



Annual program review of the master program 2019-2020

1. THE PROFILE AND STRUCTURE OF PROGRAM

Management of Real Estate and Infrastructure (MA) in terms of its mission are in full accordance with the mission of institution of College ESLG. The mission, the profile and structure of the master program is designed to create the elitary leaders in the field of real estate management and energy management through unique teaching methodologies and to contribute to the economic growth and sustainable development of the country, and advancement of learning, teaching and research in the field of built environment.

The focus on research-based teaching and inclusion of students in research projects of professors, and research projects of ESLG such as SEEB/HERD and OSCAR is considered as a unique teaching methodology and is used at the Real Estate Management master progra. The research assignments especially in diploma thesis with proper research structure and methodology with reviews from the mentors and committee resembling the peer to peer journal publication are also considered as an innovation in teaching methodology.

The master program in real estate contains four key disciplines 1) property law; 2) architecture and urban planning 3) real estate finance and economics and 4) real estate appraisal and recording and it follows strict recommendations also by the Supervisory Board of Licensing of Real Estate Appraisers and comments from the Program Industrial Board related to sustainable construction.

College European School of Law and Governance
Annex of Innovation Campus Street

Ibrahim Rugova p.n, Lipjan

Tel: 038 602 405

M: 045 456 666

E-mail: info@eukos.org



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2. LINK WITH THE LABOR MARKET

With regards to the master program in Real Estate the link of the program with the labor market and economic growth of the country has been presented below.

With regards to the link between the master program of real estate management and labor market and private sector, based on the statistics of World Bank, the real estate and construction sector constitute around 25 % of Kosovo's Gross Domestic Product. The construction and real estate sector has been proven to be the strongest sector in Kosovo during the last years. According to Besian Mustafa, Chief Executive Officer of Kosovo Investment Enterprise Support Agency, which functions within the Ministry of Trade and Industry, in its interview for "Zëri", stated that 82.5 million EUR is the value of foreign direct investment in the real estate and leasing sector, followed by FDI in financial services sector with 37.8 million EUR, whereby the sector with least investments remains the agricultural sector with only 0.3 % of FDI invested in agriculture in 2015.¹

According to Kosovo Investment Enterprise Support Agency the most attractive sector for investments in 2015 was the real estate sector. Also the passage of the new law, which makes it mandatory that each real estate transaction must be approved in terms of value by the licensed real estate appraiser makes the graduate of the present program very competitive in the market of new entrepreneurs in the field of licensed real estate appraisers as a new regulated profession, because students can very easily obtain the license and act as independent professionals.

Also, the study program contains unique courses such as sustainable architecture, sustainable building materials, sustainable facility management and sustainable urban development, with which students will gain competencies which are unique for the energy efficiency market in Kosovo. According to the Minister of Economic Development of Republic of Kosovo Mr. Blerand Stavileci following the passage of the new law on financing of energy efficiency, 10,000 new workplaces can be created. Therefore, students with unique gained competencies in sustainable architecture, sustainable building materials, sustainable facility management, and sustainable urban development will be very competitive in both domestic and global market. The President of German-Kosovar Chamber of Commerce Samir Krasniqi further argues that the construction sector with all related components, is the largest employer in Kosovo in the

¹ <http://zeri.info/ekonomia/46112/investitoret-82-5-milione-euro-ne-patundshmeri/>



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private sector. It is estimated that the construction sector globally is worth 3.5 trillion USD. 30% of this value belongs to European construction sector.

Business activities in the field of real estate transactions, leasing and other real estate related sectors were the fifth largest contributor to the Gross Domestic Product of Kosovo in 2013 with the ratio 8.9 % and total value of 365 million EUR, characterized by an increase of 8.8 % compared to the previous year. Furthermore, during the first quarter of 2014, the real estate activities had an increase of 13% compared to same period of 2013. Foreign direct investments in real estate and construction sector, which were considerably encouraged by diaspora investments have dominated the FDI during the last years constituting around 50% of all incoming foreign direct investments.

Private investments dominate the construction sector in Kosovo with an average of 71 %, whereas public expenditures (financed by Government and donors) represent less than 30 % of investments in the construction sector. In the private investment segment of construction sector, the market is dominated by housing projects (70 % of projects from which 55 % are collective housing projects and 17 % individual housing projects). Non-housing projects constitute a smaller proportion of market share with only 8%. Public expenditures are focused only on the construction of new roads and renovation of existing roads and railway infrastructure. Due to the construction of highway R6 Prishtina-Skopje, the construction sector is expected to increase by 4.4% during the last three years. In 2015, Government of Kosovo has foreseen to invest around 457 million EUR for capital investments. Several key facts for the construction sector are:

- Fourth largest employer for 2014;
- Largest employer for foreign nationals in 2013;
- Fourth highest salary among other sectors;
- Youth constitute around 27 % of total workforce of the sector

On the other hand, the link between the sustainability part of the master study program and labor market and private sector is presented below.

Investments in energy efficiency measures and financing of energy efficiency projects can serve as a strong catalyst for the development of construction and energy sector. Kosovo is a signatory party to the Energy Community Treaty. In order to expand the internal market of European Union for energy in Southeast Europe, the Energy Community Treaty requires from the signatories to adopt the EU legislation in the field of energy and other related sectors. Since April 2011, Kosovo has adopted a National Action Plan on Energy Efficiency 2010-2018. The new Directive of European Union on Energy Efficiency 2011/017217 has set as a target the saving of energy by 17% until

College European School of Law and Governance

Annex of Innovation Campus Siree

Ibrahim Rugova p.n Lipjan

Tel: 038 602 405

M: 045 456 666

E-mail: info@eukos.org



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2020. In this regard, the Government of Kosovo has adopted the law on Energy Efficiency and has adopted a second National Action Plan on Energy Efficiency 2013-2015. The initial adopted plan on energy savings foresaw as a target the energy savings by 9% until 2018. Article 11 of the Law on Energy Efficiency stipulates that the Ministry should support the measures foreseen by the National Energy Efficiency Plan of Kosovo. This support demands financial support by the Kosovo Budget, international organizations that implement programs on promotion of energy efficiency in Kosovo and financial support through energy efficiency funds established through bilateral agreements of cooperation.

In order to support the measures of promotion of energy efficiency as foreseen by municipal plans of energy efficiency, municipalities should explore the opportunities for financing through municipal budgets or donations. Kosovo Energy Efficiency Agency has several projects that are supported financially by international donors, including but not limited to EU, WB, kfW, UNDP, GIZ and EBRD, which exceed the value of 100 million EUR.² As stated so far, one can argue that there are considerable funds for the improvement of energy efficiency measures in buildings because a considerable portion of courses that are delivered at the present study program aim to achieve the set of skills and competencies among the graduates that would make them very competitive in the market for energy efficient buildings, which makes the present interdisciplinary program very attractive. Taking into account that the present study program is unique in Kosovo and the region, one can argue that the graduates of the present study program can become very competitive in the construction market, banking sector (for valuation of mortgages), market for appraisal of residential and commercial real estate, leasing market compared to other classic study programs such as Banking and Finance, where thousands of students graduate and have to compete with one another and on the other hand there are only six banks in Kosovo which employ totally 5,000 employees.

3. METHODS OF TEACHING AND ASSESMENT

The main method of teaching at master study program is research-based teaching and project group work. Both teaching methodologies are unique, highly regarded by students and professional community.

² Vlerësim i sektorit të ndërtimit në Kosovë: Perspektiva e punësimit për të rinjtë, Swiss Cooperation Office, 2015.



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Also, methods of teaching are quite unique which includes case study analysis, take home exams with case studies and research questions, which aims to develop both the critical thinking of students and problem solving skills. The problem-based teaching is an innovative teaching methodology as opposed to memorization of concepts and definitions.

The interdisciplinary activity is a teaching and assessment method that is quite unique. It has been successfully implemented in several interrelated courses with the same professor at the master level mainly.

The chosen methods of teaching and assessment are considered to be in accordance with the objectives and learning outcomes of the study program. A key important learning outcome is that students will be able to write publications and publish articles in scientific research journals, which is achieved through research-based teaching and research publication simulated setting, which resulted in the selected highlighted successes of the department:

- Research of Kosovo Real Estate Market Study for the leading bank in Kosovo;
- Research publications using research assistants from among former and existing master students in leading journals indexed in SCOPUS;
- Most of research publications of the department are generated as an idea from the private construction companies in Kosovo and real estate appraisal companies such as Kosovo Real Estate Market Study by KRG company, Measuring embodied CO2 emission in apartment buildings in Kosovo (Hoxha Investment Group), Measuring hearing energy performance of apartment buildings built after 2003 in Kosovo (Hoxha Investment Group), and Sustainable Impact of Adaptive Reuse of former communist shopping malls in Kosovo (generated by First Capital Investment);

4. PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

All the courses in the master study program in Real Estate Management have been implemented in accordance with ECTS workload where all lectures, exercises and other assignments are calculated in detail according to ECTS credits of each course.

All the courses have started in time and finished in due time during the semester. The number of cancelled lectures in master program was zero in the second semester during the pandemics.



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cancelled lectures, whereas other professors mainly held lectures in time and finished lectures in time.

The course Sustainable Architecture (lecture part) deviated 20 % from the learning outcome of sustainability since it focused on environmentally friendly architecture on green architecture when taught by Professor Elvida Pallaska and not fully on three levels of sustainability such as economic, social and environmental architecture. The exercises part was held by Teaching Assistant Albana Gjonbalaj and was in full compliance with the course syllabus and course and program learning outcomes. The deviation in lecture part occurred due to the fact that PhD of professor Pallaska is in urban planning. The training from NTNU for Teaching Assistant Albana Gjonbalaj had a positive effect on achieving a full compliance with the course syllabus and learning outcomes.

College European School of Law and Governance

Annex of Innovation Camps Street

Ibrahim Rgova p.n Lipjan

Tel: 038 602 405

M: 045 456 666

E-mail: info@eukos.org



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The practical implementation of the program is characterized by research-based teaching and students were involved in the research projects of Kosovo professors cooperating with NTNU professors, whose articles were successfully published in various impact factor journals.

The interdisciplinary activity was used by Professor Hoxha as a unique teaching methodology meeting a part of course requirements in two parallel related courses Sustainable Building Materials and Energy Buildings in 2019-2020 where students with the Joint Group Project for both courses address buildings from the perspective of sustainable building materials and from the perspective of calculation of heating and energy performance of the building.

In the course of Execution of Innovative Projects in Public and Private Sector, in student surveys students claim that there is incompatibility between course syllabus and the lectures of professors in three particular weeks within the 15-week course program in 2019-2020.

Students faced problems in master thesis preparation, which was addressed through tutors and teaching assistants serving as mentor assistants in 2019-2020.

In courses of Municipal Infrastructure, there only few site visits to infrastructure projects given the fact that the course is delivered in the Winter Semester. Had the course been in the Spring semester no visits could have been possible due to pandemics.

College European School of Law and Governance

Annex of Innovation Campus Street

Ibrahim Rugova p.n Lipjan

Tel: 038 602 405

M: 045 456 666

E-mail: info@eukos.org



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5. NUMBER OF APPLICANTS IN RELATION TO OFFERED PLACES AT PROGRAM LEVEL

In the master study program, there were around 130 applicants in 2019-2020 who applied for 50 study places and only 46 were admitted due to meeting the GPA requirement especially those coming from Architecture and Spatial planning undergraduate studies. There were 36 transfer students, who transferred in the Spring Semester.

College European School of Law and Governance

Annex of Innovation Campus Street

Ibrahim Rugova p.n Lipjan

Tel: 038 602 405

M: 045 456 666

E-mail: info@eukos.org



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6. PROGRAM COMPLETION

In 2019-2020 in the master program student drop out from enrolled students was 10 % and 97 % met the conditions to enroll in second year of studies. Only 25 % of the students have graduated within 2.5 years threshold. The rest are still in the diploma thesis preparation. The reason is that the Regulation on Diploma Thesis for Master students is quite hard and seminary workshops were provided to alleviate the problem.



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7. PROFESSORS

In the master program in 2019-2020 all the courses were held by competent professors with PhD and also with academic titles the highest being the Associate Professor. The ratio of full time versus part-time professors was 80 %.

8. AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

After examination of available resources in the study program during the 2019-2020 period, the QA Office notices sufficient resources for the regular implementation of the study programs of departmental level.

The sufficient resources and software was noticed in courses: Sustainable Architecture (ECOTECT, Design Builder), Sustainable Materials (Athena Impact Estimator), Energy Buildings (URSA software, Thermal Camera), and Quantitative Techniques (SPSS), Sustainable Facility Management (Thermal Camera), Real Estate Registration (GIS, SIKTK simulator, and land surveying equipment), and Real Estate Evaluation (Excel, SPSS, and NPSS), which are delivered at the department level.

College European School of Law and Governance
Annex of Innovation Campus Street
Ibrahim Rugova p.n Lipjan
Tel: 038 602 405
M: 045 456 666
E-mail: info@eukos.org



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9. AVAILABILITY OF LITERATURE

In all courses there is sufficient literature in English in terms of books, journal articles, and case studies. There is a lack of literature in Albanian language in most of the courses of both real estate discipline and energy management discipline given the fact that both programs are new, quite unique and have very few publications are from professors in Kosovo in Albanian language. Some of the books in some of the courses do not have the latest edition, since no latest edition has been published recently.

10. CONTRIBUTION TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR

It is the opinion of the private sector representatives who serve in the departmental advisory board such as KRG-Kosovo Realty Group L.L.C and Hoxha Investment Group that the contribution of study programs of ESLG to the private construction and real estate sector of Kosovo is as follows:

- Supply of ESLG with professional graduates especially at the master level is of very high quality;
- Students of ESLG after graduation around 90 % got employed in the respective construction and real estate firms including KRG and Hoxha Investment Group;
- ESLG contributes to the community and private sector with outstanding research published in most prestigious universities and the proprietary researches done for the private sector;
- ESLG did not achieve to include civil society organizations at full level in the promotion of sustainability in buildings and other spheres of life maybe due to the fault of lack of interest by CSOs themselves and due to the fact that only few CSOs are profiled in the field of environment, energy efficiency and sustainability;
- ESLG served as a reviewer for several researches conducted by a partner NGO Institute of Free Market Economy;
- The practical skills and research skills developed among students of ESLG during their studies are immediately transformed to real initiatives upon their employment in the real estate and construction sector, although pandemics posed a problem during the second quarter of 2020.

College European School of Law and Governance

Annex of Innovation Campus Street

Ibrahim Rugova p.n Lipjan

Tel: 038 602 405

M: 045 456 666

E-mail: info@eukos.org



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- Entrepreneurial and innovation skills developed during the studies among ESLG students can help boost the business performance of the firms in the construction sector in Kosovo;
- The contribution of diploma theses especially in real estate programs for the appraisers' community is immense since all the studies performed contribute directly as credible references for licensed appraisers during their practical valuations;
- The use of practical skills taught through software in energy management could immediately be put into practice by firms in meeting the requirements of Law on Energy Performance of Buildings;

Findings approved by Private Sector Representatives 10.09.2020

Gent Sejdiu, CEO of KRG-Kosovo Realty Group L.L.C



Bajram Hoxha, CEO of Hoxha Investment Group



College European School of Law and Governance
Annex of Innovation Campus Sreca

Ibrahim Rugova p.n Lipjan

Tel: 038 602 405

M: 045 456 666

E-mail: info@eukos.org



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11. EVALUATION BY PROGRAM DIRECTOR AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The program director Assoc. Prof. Dr. Visar Hoxha after thorough examination of all the topics of two year program review, reaches the following conclusions:

PROFILE AND STRUCTURE

- The profile and structure of the program are modern, in compliance with the mission of the institution;
- The structure of department takes into account the unique methodology of research based teaching and develops unique skills amongst students and staff;

Recommendation:

- Larger consultations with civil society organizations;

METHODS OF TEACHING AND ASSESMENT

- Research-based teaching and pilot implementation of interdisciplinary activity proven to be a success in the courses. The average GPA of students, student satisfaction, and learning outcomes achievement matrix assessment of the respective courses are the best evidences of success;
- As a consequence of research-based teaching five joint publications between professors and students (now Teaching Assistants) in impact factor journals such as Facilities, Property Management and CIRRE conference;

Recommendation:

- Increase the research publications with students;
- Increase the level of interdisciplinary activity as a form of assessment in bachelor program of real estate and Energy Management;

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

- No absenteeism of professors during second semester due to online teaching;
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College European School of Law and Governance
Annex of Innovation Campus Street
Ibrahim Rugova p.n Lipjan
Tel: 038 602 405
M: 045 456 666
E-mail: info@eukos.org



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- Slight incompatibility between course content and course syllabus in courses Sustainable Facility Management;
- Slight deviation from the sustainability learning outcome in the course Sustainable Architecture;
- Interdisciplinary activity although successful only implemented in the courses with the same professor;
- No sufficient site visits to municipal infrastructure projects because the course is elective and chosen in the third winter semester and due to weather deterioration in November and December 2019 no execution of site visits as planned. Students lagging behind the plan in preparation of their master theses;
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Recommendation:

- Expand the scope of interdisciplinary activity at other courses
- Provide seminary workshops in the final semester for preparation of theses.
- Provide obligatory 4 hours per week lectures and exercises for the preparation of diploma theses at departmental level;
- Provide more online teaching opportunities, even when the pandemics is over.

NUMBER OF APPLICANTS AS OPPOSED TO ADMITTED CANDIDATES

- Number of admitted students in the master program has been stable;
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Recommendation:

Better promotion of the master program with the excellent candidates with high GPA in management, economics, and law programs of University of

College European School of Law and Governance

Annex of Innovation Campus Street

Ibrahim Rugova p.n Lajjan

Tel: 038 602 405

M: 045 456 666

E-mail: info@eukos.org



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PROGRAM COMPLETION

- Number of drop outs has been small in master program;
- Number of students transitioning to next year has been high in 2019.2020;
- Students lagging behind the plan in preparation of diploma theses;

Recommendation:

Increase the number of tutors for diploma theses preparation in the form of teaching Assistants;

PROFESSORS

In the master program in the years all the courses were held by competent professors with PhD and also with academic titles the highest being the Associate Professor. The ratio of full time versus part-time professors was 70 %.

College European School of Law and Governance

Annex of Innovation Campus Street

Ibrahim Rugova p.n Lipjan

Tel: 038 602 405

M: 045 456 666

E-mail: info@eukos.org



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Recommendation:

Increase the number of Full professors in the study master program;

AVAILABILITY OF LITERATURE

Sufficient literature in English and deficiency of books in Albanian;

Recommendation:

Explore the publications in the universities in Albania;

Increase the books, publications and other published material in the above mentioned courses;

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND COMMUNITY

Supply of high quality graduates;

High employability of students of master program;

Outstanding research in thematic areas recommended by representatives of the private sector;

Lack of inclusion of civil society in the promotion of sustainability in buildings

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College European School of Law and Governance

Nazim Gafurri 33 10000 Prishtina Kosovo

Tel: 038 602 405

M: 045 456 666

E-mail: info@eukos.org



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- Immense contribution to appraisers community through diploma researches contributing directly to measuring valuation parameters dictating the real estate market in Kosovo;

- Increase the link between the master program and industry in terms of research and innovation;

RECOMMENDATION

- Increase the link between the master program and industry in terms of research and innovation;
- Better inclusion of civil society in the promotion of sustainability in buildings;

Assoc. prof. Dr. Visar Hoxha, Department Director

Date: 20.09.2020

