

External review of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

Annex I: TERMS OF REFERENCE

July 2013

1. Background and Context

KAA was established by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in accordance with the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo, as the Agency that guarantees the quality of educational and scientific research work in Higher Education Institutions in Kosovo.

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency is a public agency for the evaluation of quality at public and private institutions of higher education. Through the accreditation process, it supports the development of quality in these institutions.

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency has a legal basis for the accreditation of all higher education institutions that offer or propose to offer higher education programmes that lead to the award of academic degrees.

KAA's primary responsibilities are:

- The accreditation of public and private institutions of higher education,
- The accreditation of new institutions of higher education and their programmes,
- The accreditation of new programmes at those institutions of higher education that already are accredited,
- The continuing assurance of quality at accredited institutions and their programmes

KAA undertakes the accreditation of institutions and academic programmes through formal and transparent procedures that ensure internationally comparable standards. Institutions and the programmes which they offer are evaluated to ensure that they meet minimum requirements for quality.

Through accreditation, Kosova and external stakeholders can be assured that the quality of teaching and learning matches international standards. Accreditation also increases the transparency in the complex market of national and international providers of higher education, whether public or private.

KAA has been an affiliate of ENQA since April 2011 and is applying for Full membership.

2. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

This is a type A review, as defined in the *Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area*. It will evaluate the way in which and to what extent KAA fulfils the criteria for the ENQA membership and thus the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. Consequently, the review will also provide information to the ENQA Board to aid its consideration of whether KAA should be granted Full Member of ENQA. The review panel is not expected, however, to make any judgements as regards the confirmation of Full Membership.

3. The Review Process

The process is designed in the light of the *Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area*.

The evaluation procedure consists of the following steps:

- Formulation of the Terms of Reference and protocol for the review;
- Nomination and appointment of the review panel;
- Self-evaluation by KAA including the preparation of a self-evaluation report;
- A site visit by the review panel to KAA;
- Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report by the review panel;
- Scrutiny of the final evaluation report by the Review Committee of the ENQA Board;
- Analysis of the scrutiny by the ENQA Board and their decision regarding ENQA membership;
- Follow-up of the panel's and/or ENQA Board's recommendations by the agency.

3.1 Nomination and appointment of the review team members

The review panel consists of five members: Four external reviewers (one or two quality assurance experts, representative(s) of higher education institutions, student member) and a review secretary. Three of the reviewers (including the review secretary) are nominated by the ENQA Board on the basis of proposals submitted to ENQA by the national agencies, and are drawn from senior serving members of Board/Council or staff of ENQA member agencies. The fourth external reviewer is drawn from a nomination provided by the European University Association (EUA). The nomination of the student member is asked from the European Students' Union (ESU). One of the panel members serves as the chair of the review.

Current members of the ENQA Board are not eligible to serve as reviewers.

ENQA will provide KAA with the list of suggested experts with their respective curriculum vitae to establish that there are no known conflicts of interest. The experts will have to sign a non-conflict of interest statement as regards the KAA review.

3.2 Self-evaluation by KAA, including the preparation of a self-evaluation report

KAA is responsible for the execution and organisation of its own self-evaluation process and shall take into account the following guidance:

- Self-evaluation is organised as a project with a clearly defined schedule and includes all relevant internal and external stakeholders;
- The self-evaluation report is broken down by the topics of the evaluation: background description of the current situation of the Agency; analysis and appraisal of the current situation; proposals for improvement and measures already planned; a summary of perceived strengths and weaknesses;
- The report is well-structured, concise and comprehensively prepared. It clearly demonstrates the extent to which KAA fulfils its tasks of external quality assurance and meets the criteria for the

ENQA membership and thus the ESG. The report is submitted to the review panel a minimum of four weeks prior to the site visit.

3.3 A Site Visit by the Review Panel

KAA will draw up a draft proposal of schedule of the site visit to be submitted to the review panel at least two months before the planned dates of the visit. The schedule includes an indicative timetable of the meetings and other exercises to be undertaken by the review panel during the site visit, the duration of which is 2 days. The approved schedule shall be given to KAA at least two months before the dates of the visit, in order to properly organise the requested interviews.

The review panel will be assisted by KAA in arriving in Pristina, Kosovo.

The site visit will close with an oral presentation and discussion of the major issues of the evaluation between the review panel and KAA.

3.4 Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report

On the basis of the review panel's findings, the review secretary will draft the report in consultation with the review panel. The report will take into account the purpose and scope of the evaluation as defined under article 2. It will also provide a clear rationale for its findings with regards to each ENQA membership criteria. A draft will be submitted for comment to KAA within two months of the site visit for comment on factual accuracy. If KAA chooses to provide a statement in reference to the draft report it will be submitted to the chair of the review panel within two weeks after the receipt of the draft report. Thereafter the review panel will take into account the statement by KAA, finalise the document and submit it to KAA and ENQA.

The report is to be finalised within three months of the site visit and will not exceed 40 pages in length.

4. Follow-up Process and Publication of the Report

KAA will consider the expert panel's report and inform ENQA of its plans to implement any recommendations contained in the report. Subsequent to the discussion of the evaluation results and any planned implementation measures with ENQA, the review report and the follow-up plans agreed upon will be published on the KAA website.

5. Budget

KAA shall pay the following review related fees:

Fee of the Chair	4,750 EUR
Fee of the Secretary	4,750 EUR
Fee of the 3 other panel members	8,250 EUR (2,750 EUR each)
Administrative overhead for ENQA Secretariat	5,000 EUR
Experts Training fund	1,250 EUR
Travel and subsistence expenses (approximate)	6,000 EUR

This gives a total indicative cost of 30,000 EUR for a review team of 5 members. In the case that the allowance for travel and subsistence expenses is exceeded, KAA will cover any additional costs after the completion of the review. However, the ENQA Secretariat will endeavour to keep the travel and subsistence expenses in the limits of the planned budget, and will refund the difference to KAA if the travel and subsistence expenses go under budget.

In the event of a second site visit required by the Board and aiming at completing the assessment of compliance, and should the agency accept a second visit, an additional fee of 500 EUR per expert, as well as travel and subsistence costs are recoverable from the agency.

6. Indicative Schedule of the Review

The duration of the evaluation is scheduled to take 17 months, from February 2013 to June 2014:

Self-evaluation starts	February 2013
Agreement on terms of reference and protocol for review	July 2013
Appointment of review panel members	Sept/Oct 2013
Preparation of site visit schedule and indicative timetable	October 2013
Self-evaluation completed	November 2013
Briefing of review panel members	November 2013
Review panel site visit	January 2014
Draft of evaluation report to KAA	March 2014
Statement of KAA to review panel if necessary	March 2014
Submission of final report to ENQA	April 2014
Consideration of the report by ENQA and response of KAA	June 2014
Publication of report and implementation plan	June 2014