

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF UT (UNIVERSITY OF TETOVO - TETOVO), WHAT PROFILE OF THE ARCHITECTURE STUDIES MODULE DOES OUR COUNTRY AND EUROPE AS A UNION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY NEED

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Abstract

The questions about the right profile of the studies in the study programs for Architecture, which will respond to the challenges and demands of the market, the action within the spaces of the European community and our country as a candidate member of the European union. Higher education and producing architecture staff in North Macedonia begins in 1949 when Macedonia was part of the former RSFJ. In 1949, the technical faculty was formed as part of the Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje with architectural and construction sections. In 1965, the Faculty of Architecture- Construction was formed, since 1975 as a separate Faculty of Architecture and Construction. In the beginning, architects were educated and profiled with studies that lasted 4 years. In 1994, the University of Tetova was formed as a high institution of Albanian education in North Macedonia, where the initiative for the formation of the Technical Faculty was launched.

Keywords: higher education, UT, study programs, architecture, qualifications.

1. Introduction

Higher education for the training and education of architectural professionals in the Republic of North Macedonia began in 1949, when Macedonia was part of the former SFR Yugoslavia. In 1949, the Technical Faculty was established within the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, with an Architectural-Construction Section. In 1965, the Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering was founded, and since 1975, the Faculty of Architecture and the Faculty of Civil Engineering have functioned as separate and independent institutions. Initially, the studies for the Architect Engineer profile lasted 4 years.



Figure. 1. Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering – Skopje

The first architect of Albanian nationality to graduate and enroll at the Faculty of Architecture in Skopje was Suada Doko. Suada Doko Mekuli is the first female architect of Albanian nationality not only in the former Yugoslav territories but also more broadly.

SUADA DOKO MEKULI (1931–2010)



An architect and university professor, who, thanks to her outstanding work, was and remains one of the greatest architects of all time. Suada was born in 1931 in Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia, and was the first female architect in Kosovo. Although originally from Macedonia, after graduating she worked in Kosovo.

Suada Doko Mekuli completed her primary and secondary education in her hometown of Ohrid. She continued her studies at the Technical Faculty of the University of Skopje "Ss. Cyril and Methodius", in the Department of Architecture, and graduated in 1958. Throughout her career, she completed a large number of projects for collective housing

in Pristina, Peja, Rahovec, Gjakova, Štrpce, and across Kosovo.

She graduated in 1958 from the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Skopje "Ss. Cyril and Methodius." Throughout her career, she completed numerous projects for collective housing in Pristina, Peja, Rahovec, Gjakova, Štrpce, and across Kosovo.

In 1994, the University of Tetova was established as a higher education institution for Albanian-language education in the Republic of Macedonia, where the initiative for the establishment of a Technical Faculty was also launched. In 2004, the University of Tetova was legalized, after which the Center for Polytechnic Studies was established. In 2006, the Faculty of Applied Sciences was formed, along with the initiative to establish a study program in architecture, which began for the first time in the academic year 2007/2008. The study program followed the 3+2 module (Bachelor and Master), covering the first and second cycle of studies. In the first academic year, 98 students were enrolled in the first semester, admitted through a public call and selected via an entrance examination. The second cycle module (Master's level) began in the academic year 2011/2012 with 16 students.



Figure 2. The first rector of the University of Tetova, the building of the Faculty of Applied Sciences.

The Faculty of Applied Sciences continues to expand, enrich, and enhance its academic and practical work, adapting to modern trends and standards, particularly to the labor market. Until 2008, graduates in the Republic of Macedonia in the field of architecture were awarded the title of Graduate Engineer of Architecture (regular 5-year academic studies, 10 semesters—9 semesters of regular coursework and 1 semester dedicated to the diploma thesis), Master of Architecture (in design and urbanism) as a two-year program with 4 semesters, and Doctor of Technical Sciences in Architecture. Today, the academic degree profiles include a three-year program – Bachelor of Architecture, Master of Architecture, and Doctor of Sciences (Doctor of Technical Sciences in Architecture). The development and training of professional architects of Albanian nationality in the Republic of North Macedonia have also been supported by faculty from the University of Pristina since the beginning of its architecture program (academic year 1978/1979, Technical Faculty Pristina) to the present day. It is worth noting that since the year 2000, in North Macedonia, there are practicing architects who graduated as Engineers of Architecture from the Republic of Albania (Polytechnic University of Tirana).



Figure 3. The buildings of the Faculties of Architecture in Pristina (Kosovo) and Tirana (Albania)

2. Cycle of Higher Education Studies in Architecture

From the beginning of architecture studies 75 years ago until the academic year 2004/2005, when reforms in higher education began, architecture studies functioned as a 5-year program and also as a higher vocational school (5 semesters of study). The five-year studies, comprising 9 semesters, followed a module that led to the qualification of *Graduated Architect (Graduate Engineer of Architecture)*. Within the faculty offering the 5-year study module, there were mainly three institutes: the Institute for Architectural Design, Urban Planning, and Building Construction. Later, additional institutes were formed, including the Institute for Graphic Communication and Mathematics, the Institute for Cultural Heritage–History of Architecture and Art, and the Institute for Industrial and Economic Buildings.

Between 1978 and 2003, the study process evolved into a 10-semester program: 9 semesters of regular coursework and one semester for the diploma thesis (*Graduate Engineer of Architecture*). There was also a 5-semester program (first-level studies), which awarded a diploma in higher vocational education with the professional title *Engineer of Architecture*. Starting from the academic year 2004/2005, faculties and architecture study programs were reformed in accordance with the Law on Higher Education of 2000, introducing the ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System). The 2000 law also established the foundation of the Bologna Declaration and the ECTS system as a reform in higher education. In some study programs, there was a parallelism of study concepts during this transition. From 2008 onwards, the principles of the ECTS-based study system were formalized by law, and higher education was divided into three levels (cycles of study):

- **First cycle of studies** – *Bachelor's degree* (undergraduate studies)
- **Second cycle of studies** – *Master's degree* (postgraduate studies)
- **Third cycle of studies** – *Doctoral studies*

The first and second cycles together span a 5-year study period, during which students complete a total of **300 ECTS credits**.

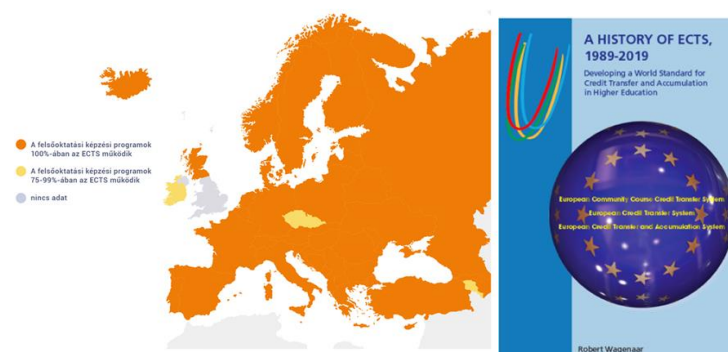


Figure 4.

3. First Cycle of Studies

The first cycle of studies—undergraduate—has generally developed as a three-year program with 180 ECTS credits, as explained above. However, for the architecture profession, the key concept in its practical application is compliance with the Law on Construction, the Law on Spatial and Urban Planning, and the Law on Civil Servants, among others.

Additionally, the authorization of architects and the licensing of legal entities where architects are employed for conducting scientific and academic activities is regulated. Licensing is issued by the Ministry of Transport and Communications for activities such as design and urban planning, construction supervision, project auditing, and more.

What is a license and who gets licensed?

A license is a document issued by the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

- Legal entities are licensed.
- These legal entities must employ authorized professionals.
- Architects and engineers are authorized by the Chamber of Authorized Architects and Engineers of Macedonia.

The Chamber of Authorized Architects and Engineers issues authorizations for architects and engineers, granting appropriate licenses from the Engineering Chamber (Authorization A and B) for the following:

- Responsible designer – preparation of project documentation
- Supervising engineer
- Project documentation reviewer
- Construction engineer
- Urban planning developer

Conditions for membership in the Chamber:

1. Citizenship of the Republic of Macedonia
2. Higher education in a relevant profession (240–300 ECTS credits)
3. At least three years of work experience after graduation
4. At least three references for each of the requested authorizations



Figure 5. Authorizations and Certificates issued by the Chamber of Authorized Architects and Authorized Engineers

This requirement is also one of the practical requirements of the 4+1 study module: 4 years of undergraduate studies (first cycle) leading to graduation, and 1 year of postgraduate studies.

At the University of Tetova (Faculty of Applied Sciences – Architecture study program), since the academic year 2012/2013, the 4+1 module has been implemented.

According to the Law on Higher Education of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2018 (May 8), No. 82: **LAW ON HIGHER EDUCATION, Study programs for regulated professions, Article 147:**

By way of exception to the provisions of this law, the duration and content of studies for degrees obtained in each cycle of studies related to the practice of regulated professions shall be as follows:

12. The academic study program for architecture shall mandatorily include at least five years of study, which conclude with the successful passing of a final examination.

This law aligns with the concept of the University of Tetova – Faculty of Applied Sciences, which, with the new accreditation of the Architecture study program in the academic year 2021/2022, began implementing a five-year integrated study program, combining the first and second cycles of studies.

Upon graduation, the student is awarded the title **Master of Technical Sciences in Architecture**.

The studies last ten semesters, and upon completion, the graduate earns **300 ECTS credits**.

Table 1. FAS, Architecture Study Program – Registered Students Over the Years

No.	Academic Year	Number of Registered Students – Architecture Study Program
1.	2007/2008	98
2.	2008/2009	73
3.	2009/2010	116
4.	2010/2011	104
5.	2011/2012	109
6.	2012/2023	125
7.	2013/2014	100
8.	2014/2015	110
9.	2015/2016	76
10.	2016/2017	66
11.	2017/2018	63
12.	2018/2019	51
13.	2019/2020	42
14.	2020/2021	38
15.	2021/2022	25

16.	2022/2023	46
17.	2023/2024	51

4. Second Cycle of Studies – Postgraduate Studies

Postgraduate studies were introduced for the first time in the Republic of North Macedonia in 1974 at the Faculty of Architecture in Skopje (former Yugoslavia). At the University of Tetova – Faculty of Applied Sciences, the Architecture study program began offering second-cycle studies (postgraduate studies) in the 2011/2012 academic year, with 120 ECTS credits and two specializations: Design and Urban Planning. Today, in response to credit requirements, two modules are available: a 1-year module with 60 ECTS credits and a 2-year module with 120 ECTS credits, upon completion of which the academic title Master of Technical Sciences in Architecture is awarded.

5. Third Cycle of Studies – Doctoral Studies

Before the 2021/2022 academic year, regular doctoral studies were not yet established under the provisions of the current Law on Higher Education. Starting from that academic year, doctoral studies were officially launched as 3-year programs (third cycle) with a total of 180 ECTS credits. The content of these studies includes academic and scientific work, as well as mentorship, involving student participation in relevant and related subjects within the university. Previously (before the 2021/2022 academic year), the doctoral process was conducted in the form of mentored studies, culminating in a public defense before an appropriate academic committee.

6. Concepts and Compatibility of Study Programs

The main goal of the Bologna study system is to establish general criteria within the European community, one of which is the credit system (ECTS). This system standardizes the scope and structure of courses within study programs and, in a way, enables mobility. Another concept is that people prefer to be educated in their native language and at universities closer to where they live. As evidence of this, until 2003, the city of Gostivar had only five Albanian graduates in architecture (who were active professionals in the Republic of North Macedonia), of whom I was the fifth (Ramadan Aliu, Shpresa Fetahu, Sabri Sulejmani, Bekim Aliu, and Enis Jakupi). Up until 2015, the number of students enrolled at the University of Tetova also included students from Kosovo, as at the time there were no private universities in Kosovo accredited for architectural studies. Students also came from the Preševo and Medveđa regions (Albanians from Serbia). Appropriate criteria must be applied in certain study programs to ensure that qualifications, diplomas, and professional titles are relevant and recognized. The implementation of the credit system through the Architecture study program, with ECTS credits and the division of studies into three cycles, highlighted the need to organize scientific conferences. At these conferences, students, lecturers, professors, and assistants present papers and scientific achievements. In the past, symposia and conferences were organized with specific characteristics, theses, and goals. Today, conferences are more comprehensive in nature, possessing scientific and normative value, as well as contributing to academic progress. In 2015 (May 2015), the first international conference was held at the University of Tetova, Faculty of Applied Sciences: the International Conference on Applied Sciences (ICAS-2015) in Tetova, Republic of North Macedonia. That same year, the faculty established its scientific journal: JAS – SUT, Journal of Applied Sciences – SUT
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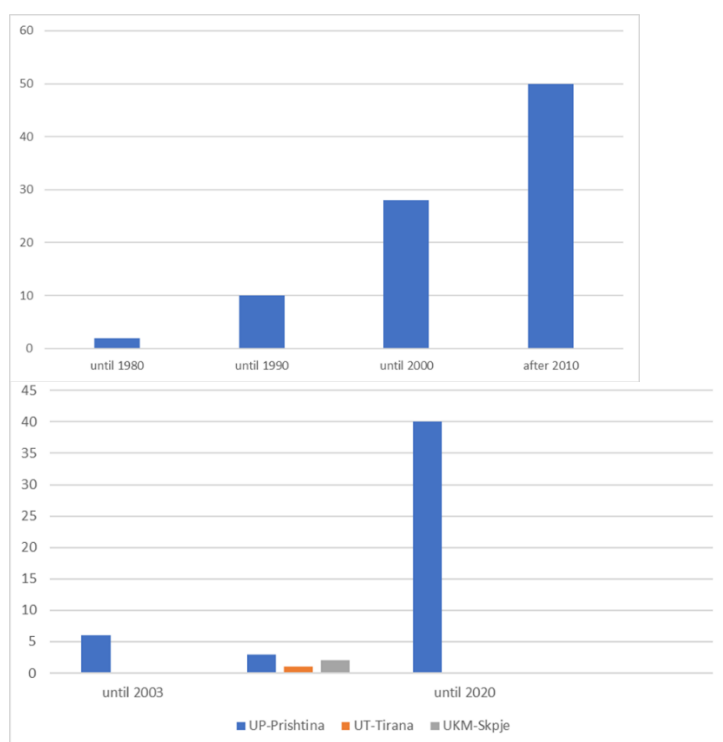
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Figure 6. Photographs from Lectures and Exercises – 2010, UT-FAS, and ICAS 2015 – First International Conference



Diagrams:

Graduated Architects Over the Years in the City of Gostivar, RNM, of Albanian Nationality,
Graduated Architects from the City of Gostivar, RNM, of Albanian Nationality



Figure 7.

As part of the agenda for marking the anniversary of the founding of the University of Tetova, the Student Parliament organized various activities across several faculties. The Faculty of Applied Sciences organized a certificate of appreciation ceremony for students who had won awards in international competitions during the previous academic year. The Dean of this Faculty gave a presentation regarding the Architecture Study Module, emphasizing its importance for both our country and Europe.

Conclusions

- It is necessary to carefully assess and plan for the appropriate professional profiles and the number of qualified personnel in the construction sector (architecture and civil engineering), both within the economic sector and the public sector.
- Equally essential and non-negotiable is the synchronization of laws and regulations related to construction, design, urban planning, and the Law on Higher Education. The process of awarding professional titles and credits (ECTS) must be clearly defined and examined. In North Macedonia, for architects, this is regulated by the Law on Higher Education from 2018 (as cited above).
- Another key concept is the continuous development and necessity of professional roles in construction, design, supervision, and auditing. The demand and the needs for these roles must align with the country's development objectives, regional dynamics, and standards within the European Union.
- Currently, it can be concluded that there is a noticeable gap between the actual demand for architects—including the type and profile of professionals needed—and the interest of young people in studying architecture, as well as their future career prospects. Addressing this gap requires a strategic approach to education policies,

labor market analysis, and the promotion of architecture as a sustainable and essential profession for national development.

In summary, a comprehensive, well-coordinated approach is needed—linking education, legislation, and market demand—to ensure that architectural education and practice contribute meaningfully to both national progress and European integration.

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