency in important institutions such as ENQA and EQAR.

This report is the result of the monitoring of the work of the State Quality council (SQC) in the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) during 2022. ORCA has participated in the meetings held by the SQC, through which we were informed about the challenges they face during their work. The report includes data about SQC decisions for accreditation, re-accreditation or non-accreditation of higher education institutions and study programs, divided into categories according to the type of institutions and the level of programs. The work of the KAA and their actions for quality assurance, the work of the Appeals Commission and many other issues were also addressed.

The entry into force of the Law on the Kosovo Accreditation Agency is one of the most efficient ways to ensure complete independence in decision-making of this institution, specifically for the accreditation of institutions and programs. This will prevent the influence of the current harmful policies of the ministers of education in office or other high public officials which violate the independence of KAA in decision-making.

WHAT IS THE KOSOVO ACCREDITATION AGENCY AND THE STATE QUALITY COUNCIL?

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) is an independent Agency and its main mission is the evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions and their study programs.

It is responsible for the process of accreditation of higher education institutions in Kosovo, it defines standards and it designs procedures for quality assurance in accordance with local legislation and international standards for quality in higher education.

The KAA consists of its board, known as the State Quality Council (SQC), which is a policy-making and decision-making body, as well as a permanent administrative structure of the Agency.

The State Quality Council (SQC) works based on the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo, the Administrative Instruction for the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and the Regulation on the work of the State Quality Council. The SQC takes a decision on accreditation by majority vote of the total number of its members, but no decision of the SQC on accreditation/reaccreditation can be taken without the participation of at least one international member.

The State Quality Council consists of seven members, Hasnije Ilazi, Dukagjin Zeka, Rozafa Koliqi, Krenare Pireva-Nuçi, Gëzim Tosuni, Seb Bytyçi, as well as one international member, Klemen Miklavic[1]. The SQC is the institution that deals with the accreditation of public and private HEIs that offer academic level studies with credit (ECTS).

1The State Quality Council at the time of publication of this report consists of five members, Hasnije Ilazi, Gëzim Tosuni, as well as international members, Klemen Miklavić, Maja Martinović and Jaakko Kauko.

The Appeals Commission is a body that handles and examines the complaints submitted by various parties to the decisions of the SQC. It consists of three permanent members and two reserve members. The current permanent members are Ibish Mazreku who is also the chairman and Zejnepe Imeri, as well as two reserve members Kemajl Zeqiri and Fatos Rexhepi.

This commission works based on the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo and the Administrative Instruction for the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (UA 15/2018).

LEGISLATION

In January 2022[2], The Parliamentary Committee on Education had approved the Draft Law on the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, which regulates the status of the Agency as a regulatory Agency in the processes and responsibilities of accreditation, re-accreditation, validation and monitoring.

In December 2021, the Government of Kosovo had proposed the Draft Law for the Kosovo Accreditation Agency[3], which it had distributed to the members of parliament, as well as published on the official website of Parliament Assembly to continue with the necessary procedures. This draft law has passed the first review in the plenary meeting of the Parliament and is continuing in the other planned stages.

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) operates based on the *Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo*[4], specifically Article 7 'Kosovo Accreditation Agency', which clarifies that the KAA is an independent Agency responsible for evaluating and promoting the quality of higher education in Kosovo, thus ensuring that the standards and quality of higher education meet the requirements and expectations of the European Network of the Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

AKA is responsible for the inspection of higher education institutions and consulting with the Ministry of Education regarding the granting, change or cancellation of licenses, performing periodic checks on the quality of licensed higher education institutions and making the decision on accreditation or re-accreditation of them, the periodic evaluation of the quality of the programs offered by the accredited carriers, as well as the announcement of policies, criteria and standards for accreditation. *The*

2 News article/ The draft law is approved to pave the way for the Accreditation Agency to return to ENQA and EQAR, January 25, 2022, link: https://www.koha.net/arberi/307639/miratohet-projektligji-qe-i-hap-rruge-agjencise-se-akreditimit-per-kthim-ne-enqa-dhe-eqar/

3 Draft law for the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, December 2021, link:https://www.kuvendikosoves.org/shq/projektligjet/projektligji/?draftlaw=348#info-div

4 Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo, September 2011, link: https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2761

Administrative Instruction for the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Kosovo[5], defines the competences of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, the requirements and procedures for the accreditation of higher education institutions and their study programs.

The KAA also works with the *Regulation on the work of the State Quality Council (SQC)* [6], through which the operation, composition, way of making decisions, duties and the way of work of this council are defined. In Article 7 of this regulation, 'Responsibilities and functions of the SQC, it is stated that the SQC determines the main objectives and timelines of the evaluation process of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), approves the Standards, Procedures and Criteria of external evaluation of HEIs drafted by the KAA.

This council also drafts and approves the KAA statute, regulations and other documents necessary for the functioning of the Agency.

In the *"Regulation on the work of the Appeals Commission"*[7], the rules and procedures for examining complaints are defined, as well as the work, organization and powers of the Appeals Commission are regulated. Article 4 of this regulation, 'The right of appeal', clarifies that the parties can submit an appeal if the decision was taken as a result of the violation of the provisions related to the decision-making procedure of the SQC, in case of incorrect application of the law material or applicable material rules and if the decision is not based on the facts and evidence presented.

In *the Administrative Instruction for the amendment of the AI for the accreditation of higher education institutions*[8], in Article 2, a paragraph has been added which states that HEIs whose institutional or study program accreditation has been refused or withdrawn can apply again within the

5 Administrative Instruction for the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Kosovo, September 2018, link: https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2018/10/ilovepdf-merged.pdf

6 Regulation on the work of the State Quality Council (SQC), June 2018, link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7etG3bh-SBVVkt4T2J5bmZuOTdYVFN4bFZmMnFwakx3Z0tR/view

7 Regulation on the work of the Appeals Commission, 2019, link: http://akreditimi-ks.org/docs/LawRegulation/Rregullorja_e_komisionit_te_ankesave.pdf

8 Administrative Instruction for the amendment of the AI for the accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, August 2019, link: https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2019/05/ua-masht-08-2019-per-ndryshim-dhe-plotesim-te-ua-nr-15-18.pdf

period of 90 days from the acceptance of the final decision. Also, the KAA has been allowed to verify the data submitted by the HEIs at any time, without the need for the HEIs to be in the evaluation process for accreditation or re-accreditation.

While also in the *Administrative Instruction for the amendment of the AI for the amendment of the AI for the accreditation of higher education institutions in Kosovo*[9], it says that the academic staff who are declared within the institution according to the legal deadlines and those who are not declared in any HEI, have the right to re-apply within 90 days after receiving the final rejection decision.

ACCREDITATION/RE-ACCREDITATION AND WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Accreditation can be done at the level of higher education institution, study program, branch and study programs offered in that branch and recognition of valid international accreditation. The request for accreditation can be made by the higher education institution itself, for the level of the institution and its study programs, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) and the State Quality Council (SQC) in specific cases.

Each institution that claims to offer higher education in Kosovo is subject to initial accreditation, while accredited institutions of higher education are subject to re-accreditation on a periodic basis.

The Higher Education Institution (HEI), which applies for accreditation/re-accreditation, must submit the request for accreditation together with the lists of academic staff, for which the SQC will approve the list of academic staff for each study program.

9 Administrative instruction for the amendment of the AI for the amendment of the AI for the accreditation of higher education institutions in Kosovo, July 2019, link: https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2019/07/4dd5f6a7-x.pdf

If the preliminary evaluation by the SQC is positive, it is implied that the application fulfils the formal requirements according to the legal acts in force by authorizing the director of KAA, for the development of procedures for the evaluation and accreditation process. Meanwhile, if the preliminary assessment is negative and the SQC finds that the application has deficiencies and does not meet the formal conditions, then the SQC makes a decision to reject the application.

After approving the list of academic staff and the application, the KAA accepts a self-evaluation report from the relevant institution, which it will then forward to the team of external international evaluators. This team writes an external quality assessment report of the applying institution or its study programs, based on the standards and guidelines for accreditation, in which the final recommendation for re-accreditation or non-accreditation is provided. After evaluating this report, the SQC decides on accreditation/re-accreditation or to reject it.
The KAA is allowed to process these applications in a period of one year, from the date of acceptance of the request for accreditation, meanwhile it is required that these applications be submitted to the Agency no later than October 31.
Initial institutional accreditation is for three years and re-accreditation for no more than five years, unless the team of external evaluators recommends another duration which receives the approval of the SQC. Meanwhile, the duration of the reaccreditation of the study program is three to five years, except in cases with a different recommendation.

The KAA can withdraw its decision on accreditation at any time, if the conditions given in the case of accreditation have been violated, if the applicant has submitted false information and documents that have influenced the granting of accreditation, as well as if the monitoring report by the evaluators international community finds that the recommendations of the external evaluators have not been implemented and the actual situation in the institution has been seriously damaged in terms of quality.
The Appeals Commission examines the complaints submitted by the HEIs against the decisions of the SQC and issues a decision within 30 days from the date of their submission.

I. ASSESSMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BY THE KOSOVO ACCREDITATION AGENCY

During 2022, the Kosovo Accreditation Agencyreviewed a total of 14 applications for institutional accreditation or reaccreditation and 119 applications for study program accreditation or reaccreditation.

The evaluation process was done in person by the experts; and representatives of the Agency were also present in every visit to the higher education institutions. 74 accreditation experts were engaged in the process of evaluating the institutions, who made a total of 83 visits to HEIs and branches of different HEIs.

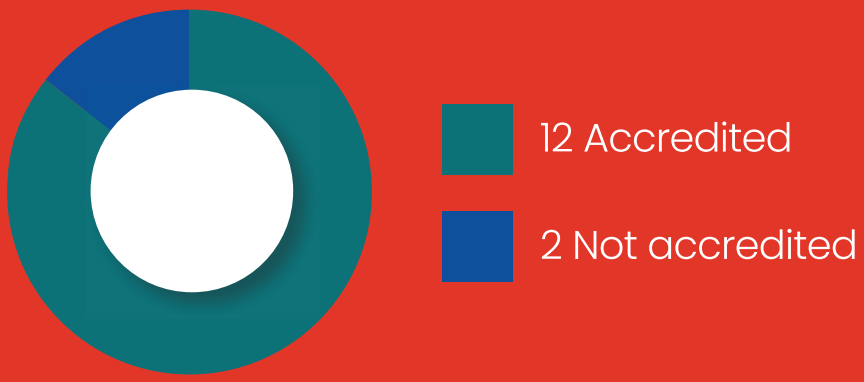
In the visits to HEIs, representatives of the Agency and the team of experts held meetings with the management of the institution, with quality assurance officials, with heads of study programs and with teaching staff. Also, they had meetings with students, alumni and some employers of alumni.

After these meetings, there was an internal meeting with only the team of experts and the KAA. The visit ended with a closing meeting with the institution's management. The team of international experts reviewed all the materials, including the self-assessment reports, requested additional documents and then submitted the draft report. After addressing the comments in the report, the experts have finally submitted the final report.

II. DECISIONS OF THE STATE QUALITY COUNCIL (SQC)

In the process of institutional accreditation during the year 2022, there were a total of 14 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), of which 13 were private and 1 was public. 12 HEIs received institutional accreditation, while 2 were rejected. All HEIs rejected in 2022 are private. In the process, two private colleges have failed in institutional accreditation.

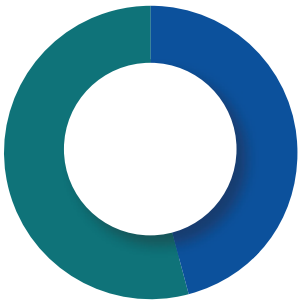
14 applications for institutional accreditation in 2022



Out of 12 applications for institutional reaccreditation, 7 are from private institutions and 5 from public institutions.

In 2022, out of 119 applications for accreditation/reaccreditation, 64 programs are of private HEIs and 55 of public HEIs.

119 applications for study programs accreditation in 2022



54% Accredited

46% Not Accredited

Out of 119, 64 study programs have been approved for accreditation, 38 of them in public HEIs and 26 in private HEIs.

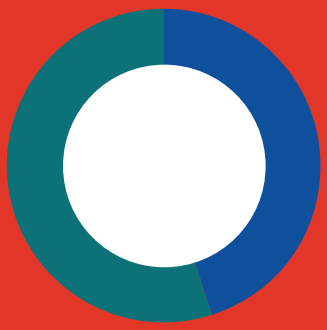
Meanwhile, 55 were not approved, where 47 were rejected at the application stage, of which 32 are in private HEIs and 15 in public HEIs, and of the 8 that were not reaccredited, 5 are in private HEIs and 3 in public HEIs.

Success rate in study program accreditation application 2022 - public HEIs



Positive 72% Negative 28%

Success rate in study program accreditation application 2022 - private HEIs



Positive 55% Negative 45%

The percentage of approval for accreditation of study programs is much lower in private institutions of higher education. This could be for the following reasons that ORCA has observed: the number of new programs is greater in these HEIs than in public ones; the contracts of the proposed program holders from private HEIs are not signed in time, the proposed program holders do not have the appropriate academic rank, and may not be of the field of study or have the necessary scientific publications in the required platforms. The last two reasons also apply to public HEIs.

Meanwhile, for comparison, in 2021 2 public HEIs and 5 private HEIs gained institutional accreditation, while 4 private HEIs did not have institutional accreditation during that year.

During the year 2022, a total of 9 negative decisions were given for the accreditation of programs in public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). 7 of them were given to public HEI programs and another 2 to private HEI programs.

For comparison, during 2021, 35 negative decisions were given by the SQC for accreditation of programs and institutions, of which 4 decisions were for institutional accreditation of private HEIs, 15 decisions were for programs from private HEIs, as well as 16 decisions were for programs from public HEIs.

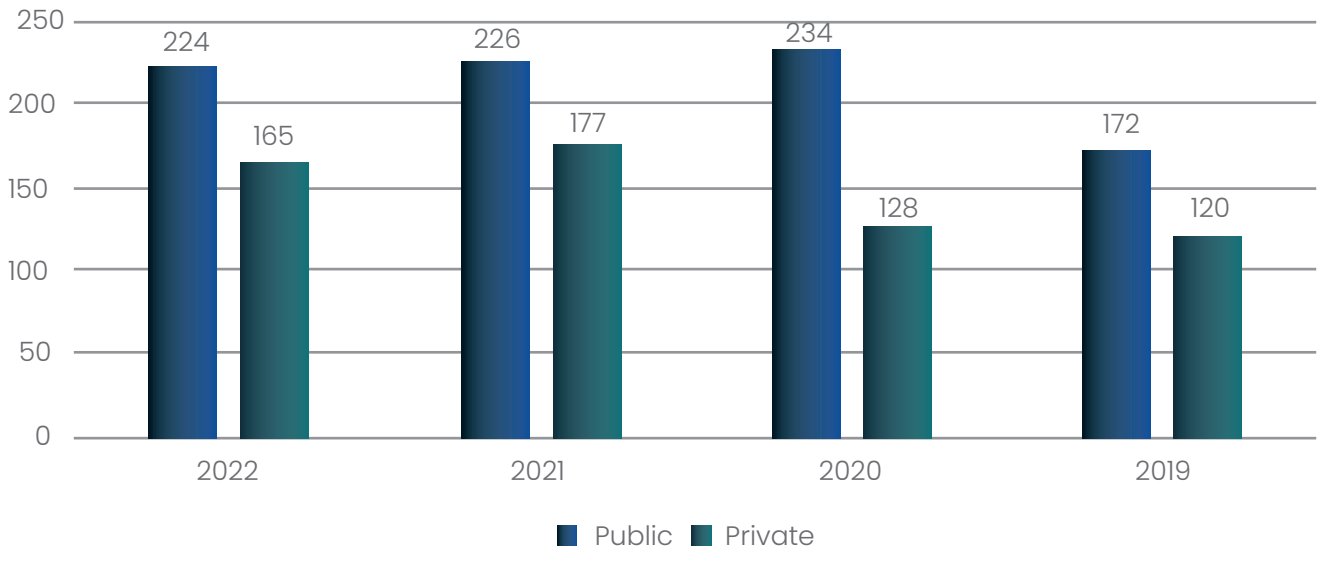
The number of programs accredited in public institutions during 2022 was 224, while the number of programs accredited in private institutions during 2022 was 165.

The number of programs accredited in public institutions during 2021 was 226, while the number of programs accredited in private institutions during 2021 was 177.

The number of programs accredited in public institutions during 2020 was 234, while the number of programs accredited in private institutions during 2020 was 128.

The number of programs accredited in public institutions during 2019 was 172, while the number of programs accredited in private institutions during 2019 was 120.

Number of accredited programs throughout the years



Balance of Active Students

The total number of students in public universities in 2022[10] was 40 thousand 996 (in 2021 it was 50 thousand 188[11]), while the total number of students in private colleges was 30 thousand 952 (in 2021 it was 32 thousand and 201).

From these data it appears that public universities had 10 thousand 44 more students than private colleges in all levels of study offered by these institutions of higher education.

According to the report of the Statistics Agency of Kosovo "Statistics of higher education according to the fields of study" for the academic year 2022/2023[12], it results that the total number of students who are studying at the Bachelor's level in public universities and private colleges are registered in programs of the field "Business, Administration and Law" with a total of 16,877 students. Second is the field "Health and well-being" with 9,555 students.

Meanwhile, the total number of students studying at the Master's level in public universities in the field of "Business, Administration and Law" is 3,853 students. Then comes the "Engineering, production and construction" field with 1,273 students.

10 The report "Education statistics in Kosovo 2022/23" of the Kosovo Statistics Agency, page 76, link: https://masht.rks-gov.net/statistikat-e-arsimitne-kosove-2022-2023/

11 The report "Education statistics in Kosovo 2021/22" of the Statistics Agency of Kosovo, page 74, link: https://masht.rks-gov.net/statistikat-e-arsimit-ne-kosove-2021-2022/

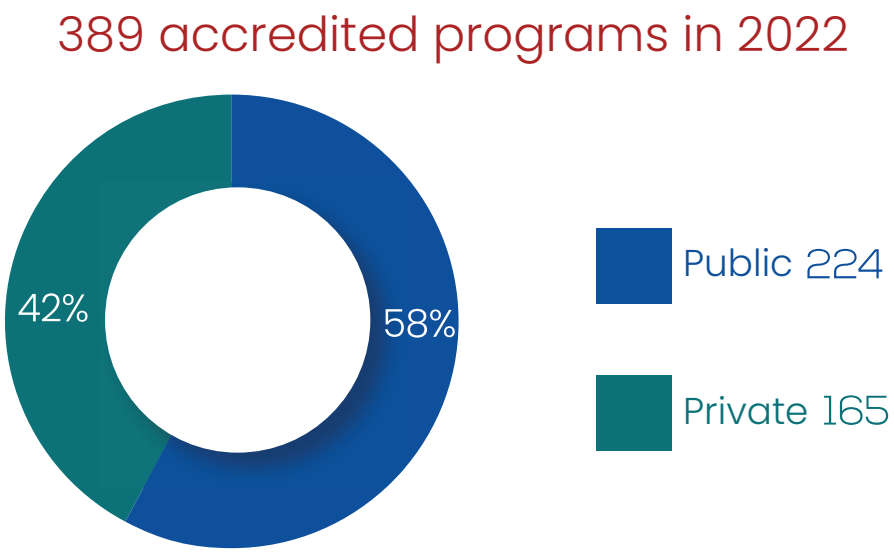
12 The report "Higher education statistics by fields of study 2022/2023", page 5, link: https://askapi.rks-gov.net/Custom/dcc09a63-5933-4f73-9af1-7c4033154f64.pdf

III. INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE RECEIVED ACCREDITATION AND INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE NOT RECEIVED INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	
With accreditation: • University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" • University of Mitrovica "Isa Boletini" • University of Peja "Haxhi Zeka" • University of Prizren "Ukshin Hoti" • University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj • University of Gjakova "Fehmi Agani" • University of Gjilan "Kadri Zeka" • Kosovo Academy for Public Safety • Faculty of Islamic Studies	**Without accreditation:**
PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	
With accreditation: • AAB College • AUK • Biznesi College • ESLG College • Evolution Academy • International Business College Mitrovica (IBC-M) • Heimerer College • "Pjeter Budi" College • Rezonance College • Riinvest College • Tempulli Academy (Tempulli College) • UBT College • Universum College	**Without accreditation:** • Fama College • AAB-Riinvest • Cactus Education College • Globus College • Dardania College • Iliria College • ISPE College • Kosovo Art Academy • Dukagjini College • Universi College • Arberi College

IV. ACCREDITED STUDY PROGRAMS IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The number of study programs with accreditation during 2022 in Higher Education Institutions is 389. There are 224 accredited programs in public HEIs, while in private HEIs there are 165.



For comparison, the number of study programs with accreditation during 2021 in public HEIs was 226, while in private HEIs it was 177.

From the data provided for the year 2022, it results that the top 5 institutions with the largest number of accredited programs are the University of Prishtina with 138 (50% of the total), UBT College with 53 (19%), AAB with 50 (18%), the University of Mitrovica with 18 (7%) and the University of Peja with 17 (6%).

Top 5 HEIs with most accredited programs in 2022

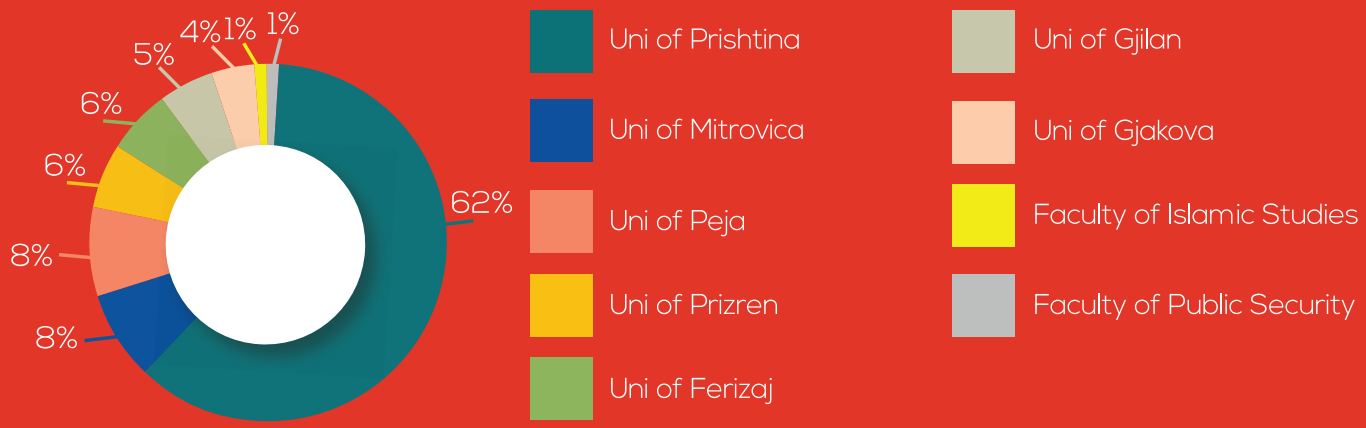


Study Programs in Public Institutions of Higher Education

In 2022, there are a total of 224 programs at the Bachelor, Master, Doctor and Doctor of Science levels in accredited public universities in Kosovo.

The University of Prishtina has the most study programs counting a total of 138 programs, the University of Mitrovica has 18 study programs, then the University of Peja has 17 programs, the University of Prizren counts a total of 14 study programs, the University of Ferizaj has 13 programs, then the University of Gjilan has a total of 11 study programs, the University of Gjakova has 9 study programs, while the Faculty of Islamic Studies has a total of 3 programs, while the Faculty of Public Safety has only one study program.

Number of accredited programs in 2022 - Public HEIs



So in 2022, the University of Prishtina leads with 62% of accredited programs in public institutions of higher education, and with 50% of all accredited programs in public and private HEIs together.

If we compare it with last year, a total of 226 programs of different levels of study have been accredited in public HEIs. So during 2022, 2 programs less than in 2021 were accredited.

The University of Prishtina leads with the number of accredited programs since the first report by ORCA (156 in the academic year 20/21, 136 in the academic year 21/22, and 138 in the academic year 22/23.)

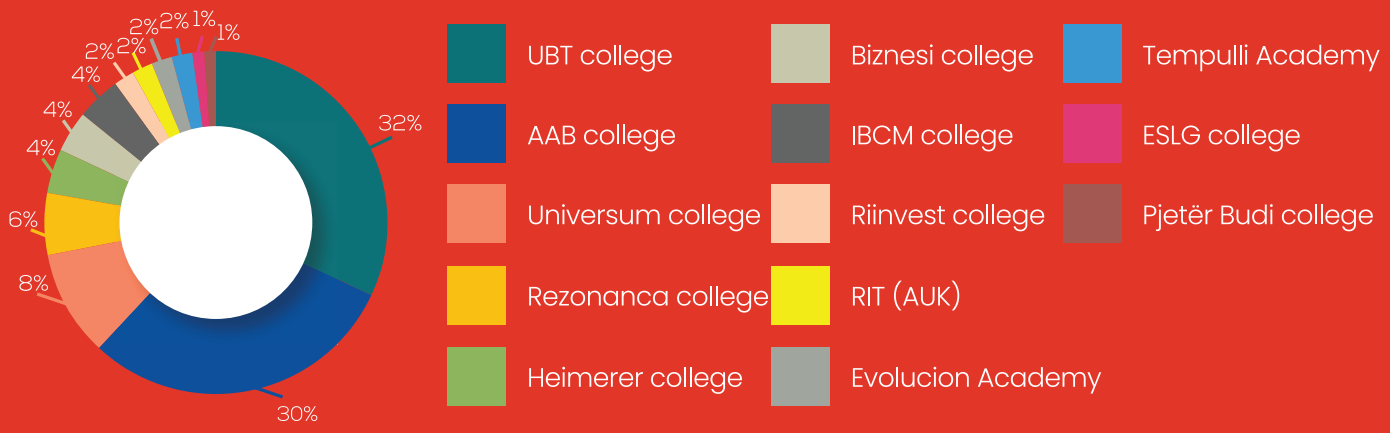
Study Programs in Private Institutions of Higher Education

In 2022, a total of 165 programs at different levels of study such as Bachelor's, Master's and Doctor of Medicine have been accredited in private colleges in Kosovo.

UBT College has the most programs counting a total of 53, AAB College has 50 study programs, Universum College has 16 study programs, Resonance College has 10 programs, Heimerer College has 7 study programs, Business College has 6 programs, IBCM College has 6 study programs, RiInvest College has 4 programs, RIT College (AUK) has 3 study programs,

Evolution Academy has 3 study programs, Temple Academy has 3 programs, ESLG College has 2 study programs and Pjeter Budi College has 2 programs.

Number of accredited programs in 2022 - Private HEIs



In 2022, UBT College leads with 32% of accredited programs from private higher education institutions and only 8% of programs from all public and private HEIs combined.

For comparison, in 2021 the number of programs at different levels of study was 177. So during 2022, the number of accredited programs has been reduced by 12 programs less.

The private institution of higher education which has the most accredited programs in the academic year 2022/2023 is UBT College with 53 programs from different levels of study.

The private institution of higher education which has the most accredited programs in the academic year 2021/2022 is UBT College with 54 programs from different levels of study.

The private institution of higher education which has the most accredited programs in the academic year 2020/2021 is AAB College with 48 programs from different levels of study.

V. REFUNCTIONALIZATION OF THE APPEALS COMMISSION

In October 2022, the Appeals Commission in the Kosovo Accreditation Agency had started its work again after the selection and appointment of four new members, and since this time this commission had started handling the complaints that had been sent to this body.

Currently, this commission has two permanent and two reserve members. The Chairman of the Commission is Ibish Mazreku, while the permanent member is Zejnepe Imeri. The reserve members of the Complaints Commission are Kemajl Zeqiri and Fatos Rexhepi.

We recall that in November 2021, the chairman of the Appeals Commission at the Kosovo Accreditation Agency resigned from this position for personal reasons, therefore since that time this commission has remained out of its function since earlier a member had also resigned due to the appointment to a public position, this commission was left with only one permanent member and one reserve. The Commission was established in September 2020, the Accreditation Agency had appointed five members to this Appeals Commission[13].

13 News article/The Appeals Commission of the Accreditation Agency is established, September 2020, link: https://kallxo.com/lajm/dokument-themelohet-komisioni-i-ankesave-i-agjencise-se-akreditimit/

VI. CHALLENGES OF KOSOVO ACCREDITATION AGENCY AND STATE QUALITY COUNCIL

Complaints of HEI Students to the KAA

According to the AKA staff, during the year 2022 they received a total of eight complaints from students of private and public Higher Education Institutions in the complaint submission system to report on various problems within the institutions where they are studying or who they have finished.

Six complaints were for colleges, while two were for public universities. Three complaints were about Universum College, one complaint about Heimerer College, another one about Fama College and the last one about Dardania College. Meanwhile, one complaint was for the Faculty of Education at the University of Prishtina and one complaint for the University of Mitrovica.

Functionalization of the Law on the Kosovo Accreditation Agency

One of the 13 recommendations of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) was the creation of a law that regulates the work and functioning of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, but at the same time ensures its independence and implementation of European quality assurance standards in higher education.

In January 2022[14], the Parliamentary Committee on Education approved the Draft Law on the Kosovo Agency for Accreditation, which regulates the status of the Agency as a regulatory agency in the processes and responsibilities of accreditation, reaccreditation, validation and monitoring[15].

14 News article/ The draft law is approved to pave the way for the Accreditation Agency to return to ENQA and EQAR, January 25, 2022, link: https://www.koha.net/arberi/307639/miratohet-projektligji-qe-i-hap-rruge-agjencise-se-akreditimit-per-kthim-ne-enqa-dhe-eqar/

15 At the time when this report was published, the Law on the Kosovo Accreditation Agency was approved by the Government and the Assembly and entered into force.

Lawsuits of Higher Education Institutions Against the Kosovo Accreditation Agency

Throughout the year 2022, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency has received a total of three lawsuits from private Higher Education Institutions, specifically from Iliria College, Universum College and Fama College, in which the KAA has responded by offering its testimonies about certain processes which are the lawsuit case of the colleges.

Iliria College had sued the KAA, requesting to cancel the decision of the SQC which had not granted institutional accreditation to this college.

Universum College sued the KAA, requesting to cancel the decision of the SQC which had rejected the request for accreditation/re-accreditation of four programs.

Fama College had sued the KCA, requesting to cancel the decisions of the SQC in which it was decided to withdraw the accreditation for some programs and reject the request for the accreditation of some other programs. These lawsuits have not yet started as court proceedings.

Meanwhile, there are five other cases of lawsuits which were examined by the court during 2022 but which were not necessarily initiated during this year, of which in three of them the plaintiffs withdrew, one was rejected as unfounded and in one the plaintiff was found guilty.

> The University of Mitrovica had sued the KAA regarding the SQC's decision not to re-accredit the institution, but it has withdrawn from the lawsuit.
>
> The University of Prishtina had sued the KAA regarding the request for the annulment of a decision of the Appeals Commission, but the case was suspended by the Court.
>
> The ISPE college had sued two former KAA officials for defamation and compensation, but in the meantime it has withdrawn from the lawsuit.

Further, the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Pristina sued the KAA for the decision in which they had changed the name of a program, the number of students allowed for registration and the duration of accreditation, but this was rejected by the court as unfounded.

The KAA sued the owner of the ISPE College for legalizing false content since he had submitted a false confirmation for the payment to enter the accreditation process, for which the court had declared him guilty.

For comparison, during 2021 the Kosovo Accreditation Agency received a total of 12 lawsuits from various public and private higher education institutions, which were initiated during the years 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. In these lawsuits, all cases were won by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency.

The KAA does not publish information about the type and content of lawsuits.

Lack of staff in the Agency

During 2022, the Agency has increased the number of employed officials to 11, and has also hired three interns, with which the number of officials has reached 14.

According to the *Law on Budget Allocations for 2022*[16], the Kosovo Agency for Accreditation has been allocated a budget for 32 positions, similar to the 2021 budget.

The administrative difficulties in the process of public recruitment, the criteria, the quality of the examination of the subjects, the facility in which they are located and many others, have made the KAA unable to hire the necessary staff, and as a result they have not yet managed to carry out the monitoring of HEIs.

16 Law on budget allocations for the budget of the Republic of Kosovo for 2022, link: https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=51763

As a consequence of the lack of staff, KAA has so far reviewed the minimum criteria for accreditation of study programs and institutional accreditation. So the revision of the number of professors and students, the amount of equipment, as well as the space of the HEI facility is carried out. Meanwhile, the competence of the KAA is also the examination of the scientific research of the institutions, the policies for the development of the academic staff, the internal organization and the approach of the HEIs to quality assurance, the monitoring of the progress of the students and many others.

Lack of Monitoring of Higher Education Institutions

One of the recommendations of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) was the adoption and operationalization of the Monitoring Methodology of Higher Education Institutions in Kosovo. After the appointment of the new board members and the director of the Agency, this document was approved in February 2022.

Despite the approval of this document, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency during the year 2022 did not monitor Higher Education Institutions and the lack of proper monitoring by the KAA towards the institutions to which it has given accreditation, has been evident over the years.

The monitoring methodology meets Standard 2.3 of the European Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG), which requires quality assurance agencies to complete the accreditation cycle with post-accreditation procedures aimed at continuous improvement of the quality of institutions of higher education.

Monitoring is a formal process that must be carried out by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA), through which it is verified whether the institutions of higher education are continuing to fulfil the recommendations of external experts and are maintaining the conditions with which they were accredited.

The lack of monitoring of HEIs until now has caused various problems especially for students. As a result, the number of students who had graduated from programs without accreditation increased, who were part of the exceeded number of student quotas for various study programs, therefore they were unable to validate their diplomas at the National Centre for Diploma Recognition, students who had continued their studies in one program and received a diploma from another program and many other irregularities.

Lack of Labour Market Needs Analysis

There is still no analysis compiled by the Ministry of Education[17], the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers[18], the Kosovo Accreditation Agency[19], the Kosovo Statistics Agency[20] and the Employment Agency[21], which shows and reflects the needs of the labour market in Kosovo. .

This type of information could be published on the official website of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, through which those interested in university studies would be informed and oriented about the programs needed by the labour market. It would also serve as a guide for the State Quality Council, during the decision-making process for the accreditation of study programs.

Lack of Information Exchange for Academic Staff at the Regional Level

A database is needed, which would serve to inform Public and Private Higher Education Institutions, inside and outside the country, about the composition of academic staff in accredited institutions, in order to prevent professors from engaging as regular staff, in more than one institution of higher education in different countries.

17 The official website of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation in the Republic of Kosovo, link: https://masht.rks-gov.net/

18 The official website of the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers in the Republic of Kosovo, link: https://mf.rks-gov.net/page.aspx?id=1,1

19 The official website of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, link: http://www.akreditimi-ks.org/new/index.php/sq/

20 The official website of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, link: https://ask.rks-gov.net/

21 The official website of the Employment Agency in the Republic of Kosovo, link: https://aprk.rks-gov.net/

VII. REPORT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON KOSOVO

In October 2022, the European Commission's Report on Kosovo was published[22], in which the progress and shortcomings of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency were again addressed.

In this report it is mentioned again that Kosovo Accreditation Agency is continuing its efforts to regain full membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and in the European Register for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (EQAR).

It is further recommended that the Law on the Accreditation Agency be approved by the Kosovo Parliament, in order to increase operational independence and transparency in the appointment of management in KAA. The new draft law, according to this report, addresses the issue of the declaration of assets by the international members of the board of the KAA, which forced these members to resign from these positions.

It is written that last year's recommendations were partially fulfilled and that in the coming year Kosovo should systematically apply quality assurance mechanisms at all levels of education, especially in pre-university education and vocational education, in the field of higher education and continue with the monitoring procedures after the accreditation of the programs.

22 European Commission Kosovo Country Report, October 2022, pg. 103-105, link: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/Kosovo%20Report%202022.pdf

CONCLUSIONS

The monitoring of higher education institutions in Kosovo is one of the most important components of this Agency, which has not been implemented even during 2022. Its absence continues to leave room for the deception of students by many of the institutions of higher education that operate in our country. Through the monitoring of higher education institutions, it is possible to prevent the deviation of students and take measures against those institutions that exceed or break the conditions through which they received institutional or program accreditation.

The number of study programs with accreditation during 2022 in Higher Education Institutions was 389. Accredited programs in public HEIs were 224, while in private HEIs there were 165.

For 2022, it turns out that the top 5 institutions with the largest number of accredited programs are the University of Prishtina with 138 (50% of the total), UBT College with 53 (19%), AAB with 50 (18%), University of Mitrovica with 18 (7%) and the University of Peja with 17 (6%).

It is very important to continue to raise the criteria and standards for accreditation so that students' degrees can secure them a better future.

Even during the year 2022, the Law on the Kosovo Accreditation Agency had not yet entered into force, so that the accreditation process is independent from the indirect influences of various ministers of education through administrative instructions.

The State Quality Council was completed with two international members during 2022, through which all decisions are considered legitimate, but this board should focus on creating further policies, so that higher education in the Republic of Kosovo is based on needs of the labour market and in the continuous improvement of quality so that graduates are prepared with the necessary skills for work.

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency considers it necessary to recruit all the necessary staff for the administrative processes carried out by the latter.

In October 2022, this Agency received associate status from the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), but it is expected that in the future they will accept the new decision after the evaluation for full re-membership, also in the Register European Quality Assurance in Higher Education (EQAR). And in order to achieve re-membership in these two important institutions for the Kosovo Accreditation Agency and higher education in general, efforts must be continued to improve the quality in higher education through decision-making by the relevant instances and to prevent any external pressure or influence and political that will undoubtedly damage this process.

Of vital importance is the cooperation of this Agency with the relevant institutions, to conduct labour market research, so that the State Quality Council is based on that study when handling or examining applications for accreditation of study programs from institutions of higher education in our country. This would undoubtedly serve the students but also our country on the right path in meeting the needs of the labour market.

DISCLAIMER:

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