REPORT
ON
ACTIVITIES OF PUBLIC AGENCY HIGHER EDUCATION
ACCREDITATION FOR THE YEAR 2008

Tirana, January, 2009
INTRODUCTION

Public Agency for Higher Education Accreditation, PAAHE has based its general activity on the main legal acts in the field of Higher Education and other laws and regulations as well as procedures of its internal operation, and in particular on the activity plan of 2008. It must be emphasized that among the main activities conducted during 2008, there have been reviews of new programs of study applied by public HEIs as a result of the reorganization of higher education studies based on the law No.9741, dated 21.5.2007, "On Higher Education in the Republic of Albania " and the Bologna reform. As a result the Public Agency Accreditation of Higher Education in 2008 conducted voluminous work not only for the assessment of new programs of study and assessments in the framework of the Private HEI accreditation but also informative and training activities about the new evaluation criteria. In the 2008 annual report, PAAHE presents its main activity divided into categories and activities conducted during the year.

CONTENTS

1. Assessments in Public Institutions of Higher Education

- Reviews of new programs for the first cycle of study

- Reviews of new programs for the second cycle of study

- Reviews of new programs for the third cycle of study

2. Assessments in Private Institutions of Higher Education

- Institutional assessments and reviews of new study programs in the new private institutions applying as private HEI (before licensing)

- Reviews of new programs of study in licensed existing private institutions

- Reviews for first accreditation of private institutions of higher education.
3. Analytical assessments in the context of reviews of the new programs of study in HEIs

4. PAAHE activities with HEIs for the establishment and operation of the ISQA

5. Review and improvement of legal basis and other documents basic for assessment and accreditation

6. PAAHE restructuring and reorganization

7. Support of the activity of the Council of Accreditation

8. PAAHE publication and informative activity

9. PAAHE activities organized with various stakeholders of higher education

10. Relations with international organizations in the field of quality assurance

11. A more efficient and effective use of human and financial resources

12. Annexes

   - Annex A

   - Annex B

   - Annex C
THE LEGAL BASIS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Legal bases and regulations for the main activities of the Accreditation System

- Law Nr.9741, dated 21.05.2007, "On Higher Education in the Republic of Albania"

- Instruction No. 4, dated 22.01.2008, "For the opening, closing and reorganization of academic programs of first level master."

- Instruction No. 5, dated 22.1.2008, "On the setting of academic standards necessary for opening, closing and reorganizing programs of doctoral study, as well as the basic elements upon which higher education institutions should prepare relevant regulations


- Instruction No. 15, dated 04.04.2008. "For the organization of studies at public institutions of higher education

- Instruction No. 30, dated 26.9.2007, "On determining the procedures and documentation a legal entity must submit to open a private institution of higher education or study programs, in the first and second cycle studies."

- Instruction No. 30 amended by decision No. 29, dated 28.07.2008.

- Instruction No. 20. For activities of academic staff in public institutions of higher education, dated 9.5.2008.

- Instruction No. 30, dated 29.07.2008 "On organization of university studies for the professional training of teachers".

- Decision No.467 On defining the criteria and procedures for scientific and pedagogical training of the staff, dated 18.7.2007.
- Decision No.864 to open the doctoral programs in PHEI and defining conditions to be met by the student to get a diploma for scientific degree "Doctor", dated 5.12.2007.

- Decision of the Council of Ministers No.877 dated 18.06.2008. "On some amendments in the decision No.864 dated 05.12.2007," For the opening of the doctoral study programs in PAAHE and determining the terms that the student must meet to get a diploma for the "Doctor" scientific degree ".


- CM Decision No.156, dated 22.03.2001. For non-public high schools in the Republic of Albania

- Instruction No. 4 of MES , dated 28.02.2006, "On setting evaluation and accreditation fees for non-public higher education schools."

2. Legal bases for payment of employees and external collaborators PAAHE:


- CM Decision No.478 , dated 18.07.2007. On approval of the structure and salary levels of employees of some institutions, depending on the line ministers

- CM Decision No. 720 of 29. 11. 1995. On payment of public employees who are hired in other secondary state activity

- CM Decision No.120 dated 27.01.1997. On payment of the authors of scientific works, textbooks and other materials of school documentation.

- Instruction No.20 dated 10.07.2008. On employees who are paid out of the number of employees approved in the budget for ministries and government institutions.
3. PAAHE internal acts:

- Procedures for assessment of academic programs and Institutions of higher education within the first and periodic accreditation.

- Procedures for evaluating a new institution of higher education and / or new program of study in the context of their opening.

- Guidelines for internal quality assessment in higher education

- Guidelines for external quality assessment in higher education

- Aspects and indicators of quality in higher education

- The application form for evaluation and accreditation

- Format form for study programs review by field experts on an anonymous basis.

- Format form used by PAAHE for the technical evaluation of new programs of study for three separate study cycles, for each type of degree (DFL, DSL, ID, Professional MFL, Teacher education MFL, MSL, DR in the process).

- Internal regulations of the Public Agency for Higher Education Accreditation

- Descriptions of the functions, responsibilities and duties of PAAHE employees

- Statute of the Council of Accreditation.

I. ASSESSMENT OF NEW PROGRAMS OF STUDY IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

PAAHE has successfully coped with all the influx of applications received during 2008. These applications come from both the public system of higher education and the private one, including the application for assessments in the framework of licensing new institutions of private higher education. Applications have been for all types of study programs provided at Law No.9741, dated 21.5.2007 "For Higher Education in the
Republic of Albania ". More specifically, the total number of applications was 511, of which 315 came from public HEIs and 196 from private HEIs. 36 applications (27 from private HEIs and 9 from public HEIs ) were returned for deficiency in documentation. The total number of applications dealt with or in the review process by PAAHE is 475, 306 of which from public HEIs (the procedure for 279 applications has been finished and 27 applications for doctoral programs are being reviewed) and 169 applications form private HEIs, the procedures of which have all been finished. It is worth mentioning that a number of practices have been sent back again and again to MES for deficiencies in documentation, but their number has not been included in the total number of assessments although the technical reviews of the application files have claimed time and work from the PAAHE specialists. For more information on the number of applications from public and private HEIs

1.1 Reviews of new programs of study (PRS) of the first cycle

According to the activity plan for 2008, PAAHE has conducted institutional and program reviews at several Public Institutions of Higher Education. There have been done 22 reviews, 12 of which have been evaluated positive by the Accreditation Council, 8 negative and 2 are sent back to the MES, without being reviewed. Also, the assessment was conducted for 3 practices for opening new branches of Tirana University and Agricultural University of Tirana in other cities, Saranda, Kukes and Lushnja. Detailed information on the PRS of the first cycle assessed by PAAHE are given in the Table and diagrams of paragraph 1.1 of Annex A.

1.2 Reviews of new programs of study (PRS) of the second cycle of study

Following their new organization of studies pursuant to the law of higher education, public institution of Higher Education have applied for the opening and organization of PS of the second cycle (DFL, IDSL, MFL). During 2008 a great number of review applications were made to the agency for the second cycle which have been reviewed. The total number reached 208 reviews: 68 DFL, 3 IDSL, 137 MFL (of which 30 are first-level master in high school teacher education, 41 master's ion secondary school teacher education, and 66 are professional master's. The programs of study of the second level evaluated positive
by the AC and opened with the CM decision up to November 2008 for each university and faculty are given in tables and diagrams accompanying the paragraph 1.2 of Annex

1.3. Reviews of new programs of study of the third cycle of study

During 2008 PAAHE has conducted the reviews of the third cycle programs of study, namely MSL, and is working with Doctoral programs. Out of the 80 applications made 53 are for MSL and 27 for Doctoral programs. The Accreditation Council has assessed "positive on condition " 6 MSL (UT), as negative 2 MSL (EU, UGJ) and 2 MSL (UV) were sent back to MES. 46 programs for MSL are to be reviewed by CA. These applications are from UT (34), AUT (8), UGJ (1). DR programs of study are in the process evaluation by the accreditation agency.

Paragraph 1.3.1 of Annex A gives the summary table with the respective diagrams showing in detail the total number of third cycle PRS, evaluation and the respective public universities.

Paragraph "review 2", gives in detail all the reviews conducted by PAAHE for any program of study, universities applying and the new PRS opened with CM decision for the academic year 2008 - 2009. It is also given the list of new programs of study opened by public HEIs with CM decision, decision published in the Official Journal until November 2008 while the full list of all PRS opened with CM decision until 15.12.2008, is at http://www.aaal.edu.al/AL/publike.htm

II. ASSESSMENT IN PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1 Institutional and PRS reviews in the new private institutions that apply as private HEIs (Prior to licensing)

During 2008 PAAHE has reviewed programs of study in the context of licensing in 16 private institutions, which have submitted their application and relevant documentation to MES. The have been 116 reviews, of which: 88 DFL, 11 DSL, 4 DISL, 13 MFL. Paragraph 2.1, Annex A, gives a table with a list of new institutions in which reviews for licensing have been conducted, as well as the kind of PS reviewed with the relevant assessment.
2.2 Reviews of new programs of study in existing licensed private institutions

**PAAHE** has reviewed 56 new programs of study applied by the existing private HEIs.

17 of these were for DFL, 16 positively evaluated, 1 negatively

14 of these were DSL, 12 evaluated positively, 2 negatively

3 of these were DISL, 3 evaluated positively, none negatively

18 of these were MFL, 17 evaluated positively, 1 negatively

4 of these were MFL, 1 evaluated positively, 3 negatively.

In Annex A and the accompanying diagrams are given in detail all kinds of evaluated PRS in private HEIs during 2008 and the relevant assessment for each PRS, and data on opening by CMD of each PRS positively evaluated. More detailed information about all the private HEIS licensed in our country, about programs opened with the decision of the Council of Ministers (associated with the corresponding decision for each private HEI) is given at [http://www.aaal.edu.al/AL/private.htm](http://www.aaal.edu.al/AL/private.htm)

2.3 Reviews for the first accreditation of private institutions of higher education.

Based on the requirements and changes required by the new law of Higher Education and Instruction No. 30, dated 26.9.2007 of the Ministry and Education and Science, as well as new procedures of the agency for a prior review of the of Private Institutions of Higher Education, in the period April - July 2008, the agency carried out the institutional and three new programs of study review in the context of the institutions demand for the HEI first accreditation after licensing. These reviews were carried in two private institutions of higher education, Higher School University "Ufo Dental" for Politolog diploma, and "Crystal" university for the degrees: Law and Pharmacy. These reviews are in the final phase of evaluation by the Accreditation Council.
Meanwhile, during 2008 have been, five applications have been filed and accepted by the agency. These private HEIs apply for a review process for their first institutional and program accreditation. The applications are from Aldent (dental laboratory assistant), "Marin Barleti (business management, finance accounting, law, political science)", "UET (Journalism, communications and public relations, political science, international relations, lawyer, economists, business finance, bank management, public administration)", "S & P Qiriazi, (Accounting, finance, management, marketing) "and" Justinian I (lawyer). These reviews were carried out and approved by CA and placed on the agenda of the evaluations for 2009. Two other applications from "Polis (external quality assessment of HEIs)" and "Justice, (Lawyer degree evaluation)" are pending.

III. ANALYTICAL EVALUATION UNDER ASSESSMENT OF NEW PROGRAMS OF STUDY IN PUBLIC HEIs

At the demand of the Council of Accreditation, in the framework of new programs of study reviews in public HEIs, especially of programs of study of the second cycle, PAAHE carried out an assessment of the structures which apply these programs according to the following indicators:

- Compliance with the standards of the organizational structures
- Composition and qualification of academic staff in function of the programs of study
- Number of students who have completed the first cycle of study (condition for entry into the second study cycle)
- Academic staff / student ratio

These analyses served as additional guidance criteria for CA decision making and recommendations for MES for these programs of study.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF PAAHE WITH THE HEI FOR ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF THE INTERNAL SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE (ISQA)

Throughout 2008, PAAHE has developed a series of meetings / workshops with HEI (individually at their request) and 2 workshops with representatives of all HEIs in the country (16 December 2008 and 19 December 2008), where the main principles, criteria and standards for establishment and operation of internal system of quality assurance (ISQA) in HEIs in the country in accordance with the standards and European guidelines in this area were introduced.
These activities have helped to present and share the best elements of quality assurance and best practices that exist in these HEIs. This process will continue during 2009, for specific standards and criteria for these systems and will close with a joint guide between PAAHE and HEIs, involving the principles, standards, criteria for establishment, operation and external assessment (audit) of these ISQA. Annex B gives the activity carried out during 2008 in connection with the establishment and operation of this system.

V. REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT OF LEGAL FRAMEWORK, REGULATIONS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS BASIC FOR ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION

PAAHE and CA have given and KA gave a special contribution in drafting the guidelines of the Ministry of Education during 2008. PAAHE has also prepared or reviewed nearly all of the guidance documentation for the evaluation and accreditation system in accordance with the requirements of the new legislation and regulations that have been passed. They are as follows:

- Review and updating of " Procedures for the evaluation of programs of study and Institutions of higher education in the framework of the first and periodic accreditation."
- Drafting " Procedures for evaluation of a new higher education institution or /and new program of study in the framework of their opening "
- Review and updating " Application form for evaluation and accreditation"

The three above mentioned documents have been published as booklets.
- Review and updating of "Guidelines for Internal Quality Assessment in Higher Education", in the publication process.
- Review and updating of "Guidelines for External Quality Assessment in Higher Education", in the publication process.
- Review and updating of "Aspects and indicators of quality in Higher Education", in the publication process.
- Development of a standard format for an anonymous evaluation of programs of study with field experts, published in the website.
- Development of formats for technical reviews of new programs of study in the three cycles of study, and for each type of degree (DFL, DSL, DISL, Professional MFL, Teacher education MFL, MSL, Dr. in process.)
- Drafting terms of reference for the external experts of the field of higher education.

All these documents have been reviewed and after revision have been approved at meetings of the CA.

VI. PAAHE REORGANIZATION AND RESTRUCTURING

Pursuant to Order No. 65, dated 23.05.2006 of the Prime Minister, "On approval of the structure and organizational composition of the Public Agency for Higher Education Accreditation", PAAHE has changed its structure and number of its employees.

After 1 July 2008, the number of employees of PAAHE raised from 7 to 12, and its organizational structure changed. At present PAAHE is organized into three sections:

1. Sector of Assessment and Analyses
2. Sector of Services and Publications
3. Sector of supporting activities

This has led to internal reorganization and a new division of duties of existing and new staff, the latter hired through open public procedures. Each sector has its own work plan and submits periodic reports on its progress and implementation in practice. Although PAAHE has its new structure under the above organogram the primary task of all agency specialists is the technical review, management and evaluation of application files submitted to the PAAHE, as well as following and monitoring of higher education institution assessment within the first or periodical accreditation.

VII. SUPPORT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

One of the agency's tasks is to support it has given and gives to the Accreditation Council. The agency has organized meetings of the Accreditation Council, prepared the agenda of meetings, drafts and distributes information to Council members and prepare the final document on behalf of the Council before it is discussed and
approved. The Agency also keeps all correspondence with other institutions on behalf of the Council of Accreditation. During 2008, the Accreditation Council has held 26 meetings, has worked on 315 institution or program reviews and has taken 194 decisions of which: 41 positive decisions, 115 positive decisions on condition, 35 negative decisions, 121 decisions are in process and 1 decision is for opening new branches.

It has also examined a large number of individual and analytical assessments - and has developed systemically delivered and has drafted and delivered to MES in a series of recommendations and documents. In addition there have been evaluated and approved a number of documents that help to improve the work of PAAHE. In paragraph 3 of Annex A, it is given detailed information about the activities of the Accreditation Council.

VIII PAAHE Publications and Information System

In the context of obligation for information and transparency to all stakeholders of higher education and the public in general, PAAHE has used a variety of instruments and information and communication elements as:

- website, cooperation and direct formal and informal communication with HEI
- cooperation and coordination with MES
- publication of new edition of leaflets by PAAHE which reflect all the changes in the law of higher education regarding quality assurance

During 2008 PAAHE completely restructured its web site. All information is enriched, restructured and adapted to the requirements of new legislation on Higher Education and in accordance with European standards for transparency and public information about the quality of Higher Education. At Agency Official website (www.aaal.edu.al, Annex C) all interested will find updated information on:
- PAAHE, its organization, mission and areas of activity associated with the institution's organization chart and staff
- Accreditation Council, its composition, its decision and full activity
- Legislation supporting the activity of PAAHE as: laws, DCM, etc. instructions.
- Data for the evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions in the country (private or public), reviews of study programs offered by these institutions, accreditation status, etc..

- Documents, publications, procedures related to the organization of higher education standards, quality assurance, indicators, aspects, questionnaires, surveys on-line etc..
- The full list of public and private HEIs, their organization, programs offered according to the cycles of study, admission quotas and tuition fees in any program, similar or the same programs of study offered by different public and private HEIs, programs approved by CMD etc..
- The complete database with detailed information on assessments conducted or in process in PAAHE, annual reports of PAAHE and CA etc..

- Events, seminars, conferences, training sessions organized and expected to be organized by PAAHE, publications of conference and seminar materials and of the activity of the institutions of quality assurance at home or abroad

Meanwhile PAAHE is in constant contact with the public in providing information through phone, e-mail, as well as through questionnaires, various surveys whose importance lies in perception of public opinion about higher education issues in order too further improve the work of the agency.

IX. ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY PAAHE WITH VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

During 2008 PAAHE HAS organized several meetings with representatives of the HEIs mainly on issues related to quality assurance in public and private higher education and on specific areas such as the second cycle degrees MFL, DSL.

- Establishment and Operation of the System of Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education Institutions, 16 December 2008
New programs of study in the context of the Bologna process, the preliminary assessment, continuity and accreditation, 19 December 2008
- Seminar EUT
- Seminar AEFS
- Seminar Justinian I
- Seminar UT Faculty of Economics
- Seminar UT FM
- Seminar Justicia
Full information about their activities has been published on the official website of the agency, http:\\ www.aaal.edu.al \ AL \ konferenca.htm.

X. Relations with International Organizations in Quality Assurance Area

Preparing to apply in the European Register of Agencies

During 2008, PAAHE has increased contacts and strengthened ties and cooperation with various important international organizations and networks operating in the field of Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Now we have steady connections with the European Organization of Quality Assurance (ENQA), sometimes PAAHE has participated in ENQA’s activities at the request of the latter. PAAHE has been drafting a self-assessment report which will serve as a basis to request an external assessment conducted by foreign experts to be brought by ENQA.

PAAHE has also relations with the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies INQAAHE as well as the Regional and Central and Eastern Europe Network (CEE) with which PAAHE conducted an activity entitled “Workshop on Regional Cooperation” which took place in Albania from 23-25 May 2008 (paragraph 10 Appendix B).

For the first time and there have been established contacts with the Department of Education of UNESCO and ERI SEE network. The aim is to support the initiative of establishing a networking of sub-regional Quality Assurance Agencies with the help of these two organizations.
XI. MORE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT USE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCE

In paragraph 2 of Appendix B, there are data on the budget and finances of PAAHE and its realizations for 2008, its distribution by the main financial items, use of operating expenses connected directly to the specific activities of the agency in relation to the total operating expenses as an indicator of the efficiency and effectiveness of finance use. PAAHE has realized 15,613,639 ALLs out of the planned budget of 17,530,000 ALLs, or 89%.

ANNEX B

VARious ACTIVITIES AND DATA AND INDICATORS OF USE OF HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

1. Relations with international organizations in the field of quality assurance. The activity organized by the Public Agency for Higher Education Accreditation, with the topic: "Workshop on Regional Cooperation", 23, 24, 25 May in "Adriatic Hotel", Durres Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education offered to organize the CEE Network in Albania 2 years ago, at the Workshop held at St.. Petersburg (Russia) in 2006, a request that was approved.

The event was organized on 23, 24, 25 May and was conducted with World Bank funding under the CBA project. The preparatory phase for the most successful organization of this activity took long (about 1 year) and included: the organization of information on the website, the draft of programs for the three meetings, data collection and database preparation, organization of the activity logistics, etc..

On the first day it was the official opening by Mr Pavol Navrat, the chairman of the directing committee of the CEE Network .Regulations. I

Guest of honor was Mr. Genc Pollo, Minister of Education and Science, who hailed the activity and held a speech entitled "Quality assurance in higher education in the context of reform in Higher Education in Albania ". 
On the first day there was the workshop on "Collaboration of agencies of accreditation. Towards mutual recognition of accreditation decisions. The following addressed the workshop:

**Prof. Mark Fredricks, ECA, NVAO Netherlands / Flanders**

**Prof. Dhurata Bozo, Director of PAAHE).**

**Prof. Radu Damian** (Romania ARACIS) and **Prof. Ivan Panaiotov**, NEAA Bulgaria

The workshop followed with discussion by:

**Vladimir Dvorakova** (Accreditation Commission of Czech Republic);

**Irene Mueller** (Member of the FH Council, Austria);

**Christina Rozsnyai** (Hungarian Accreditation Committee / CEEN);

**Jorn Grunewald** (ASIIN, Duesseldorf, Germany), etc..

The workshop was attended by the President of ENQA Mr. Peter Williams.

On the second day the General Assembly of CEE Network was held with these topics:

1) Membership Issues

2) The legal status and the establishment of the European grouping of CEE Network on territorial cooperation

On the third day, **Mrs. Aspasija Hadzisce**, executive director of the ERI SEE, held the paper:

"The initiative for reform in education in the countries of South-Eastern Europe"