

ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional and Programme Accreditation
at Kolegji Heimerer - Heimerer College,
Prishtina, Kosovo

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1. Kolegji-Heimerer – Heimerer College Prishtina

Heimerer College (HC) is a private higher education institution in Prishtina, the capital of Kosovo, which has its roots in the Institute for Southeast Europe Advancement of Health and Nursing Science, and the German Education Institution Heimerer GmbH. The latter has over 40 years of experience in the field of education.

The college was founded in 2010 with the aim to improve quality of healthcare education, and it offers study programmes at Bachelor's and Master's level. Currently 998 students are studying at the college, of which 780 are undergraduates. Language of instruction is Albanian, some lectures are held in English, too.

The following Bachelor's study programmes are offered:

- Nursing (B. Sc.)
- Professional Education in Health (B. Sc.)
- Therapeutic Health Science – Profile – Speech Therapist (B. Sc.)
- Therapeutic Health Science – Profile – Occupational Therapist (B. Sc.)
- Health Sciences for Diagnostic Profiles – Profile – Laboratory Technician (B. Sc.)

The duration of each Bachelor's study programme is three years (six semesters) with a minimum of 180 ECTS.

The college also offers the following Master's programmes:

- Management of Health Institutions and Services (M. Sc.) and
- Psychology of Assessment and Intervention (M. A.)

These programmes are designed for a study duration of two years (four semesters) with a total of 120 ETCS.

Table 1 shows an overview of Heimerer College in numbers.

Kolegji-Heimerer – Heimerer College Prishtina	
Founding year	2010
Number of students	998
- Undergraduate students	780
- Graduate students	218
Academic staff	73
Full-time academic staff	52
Part-time academic staff (heads)	21
Administrative and technical staff	47
Number of programmes:	7
Undergraduate programmes	5
Graduate programmes	2

Average annual tuition fee	
Bachelor's programmes	2,400-2,700 EUR
Master's programmes	2,000 EUR
Dropout rate	3.6%
Percentage of international students	2.4%
Percentage of international staff	27%
Annual budget	about 3 Mio. EUR
Share of tuition fees in the total budget	about 80%

Table 1 – Heimerer College in numbers (Academic year 2021-2022)¹

The academic year starts in October and ends in June of the following year. It consists of 30 teaching weeks in auditorium and 4 to 6 weeks of final exams.

Credit points are the quantitative measure for the overall workload of a student. The overall student workload consists of the time for attending lectures as well as the time for preparing and taking exams, thesis writing, seminars and semester assignments. An effort of 30 hours is taken as a basis to earn one credit point. One study year's effort equals 1,800 hours of work.

As a private higher education institution, Heimerer College does not receive any public funding and relies on student fees as its main source of income.

2. The accreditation procedure

Subject of the proceedings is the assessment of both the institution and the study programme "Management in Health Institutions and Services (M. Sc.)". The assessment was carried out with an informed peer review on the basis of two self-evaluation reports provided by the college, a virtual site visit with several online meetings² between an international expert panel and different stakeholder groups of the college, the experts' assessment report and the accreditation decision taken by the **evalag** Accreditation Commission.

The procedure applies the fit-for-purpose approach, which assesses the institution's ability to achieve its self-imposed goals and whether the programme reviewed is coherent in terms of objective, design and structure. Points of reference are **evalag's**

¹ Source: Heimerer College.

² For this purpose, ZOOM was used as technical platform, based on a contract between evalag and ZOOM for commissioned data processing in order to ensure that the conferences are carried out in conformity with European data protection law. Only authorised persons had access to the meeting sessions, no discussions during these video conferences were recorded. The length of the web conferences did not differ from the conversations that would have taken place in an on-site inspection. Instead of a personal inspection of the premises, the group of experts was provided with various video and image material to enable them to inspect the campus, the premises and the equipment.

criteria for international institutional accreditation³ and for programme accreditation.⁴ Both documents follow the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).⁵

These criteria focus on the profile and the strategies of the institution as well as on the programme and its curriculum. The governance structures which are used to implement strategies, the fields of activities of the institution and crosscutting issues which influence the implementation and the success of the institutional strategies are also examined. Further, the criteria cover all aspects of the implementation of the study programme, its quality assurance and its resources. By assessing compliance with the criteria, the experts check whether the institution has objectives with regard to each criterion, whether it implements activities which serve to reach the defined objectives, and whether it uses mechanisms to assess the results of its activities. Additionally, the experts assess if the institution and the programme meet academic standards that are internationally accepted.

The following criteria are used:

- Institutional profile and strategy
- Governance
- Resources
- Research
- Institution and society
- Quality assurance
- Programme profile
- Curriculum
- Student assessment
- Organisation of the study programme

The experts express the extent of compliance of the criteria with the following assessments: “passed”, “passed subject to conditions”, “suspension of the accreditation procedure” or “failed”. Depending on the degree to which the institution/programme meets the criteria, the institution/programme will be accredited, accredited with conditions or not accredited.

As a first step of the procedure and in preparation for the site visit, Heimerer College produced two self-evaluation reports based on guidelines from **evalag** – one on the institution, the other on the study programme. At the same time, **evalag** formed an international expert panel consisting of two academic experts, one expert from professional practice, and one student expert:

Academic experts:

³ https://www.evalag.de/fileadmin/dateien/pdf/akk_international/standards_kriterien/inst_acc_process_criteria_171201.pdf (accessed 14 February 2022).

⁴ https://www.evalag.de/fileadmin/dateien/pdf/akk_international/standards_kriterien/prog_acc_process_criteria_171201.pdf (accessed 14 February 2022).

⁵ https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf (accessed 14 February 2022). The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is a group of 48 countries that cooperate to achieve comparable and compatible higher education systems throughout Europe. Member countries of the EHEA follow the directives of the so-called Bologna Process to achieve these goals.

- Prof. Dr. Silke Kuske, Prorector for Research and Development, Head of Study Programme Health Services Research and Management in Healthcare (M.Sc.), Fliedner University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf, Germany
- Prof. Dr. med. Dr. PH Timo Ulrichs, Head of Studies on International Disaster Relief and Chair of Global Health and Development Cooperation, Akkon University for Human Sciences, Berlin, Germany

Expert from professional practice:

- Dr. Ines Reith, Head of Corporate Development, Cantonal Hospital Baselland, Binningen, Switzerland

Student expert:

- Beatriz Atienza Carbonell, Quality Assurance Officer at Valencian International University, PhD student (Medicine/Psychiatry) at University of Valencia, Spain. Member of the QA pool of European Students' Union (ESU)

All experts had declared to be free of any conflict of interest.

From **evalag**'s side, Georg Seppmann coordinated and carried out the project, with the assistance of Galina Novikova in Mannheim back office.

The online meetings ([annex](#)) took place on 7 and 8 February 2022. The expert panel met the leadership of Heimerer College, academic and administrative staff, several international cooperation partners of the college, employers, students and alumni from current study programmes. Ilirjana Ademaj-Ahmeti from the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) participated in the online meetings as a guest.

After the online meetings the expert panel produced the assessment report. In addition to the findings from the interview sessions and the documents provided by the college, the reports on the accreditation procedures carried out by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency in 2019⁶ were also taken into account. The expert report was submitted to the college for correction of potential factual errors on 8 March 2022.

The report is structured along the assessment criteria which are the basis of the accreditation. After a short description of the criterion, each chapter starts with a presentation of the current status regarding the criterion which is based on the information in the self-evaluation reports of the college and the information gathered during the online meetings. On this basis, the expert panel assesses the criterion. Finally, the experts list their recommendations for further improvement.

3. Institutional assessment

3.1. Institutional profile and strategy

The institutional profile and strategy define the main activities of a higher education institution and therefore are at the centre of the institutional accreditation procedure. Applying the fitness for purpose approach, the experts mainly check whether an institution has a clearly defined strategy that fits the institutional profile and whether the strategies and profile of the institution comply with internationally accepted standards. The

⁶ https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FR-Heimerer-College_Institutional-Accreditation.pdf, https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FR-Heimerer-College_Management-of-Health-Institutions-and-Services-MSc.pdf (accessed 14 February 2022).

experts also review the processes for the definition of strategies. Furthermore, they look whether the strategies are adequate to reach the institutional objectives.

Current status

Strategic profile

According to the self-report⁷, Heimerer College positions itself as a university of applied sciences inspired by the German model and as a bridge for knowledge transfer from the EU to Southeast Europe. Its vision is to be recognized as a national and regional leader in healthcare education through excellence and innovation in teaching and service.

The mission of Heimerer College is described as “to provide future professionals with the advanced skills necessary for health service provision, in the interest of the individuals and society.” According to own account, the college aims to provide quality education through evidence-based research, international cooperation, well qualified teachers and modern and innovative teaching methods. International standards, the needs of society and the labour market are to be taken into account.

The basic principle of the college is to influence the society by advancing three pillars: education, health and employment. This means the triangular relationship between advanced applied health sciences programmes, health services and employment opportunities to simultaneously meet local and EU health market needs, but also to create positive spillover effects that improve health at work, in personal settings and in the community and drive technological advances in healthcare.

The following strategic goals are formulated:

1. Uniqueness and diversity
2. Interrelation between teaching, research, training and service provision
3. Responsibility towards students, co-workers and society
4. Intertwining with the country through sustainable internationalisation

In its programmes, Heimerer College follows guidelines and standards set by international organisations, for example ASHA⁸, ESLA⁹ for the Speech Therapy programme, ENOTHE¹⁰ for the Occupational Therapy programme, APA¹¹ and EuroPsy¹² for the Psychology programme, and ICN¹³ for the Nursing programme.

The college feels a special responsibility in a “society in transition”: it wants to open up good prospects for young people through excellent education in the health sector, also with a view to the pan-European labour market. However, it is expressly intended to

⁷ Cf. self-report p. 12.

⁸ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), <https://www.asha.org/> (accessed 14 February 2022).

⁹ European Speech and Language Therapy Association (ESLA, former name CPLOL), <https://eslaeurope.eu/> (accessed 14 February 2022).

¹⁰ European Network of Occupational Therapy in Higher Education (ENOTHE), <https://enothe.eu/> (accessed 14 February 2022).

¹¹ American Psychological Association (APA), <https://www.apa.org/> (accessed 14 February 2022).

¹² European Certificate in Psychology, <https://www.europsy.eu/> (accessed 14 February 2022).

¹³ International Council of Nurses, <https://www.icn.ch/> (accessed 14 February 2022).

counteract emigration and “brain drain” from the Balkan countries. Local professional perspectives are to be created, and cooperation partners are to be won locally. During the site visit it was explicitly emphasised “We do not want to be part of the problem but part of the solution.”

Heimerer College reviews its strategies every five years. The Strategic Plan 2022-2026¹⁴ defines the strategic objectives as follows:

1. Developing and providing study programmes according to international standards and labour market needs, through qualitative, practical, digital teaching/learning, research and entrepreneurship
 - 1.1. Quality of education that provides contemporary approaches on the achievement of programme competencies
 - 1.2. Increasing academic and professional capacities in accordance with the academic needs for sustainability and increasing the quality of teaching
 - 1.3. Sustainability of study programmes through the achievement of retention, growth and graduation of students
 - 1.4. Achievements of practical/professional competencies by students
 - 1.5. Quality enhancement through continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of existing study programmes and their advancement according to the standards set by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency
2. Advancing high-end and applied scientific research in health sciences, through professional competence development and embedding research infrastructure in the academic system: applicative, institutional, students, cooperation.
 - 2.1. Integration of research within the teaching processes and social impact
 - 2.2. Advancing scientific and applied research at the Institutional level
 - 2.3. Advancing knowledge and student engagement in scientific research
 - 2.4. Promoting scientific work and expanding scientific cooperation across borders
3. Co-creation of innovative solutions and development of capacities within institution in cooperation with regional and international partners
 - 3.1. Advancing the institution’s capacity to contribute to the community through initiating and managing innovative solutions jointly with relevant international partners
 - 3.2. Development of students’ professional and social competences through student mobilities and internationalisation of campus
 - 3.3. Development of teacher’s competences through international staff mobilities schemes and trainings of international strategic projects
 - 3.4. Development of new institutional units for the advancement of institutional capacities for delivery of teaching, professional training and social and health services through international projects.
 - 3.5. Internationalisation of academic programmes through co-creation of new and revised curricula and pedagogical approaches jointly advanced international partners

¹⁴ Cf. “Draft Strategy 2022-2026”, provided in addition to the self-report.

- 3.6. Internationalisation of institution through memberships at regional and international relevant networks/associations
- 4. Advancing mechanisms for promoting and achieving the highest level of quality standards in educational process
 - 4.1 Quality enhancement of the teaching and learning process through continuous monitoring and evaluation
 - 4.2 Quality enhancement through continuous monitoring and evaluation of students' knowledge, skills and competences
 - 4.3 Quality enhancement through implementation of the institutional accreditation process and study programs according to ENQA requirements
 - 4.4 Quality enhancement through continuous monitoring and the evaluation of student services and the work performance of the college staff

Definition process

The college strategy is embedded in 5-year plans, within which the planning and implementation for the academic years are made. The process of revisioning and refining the college strategy every five years is initiated by the leadership. According to the self-report and the interviews, internal and external stakeholder groups are involved, namely senior leaders, academic and administrative staff, students, local healthcare institutions, public healthcare providers, private healthcare institutions, civil society, local communities, and international partners.

All planning and budgeting processes which includes all internal structures, like the Rector's office, dean's offices, the academic and administrative staff, follow the general mission and strategy through periodic planning, revisions and reporting.

The revision process of the college strategy takes about 6 months and includes the following steps:

1. In the course of December, the college leadership elaborates and proposes the institutional strategy describing vision, mission, key values and principles (aims).
2. 1st workshop (January): college and sectorial leadership and stakeholders decide about the strategic objectives on basis of the document proposed.
3. Sectorial leaderships, together with the heads of the academic programmes and other relevant units start to discuss the sectorial strategies.
Result: draft strategies for each sector submitted to the college leadership.
4. 2nd workshop (March): college and sectorial leaderships and stakeholders discuss and refine the sectorial strategies.
Result: final drafts of sectorial strategies considering the workshop recommendations.
5. College leadership update the draft of the institutional strategy, by incorporating the sectorial strategies submitted to the college leadership.
6. 3rd workshop (April): College and sectorial leaderships harmonize the draft of the institutional strategy and final drafts of the sectorial strategies.
Result: Final documents on the strategy of the institution and the sectors.
7. The Directing Board evaluates and approves these documents (May).

8. Sectorial leaderships prepare and submit to the college leadership the first drafts of the annual work plans (submitted in May, covering the following academic year starting from October).
9. College leadership evaluates these draft annual work plans.
10. 4th workshop: college and sectorial leadership draft the annual workplans based on the approved college strategy.
11. All the recommendations are incorporated on the annual work plans
12. College leadership evaluates and finalises the annual work plans (June).
13. Implementation of the updated college strategy and the annual sectorial workplans (June).

Assessment

Strategic profile

During the interview sessions the experts experienced Heimerer College presenting itself as a higher educational institution with great ambition to offer health studies of professional relevance and international quality standards. The educational mission of the college is closely related to the further development of society in Kosovo as well as in the whole Balkan region.

Vision and mission are clearly stated and published on the website of the college. In the online-meetings, college leadership and management explained in detail and comprehensively the development path that Heimerer College has taken since its founding, and the experts were impressed by what has been achieved so far. The ideas and plans presented for further development seem promising. However, the experts noted some discrepancies between the self-report and the presentation in the interviews. In the view of the experts, Heimerer College should continue to work on developing real metrics and indicators for the achievement of its goals and use these to build a continuous monitoring and reporting system. This is seen as a task for leadership, management and quality management.

The panel appreciates the opportunities Heimerer College is providing to its students and staff. All staff, students and alumni whom the experts interviewed in the following day showed great commitment to the college.

The perspectives and strategies of the college, which were mainly presented in the meeting with the management level, undoubtedly correspond to the profile of the institution.

Definition process

The experts assess that there are regular processes to reflect and adapt the college strategies. However, according to the experts' perception, these processes mainly take place at the leadership and management level. The experts cannot conclusively confirm to what extent the academic staff as a whole is actively involved.

Strategic planning goes ahead together with budget planning on annual basis, considering input and participation from all relevant departments. From the description papers, the planning processes appear structured, with clear responsibilities and deadlines. The individual departments are undoubtedly taken into account, but overall, the concrete planning procedure seems to the experts to be organised more from the top

down. From the impression of the meetings, impulses are to be more expected (and given) from above (=from leadership level) than from the teaching staff.

The decision in which direction the range of study programmes should be expanded and which focal points should be newly set is finally determined by the owners. The college is a private company and managed as such.

Adequacy of the strategies

To the expert panel, the 5-year strategy of the college is consistent and should give the institution the necessary security and sustainability to secure the study programmes offered in particular, even though the finances are heavily geared towards tuition fees, which can be a risk in the long term. The development of recent years speaks for itself: the existing study programmes have been continuously expanded, Europe-wide contacts (e.g., within the framework of Erasmus+) have been established, graduates successfully placed in the labour market. Among the several Erasmus+ activities of Heimerer College presented the experts especially appreciate the Interdisciplinary Allied Health Digital Practice Centre/ SIAHDPC.¹⁵

In the experts' view the strategies both on college and on programme level appear to conform to the college mission and have worked so far. The next step, however, is to also give the applied study programmes a more research-oriented profile that is also consistent and fit for purpose. This is necessary not least because of the increasing complexity of the teaching content to be taught in health studies. This pan-European development (keyword: stronger academisation in the healthcare sector) does not stop at the Heimerer College. The college should plan a strategy for the future that does not overburden the institution or the academic staff.

Areas for improvement

The profile of the institution should be further expanded, in addition to the strong professional aspect, to better include the scientific part. There is nothing wrong with the fact that Heimerer College primarily trains students for later practical work in the health sector. In a university of applied sciences, however, the area of research and further scientific qualification must also be strong: Here, according to the experts, the college is only at the beginning, despite all the successes achieved so far. The college should, for example, make its Bachelor's programmes' graduates (through agreements with partner institutions) fitter for the transition to international Master's programmes. The college should also actively advertise this to students.

The Master's programmes would also gain if they became more attractive to international students. This is above all a question of better external presentation.

With regard to the recommendation from the KAA Review 2019, to develop clear performance indicators for the mission of the college, the experts see some improvements in the field of teaching and learning (see chapter 3.6), but in relation to the institution as a whole, there is still further potential: a continuous and systematic reporting system with key figures for all aspects of the college's mission is not in place.

The business model with the students, almost all of whom working in Germany as part of their internships or after graduation, should be reviewed and should be expanded to

¹⁵ <https://siahdpc.com/> (accessed 14 February 2022)

include a stronger local component. Job creation in Germany must not be played off against Heimerer College's mission to strengthen the health system in Kosovo.

Recommendations and condition

Heimerer College should further elaborate its key performance indicators in direct relation to the mission statement.

Academic staff beyond the leadership and management level should be more actively involved in the strategy building processes.

The academic profile of Heimer College should be sharpened by explicitly referring to the academic connectivity of the degree programmes with regard to further studies.

The further expansion of the college and the introduction of new degree programmes must only take place with a significant increase in academic staff with appropriate qualifications.

3.2. Governance

The criterion focuses on the internal governance and decision-making processes of the institution. The experts check the clarity and transparency of the organisational provisions and governance structure. They examine whether governance structures are adequate to support the institutional strategies and how decision-making processes are organised. Furthermore, the experts check how stakeholder groups are involved in governance, whether the institution provides relevant information about its activities for the internal and external public and whether academic freedom is assured.

Table 2 shows the organisational chart of Heimerer College.¹⁶

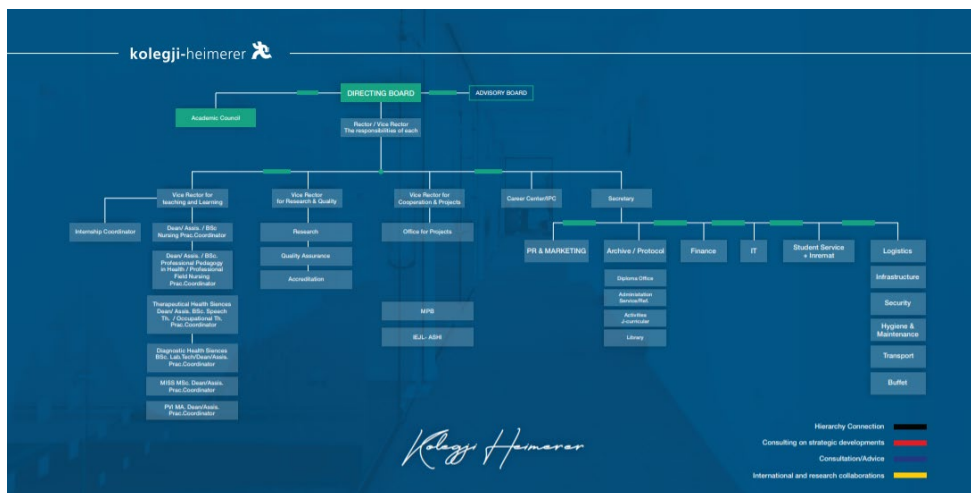


Table 2 – Organisational chart

Current situation

Governance structure and decision-making processes

¹⁶ Source: self-report p. 16.

The governance structure is described in the statute¹⁷. The college operates according to a clear hierarchy.

The Directing Board¹⁸ consists of the founders of Heimerer College. It is responsible for college-wide policy changes and strategic decisions related to the institutions sustainability and profile.

The highest academic organisational authority is the Academic Council. It has eleven members and consists of the Rector of the College (as chair), a representative appointed by the Directing Board, the deans of the academic programmes, the Secretary as a representative of the administration and 2 elected student representatives, one of whom must be the President of the Student Council.

The Rector and her/his office are responsible for managing the academic component of Heimerer College, supported by the Vice Rectors. Currently there are three Vice Rectors: one for Education Processes, one for International Projects and Cooperation, and one for Research. Each Vice Rector has his own area of responsibility with full authority to plan, budget, implement and monitor the development processes and activities within that area.

The deans design, develop and lead the strategic plan for the relevant academic units within Heimerer College. Together with their staff, the deans organise and control the scientific teaching work in the respective academic unit. Besides, they monitor and control the implementation of the curricula, they participate in the drafting of the calendar plan of the teaching process, they set teaching and exam schedules and follow the implementation. The deans are also responsible for the accuracy and correctness of the documentation of the academic unit.

The Secretary is the head of administration. He is responsible for all administrative units, such as PR & marketing, archive/protocol, finance, IT, student services, and logistics.

The representation of students in Heimerer College is ensured through student elections, based on the Regulation on Student Council. Representatives of students are members of decision-making, executive and consultative bodies and reach a quota of around 20% in institutional decision-making. The mechanism for the selection of student representatives is clearly explained in the internal regulations. The institution itself is not involved in the process of selecting student representatives.

The college's decision-making system and internal work regulations are set in accordance with the current legal provisions in Kosovo. Beyond the statute, several regulatory documents define governance, responsibilities, duties and decision-making processes. Strategic planning of the institution is integrated with annual operational planning and budgeting through institutional management systems to ensure adequate implementation, possibilities for feedback and improvement and interventions.

The general idea behind the concept of governance is to put the actual educational programmes at the centre, as the driving force for all other decision-making, planning, budgeting, feedback and improvement processes. To achieve this, decision-making processes are generally decentralised and placed as much as possible in the hands of those they directly affect.

¹⁷ "Statute of the Private Bearer of Higher Education 'College Heimerer'", latest version October 2016. The document was submitted together with the self-report.

¹⁸ In the statute named "Steering Board".

Stakeholders' involvement in governance

Internal stakeholder representatives are involved in governance through the Academic Council (see above).

External stakeholders are also taken into account. Heimerer College follows the approach of offering practice-oriented studies. Thus, professional chambers, health institutions, Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health are involved in the planning, implementation and revision of the existing study programmes as well as in the development of new study programmes. For a number of years, the University Hospital and Clinical Service of Kosovo (SHSKUK¹⁹) has been directly involved in the implementation of the practical parts of study, last not least by providing clinical mentors.

Clarity and transparency and information policy

All institutional organisation and functionalisation in detail are described in documents that are kept up-to-date. These documents are available to all staff and faculty.

The student services component has been digitized, and as such, provides updated information in real time to all Heimerer College students, be that of academic nature (class or training related) or extracurricular nature.

As for the international projects that Heimerer College is involved in, they all have individual websites that are regularly updated.

Heimerer College also uses social media services to address the public: Facebook (about 24,000 followers), LinkedIn (344 followers) and Twitter (27 followers). The college's YouTube channel has 83 followers.

Academic freedom and hiring procedures

Heimerer College aims to create an environment where academic staff can contribute to the institution as well as improve their professional and academic capacities. The academic staff is seen as core resource of the institution. The college ensures that the teaching and research process is independent, formally seen in the strict distinction of responsibilities between the Directing Board and the Academic Council: While the Directing Board deals with financial and strategical issues, the Academic Council deals with all academic issues. Neither party interferes in the competencies of the independent decision-making bodies.

The main responsibility for research and teaching lies with the academics. The college tries to improve the staff's research profile according to the official policy set by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Kosovo: Each academic staff has to publish at least one paper per year.

The study programmes are organised as "faculties", with a Faculty Council that decides on the academic processes like the approval of students' thesis, updates of content of the programmes, etc. The council consists of the academic staff and the head of the academic programme/dean.

The recruitment process of new staff is based on the required professional and academic criteria set in internal legal acts. All is documented and follows proven procedures. Criteria for employment are a relevant university degree, relevant work

¹⁹ Shërbimi Spitalor dhe Klinik Universitar i Kosovës, <https://shskuk.rks-gov.net/> (accessed 14 February 2022).

experience in the private and/or public sector. Academic staff were recruited primarily with the aim of having staff who are able to deliver the relevant courses outlined in the course content. A possible need for further training is also addressed as early as the application process.

The initiative for new recruitments lies with the dean's office that identifies a need and submits its request to the Vice Rector for Teaching. On her/his approval the request is forwarded to the Academic Council to arrange for the vacancy to be advertised.

Academic positions are usually advertised twice a year by posting the call on the website, on social media and with job advertisement agencies. External and internal vacancies contain detailed and accurate job descriptions, and the interviewing and selection of candidates are based on that job description. There are clear guidelines for the selection process.

For the newly appointed staff there are mentoring policies for the first three months (trial quarter) to ensure full involvement in the institution. After these three months, a first performance evaluation for the trial quarter is made.

Assessment

Governance structure and decision-making processes

Heimerer College is clearly structured in governance and decision-making – according to the experts, probably a little too small-scale (as was also admonished in the KAA's 2019 report). Responsibilities and procedures are regulated, starting with the Statute of the College and several regulatory documents. However, the documents in English language sometimes use different terms for the same thing, to name but a few: Steering Board or Directing Board, Advisory Board or Counselling Board. Not all university bodies in the documents presented can be derived from the statute. The organisational chart presented does not reflect decision-making and, above all, voting processes.

The decision-making processes explained in the self-report are closely modelled on the procedures in private sector companies. There is a top-down system of responsibility, and that is ultimately how decisions work. The decision-making bodies consist of responsible persons (e.g., Board, Rector, Vice Rector, deans/heads of study programmes), the entirety of the academic staff is not represented. The experts have no doubt that the concerns and ideas from the academic staff are taken into account, but they have only a voice, not a vote in decisions.

Given the size of the college, the experts question whether it really makes sense to treat the study programmes as separate faculties. Since teachers are deployed across study programmes, the focus should rather be on the transdisciplinary structure.

However, the institute's administration is functioning, and all people working in leadership and in the administration and management appeared very experienced and competent.

Adequacy

In the opinion of the evaluators, Heimerer College is working efficiently and in line with its mission, although measurable indicators of success only partially exist.

Stakeholders' involvement in governance

Academic staff contributes to planning processes (e.g., budget planning), but has no formal role. Last decision lies with the Directing Board. The Academic Council would have the potential to play a more influential role if it were expanded and developed accordingly, like a "university senate" with representatives of all university groups.

Clarity and transparency and information policy

The experts criticise that almost all statutes and regulations are only accessible internally. This does not meet the requirements of transparency. The public presentation should include the constitution of the institution, how the responsibilities of the departments are regulated, how academic teaching functions, especially the procedures for ensuring good academic practice, anti-plagiarism measures, etc. These documents must be made publicly accessible.

From the outside, it is very difficult to get a real picture of how the institution functions.

Prospective students have a right to know exactly what to expect – and not to receive documents about their future studies only after they have started.

The fact that the submitted regulations for academics is classified as confidential is incomprehensible.

Academic freedom and hiring procedures

Academics are free both in scientific and teaching activities. However, the experts warn that the short contract terms for staff could limit this freedom. Corresponding regulations on rights and duties of teaching personnel exist. Not everything seems to be known to staff, esp. the reporting duties about education and training issues.

The experts assess the recruiting procedures of the college as appropriate and in line with international academic practice. The current staff/student ratio allows the college to maintain relatively small groups and a close contact between teachers and students.

The many fixed-term contracts could pose a general risk.

Areas for improvement

The review of the KAA 2019 has already identified the need to better clarify and elaborate the role and presence of students in decision-making bodies, executive bodies and advisory bodies. In the meetings, the Student Council representatives made a good impression on the expert panel, but its concrete sphere of influence is not clear.

The current requirement of one publication per year is an absolute minimum in the view of the experts. The college should act proactively to increase scientific output.

Recommendations and conditions

All documents on governance – at least the statute, the bylaws, regulations, policies, etc. – must be publicly accessible.

All study-related documents must be publicly accessible.

In order to transparently present the responsibilities and processes in the respective regulations, the experts recommend the use of flowcharts.

The college's organisational chart should be publicly accessible and, in addition to the tasks and responsibilities, also show the dependencies.

The Academic Council must be expanded with staff representatives below management level.

Student participation in decision-making processes should be further expanded.

3.3. Resources

The criterion focuses on adequate resource endowment and deployment to sustain the core activities. The experts check the existence and sustainability of a professional funding and financial management. They also check whether the qualification and number of the (academic) staff (full-time and part-time) are adequate to support the institutional strategy as well as to ensure the intended learning outcomes. Further, they review which strategies and processes for the staff recruiting and staff development are used and if the search, hiring and tenure procedure are in line with international academic practices. The resources, facilities and equipment are also part of the criterion. Therefore, the experts examine if the amount and quality of facilities and equipment allow the provision of the programme (library, laboratories, teaching rooms, IT equipment) and if the resources are adequate to reach the objectives of the programme and are in accordance with the institutional strategy.

Current status

Financial resources and management

Heimerer College has an annual budget that should guarantee financial security, stability and well-being of the organisation and its activities. The budget is developed from the bottom up involving individuals at different levels of the decision-making process: Each budget cycle starts in September and ends in August of the next year. Financial stability is achieved from by the students' tuition fees (practically 80% of budget revenues), external funded projects and the owner's capital. Contributions to financial sustainability are joint ventures with sister companies as co-owners such as Heimerer Schools in Germany and Heimerer PIK in Pristina, Tirana.

Procedural steps in the academic sector are described below (non-academic cost centres follow similar paths) based on the financial manual.

1. The office of the Vice Rector for Finance sends to all deans and budget units a copy of the currently approved budget with the space provided for the inclusion of the desired changes for "next year" with a note explaining the limits of the change approved by the Directing Board. This is done in through the budget planning form.

2. Academic cost centres submit their internal discussions to the relevant dean by the end of January. These discussions will include the needs for next year at the college for full-time and part-time teaching, equipment, facilities, etc. The non-academic cost centres will submit the results of their discussions directly to the Vice Rector for Finance's office.
3. The dean's offices will coordinate the requests of the various cost centres under their jurisdiction and send them to management by the end of February.
4. The Vice Rector for Education will meet with the deans in a joint budget protection meeting, and together they will arrive at the figures that will be sent to the Vice Rector for Finance for consideration at the end of March.
5. The Vice Rector for Finance will hold all college budget protection meetings with each budget centre represented by its ultimate director (deans and other non-academic units) during May until a final budget of the entire college is approved.
6. The Rector submits the proposed budget of the college to the Directing Board for approval at its June session.

The Vice Rector for Finance is the key person in the budget cycle. All dean's offices have one employee who is directly involved in collecting and allocating funds according to the approved budget. Employed in the office of the Vice Rector for Finance are two full-time employees (with Bachelor's and Master's degrees) with long experience specialised in economics and finance and two experts in accounting and financial statements who take care of revenue collection and payments.

At the end of each year the annual financial statements are made together with an external auditor.

Human resources and the recruitment process

With the increase of student numbers and study programmes, Heimerer College is continuously expanding the academic and administrative staff. The main criteria for recruitment of all academic, scientific and administrative staff are the relevant qualification according to the field it covers, especially requirements of scientific titles as well as academic titles. The institutional objectives of Heimerer College aim to provide professional qualifications in the fields of health, pedagogy and social sciences, thus aiming to set European standards in the field of professional qualifications in Kosovo. Therefore, the college tries not only to attract new highly qualified academics but also to assist the existing staff in their academic enhancement.

Most Heimerer College academic staff members hold Doctorate and Master's degrees in their areas of teaching. The ratio of teacher to student is 1:13, which is in compliance with the Ministry of Education & Higher Education Decree No. 9274. Table 3 gives an overview in numbers on the academic and administrative staff of Heimerer College.

	Total	Full time academic staff	% Female	International	Part time academic staff	Administrative staff
Total	73	52	54%	27%	21	47
With Bachelor's degree	1	0	100%	0	0	8
M. Sc. cand.	7	2	53%		1	6
With Master's degree	17	0	35%	6%	6	12

PhD cand.	19	3	26%		2	0
With PhD de- gree	26	12	15%	15%	3	1

Table 3 – Academic and administrative staff of Heimerer College²⁰

The recruitment and selection process has already been briefly described in chapter 3.2. It follows the Regulation on the Grading and Engagement of Academic Staff which is included in the Guidelines for Academic Staff. The regulation ensures that the selection, appointment, and promotion of academic staff is made according to the relevant qualifications and relevant workplace experience, thus effectively ensuring that all candidates are treated equally. The regulation on the degrees, titles, selection and promotion of academic staff is based on Law no. 04 / I-037 on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo and in the Status of Heimerer College.

Staff quality assurance and evaluation

Heimerer College has policies, procedures and guidelines adopted in accordance with the applicable legislation on higher education and as required by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA). The academic staff of the college is registered with the KAA in accordance with the criteria set by the KAA in terms of teaching positions. To ensure long-term teaching quality, the college has implemented a Professional Development Plan for Academic Staff, which is included in strategic planning.

Continuous monitoring of staff performance identifies specific needs for improvement and development. The Regulation on Quality Assurance specifies all criteria and processes for performance evaluation, and the entire staff gets familiar with them at the beginning of their employment. After each semester, together with the Quality Assurance Office, the staff organises various surveys with current students in order to evaluate teacher performance among other evaluations. For this purpose, a 360-degree assessment is carried out that includes the assessment of the quality of teaching and study modules. The quality of teaching is evaluated with a questionnaire and focus groups of students requiring student assessment of the learning and teaching atmosphere, the content, the input given by the teacher, the teaching methods, the organisation of the courses, and the assessment given by the teacher. The results are sent to the academic staff, and individual meetings are then organised to discuss the issues emerging from the assessment and to identify the areas for improvement.

Each employment contract entitles all staff to participate in regular trainings and to use resources to support further development, both in terms of publications and institutional support for continued academic development. Besides, the college supports academic staff enrolling in academic programmes offered by international collaborators. The college also organises training by international experts and institutions, and leaders in relevant sciences.

²⁰ Cf. self-report, p. 20.

Facilities

Heimerer College has a modern well-equipped campus in Prishtina with laboratories, teaching rooms, a library, IT equipment with a total area of 5,030 square meters. Room for social activities is provided as well.

Dedicated cabinets are used for teaching and learning in the three profiles, all equipped with corresponding learning material.

Besides, the college offers its students and staff a range of electronic services for communication and efficient management of teaching and learning processes:

- the Student Management Information System (SIMS) which is the college's internal platform in which students have the opportunity to perform their services more easily, be informed, submit exams, see grades, schedule of lectures exercises, exams, different events as well as are able to submit requests for services provided by the student service
- a MOODLE e-learning system for facilitating the work of students and academic staff, the development of learning and access to literature
- equipment for teleconferences for online lectures
- E-library for use within the campus.

The whole teaching facility infrastructure is suitable for students with special needs. There are two elevators in the building of a capacity of 1,000 kg or 13 persons each. The entrance of the college building is wide and suitable for people with disabilities. In addition, the halls and cabinet halls are of enough width for students with disabilities. Also, as far as personal needs are concerned, the college has a well-equipped toilet, according to the highest standards, considering the needs of students with special needs.

Due to the current pandemic, it was not possible to visit the campus but the college provided the experts with pictures, lists of equipment and a five-minute film²¹ on the campus.

Library

The library has 26 working places for students and is open during business days. In addition to the library, students have access to the classrooms which are free after the class schedule and at the period of the exams. These rooms can be used individually as well as for group preparation. Another 30 places for group work are implemented in the computer cabinet which is part of the library.

Heimerer College's library is equipped with 916 books, research and other materials that are also accessible electronically. Most of the printed material (approx. 150 copies) is not older than 20 years. Material in Albanian, English and German is provided. However, students complained that too few teaching materials are available in Albanian.

Heimerer College has full membership in JSTOR,²² a shared digital library created in 1995 that includes more than 2,000 academic journals. JSTOR was founded to help libraries and academic publishers transition their activities from print to digital operations, to expand access to scholarly content around the world and to preserve it for

²¹ <https://youtu.be/QzeOTpmxXvg> (accessed 14 February 2022).

²² <https://www.jstor.org/> (accessed 14 February 2022).

future generations. Every member of Heimerer College staff can have access to JSTOR's collections by browsing for the needed content and can download several articles periodically.

Staff publications in scientific journals are sent to students to be informed of the novelty occurring in their profession and encouraged to conduct research on therapeutic health sciences, as well as to be presented in local and international conferences.

All students and the university academic and administrative personnel are members of the library. They can borrow library materials in accordance with the rules.

Assessment

Financial resources

In the view of the experts, the financial management of the college is professional. The budget has been balanced for years. Sustainability seems likely.

The financing concept of Heimerer College is based on a constant inflow of tuition fees from students. It relies on the general interest of the Kosovo population in nursing and paramedical professions. However, it could be that the interest changes. In this case, Heimerer College needs to diversify its funding concept, e.g., by integrating it into government programmes on the enhancement of the healthcare system.

Staff

From the point of view of the expert panel, the qualification of the teaching staff at Heimerer College seems adequate for study programmes at Bachelor's as well as Master's level. Since its foundation, the college has made steps to improve the academic profile of the staff. In this context, the experts welcome the fact that the college lists the publications of its staff on the website. However, the experts must note that almost 50% of the teachers of the Master's programme do not hold a PhD, although most of them are PhD candidates. Moreover, those with a PhD have a very scarce research production (only one or two indexed scientific articles). This must be improved.

The experts assess the recruiting procedures of the college as appropriate and in line with international academic practice. The current staff/student ratio allows the college to maintain relatively small groups and a close contact between teachers and students.

The relation between full-time and half-time staff seems appropriate. The experts note from the interview sessions that teaching is carried out by dynamic and motivated lecturers. Some of them have international working and educational experience which is appreciated by the expert panel.

Facilities

From the pictures alone, the expert panel got a good impression from the existing facilities but real assessment is not possible without a visit. Teachers as well as students indicated that the facilities and resources are seen as sufficient.

The experts welcome the expansion plans for laboratories and IT.

Areas of improvement

The library should be expanded, more teaching material in Albanian would also be desirable. But it would probably be even more important to intensify the teaching of foreign language skills.

Conditions

The college must intensify its efforts to increase the academic output of the teaching staff.

A fixed financial amount must be set in the budget to promote publications, projects, exchanges with other scientists, staff mobility, and international scientific cooperation.

The expansion plans for laboratories and IT must be realised as presented.

3.4. Research

The criterion focuses on the research profile and academic goals of the institution and whether the profile fits the institutional strategy. Moreover, the experts check whether the academic standards are fulfilled, how the research process is organised and supported by the institution and how research is evaluated within the institution. They also check how the training of young researchers is organised, how the institution assures the academic standards of the training of young researchers and their rights.

Current status

Research and institutional strategies

The research profile of Heimerer College is oriented towards four strategic thematic areas: public health, advanced nursing education, diagnostic health sciences, psychosocial well-being, and rehabilitation sciences. These research areas are in line with the study programmes offered, thus also creating opportunities to build and achieve learning competences for students and academic staff through research in the pertaining fields.

The college has integrated research in academic departments' annual plans and objectives. All departments are required to produce two publications per year, relevant to the study programmes and research profile of the institution, whereas interdisciplinary collaborations are highly encouraged in academic staff publications. In addition, staff is required to form research groups with a specific thematic profile, plan attendance in health science conferences, locally and regionally, and attend training for research competence building. Heimerer College has outlined a number of main principles imperative to academic research, which include:

- Evidence-based practice
- User involvement in the process, including students and community members
- Multi-disciplinarity
- Co-creation

Research and promotions

The Vice Rector for Research has produced written policies to coordinate research outputs. The policy details two main strategic objectives, which include 1.) promoting high-end research, in particular in cooperation with external institutions and partners, and 2.) integrating research activities in the educational curriculum, with particular emphasis on student engagement in research outputs. Further specific strategic objectives as outlined for the period 2019-2022 include:

- Fostering institutionalisation of research in dean's offices
- Building research capacities of academic staff
- Encouragement and support of academic personnel to conduct high-end research, particularly in collaboration with other national and international institutions.
- Engaging students in research activities
- Support for student-created work and scientific research
- Capacity-building for students' research skills
- Promotion of scientific efforts in the country through activities, events, and the media
- Fostering cooperation and networking at the international level

In order to pursue the profile and strategic objectives, Heimerer College has established a core research unit at the office of the Vice Rector for Research. This unit exercises a coordinating role for research activities and human resources.

Heimerer College financially supports publications. The allocation of funds is determined through the Regulation for Financial Support. Requests are confirmed by the Vice Rector for Research and approved by the Rector. Table 4 illustrates the procedure.

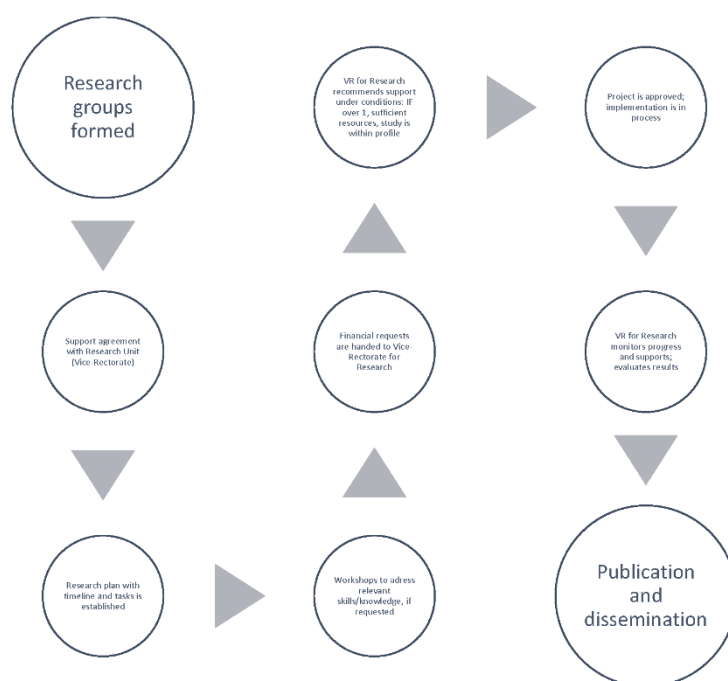


Table 4 – The process of research support at Heimerer College

To strengthen its strategic orientation towards research in health sciences, the college collaborates closely with the Institute of Southeast Europe for Health and Social Policy.²³ Examples of this collaboration include research on compliance of nursing staff with hygiene standards and a multi-disciplinary validation of childhood well-being assessment instrument, both part of its evidence-based practice, user involvement and multidisciplinary principles.

Procedures for academic titles at Heimerer College follow the academic standards for research set by national legislation. The Regulation for Promotion applies to all academics who pursue academic titles and promotion, and is based on main criteria of teaching experience, research outputs and education credentials.

Currently, there are 23 members of faculty staff carrying PhD titles, 16 PhD candidates, 20 Master of Science titles, 8 Bachelors of Science and 3 MSc candidates. Overall, these staff members have been engaged in over 300 research publications, with a large number engaged as personal instructors. A list of publications was submitted together with the self-report.

At individual level, each member of the academic personnel has a designated number of hours which they must dedicate to research. This instrument along with annual publications is used as a performance indicator in performance evaluations which are conducted annually with all staff. According to the regulation on academic staff, it is required from each academic staff to have at least one publication per year.

Regarding the implementation of studies, research is also supported with seed money from the college to cover administrative and operational expenses for research. These funds are required to be part of annual plans, and budgeted before each academic year. In addition, the Vice Rector for Research encourages and assists faculty members to pursue external funding for their research ideas based on available open calls.

With regards to ethics, Heimerer College has established the Ethical Committee. The task of the committee is to review all human-subject research using ethical regulations pertaining to the institution as well as international standards of the disciplines. The Ethical Committee meets on a needs-basis and evaluates all ethical proposals submitted for review. This includes dissertations at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as research taking place outside of the teaching process.

Training of young researchers

The Vice Rector for Research coordinates capacity-building in the field of academic research for young researchers through formal training sessions, organised on a monthly basis during the academic year. Training sessions are offered to graduate students undergoing research projects, and undergraduate students who are completing their dissertation project.

A second line of training is offered to academic staff who are part of research groups within the institutional profiles. These trainings target more advanced levels of skills and knowledge, and are designed to meet the needs of attending staff. Currently, trainings are offered on the topics of research design, statistical analysis, qualitative methodology, data analysis, advanced statistical analysis and writing. In addition, the office trains young researchers to liaison with scientific journals, in order to support the technical publication processes as well.

²³ <https://isee-hsp.net/> (accessed 14 February 2022)

Apart from the standardised trainings, the research unit also provides independent consultation hours for researchers.

The college also supports faculty members who are pursuing PhD programmes in other universities abroad. The college assists students and staff to apply and secure acceptance in their preferred PhD programmes, through recommendations and technical support in applications. In certain cases, the college provides opportunities for remote engagement for PhD candidates who wish to remain active at the college as associates in research projects. The Vice Rector for Research also provides support for PhD candidates while they deliver their PhD requirements. For example, the office assists candidates with their research papers, through advisory, support with writing and conducting analysis, as well as data collection operations should they wish to collect data in Kosovo.

Heimerer College follows a policy on recognition of work credits for all personnel and students involved in research projects.

Assessment

The experts appreciate that research has become a more prominent part of the college's strategy. Encouraging young researchers and linking research and teaching are crucial for a higher education institute dedicated to nursing and paramedicine to document its ability to set themes, and not just act as a training centre for practical skills required for a job abroad.

There are numerous efforts to integrate research into the learning and teaching process and to support researchers. The Vice Rector for Research plays an important role in this context. In the view of the experts, the college has already created good organisational preconditions. In recruitment procedures, the research profile of applicants is taken into account in addition to their teaching profile.

However, the number of publications, in particular in internationally relevant journals, is still low. It is to be noted, that the college meanwhile explicitly demands academic staff to do research and to publish.

With a view to the study programmes, it can be stated: Research is a topic, smaller projects are integrated into the teaching process, research also plays a role in the internships. During the meetings, regular trainings offered by external experts were mentioned. The expert panel got the impression that these will be more extended in the future.

As already mentioned in chapter 3.2, the research policy and the guidelines for good scientific practice must be made visible and publicly accessible. This would not least benefit the external image of the college.

Areas for improvement

The experts believe that Heimerer College should make greater efforts to increase its activities towards research, especially in practical issues of health challenges in Kosovo and the region. The prerequisites are good: intensive international contacts, a young motivated team with good academic training and a certain financial leeway of the institution. The college should proceed here: In the view of the experts, it is not enough just to hold out the prospect of funding for research projects or publications in general – a fixed budget sum must be set.

The amount and how to access this supportive money should be clearly communicated in the college. The meetings with the teachers showed that among the academic staff there is only a more general knowledge about funding for research. According to the experts, the college research policy must be more formalised and better communicated.

Clear incentives should be given for the participation in research projects. This could mean not only financial support but also reduction of teaching hours. It is also conceivable to specify concrete research components in employment contracts or to agree on research projects.

Concerning new projects, more applied research projects could be implemented that address public health problems in Kosovo. This could be made topics of teaching, too. During the pandemic, some approaches in this direction in cooperation with local communities have already been implemented.

Recommendations and conditions

Substantial resources must be allocated to research by setting and communicating a fixed amount for research in the budget.

Heimerer College should consider more incentives in order to support academic further qualification of staff.

Systematic measures must be taken to identify the talents of those students to put into research and later to be promoted.

Students should be further encouraged to participate in research projects and thus combine research content, education and training approaches in the sense of Humboldt.

Strategic partnership contracts with universities abroad should be increased to offer more postgraduate/doctorate for the young scientists.

3.5. Institution and society

The experts check whether the strategy of the institution takes the needs of the society into account. They also examine the activities with which the institution connects to the society among others with cooperation, internationalisation, entrepreneurship, diversity. In addition, the experts review whether the activities fit the strategy.

Current status

Considering the needs of society

The initiative to found Heimerer College is to be seen as a response to the prevailing social problems in Kosovo, especially in the health and social sectors. The needs of the community in Kosovo are in focus as well as the developments of the health sector in Europe in general. The long-term goal is to introduce good education at an academic level in the health sector in Kosovo, based on international experience and standards.

According to the self-evaluation report and the interview sessions with the college management, the study programmes respond to Kosovo's labour market needs. The college involves regional stakeholders, ministries concerned and also partner

universities, conducts regular needs analyses and attempts to make timely adjustments to the programme designs.

Institutional arrangements with international partners (e.g., Helios Kliniken GmbH, Germany) have been made. Thus, the employment of 240 graduates from Heimerer College is guaranteed every year. In the self-report as well as in the interview session the college emphasized the high percentage (98%) of employability of its young graduates in view of a country with extremely high unemployment.

In the meetings, it was reported that there is also an increasing number of health institutions in Kosovo and abroad that offer Heimer University students the opportunity for practical training.

Connection to civil society

Heimerer College is encouraging its entire staff to initiate and participate in various community-oriented local projects with their expertise, and also often contributes as one of the co-funding parties. Also, the college has successfully managed to establish partnerships with local industry. Given its applied science orientation, the cooperation with the healthcare organisations in particular is treated with high priority across all levels and channels. Regarding the cooperation with the industry in relation to the academic programmes, Heimerer College ensures the involvement of the industry representatives from the beginning of the process of their curricula development, aiming to grasp directly from the latter an accurate picture in terms of their needed/demanded competences and then translate into content, approaches, and expected learning outcomes.

For example, in October 2021, the college together with its local and international partners established the Industry Advisory Board (IAB), as an alternative formally structured mechanism to support the cooperation in this regard.

To further expand and institutionalise the concept of entrepreneurship, Heimerer College has intervened at different levels. At the institutional level it has created the Joint Venture Group (JVG), which comprises relevant experts and investors ready to support the new innovative ideas of the staff and students. Further, the college organises two innovation days per year, after the end of each academic semester, where the most innovative entrepreneurs pitch their ideas to the JVG members seeking their technical and/or financial support to tap into their entrepreneurial potential.

Besides, numerous partnerships exist with higher education institutions in Kosovo, NGOs, healthcare organisations, donors and policy making institutions focusing on health and social issues.

Among the community based-serves that staff and students provide for their communities are free health services to the general public, nursing homes, elderly home care centres, rehabilitation centres, and paediatric clinic-oncological wards. Such readiness to support their communities has been reflected in many other ad-hoc events not only in Kosovo. For example, a team from Heimerer College comprising licensed and students of healthcare disciplines (psychology, nursing), voluntarily served the community in Albania after a disastrous earthquake had hit them in 2019. Similarly, during the collapse of the healthcare system in Kosovo due to the covid-19 pandemic, Heimerer College health professionals were allowed to work part-time, whereas students volunteered in providing nursing services especially at healthcare centres in different communities.

Assessment

Relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

There is an obviously strong connection between the college's intentions and Kosovo public needs. Heimerer College's portfolio addresses public needs and necessities. The self-evaluation report and the interviews during the meetings also gave proof that college executives, staff and students give high attention to the needs of society.

From the experts' point of view, the discussions during the meetings with several stakeholders explained very well how the culture in Kosovo has changed from a "push" to a "pull back" culture. Like the founders of the college, the experts also believe that a good education can help people to return to Kosovo. The Master's programme in Health Management responds to the needs of Kosovar society and the institutional strategy to change the health management model of the country's health services (e.g., to change from a socialist to a capitalist management).

There is a huge need for qualified personnel for the development of health services in Kosovo. Heimerer College should also devote more effort to this task and, in the long term, consider the internships and job opportunities in Germany as just one step in an overall process – in the sense of a "circular migration" (i.e., training semesters in German institutions with the aim of gaining qualifications and training, and then returning to Kosovo to participate in strengthening the national healthcare system).

The experts appreciate the innovative character of the whole institution in a rather difficult social and public environment in Kosovo. Obviously, the college has a good partner environment and is appreciated by the regional healthcare institutions. Students from Heimerer College are gladly accepted for internships. The whole range of international destinations (not only Germany) for exchange is seen as a big plus for such a small institution.

Recommendation

As mentioned above (see 3.4), the good connection to society should be used to implement more applied research projects together with students on healthcare problems in Kosovo.

3.6. Quality assurance

The criterion focuses on the internal and external mechanisms used by the institution to monitor and improve its quality. The experts check the existing quality assurance concept of the institution, which indicators are used for monitoring the achievement of objectives and how the institution and the persons responsible for the programme systematically collect, analyse and use relevant information about their activities. Moreover, the experts examine whether quality assurance is used regularly, systematically and effectively for quality enhancement, if quality feedback loops are closed and how the institution fosters the development of a quality culture in general.

Current status

Quality assurance concept of Heimerer College

According to the self-report, quality development is seen as a common obligation, which involves all members and internal and external stakeholders of the college. The

main responsibility for quality management lies with the Rector and the Academic Council. The deans and the Programme Commission on programme level are responsible for the quality assurance of the study programme they are responsible for.

To assure and enhance its quality Heimerer College uses internal and external quality assurance instruments which are coordinated by the Quality Office which is established by the Rector and Academic Council. The quality assurance instruments and processes are implemented and described in the Regulation on the Quality Assurance System which aims to build a mechanism for promoting and achieving the highest level of quality and standards in educational and scientific activities, as well as the professional activities, administrative services and other support services of Heimerer College. The Regulation on the Quality Assurance System covers the area of quality assurance continuous improvement and routines. It specifies the processes and mechanisms which are focused on the analysis of the actual situation and reviewing the vision in relation to the strategic developments of the college, collecting weaknesses that were noticed during the quality assurance process; drafting the strategic plan for improving the weaknesses noticed during the year; foreseeing the innovations and need for changes during the self-evaluation process.

The most important quality circle at Heimerer is the five-year Strategic Plan of the College which sets strategic and specific objectives, including those related to quality assurance. Each academic unit develops its own strategic plan in alignment with the objectives of the college. The strategic plan contains measurable outcomes of strategic planning goals and objectives and these measurable outcomes comprise of internal targets, which the college management agreed with academic and administrative units. The results contribute in defining improvement actions. These actions result in further improvement of the study programmes as well as administrative and support services.

All the academic and administrative units are included in the quality assurance process according to the planning. All internal and external participants within the educational process and scientific-research and professional activities of Heimerer College, participate in the design and development of the quality assurance system and make use of the results.

Internal participants are the students and teachers, associates, administrative, technical and support staff of Heimerer College. External participants are legal persons and organisations that relate to the activities of Heimerer College (e.g., educational institutions, healthcare, businesses, local and national government bodies, employers and alumni).

Quality assurance processes and instruments

All study programmes offered by Heimerer College are subject to regular internal and external evaluation (review) prior to their accreditation. The self-report describes self-evaluation measures conducted periodically. The results are regularly published on the website.

The model for self-evaluation adapted by Heimerer College is focused on three most important aspects for a higher education institution, including: quality of teaching, quality of learning and student support. For these three aspects, the college's own group for quality drafted effective evaluation methods, based on the Total Quality Management model (TQM).

Heimerer College applies a 360-degree assessment process and within the assessment are several processes including the monitoring of the teaching conducted by the Quality Office. The office in cooperation with each deans' offices monitors teachers

regarding the methodology, atmosphere, assessment and other components. The data is used to evaluate the teachers as well as the programs and to look for comparisons over the years to assess whether the institution has made progress and achievement in the teaching process.

At the end of each semester, various regular evaluations are organised. The results of the internal and external quality assurance system are ensured by the following processes and instruments that are common to all academic units of the college:

- Evaluation of module and teacher performance (e.g., class visits)
- Evaluation of knowledge, skills and competences (e.g., through personal interviews)
- Evaluation of student support services (through questionnaires)
- Regular surveys among alumni
- Survey with employers
- Staff performance evaluation in cooperation with the Quality Office and with 4 instruments:
 - 1) Quality of work and satisfaction level of the staff
 - 2) Evaluation of the supervisor's performance by the employees.
 - 3) Staff Evaluation by the supervisors
 - 4) Agreement for further professional development

Feedback loops

After each evaluation, reports are prepared including recommendations and activities for quality improvement both in the teaching/ learning and administrative processes. These reports and analyses identify the needs for change, bring innovative ideas for implementation, based on them recommendations are given that are then included and implemented, either in programme development or in the teaching process, and in other important processes of the profile in order to increase the quality. The reports are shared with all members of Heimerer College.

Involvement of stakeholders

All academic and administrative units are included in the quality assurance process according to the planning. All internal and external participants within the educational process and scientific-research and professional activities of Heimerer College participate in the design and development of the quality assurance system and make use of the results.

On programme level, staff members participate in self-evaluations in all the areas and cooperate with the reporting processes arising from these evaluations. Also, at least weekly meetings are held to reflect the quality of work, based on quality reports, related co-teaching and learning process, the quality of the research and scientific aspects, as well as the quality of the various supporting and administrative services. All proposed activities are initially included in the strategic planning. They are then reflected in annual plans and are monitored in quarterly, monthly and weekly bases. Additionally, planning processes are continually completed, depending on the new needs identified by the quality assurance processes.

Students, lecturers, administrative staff are involved during the preparation of self-assessment report in the framework of the first and periodic accreditation of the institution

and the study programmes. Current students' feedback as well as alumni feedback obtained through the respective questionnaires is used as an input for the improvement of the study programme. At the same time student feedback for the supporting services is also used as an input for improving and assisting academic units such as library, IT and other services.

Quality assurance in research

The functions of the Vice Rector for Research principally focus on promoting the college's research activities, as well as on education and research with particular reference to the PhD programmes, evaluation of the quality of research, the development of competitive projects in collaboration with other institutions and national and international public partners, and promotion of the internationalization of research together with the Vice Rector for International Relations and the deans. This is best explained by the fact that the College has been organising the International Symposium of Health Sciences for 11 years now. This event includes oral presentation sessions and poster presentations touching on important health areas in order to advance and increase knowledge in the field of diagnostics, psychology, nursing, medicine and digitalization of health services.

To increase the involvement of staff and students in research activities, the research office employs support staff who are directly involved in the research. According to the self-report and to the interview sessions substantial improvements have been made in relation to the engagement of staff in research. Each deanery has created "research groups" with internal and external members from various fields of expertise. The aim of the group is to focus on one area of research in the long term, to be able to provide relevant, original, and advanced research studies in this field.

The Vice Rector for Research and Quality organises regular monthly trainings for staff advancement in the field of research and quality improvement of Heimerer College publications. Some of the topics covered are: statistical analysis, writing of academic papers, publication process and other trainings in this field.

In order to advance the quality of scientific research at the institutional level and provide financial support, the Vice Rectorate for Research and Quality has formulated the document for financial support. The document sets out the criteria that scientific research must contain to gain support, where one of these criteria is that only publications in journals with an impact factor greater than one will be financially supported. The financial amounts are clearly regulated, and the application process is modernized.

An integrated list of all the used topics for the diploma work of students already exists within the IT infrastructure, which is searchable, and full documents are integrated with links. The list contains which topics, mentors, types of students, and which methodologies have produced more qualitative research. This then will be used to guide the establishment of a catalogue for future topics for diploma the-sis.

Heimerer College is progressing fast towards having a fully functional internal anti-plagiarism system. First, a database of electronic versions of all the submitted thesis of students in the college for all years already exists within the Vice Rectorate of Research and Quality. Secondly, the relevant research staff have been recently introduced to the use of special anti-plagiarism software.

Assessment

The experts observe a well-developed quality assurance system based both on formal and informal processes. The academic and administrative staff are very dedicated, act professionally and ambitiously and demonstrated that they have internalised all QA processes.

The experts assess the instruments employed as well adapted for a small institution as Heimerer College, professionally designed and coordinated by its quality assurance officer.

The college uses internal and external instruments in a professional way in order to assess their activities from different point of views and to get external feedback and expertise where necessary. They use the external support systematically to improve the internal capacities of the college, and further to manage its quality independently.

The quality assurance activities focus on teaching and learning as well as on research and administrative processes related to the well-being of students. During the online meetings the students confirmed that they are very satisfied with the education and the student services at the college. Students receive feedback on the views they express in the student evaluation surveys.

The quality assurance concept used by Heimerer College seems to be appropriate to assure and improve the quality of teaching and learning at the college. Moreover, the quality assurance instruments, which are currently in place, seem to be accepted and implemented throughout the institution and are used for further improvement.

Areas for improvement

While important performance indicators exist at the level of teaching, the college still lacks clear institutional metrics (as already mentioned in chapter 3.1).

The involvement of external experts in the college's internal quality assurance should be considered. These can be experts with an academic background as well as experts from practical healthcare.

Recommendations or conditions

None.

3.7. Programme profile

The profile and objectives of a study programme is an essential criterion for the assessment. The experts have to evaluate, whether the objectives of the programme are in line with the profile and the strategic goals of the institution. Further, they assess if the intended learning outcomes of the programme are well defined, publicly accessible and whether they correspond to the type and level of qualification provided by the programme. They also consider whether the intended learning outcomes are based on academic or professional requirements (standards), public needs and the demands of the labour market, and if they contribute to the employability of the graduates. The experts have to evaluate the programme's relation to research (procurement of scientific methods in theory and practice, research-based teaching). The experts assess whether the profile and objectives of the programme comply with internationally accepted standards. The experts consider the international dimension of the programme and verify

whether the qualification of the academic staff is adequate in terms of the profile and the objectives of the programme.

Current status

Programme profile and objectives

The study programme “Management of Health Institutions and Services (M. Sc.)” is a two-year full-time programme. Successful graduates receive a Master’s degree. Table 2 shows some statistical information on the programme:

Name of study programme	Management of Health Institutions and Services
Founding year	2014
Final degree	Master of Sciences (M. Sc.) in Management of Health Institutions and Services
Duration of study	2 years
Credits (ECTS or other system)	120 ECTS credits
Number of students (actual semester)	60
Number of graduates (from the beginning)	52
1 st year students (actual semester)	22
% international students	0
Dropout rate (actual semester)	0
Dropout rate (average in last 5 semesters)	2
Full-time academic staff in the programme	Heads 20
Part-time academic staff in the programme	Heads 5

Table 5 – Data on the study programme (Source: Heimerer College)

According to the self-evaluation report, the Master’s study programme “Management of Health Institutions and Services” aims to primarily fill the long-existing gap in the management and leadership of healthcare institutions and clinics throughout Kosovo as well as to develop managers who will make and develop policies and manage organisations in the public health sector. The future managers shall be prepared to develop, implement, and evaluate policies and management strategies in healthcare organisations and their services, and also in public health.

According to the self-report, graduates can later work in a wide variety of senior leadership roles, such as:

- clinical manager
- practice manager
- aged care manager
- health and welfare services manager
- medical or hospital administrator
- primary health organisation manager

- NGO
- health policy analyst
- senior consultant
- research associate
- project manager
- health care analyst

Learning outcomes

The two-year programme aims to expand personal knowledge and skills in management, evidence-based management, administration, public health, health policies, leadership, project management, strategic management, and financial management. The following learning outcomes are listed:

- To reach a shared understanding in order to work in interdisciplinary contexts with different expertise qualities, knowledge bases, and disciplinary perspectives;
- Originality in knowledge application, as well as a practical understanding of how research and inquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the field;
- The ability to communicate and interact productively on healthcare issues (via listening, speaking, and writing) with a diverse and changing industry, workforce, and citizenry;
- The ability to manage teams, projects, and people; to work in change-oriented healthcare organisations; and to mentor a diverse and changing workforce, as well as to implement management practices that optimize workforce performance;
- Understanding and application of legal and ethical principles to managerial and leadership decisions affecting healthcare organisations;
- The ability to align an organisation's human resource capacity, practices, and processes with its strategic goals;
- The ability to hold people accountable to performance standards and/or ensure organisational, professional, and ethical compliance;
- The ability to measure, monitor, and improve health care organisations' safety, quality, access, and system/care delivery processes;
- The ability to assess population and community health needs from the standpoint of public service;
- The ability to investigate social and behavioural health determinants and comprehend how healthcare systems can meet the needs of vulnerable populations;
- The ability to use information systems and evidence-based management principles to solve problems, plan and make strategic decisions, and implement and measure change;
- The ability to synthesize evidence and apply statistical, financial management, entrepreneurship, economic, and cost-effectiveness tools and techniques to organisational analysis;
- Understanding of healthcare financing, as well as the ability to use financial analysis as a tool for organisational control;

- Understanding of policy and delivery processes, as well as consideration of demographic, cultural, political, and regulatory factors involved in and influencing health policy and management decision-making;
- The ability to set goals and objectives for improving health outcomes that take into account the social determinants of health and the socioeconomic environment in which the organisation operates;
- The ability to manage health risks, threats, and damage during disasters and/or emergencies;
- Interpret the organisation's public policy, legislative, and advocacy processes.

The detailed objectives and learning outcomes of each course are described in the course syllabus.

Relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

The programme was established and designed with the support of EU funds²⁴ and first accredited by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency in 2014²⁵. It reflects the college's vision of a learning environment for students where they are challenged to demonstrate professional perfection, respect for professional codes of ethics, interrelated learning with research, innovation in research, and focus on promoting the profession of health care managers. The study programme is interdisciplinary in nature to prepare future leaders to deal with different perspectives of management and leadership at different organisational levels (top, meso and lower management). The programme's philosophy is based on the need for a multi-faceted role of managers as a member of the health care team, including management, administration, planning, consulting, education, and research.

Heimerer College monitors graduate employability and periodically gathers statistics on graduates' employment. According to the college's own surveys, 97% of the graduates of the Master's programme "Management of Health Facilities and Services" have so far progressed in their personal work. 65.8% of students (alumni and 2nd years) confirm that their studies have helped them achieve their career and personal life goals, 73.7% of these students stated that the programme has helped them in the field in which they currently work.

Relation between study and research

According to the self-evaluation report as well as the interview sessions during the site visit, Heimerer College tries to integrate research into teaching and learning processes. All lecturers of the study programme are advised to include student projects in the syllabus when suitable for the course. Each student must do research before doing the thesis.

As an institute of applied science, Heimerer Colleges focuses on the practical parts. Practice is an important pillar in the framework of studies of "Management of Health Institutions and Services". The practice module is located in the fourth semester, includes 6 ECTS credits or 180 hours, and is completed over the course of 4-6 weeks.

²⁴ TEMPUS project 2012-2016.

²⁵ <https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2022-30-Vendim-Heimerer.pdf> (accessed 14 February 2022).

Student should learn to work in accordance with evidence-based practice that means continuous, clear, and measured use of the best present evidence in making decisions together with the client and based on integrating individual clinical expertise with the best external evidence available from systematic research.

Starting in 2022, Heimerer College tries to implement a new approach for increasing research competencies through a student-run interdisciplinary innovative research lab (S2IRL). Fields of research should address current community challenges and provide practical impact on the community.

International dimension

As mentioned above, an international TEMPUS project has initiated the programme. The programme was designed with the assistance from several European higher education institutions, namely the University of Applied Science Münster (Germany), the Tyrolian Private University (UMIT) Hall (Austria), and the University of Maribor (Slovenia). The contacts to these organisations still exist.

The further process of keeping the programme curriculum up-to-date continuously considers the curricula of similar programmes from abroad.

Foreign guests are on site at regular intervals to offer lectures or exchange information on the latest subject developments. There is a strong connection with the German Heimerer institutions.

Students and staff are encouraged to join exchange and mobility programmes under the regulation on student exchange. Several partnership agreements with universities from abroad exist.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

According to Kosovo legislation, a Master's programme must have at least three full-time PhDs. The study programme "Management of Health Institutions and Services (M. Sc.)" has a total of 14 PhDs and seven PhD candidates.

All teachers are advised to publish. A list of publications is annually delivered to the rectorate.

Staff recruitment is done according to the Regulation on the Grading and Engagement of Academic Staff which is included in the Guidelines for Academic Staff. The recruitment takes place via a complex selection process with clear objectives and criteria.

Assessment

Programme profile and objectives

From the self-report, the syllabus and the online-meetings, the expert panel got the impression that the presented programme fits well into the portfolio of the college, esp. in view of the college's overall vision of improving the healthcare system in Kosovo. The programme contributes to the college's reputation.

Content and structure emerged out of an international project. The contacts from back then are still current, and the teaching content is regularly reviewed and updated together in the network of partners.

Learning outcomes

As far as it can be seen from the translated documents, the learning outcomes of the programme and of each module are clearly defined and regularly updated. Students' learning success is regularly assessed by using a variety of assessment methods.

The intended learning outcomes described in each module description are concise, clear and aligned with content. Not in every aspect the formulation meets exactly Master's level.

Relation to academic and professional requirements and public needs

There is an obviously strong connection between the college' mission, the programme's intentions and Kosovo public needs. As already said before, Heimerer College's portfolio addresses public needs and necessities, which is mirrored in the Master's programme.

Although the college presented a few figures on graduates there is no systematic follow-up of career paths after graduation.

Relation between study and research

By its own account, the college is expanding the research component in the programme. The experts appreciate that Heimerer College tries recently to implement a new approach for increasing research competencies through a student-run interdisciplinary innovative research lab (S2IRL) where fields of research should address current community challenges and provide practical impact on the community. According to the experts, this approach of practical science will increase the academic quality of the programme.

International dimension

The experts appreciate that the international partner network of Heimerer College is still involved in the further development of the study programme. Representatives of the partners took part in some of the online sessions, and they painted a very positive picture of the cooperation with the college.

The implementation of the programme is going along with continuous exchange with international partners as well as with the German parent institution.

International standards in teaching seem to be generally met. The same applies to online teaching, which has been successfully expanded during the pandemic.

Staff qualification (see also criterion 3.3)

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the programme fulfils the requirements of higher education on Master's level in Kosovo but continuous improvement of the teaching staff has to be ensured. A rising number of scientific reports and articles would be an indicator. According to the experts, the number of teachers non-holding a PhD qualification is still quite high.

The college has already made great efforts to prepare and train staff for teaching on Master's level. This should be expanded. The experts recognise that there are explicit criteria for staff recruitment and that the recruitment process itself seems to be well developed.

The relation between full-time and half-time staff seems appropriate. The experts note from the interview sessions that teaching is performed by committed and motivated lecturers. Obviously, a variety of teaching methods is used. However, the experts had some doubts about how closely the syllabus is taught. The expert panel would suggest that the college should better monitor the teaching.

The experts appreciate that the university offers different opportunities to teaching staff for improving their teaching methods.

Recommendations

The college should intensify exchange and mobility possibilities for students in the programme, combined with incentives for further career after returning to Kosovo.

Heimerer College should implement systematic research on graduates' further career after graduation.

3.8. Curriculum

This criterion concerns the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning methods. The expert panel evaluates, whether the curriculum of the programme is adequately structured to achieve the intended learning outcomes and whether the curriculum provides the necessary knowledge and methodological expertise of the relevant discipline(s). The experts also evaluate the organisation of the learning process, especially if there are appropriate student-centred teaching and learning methods, if students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process and whether the diversity of students and their needs are taken into account.

Current status

Programme structure

The study programme "Management of Health Institutions and Services (M. Sc.)" is a two-year full-time programme with 120 ECTS credits. Credit points are a quantitative measure for the overall workload of a student. The overall student workload consists of the time for attending lectures as well as the time for preparing and taking exams, thesis writing, seminars and semester assignments. An effort of 30 hours is taken as a basis to earn one credit point. One study year's effort equals 1,800 hours of work.

The total credits per semester and the respective workload can be summarised as follows:

- 1 academic year has 60 ECTS
- 1 academic year has 30 teaching weeks in auditorium and 4 to 6 weeks of final exams
- 1 semester has 15 teaching weeks of lecture and 2 to 3 weeks of final exams
- 1 ECTS = 30 hours of student work
- 1 lesson hour = 90 minutes

The curriculum comprises four semesters with obligatory courses as well as elective courses. In the first academic year, students take ten compulsory courses and may

chose two electives (out of five). In overall, during the two academic years, students take nineteen compulsory courses and three elective courses.

The curriculum covers three main areas of competences: managerial competences, interdisciplinary competences and research competencies.

Table 6 on the following pages shows the curriculum, distributed over the 2 years of studying.

YEAR 1: 60 ECTS						
SEMESTER 1: 30 ECTS			Hours per week			
Nr.	Type	Module	Lecture	Practice	Self-study	Credits
1	O	Public Health	30	15	105	5
2	O	Management and Analysis of Health Systems	45	15	120	6
3	O	Governance, Health Legislation and Ethics	30	15	105	5
4	O	Human Resources Management	45	15	120	6
5	O	Academic Writing	20	10	90	4
6	E	Applied Research and Policy Development	20	10	90	4
7	E	Case/ Care Management	20	10	90	4

SEMESTER 2: 30 ECTS			Hours per week			
Nr.	Type	Module	Lecture	Practice	Self-study	Credits
8	O	Health Promotion	30	15	105	5
9	O	Quality Management in Healthcare	45	15	120	6
10	O	Organisational Development and Behaviour	45	30	105	6
11	O	Entrepreneurship in Healthcare	30	15	105	5
12	O	Leadership and Strategy	20	10	90	4
13	E	Performance Measurement in Healthcare	20	10	90	4
14	E	Materials and Pharmacy Management in Health Organisations	20	10	90	4
15	E	Systems Thinking: Concepts and Methods	20	10	90	4

YEAR 2: 60 ECTS						
SEMESTER 3: 30 ECTS			Hours per week			
Nr.	Type	Module	Lecture	Practice	Self-study	Credits
16	O	Statistical Methods for healthcare research	30	30	90	5
17	O	Evidence-based Medicine	30	25	95	5
18	O	Economics and Finances in health	45	15	120	6
19	O	Research Methods in Health	45	15	105	6
20	O	Health Information Systems	20	10	90	4
21	E	Management of Public Health Disasters	20	10	90	4
22	E	Writing Grants and Funding Proposals for Health-Related Programmes	20	10	90	4

SEMESTER 4: 30 ECTS			Hours per week			
Nr.	Type	Module	Lecture	Practice	Self-study	Credits
23	O	Internship/Practice	10	0	140	5
24	O	Research Seminar	10	10	70	3
25	O	Communication and Conflict Management	20	10	90	4
26	O	Master Thesis	15	15	570	18

Table 6 – Curriculum structure

Each course is described in detail in the programme handbook structured as follows:

- year/ semester
- module name
- type (obligatory vs. elective)
- ECTS
- lecturer name
- course description
- objective learning outcomes
- learning and teaching methods
- assessments methods
- teaching tools/ IT
- ratio between theoretical and practical part of the study in the module: lecture, seminar/ clinical exercise/ clinical practice/ self-study
- workload
- literature

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

In the self-report, Heimerer College recalls more than 7 years of building up and developing the teaching skills of its staff, in particular with a focus on digital methods to support face-to-face teaching and the self-study phases of the students. As example the method of inverted classrooms is named. Furthermore, regular discussions are held regarding the evaluation and development of the existing methods as well as the implementation of new methods. Namely listed for the Master's programme are the following:

- **Blended Learning:** It can be broadly defined as any combination of different methods which makes use of new technologies. In the programme, a rotation model is implemented, where teaching is carried out by the traditional method of lectures on the subjects of interest, as well as online seminars and other online forms of learning. This particularly aids in aiding students in the capacity of autonomous and reflective thinking. The self-report mentions the following examples:
 - Lectures explaining the features of various study designs
 - Online individual exercises
 - Online and offline group-based exercises
 - Problem-based learning, as key to developing problem-solving skills and helping students to gain a deeper understanding of the course content by engaging them in exercises relevant to the field of study and in solving problems

Some examples of relevant exercises are:

- Providing a psychological assessment and formulation based on case information
 - Suggesting intervention planes based on particular condition
 - Exploring relevant literature to determine an appropriate diagnostic method for a previously unstudied condition
 - Problems will be designed to reinforce the course content, as well as allowing the students to build on existing knowledge. The exercises will also vary in complexity between exercises designed for individual work, and more complex exercises which require group-work. Student's results will be submitted in writing or presented to the group.
- **Practice-based learning:** Both a method for developing enhanced practical skills, and a way of supporting the primary learning objectives and content of the course. Using our connections with a variety of psychological centres within Prishtina and internationally, candidates are given the opportunity to gain extensive practical experience of working in a clinical setting, thus to enhance abilities on psychotherapy, assessment and interpretation of performance and results, as well as improved experience on interventions plan.
 - **Research-based learning:** Every student undertakes a supervised research project, where they get the opportunity to develop their own research question in collaboration with one of the teaching staff, and be assisted to carry out the project. Some of these projects will involve statistical research, including meta-analysis, while other projects will be carried out in collaboration with external partners.

related study regulations, syllabuses, and detailed information about all processes in the institution. The methodology of the assessment and the criteria are also explained.

In order to ensure practical learning and internships for students, Heimerer College has arranged cooperation agreements with a number of hospitals and organisations relevant to the scope of the study programme.

Assessment

Programme structure

The curriculum is well structured with all modules described in detail. The level of detail differs slightly between the modules, a consequent distinction between knowledge and competences is not always made. Teaching and learning methods are specified.

In the meetings, the interview partners (even students) often referred to Bloom's Taxonomy. However, the terminology is not consistently adhered to in the syllabus, e.g., the module of academic writing is described more related to Bachelor's level.

Mechanisms for providing knowledge and application of scientific methods

The curriculum shows a broad variety of both appropriate and innovative teaching methods. The students reported a good learning atmosphere to the experts, together with a general policy of openness which makes it easy to solve difficulties and problems fast and sustainable. The experts got the impression that teachers see themselves to be more of learning supporters than instructors.

The college regularly offers workshops for teaching improvement, some of them with international contributors. According to the experts, these regular offers make sense, but it cannot be verified whether all teachers (including part-time teachers) really use them.

As mentioned elsewhere, the experts noted some differences between the written report and the on-site interviews. The expert panel is unsure whether the teaching staff really implement the curriculum in every case as described and intended. The university should discuss this internally with the academic staff.

Organisation of students' learning experience

The teaching methods described seem appropriate in general. Due to the variety of forms of teaching, the diversity of students and their needs seems to be taken into account. It is not fully clear to the experts how the internship allocation works (especially given the so tightly limited local opportunities).

Without a real on-site inspection, from a distance only and on the pure basis of documents and interviews, the expert panel does not see itself in a position to really assess the practical learning components.

Areas for improvement

The allocation of credits does not convince the expert panel in each case, e.g., the seminar on research (Semester 4) seems undervalued with 3 credits.

The definition of competences should be aligned with the Master's level and generally expanded from a purely reproductive to a more application/transfer-oriented definition.

More diverse teaching methods should still be implemented.

As mentioned elsewhere, some students complained about the high proportion of foreign language literature. Since a change does not seem realistic to the experts, the college should offer students more support in improving their foreign language skills. A foreign language offer anchored in the curriculum (explicitly for advanced learners and as an additional optional subject) also seems conceivable.

Recommendation and condition

The wording, credits and listed teaching methods of each module in the syllabus must be reviewed and updated with regard to a clear allocation to the Master's level.

The experts recommend the development of guidelines for the implementation of the framework curriculum.

3.9. Student assessment

The ninth criterion focuses on the organisation of student assessments. The expert panel has to evaluate how the assessment of intended learning outcomes is organised and whether the amount and requirements of assessments are adequate. They also have to decide whether the requirements of the thesis reflect the level of the degree.

Overall, it is assessed whether the assessment criteria are transparent and used in a consistent way. It is also evaluated if the staff undertaking assessments is adequately qualified. Last not least it should be verified if examination regulations exist and that they provide clear and fair regulations for student absence, illness and other mitigating conditions.

Current status

Organisation of assessment of intended learning outcomes

Heimerer College has implemented procedures for ensuring the fulfilment of teaching and learning standards and learning outcomes. All processes are formally described and regulated in the following documents:

- Regulation for Teachers
- Regulation of Studies
- Guideline for Academic Staff

The teaching process, the exercises and all practices are monitored and monthly reported. Teaching methodology, assessment instruments and methodology as well as the literature and other didactic resources are regularly reviewed, whether they are adequate to the intended learning outcomes and compatible with the level of degree.

Students will be graded through a mix of examinations and class work as described in each module's syllabus. Typical forms of examinations are: assignments, projects, written tests, case studies, written exams, opinion papers, team projects, online discussions, peer assessments, individual reports, oral presentations, quizzes, individual research projects, weekly reaction paper, an internship report etc. Class participation can also be taken into account.

Adequacy of the amount and requirements of assessments with regard to the intended learning outcomes

All study programmes at Heimerer College have been developed against the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Area (EQFHEA).

The college takes all efforts to make the assessment in line with the expected results of each course to ensure the provision of quality teaching that leads to the predefined competences. There are filter mechanisms established, such as an ongoing monitoring of its implementation and ongoing evaluations of knowledge, skills and competencies. Besides ongoing evaluations of academic staff, Heimerer College undertakes an extra evaluation from other two bodies within the college, the Vice Rector for Teaching and Quality Assurance Office. At the end of the academic year, those offices together with Dean's office organise the "quality week", where students from all study programmes and all years of study are subject to an overall evaluation. The evaluation data clearly shows the achieved progress as well as problems that would require solution, by exposing students to different tasks: individual interviews, questionnaires testing students' professional skills and other tasks, like writing a substantial essay, are the methods used to test students' professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired from the institution. To evaluate students' technical and social skills, two methods are used: solving of different professional problems and role play. Findings from these activities are used for further advancement of didactic methodology and teaching/learning processes in general.

Correspondence of the requirements of the thesis to the level of the degree

At Bachelor's degree, the thesis usually counts 15 credits that is half of a semester's credits. The remaining 15 credits mostly are final practice and one or two modules that mostly are related to thesis. The criteria for the subject of the thesis are that it has to address a core topic as well as a research question of value.

The Master thesis counts 30 credits; the last (usually fourth) semester is reserved just for working on the thesis. The topic is in direct connection to a student's personal focus (e.g., geriatrics, health management etc.). Heimerer College supports students in choosing a topic that would improve their later work opportunities.

Transparency and consistency of assessment criteria

Applicants and new students are informed through open-doors days and the orientation week. All new students are provided with an USB-stick which contains all study related regulations, syllabuses, and detailed information about the processes in the institution as well as about the assessment (methods and criteria): Each syllabus contains the assessment criteria. The methodology of the assessment is presented to students before starting the semester, during the first lecture. For the transparency, the syllabuses are placed in Heimerer College's MOODLE platform and is electronically accessible during the whole academic year.

Moreover, the first page of each exam always describes the criteria to avoid all misunderstanding with students. Students are evaluated with the following grades which are unified and used in a consistent way:

- (A) – (EXCELLENT, from 91 to 100 points)
- (B) – (VERY WELL, with some mistakes, from 81 to 90 points)
- (C) – (WELL, with some mistakes from 71 to 80 points)

- (D) – (SATISFACTORY, with significant errors from 61 to 70 points)
- (E) – (ENOUGH, minimum fulfilment of criteria, from 51 to 60 points)
- (F, FX) – (failure to fulfil the minimum criteria, under 51 points)

Throughout the academic year ongoing assessment is organised. There are six exam deadlines organised by the Heimerer College:

- Term of January
- Term of June
- Term of April
- Term of September
- Term after the module
- Term with commission students' success on the exam or other assessment of knowledge.

Adequacy of the qualifications of the staff undertaking assessments

Different assessment mechanisms and instruments of student achievement are dedicated to the measurement of different levels of knowledge, according to Bloom's Taxonomy. On annual basis the college organises workshops and trainings with international, external, and internal evaluation experts to support the teachers of Heimerer College. In particular in 2020 there were three trainings organised with teachers whereby two of them covered the topic of the assessment methodologies. The assessment instruments are reflected in each of teacher's syllabus before they begin their course. Likewise, assessment techniques depend on the modalities of subjects and disciplines, but the core methodology is based on Bloom's Taxonomy, as well as how and in what form the teacher finds it as the most appropriate assessment methodology.

The academic staff is supported in the process of the preparation of exams: each exam has to be submitted to the Dean's office at least 10 days prior to the exam for approval, and consultation is done with the Vice Rector on Teaching and Learning and the Quality Assurance Office.

Availability of examination regulations

Heimerer College has a Regulation of Studies which defines the evaluation mechanisms, modalities and other characteristics in relation to assessment and exams, Article 9, article 10, article 11 Article 12, Article 13 Article 14 and Article 15. Whenever the need arises to make changes based on certain situations, specific guidelines are prepared which are approved in advance by the Academic Council. For instance, this year, in the period of Pandemic, the Heimerer College has organised exams in the institution but electronically through MOODLE under the prevention measures for Covid-19. For the situation, the Vice Rector for Teaching and Learning has developed specific guidelines on how to adapt to the new online assessment methodology and all academic staff were trained in advance.

The Regulation of Studies, in particular Article 15 "Complaints for Evaluation", also clearly sets out the steps and procedures to be followed in case of dissatisfaction and non-consistency with the assessment of students. Furthermore, the academic staff is

obliged by regulations to hold consultations with students before and after the exams, where any constrain and dilemma regarding the exam is addressed.

Availability of clear and objective regulations for student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances

According to the self-report Heimerer College ensures that the rights and obligations of students are regulated by the Study Regulation, which is public to students on the college intranet, the SIMS and MOODLE platform and is physically delivered to each student at the beginning of studies (see above). In Particular, the Article 9 "preliminary procedures before the exams" and Article 13 "Exceptions" also defines the time limit for taking the exam and eventual absences. Students' absence, illness and other mitigating conditions are mainly addressed after the request of the student is delivered and the request is recorded by the dean's office. According to the Study Regulation - besides the standard forms of assessment according to the foreseen timeframe, at the student's request, a student's entrance to examination may be allowed only if the dean of the academic unit approves her/ his request to enter the exam before the foreseen timeframe. This is permissible when the student is part of international exchange-study programs when she/he is pursuing practical teaching abroad.

Above all, the following are some of the student's rights for complaints provided by the Study Regulation:

- a) Students have the right to complain about violations of the exam development rules. The appeal is submitted to the dean within 48 hours, from the moment of the completion of the exam.
- b) The responsible programme officer makes a final decision after verifying the violations in cooperation with the Quality Committee and the Vice Rector for Teaching.
- c) If the complaint is fair, the examination shall be cancelled within three days from the day of the appeal and another exam takes place within that examination period.

Assessment

Organisation of assessment

The assessment system is transparent, clear and diversified. Assessment is well organised and scheduled, students know the exact dates at the beginning of the semester. Responsibilities are also clear to lecturers as well as to students.

Amount and requirements of assessments

The amount and requirements of assessments with regard to the intended learning outcomes seem to be appropriate. They are fully in line with international practice.

Assessment criteria

Defined assessment criteria exist and are transparent for students as well as for staff. The students whom the experts talked with were well aware of the assessment criteria, they know what is expected and they know whom to contact in the case of problems or questions. They also reported to feel fairly assessed.

However, students noted that not every course says at the beginning what is expected and how the assessment will be done.

Assessment qualification of staff

According to the experts, the staff undertaking the assessments is adequately qualified. The expert panel appreciates that Heimerer College undertakes great efforts to improve the assessment capabilities. A wide range of assessment tasks is used, which, however, are not in every case really comprehensibly assigned to the competences or knowledge to be tested.

Examination regulations and regulations for student absence, illness, etc.

Examination regulations exist and are available to students. There are clear and objective regulations for student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances.

Areas for improvement

According to the students, the type of examinations for the course is not always clearly communicated from the beginning. The exams vary between courses. Students said they only really know when the exam is, but they don't know what kind of questions will be in the exam.

Recommendation and condition

The college should continue to monitor the examination system and assessment practices and provide regular training to staff as needed.

Heimerer College must ensure that the final assessment (type, requirements, grading, etc.) is clearly explained to students at the beginning of each course.

3.10. Organisation of the study programmes

Finally, the implementation of the programmes has to be evaluated. The expert panel assesses the appropriateness of entry qualifications and the regulations for the recognition of qualifications (i.e., Lisbon Convention). It has to be reviewed whether the organisation of the study process allows the programme to be carried out in such a way that the intended learning outcomes will be achieved and whether the organisation of the study process also takes the diversity of students and their needs into account. It is evaluated how the implementation of the programme is managed (roles and responsibilities) and even whether the workload of the programme is adequate with respect to the necessity to reach the intended learning outcomes in the scheduled time frame. The organisation of the student life cycle (i.e., all (organisational) relationships between the student and the institution from enrolment to graduation) is also part of this criterion. The experts check whether the care services and student advisory services are suitable and – in case of a cooperation with internal and external partners – how the cooperation is organised.

Current status

Entry qualifications

The entry and application processes are regulated by the Regulation of Studies, which also define the target group for each study programme. All information on study opportunities is published on the website of the college²⁶ and other means of information such as social networks, to notify everyone about the possibility of registration.

For the application to a Bachelor's programme at Heimerer College, applicants must have at least 12 years school education, which is completed with a secondary school degree or Matura examination.²⁷ Candidates must issue also the transcript as a record of grades showing their high school success, issued by the school and recognized by Ministry of Education and Science (MES) of the Republic of Kosovo. Besides, applicants have to pass the entry exam. Further completed basic studies, verified by a certificate or diploma might be acknowledged.

For application acceptance, the exam counts 40 %, Matura 30 % and the documented school grades another 30 %.

To start a Master's programme, students have to provide a diploma (at least Bachelor's level). A Bachelor's degree in social sciences or in health sciences is recommended for admission to the programme "Management of Health Institutions and Services (M. Sc.)".

The average grade from the Bachelor's studies counts 20 %, a personal interview is obligatory which counts another 60 %, knowledge in English language may count up to 20 %, too.

Enrolment is possible for each winter term. The application period is about 3 months (in 2021 from July 5 to October 5).

Regulations for the recognition of qualifications

Heimerer College recognises educational achievements of students, which have been acquired at other higher education institutions. The recognition of qualifications follows the Lisbon Convention, details are regulated in the study regulations of the college.

Organisation of the study process

Heimerer College uses MOODLE as its e-learning platform as well as several digital resources (e.g., Google Meet). Especially during the current pandemic, virtual teaching and learning is conducted for lectures, seminars, classes, assignments, and communication. Even assessment had to be newly organised. The college has an extensive counselling system for students, which support students in different situations. Students are assisted in arranging their internships. Monitoring processes signal when students are at risk of falling behind in their study progress. Furthermore, the lecturers are also easily approachable for the students.

The teaching and learning forms, qualification goals of the programme, pedagogical concept, admission requirements, selection procedures, internships, study and examination requirements, recognition of achievements at other higher education institutions,

²⁶ <https://kolegji-heimerer.eu/en/bachelor-students/> and <https://kolegji-heimerer.eu/en/master-students/> (accessed 14 February 2022).

²⁷ The Matura exam (Matura shtetërore) was invented in Kosovo in 2005/2006.

regulations for student absence, illness and other mitigating conditions etc. are described in detail in the study regulations and module handbooks of the programme. The rules and regulations as well as the handbooks of all current programmes are available on the college's MOODLE system, are updated regularly and are adapted to changed requirements.

Management of the study programme

The responsibilities are clearly regulated. Each study programme ("faculty") is organised with dean, vice dean, several assistants for organising teaching and research projects as well as responsible persons for organising practice. Responsibilities are defined in Terms of Reference. Their work is interrelated, and they cooperate to achieve the study programmes outcomes.

The direct responsibility for the implementation and the management of the study programme lies with dedicated persons for each programme.

Student workload

The allocation of credits at Heimerer College for a study programme or educational component is carried out according to the estimated student workload needed to achieve the defined learning outcomes. The overall student workload consists of a time for attending lectures as well as the time for preparing and taking exams, thesis writing, seminars and semester assignments. An effort of 30 hours is taken as a basis to earn one credit point. One study year's effort equals 1,800 hours of work. Consequently, a Bachelor's programme corresponds to 5,400 hours of work, Master's programmes correspond to 3,600 hours of work.

The theoretical and practical classes vary on the content of each study programme but in general they must include at least 1/3 of the total number of hours, while the practical part of at least 1/2 of the total number of hours. Clinical exercises, again depending on the study programme, are conducted in average, with 10-12 students in the college, in simulated conditions in modern equipped cabinets for practicing training. Outside the college, clinical practice is conducted in groups of 8 students. According to the self-report, this division is fully in line with the institutional capacities and specifications of the services provided, as foreseen in the study programme.

For students who are already working in a health institution where the practice of certain competencies should take place, their work experience is recognized by Heimerer College for those competencies they have achieved as part of their job.

Student life-cycle and student support system

Clinical practice is supervised by clinical mentors who are appointed throughout the Kosovo health system, primary, secondary and tertiary. Students in the first-year start practicing in the primary sector (outpatient clinic); in the second year they continue in the secondary sector (regional hospitals) and in the third year in the tertiary sector at the (University Clinical Centre of Kosovo – UCCK). Students are evaluated by mentors and lecturers after the end of the clinical practice period, with a direct practical assessment based on the assessment form and with a test to verify that they meet the required skill standard in terms of knowledge, practical skills, personal development and professional practice. During the period when the student is in practice, documents must be created for each period of student practice to show that the environment where the practice has been held has been appropriate for the student's educational

needs. It is intended that during the clinical practice students get acquainted with different areas of studying and get the first idea of where they would like to work after graduation. At the same time, employees at the clinic can identify students with good skills and competencies that will in the future calculate their potential for work.

Student life-cycle is organised in a lot of steps starting from the application for registration where the candidates meet with registration officers and after that they apply and wait for the enrolment exam. During this period the registration office informs candidates (future students) of the subjects and materials needed to prepare for the exam. After the exam and enrolment procedure the college organises the open-doors day and the integration week for all first-year students, led by the Dean's office and supported by the Vice Rector for Teaching and the Centre of Heimerer Students. On the open doors day first year students are informed with the structured regulation of the institution. A welcome cocktail is organised to know each other, the academic staff and to get familiar with the institution. Then students are invited in groups to inform them about teaching methods, curriculum, methodology of implementation of the study program, including lectures, exercises, and practical part, also how to use official emails, System of Managing Data of Students (SIMS), MOODLE etc.

During the further academic year with formal lectures, exercises, and practice are invited to participate in extracurricular activities, when they become more experienced. They may even become a tutor and help new students to integrate.

Students are regularly informed via e-mail, MOODLE, social media, and internet sources, and they may participate in democratic processes with the Student Council and the Academic Council. In the final study period of writing the thesis, students get full support from the institution (with seminars on how to write a thesis and even for related topics) as well as a personal mentor.

The college has implemented a model of dedicated study advisors during the whole study period. These advisors are appointed at the beginning of the first year, each responsible for about 20 to 30 students. They will hold regular meetings with students (about every two weeks) with the purpose to encourage and motivate them to participate in various activities like research, projects, humanitarian activities, debates, trainings, and more. Study advisors also discuss student concerns (addressing them to the Dean and addressing issues depending on the student's concern) and connect students to the resources of the college for addressing and solving problems and eventual difficulties. The study advisor herself/ himself is a teacher, she/he is assisted by student tutors.

Preventing study delays and dropout strategies

The Dean's offices and the Heimerer Student Center annually analyse the reasons of students' dropout and study delays. Since the establishment and functioning of the Heimerer College, the analysis shows that 60% of students graduate on time. From the rest 40% of them, 9% of students can be counted as dropouts, the rate of students' delays in completing their study is 31%. The study of reasons for dropping out shows that the most common reasons are financial.

Cooperation with internal and external partners

In 2018, Heimerer College has adopted an institutional strategy 2018-2023 which sets the strategic and specific objectives, including those pertaining to the international/ institutional cooperation. It serves as the reference document in terms of allocating the actual resources in line with the institutional strategic objective of internationalization.

Heimerer College has developed specific internal processes that define the specific roles and responsibilities of relevant institutional units with regard to these priority areas of internationalization:

- Exchange of staff and students
- Development of international projects/events
 - Joint academic programmes
 - International projects
 - International seminars/ conferences/ symposiums
- Cross border cooperation
- Integration at international relevant organisations/associations/networks

Currently, Heimerer College has a rather diverse and unique network of partners. It has successfully accomplished expanding its list of partners with whom it has signed formal agreements, containing clear terms of cooperation. The college is partner in three Erasmus+ projects, two of them focused on capacity building (leading applicant in a project and member in the other) and one on a strategic partnership project.

Assessment

Entry qualifications

In the view of the experts, the entry qualification and regulations are appropriate, transparent and sensible. All information on the requirements and procedures can be found on the university website.

Regulations for the recognition of qualifications

Prior qualifications from other universities are recognised according to the Lisbon Convention. Corresponding regulations and a clear and transparent procedure exist. Recognition of prior professional work practice is also practiced.

Organisation of the study process and management of the study programme

The roles, obligations and responsibilities in the management are clearly defined and appropriately structured, people involved the experts could talk to are highly motivated and professional. Besides, the college has established methods and means for student involvement, both in giving feedback and in decision-making.

Student workload

Having heard the students, the expert panel assumes that the workload of the programmes is manageable. The college observes the students' workload regularly. However, the college itself reports quite high dropout rates (9 %). Besides, only 40 % of students complete their studies within the standard period of study. The university must conduct more detailed research into the causes of this, e.g., by using constant feedback and evaluation cycles.

Organisation of the student life cycle

The experts note that there is excellent communication between students and teachers: learning groups are small, there seem to be lots of formal as well as informal contacts between teachers and students. The students that the expert team could interview were very positive against the good organisation and atmosphere of the study process.

Student support system

According to the interviews with students, care services of Heimerer College and student advisory services are highly developed and both known and favoured by the students. Web information and communication services offered by the college play an important role and are frequently used.

Cooperation with external and internal partners

According to the experts' view there are robust cooperation links with both local organisations and institutions and higher education institutes from abroad. Within the college, the different bodies also seem to harmonize excellently with each other, which the expert panel was able to perceive very clearly during the various interview sessions with changing compositions of persons.

The college is part of an excellent international network.

Areas of improvement

Heimerer College should do more intensive research on reasons of students' dropout and study delays and should develop countermeasures.

Against the background of the good organisational framework, the good local networking and the excellent international network, the college could be much more committed to attracting young experts/young researchers in and for Kosovo, and thus decisively help to advance Kosovo's health system!

Recommendations or conditions

None.

4. Final assessment

The experts would like to thank all participants and the organisers for giving them the opportunity to gain insights of Heimerer College. The online-meetings were held in an open and constructive atmosphere.

The institution

Although the experts noted discrepancies between written and oral presentations, the overall impression of Heimerer College is good. It fulfils the requirements of a well-planned development, in line with the international guidelines and requirements.

The educational mission of the college is closely related to the further development of society in Kosovo as well as in the whole Balkan region. Against this background, the business model with the students, almost all of whom work in Germany as part of their internships or after graduation, should therefore be reconsidered and expanded to include a stronger local component.

Vision and mission are clearly stated and published on the website of the college. In the online-meetings, college leadership and management explained in detail and comprehensively the development path that Heimerer College has taken since its founding, and the experts were impressed by what has been achieved so far.

To the expert panel, the 5-year strategy of the college is consistent and should give the institution the necessary security and sustainability to secure the study programmes offered in particular.

As for the governance, Heimerer College is clearly structured in governance and decision-making. Responsibilities and procedures are regulated, starting with the Statute of the College and several regulatory documents. However, all the relevant regulations should also be publicly accessible. The external presentation of the institution mainly advertises the institute and does not go into enough detail about what is being taught.

The college is a private company and managed as such. It should further develop its image to become more university-like. This also applies to the internal organisation: the academic staff should be more broadly involved in processes.

Heimerer College should move forward in its efforts to improve research and to better include scientific practices into learning and teaching. The experts appreciate that research has become a more prominent part of the college's strategy. Encouraging young researchers and linking research and teaching are crucial for a higher education institute dedicated to nursing and paramedicine to document its ability to set themes, and not just act as a training centre for practical skills required for a job abroad. The experts believe that Heimerer College should still make greater efforts to increase its activities towards research. The prerequisites are good: intensive international contacts, a young motivated team with good academic training and a certain financial leeway of the institution. The college should proceed here: In the view of the experts, it is not enough just to hold out the prospect of funding for research projects or publications in general – a fixed budget sum must be set.

The qualification of the teaching staff at Heimerer College seems adequate for study programmes at Bachelor's as well as Master's level. Since its foundation, the college has made steps to improve the academic profile of the staff. The college's procedures for recruiting and later continuous training and developing staff seem appropriate and fulfil academic standards. Still more attention should be paid to recruiting and developing good researchers.

Overall, the college makes a good impression to the expert panel with a lot of potential, which should be further developed in the coming years.

The programme "Management in Health Institutions and Services (M. Sc.)"

From the self-report, the syllabus and the online-meetings, the expert panel got the impression that the presented programme fits well into the portfolio of the college, esp. in view of the college's overall vision of improving the healthcare system in Kosovo.

By and large, the learning outcomes of the programme and of each module are clearly defined. Weaknesses in the wording of the curriculum and a not entirely convincing allocation of credits to the individual modules can be remedied relatively quickly,

according to the experts. In this context, the experts appreciate that the international partner network of Heimerer College is still involved in the further development of the study programme.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the programme fulfils the requirements of higher education on Master's level in Kosovo. According to the experts, the number of teachers non-holding a PhD qualification is still quite high. Heimerer College makes many efforts to support and improve academic staff. All these measures should be continued. However, teaching practice should become better observed against the syllabuses given, the college should provide teaching guidelines.

Student learning is regularly assessed using a variety of assessment methods. The information policy regarding assessment should be improved: It should be ensured that students know the expected types of assessment at the beginning of a course.

Since a high proportion of foreign language literature is used, the college should offer more support for improving students' foreign language skills. These offers could become additional electives.

Overall, the programme fits well into the Heimerer College portfolio.

Assessment levels

Level	Assessment	Description
A	Passed.	The institution fulfils or exceeds all criteria. All activities are in line with the profile and objectives of the institution and provided at a high academic level.
B	Passed subject to conditions	The institution does not fulfil some relevant criteria. However, the institution should be able to remedy the shortcomings within nine months after the assessment.
C	Suspension of the accreditation procedure	The institution does not fulfil relevant criteria, but it is likely, that it will be able to remedy the shortcomings within 18 months after the assessment. The HEI may apply for a resumption of the accreditation procedure.
D	Failed	The institution does not fulfil relevant criteria, and is not expected to be able to meet all assessment criteria within 18 months' time.

Assessment grades

No	Assessment criteria	Assessment
1	Institutional profile and strategy <i>Condition:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The further expansion of the college and the introduction of new study programmes must only take place with a significant increase in academic staff with appropriate qualifications. 	B
2	Governance <i>Conditions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All documents on governance – at least the statute, the bylaws, regulations, policies, etc. – must be publicly accessible. All study-related documents must be publicly accessible. The Academic Council must be expanded with staff representatives below management level. 	B
3	Resources <i>Conditions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The college must intensify its efforts to increase the academic output of the teaching staff. A fixed financial amount must be set in the budget to promote publications, projects, exchanges with other scientists, staff mobility, and international scientific cooperation. The expansion plans for laboratories and IT must be realised as presented. 	B
4	Research <i>Conditions</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial resources must be allocated to research by setting and communicating a fixed amount for research in the budget. Systematic measures must be taken to identify the talents of those students to put into research and later to be promoted. 	B
5	Institution and Society	A
6	Quality assurance	A
7	Programme profile	A
8	Curriculum <i>Condition:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wording of each module in the syllabus must be reviewed and updated with regard to a clear allocation to the Master's level..... 	B
9	Student assessment <i>Condition:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heimerer College must ensure that the final assessment (type, requirements, grading, etc.) is clearly explained to students at the beginning of each course. 	B
10	Organisation of the study programme	A

5. Accreditation recommendation of the expert panel to the evalag Accreditation Commission

According to the expert panel, Heimerer College as institution and the study programme “Management in Health Institutions and Services (M. Sc.)” meet **evalag**’s criteria for international institutional and programme accreditation.

The panel formulates the following conditions (C) and recommendations (R):

Institutional profile and strategy

- R 1** Heimerer College should further elaborate its key performance indicators in direct relation to the mission statement.
- R 2** Academic staff beyond the leadership and management level should be more actively involved in the strategy building processes.
- R 3** The academic profile of Heimer College should be strengthened by explicitly referring to the academic connectivity of the study programmes with regard to further studies.
- C 1** The further expansion of the college and the introduction of new study programmes must only take place with a significant increase in academic staff with appropriate qualifications.

Governance

- C 2** All documents on governance – at least the statute, the bylaws, regulations, policies, etc. – must be publicly accessible.
- C 3** All study-related documents must be publicly accessible.
- R 4** In order to transparently present the responsibilities and processes in the respective regulations, the experts recommend the use of flowcharts.
- R 5** The college’s organisational chart should be publicly accessible and, in addition to the tasks and responsibilities, also show the dependencies.
- C 4** The Academic Council must be expanded with staff representatives below management level.
- R 6** Student participation in decision-making processes should be further expanded.

Resources

- C 5** The college must intensify its efforts to increase the academic output of the teaching staff.
- C 6** A fixed financial amount must be set in the budget to promote publications, projects, exchanges with other scientists, staff mobility, and international scientific cooperation.
- C 7** The expansion plans for laboratories and IT must be realised as presented.

Research

- C 8** Substantial resources must be allocated to research by setting and communicating a fixed amount for research in the budget.

- R 7** Heimerer College should consider more incentives in order to support academic further qualification of staff.
- C 9** Systematic measures must be taken to identify the talents of those students to put into research and later to be promoted.
- R 8** Students should be further encouraged to participate in research projects and thus combine research content, education and training approaches in the sense of Humboldt.
- R 9** Strategic partnership contracts with universities abroad should be increased to offer more postgraduate/doctorate for the young scientists.

Institution and society

- R 10** The good connection to society should be used to implement more applied research projects together with students on healthcare problems in Kosovo.

Quality assurance

None.

Programme profile

- R 11** The college should intensify exchange and mobility possibilities for students in the programme, combined with incentives for further career after returning to Kosovo.
- R 12** Heimerer College should implement systematic research on graduates' further career after graduation.

Curriculum

- C 10** The wording, credits and listed teaching methods of each module in the syllabus must be reviewed and updated with regard to a clear allocation to the Master's level.
- R 13** The experts recommend the development of guidelines for the implementation of the framework curriculum.

Student assessment

- R 14** The college should continue to monitor the examination system and assessment practices and provide regular training to staff as needed.
- C 11** Heimerer College must ensure that the final assessment (type, requirements, grading, etc.) is clearly explained to students at the beginning of each course.

Organisation of the study programme

None.

6. Statement of Heimerer College to the assessment report

On 18 March 2022, Heimerer College submitted a statement to the recommendations and conditions set in the report.

Institutional profile and strategy	
<p>R 1 Heimerer College should further elaborate its key performance indicators in direct relation to the mission statement.</p>	<p>In the new strategy that we are developing for next five years based on the mission we are setting clear indicators about the expansion with study programs, number of the students, publication, increasing the quality and so one.</p> <p>We aim in next five years to complete the level 6 and 7 of the studies in all fields that we are offering study programs and to expand with specific specialisation that cover best the field and need of the market.</p> <p>As we presented the dropout strategy is set and the results are obvious, the dropout decreases dramatically in last two years after the measures were taken.</p> <p>Another important strategic objective is linkage between entrepreneurship and education that will impact the employment.</p> <p>Research policy are clear and measurable with clear indicators.</p>
<p>R 2 Academic staff beyond the leadership and management level should be more actively involved in the strategy building processes.</p>	<p>As mentioned in the Self-Evaluation Report, the development of five-year strategy, is done in close consultation with the academic staff in the institution. We are currently developing the five-year strategy and the academic staff is part of the working groups in the priority areas such a teaching/learning, research, internationalisation, administration, etc. Because the academic staff are the core resource in the institution, they are important part of decision-making body and therefore involved in all essential processes. Nevertheless, as we strive for improvement continuously, we will advance even more this aspect.</p>
<p>R 3 The academic profile of Heimerer College should be strengthened by explicitly referring to the academic connectivity of the study</p>	<p>As mentioned above, the idea is to create the opportunity to finish at HC both levels, actually more than half of the programs have this opportunity but this is in the plan, and we are having everyday</p>

programmes with regard to further studies.	more MoU with international partners where our students can further their studies, like University of Maribor, Halle LMU, JAMK, Metropolia, and so on.
Governance	
C 1 The further expansion of the college and the introduction of new study programmes must only take place with a significant increase in academic staff with appropriate qualifications.	It is planned and it is allocated a budget for expansion of the study programs through recruitments of the academic staff with high scientific and academic degree and professional expertise that goes beyond the AAK requirements, and meets our standards that meets international standards of the profession.
C 2 All documents on governance – at least the statute, the bylaws, regulations, policies, etc. – must be publicly accessible. C 3 All study-related documents must be publicly accessible.	Heimerer College has always aimed the transparency of its activities and all the relevant documentation. To that end, we are in the process of redesigning the web page of the College and we have already prepared the list of all documents (Statute, Regulations, various policies and study-related documents) which will be accessible
R 4 In order to transparently present the responsibilities and processes in the respective regulations, the experts recommend the use of flowcharts.	We are already working on flowcharts which present all main processes of Heimerer College and will be finalised quite soon and will serve as a guideline for the relevant staff.
R 5 The college's organisational chart should be publicly accessible and, in addition to the tasks and responsibilities, also show the dependencies.	Related to the answer to C 2, the organisational chart will be publicly accessible once the new webpage is finalised and this is expected shortly. We will inform you as soon as it is completed.
C 4 The Academic Council must be expanded with staff representatives below management level.	As it is mentioned also in the SER and as it is as a standard from the accreditation standards. Actually, there are two academic staff that represent academic staff that are fully member of Academic Council and there are two students who are fully member of Academic Council. To conclude the member of AC are Rector, Deans Secretary which represent Administration and Academic Staff and Students.
R 6 Student participation in decision-making processes should be further expanded.	Besides the representatives of the students in Academic Council the students have the Student Council where are chosen through election which represent the study programs and also, they are part of decision making in different levels.

Resources	
<p>C 5 The college must intensify its efforts to increase the academic output of the teaching staff.</p>	<p>It is clear that the number of formal outputs should be increased, actually we had a plan that we are at the level where were developed more than 50 teaching materials that are in the process of developing as a book, and this will take a little bit more time, but this is in the process and actually students has as a teaching material that is unpublished yet, because they are in the process of finalizing them. We just had Tuesday a promotion of a Book and Standardised test.</p> <p>According to the papers there are a lot of papers that are published, submitted and written so we will have more formal and published outputs during the year.</p> <p>I have to mention that from this year Heimerer College achieved the number of citations that makes as part of the list of Webometrics that measures the institutions' rank based on their citations and publications. So, we are part of citation list and also, we increased in the overall rank list to.</p>
<p>C 6 A fixed financial amount must be set in the budget to promote publications, projects, exchanges with other scientists, staff mobility, and international scientific cooperation.</p>	<p>With regard to publications, available funds are fixed and regulated. Currently, the HC uses the Regulation for Financial Support for Publication to support scientific activities of academic staff. We have attached it for your confirmation. The sums as presented in the regulation are also in relation to the public support that is provided for all Kosovo scientists (please see document 2 attached). The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation supports all publications that fulfil criteria by funding 80% of publication costs. This is applicable to all national scientists and was taken in consideration when the internal Regulation passed. In addition, HC has guidelines for stimulating (awarding) research through additional financial support (see document 3). These documents are available and have been duly shared with staff, and all relevant requests must be made in reference to these documents.</p>

<p>C 7 The expansion plans for laboratories and IT must be realised as presented.</p>	<p><i>The extension plan will be implemented as presented.</i></p>
<p>Research</p>	
<p>C 8 Substantial resources must be allocated to research by setting and communicating a fixed amount for research in the budget.</p>	<p><i>Please see clarification from C6</i></p>
<p>R 7 Heimerer College should consider more incentives in order to support academic further qualification of staff.</p>	<p>Heimerer College has a regulation where gives incentives to motivate young academic staff for further developments, immediately after they register, they PhD they get an extra money for their studies, also free days.</p> <p>Another support is support for publishing, support for research and support for writing and publishing books that are for the didactic purposes for the students. Maybe they are not enough that can cover every need of the academic staff, but taking in consideration the circumstances we concluded that this is good enough.</p>
<p>C 9 Systematic measures must be taken to identify the talents of those students to put into research and later to be promoted.</p> <p>R 8 Students should be further encouraged to participate in research projects and thus combine research content, education and training approaches in the sense of Humboldt.</p>	<p>A comprehensive, immersive program which includes students in research projects (didactic, applicable and training) is already in place. The Research Lab Model, or S2IRL, was based on the 3ID lab model and its successful application at the Artevelde University. The model includes developing applied projects delivered by students, who are trained and mentored by academic and other supporting staff. The project already showed results with the majority of enrolled students engaged throughout the research cycle. This semester, the projects will also be presented publicly, in dialogue with stakeholders.</p>
<p>R 9 Strategic partnership contracts with universities abroad should be increased to offer more post-graduate/doctorate for the young scientists.</p>	<p>HC already has continuously used this model to advance academic staff. Currently, the college has partnership contracts in place, with 5 academic staff members who are completing PhDs through these arrangements with University of Maribor (Slovenia) and Nicolaus Copernicus (Poland). Previously, other academic staff have acquired their PhDs through similar partnerships with Martin Luther University in Halle. This model is</p>

	prioritized and applied whenever possible through international partnerships.
Institution and society	
R 10 The good connection to society should be used to implement more applied research projects together with students on healthcare problems in Kosovo.	<p>The institutional policy of linking our institution with the society is deliberately designed to maximize our impact on solving the prevailing and expected healthcare problems in Kosovo through integrating the work of our students and researchers in a strategic manner. That policy comprises of continues leadership/management support, co-funding, and strategically integrated structured process of research and project development, implementation of collaborative models based on good practices of international partners and contextualized to our needs and capacities (Research Lab Model, or S2IRL was based on the 3ID lab model).</p> <p>Subsequently, the bulk of research is conducted related to issues prevailing in the health care sector either from a management or clinical perspective, especially. Besides, the international strategic projects that it leads or participates in are evaluated by the donors and national policy makers (Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Information) as relevant to national needs in the health care sector in terms of new curricula, pedagogical approaches, and training health centres needed to develop the missing competences of current and prospective health professionals, and develop/pilot new and more effective/efficient models of providing health care services (e-health rehabilitation services).</p>
Programme profile	
R 11 The college should intensify exchange and mobility possibilities for students in the programme, combined with incentives for further career after returning to Kosovo.	During the time period the HC has been able to attract external funding through the ERASMUS+ project for the purpose of outgoing staff to its EU partner universities of € 319,953.98. Simultaneously, around three times of that amount has been dedicated for the purpose of incoming staff from those same strategic partners.

	<p>Further, the HC has been able to successfully prepare grant applications for 4 strategic capacity development projects on the new call of the ERASMUS+ programme, within which it is foreseen a significant amount of funds and content precisely for facilitating and enhancing the institutional capacities for student and staff exchange. More specifically, the expected benefiting units are academic and non-academic institutional units engaged in the process of student services, research, and innovation.</p> <p>Besides, the HC has been rewarded by the ERASMUS+ Programme with around € 135,000.00 for student and staff exchange for the purpose of teaching and practical training during the time span of 2018-2022. Moreover, the HC has managed to submit new grant applications for the ERASMUS+ Call for international credit mobilities with new university partners, including some of the top EU ones such as Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, University of Life Sciences – Humboldt, etc. The respective applied funding is expected to enable the exchange of 56 students and 43 staff either for teaching or training purposes. The HC has a 100% record of winning such grant applications.</p>
<p>R 12 Heimerer College should implement systematic research on graduates' further career after graduation.</p>	<p>We have a systematic process of research regarding our alumni students. Six months after their graduation, we contact each alumni through their personal emails, asking them to complete a questionnaire, which is the tool that we use uniformly for each program. In the questionnaire they are asked about their current employment situation, areas of their work, sector of the institution where they work, if they are currently studying in another program/level.</p> <p>Alumni students also get contacted regularly by email for each job possibility we have from our partners/or other institutions. They also get professional support to prepare for the job interviews and portfolio review and are always invited to national/local job fairs.</p> <p>Furthermore, alumni students are an important component of our extracurricular</p>

	activities, where they are invited as guest speakers in Human Library events, or/and as part of the team of organizers of other extracurricular activities.
Curriculum	
C 10 The wording, credits and listed teaching methods of each module in the syllabus must be reviewed and updated with regard to a clear allocation to the Master's level.	<p>We shared the Bloom taxonomy list to build the curriculum and competencies, and it seems that needs to be further advanced, which will happen during the summer before starting academic year.</p> <p>Here will be updating the level and also methodology, and approved from the AC of HC.</p>
R 13 The experts recommend the development of guidelines for the implementation of the framework curriculum.	We gave quite a lot of importance in Academic Freedom, but always to the framework of the curriculum and standard of the profession. Also based on the rules that they can advance until 30% of the approach and content, this is in line with the regulation of academic freedom.
Student assessment	
R 14 The college should continue to monitor the examination system and assessment practices and provide regular training to staff as needed.	<p>As we explained we had more than one training for Academic Staff about evaluation, based on Bloom Taxonomy, from national and international trainers, which make unique assessment level and methods.</p> <p>As a monitoring of the process: there is a rule where each academic staff prepare exams, sent to the faculty and there is a team which evaluate if the test meet criteria based on Bloom taxonomy, if not than the tests sent back to Academic staff to advance with the help of our experts, and if they meet criteria then it is approved and then goes to electronical system we use for the exams.</p>
C 11 Heimerer College must ensure that the final assessment (type, requirements, grading, etc.) is clearly explained to students at the beginning of each course.	With high respect to the student, this is not an issue in HC, because all academic staff in the beginning of academic year they propose syllabuses, and in the syllabus, besides the content, literature, there is written about the teaching methodology and also the evaluation process, which means continual evaluation like, colloquiums, researches, presentation, working in community etc... everything with all clarification. You can check

	<p>online in the Moodle. https://moodle.kolegji-heimerer.eu/</p> <p>Find an example and I will leave it in Albanian as it is. This is part of each syllabus that it is shared always before starting a semester.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">Assessment methods:</td> <td> <i>First colloquium 35%</i> <i>Second colloquium 35%</i> <i>Case study 20%</i> <i>Participation 10%</i> <i>Participation applies for 4 terms, whereas the seminar is obligatory. It has to be submitted beforehand.</i> </td> </tr> </table>	Assessment methods:	<i>First colloquium 35%</i> <i>Second colloquium 35%</i> <i>Case study 20%</i> <i>Participation 10%</i> <i>Participation applies for 4 terms, whereas the seminar is obligatory. It has to be submitted beforehand.</i>
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7. Accreditation decision of the evalag Accreditation Commission

In its meeting on 22 March 2022, the **evalag** Accreditation Commission decides unanimously to accredit Heimerer College and the study programme “Management in Health Institutions and Services (M. Sc.)”.

The Commission agrees with all the recommendations and conditions made by the expert panel. In the Commission's view, the additional statements show that Heimerer College is on a good path and is striving for continuous improvement.

The following conditions (C) and recommendations (R) are made:

Institutional profile and strategy

- R 1** Heimerer College should further elaborate its key performance indicators in direct relation to the mission statement.
- R 2** Academic staff beyond the leadership and management level should be more actively involved in the strategy building processes.
- R 3** The academic profile of Heimer College should be strengthened by explicitly referring to the academic connectivity of the study programmes with regard to further studies.
- C 1** The further expansion of the college and the introduction of new study programmes must only take place with a significant increase in academic staff with appropriate qualifications.

Governance

- C 2** All documents on governance – at least the statute, the bylaws, regulations, policies, etc. – must be publicly accessible.
- C 3** All study-related documents must be publicly accessible.
- R 4** In order to transparently present the responsibilities and processes in the respective regulations, the experts recommend the use of flowcharts.

- R 5** The college's organisational chart should be publicly accessible and, in addition to the tasks and responsibilities, also show the dependencies.
- C 4** The Academic Council must be expanded with staff representatives below management level. The regulation must be adjusted accordingly.
- R 6** Student participation in decision-making processes should be further expanded.

Resources

- C 5** The college must intensify its efforts to increase the academic output of the teaching staff.
- C 6** A fixed financial amount must be set in the budget to promote publications, projects, exchanges with other scientists, staff mobility, and international scientific cooperation.
- C 7** The expansion plans for laboratories and IT must be realised as presented.

Research

- C 8** Substantial resources must be allocated to research by setting and communicating a fixed amount for research in the budget.
- R 7** Heimerer College should consider more incentives in order to support academic further qualification of staff.
- C 9** Systematic measures must be taken to identify the talents of those students to put into research and later to be promoted.
- R 8** Students should be further encouraged to participate in research projects and thus combine research content, education and training approaches in the sense of Humboldt.
- R 9** Strategic partnership contracts with universities abroad should be increased to offer more postgraduate/doctorate for the young scientists.

Institution and society

- R 10** The good connection to society should be used to implement more applied research projects together with students on healthcare problems in Kosovo.

Quality assurance

None.

Programme profile

- R 11** The college should intensify exchange and mobility possibilities for students in the programme, combined with incentives for further career after returning to Kosovo.
- R 12** Heimerer College should implement systematic research on graduates' further career after graduation.

Curriculum

- C 10** The wording, credits and listed teaching methods of each module in the syllabus must be reviewed and updated with regard to a clear allocation to the Master's level.
- R 13** The experts recommend the development of guidelines for the implementation of the framework curriculum.

Student assessment

- R 14** The college should continue to monitor the examination system and assessment practices and provide regular training to staff as needed.
- C 11** Heimerer College must ensure that the final assessment (type, requirements, grading, etc.) is clearly explained to students at the beginning of each course.

Organisation of the study programme

None.

Annex: Site visit schedule

All meetings were held online.

Wednesday, 26 January 2022

09:00am – 10:15am	Preparatory meeting of the expert panel (internal)
10:15am – 10:30am	Short welcome and presentation by representatives from Heimerer College

Monday, 7 February 2022

13:30pm – 14:30pm	Internal meeting of the expert panel
14:30pm – 15:45pm	Meeting with <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Directing Board- Rector- Vice Rectors- General Secretary- Members of the Advisory Board
16:00pm – 18:00pm	Meeting with <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vice Rector for Studies and Training- Head of study programme- Internship Coordinator- Career Center

Tuesday, 8 February 2022

08:30am – 09:45am	Meeting with teachers (full-timers & part timers)
10:00am – 11:30am	Meeting with students
11:30am – 12:30pm	Meeting with employers and alumni
12:30pm – 14:00pm	Internal meeting of the expert panel / lunch break
14:00pm – 15:30pm	Meeting with <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vice Rector for Research and Quality- Vice Rector for Cooperation and Projects- Quality Assurance Office
15:30pm – 16:00pm	Meeting with administration & student support units <ul style="list-style-type: none">- General Secretary- Finance department- Library- IT- Student services
16:00pm – 17:30pm	Internal meeting of the expert panel
17:30pm – 18:00pm	Closing meeting with representatives of Heimerer College