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***UNIVERSITY OF MITROVICA***  
***”ISA BOLETINI”***  
***MINING (MSc)***

***RE/ACCREDITATION***

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*May 28 2019, Mestrovic*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit: May 28, 2019.**

**Expert Team (ET) members:**

- *Prof. Dr. Regita Bendikiene*
- *Prof. Dr. Bettie Higgs*

**Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):**

- *Avni Gashi, Acting Director of KAA*
- *Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*

**Sources of information for the Report:**

- *Self-Evaluation Report (SER) submitted by University: Mining (MSc)*
- *Information obtained during meetings with management of the faculty of Geoscience, with Heads of study programs, teaching staff, students, graduates and employers*
- *Information obtained during site visit*
- *Additional documents requested by ET*

**Criteria used for program evaluation:**

- *KAA accreditation Manual*



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## 1.2. Site visit schedule

May 28 2019

- 07.40** Meeting at the reception of the hotel
- 09.00 – 09.30** Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated (*no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion*)
- 09.30 – 10.30** Meeting with the head of the study programme: *The Deposit of the mineral resources MSc*
- 10.30 – 12.00** Meeting with the head of the study programme: *Mining BSc and Mining MSc*
- 12.00 – 12.30** Meeting with quality assurance representatives
- 12.30 – 13.40** Lunch break
- 13.40 – 14.10** Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure (*used for the implementation of the programme*)
- 14.10 – 14.50** Meeting with teaching staff
- 14.50 – 15.30** Meeting with students
- 15.30 – 16.00** Meeting with graduates
- 16.00 – 16.30** Meeting with graduates and employers of graduates
- 16.30 – 16.45** Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program

## 1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation

The foundations of higher education studies in Mitrovica began with the opening of the Technical High School in 1961. In 1974 the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy was opened, with three departments: Mining, Technology, and Metallurgy, while in 1987 the Geology department was opened.

Based on these departments and on over 50 years of experience in Higher Education in Mitrovica, the Government of Republic of Kosovo on 06.03.2013 decided on the establishment



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of Mitrovica University (decision no.01/118). Kosovo Assembly ratified this decision on 31.05.2013.

The University of Mitrovica “Isa Boletini” (UMIB) is a public institution of higher education, which develops academic education, scientific research, professional counseling and other fields of academic activity. It consists of 6 academic units: Faculty of Geosciences, Faculty of Food Technology, Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Education.

Faculty of Geoscience (FG) has a much older tradition than the UMIB itself. Since the 1960s FG in Mitrovica has been educating competent experts and conducting professional and scientific research in the field of geology, mining and material & metallurgy according to social and economic circumstances. The development of the professions in Kosova has greatly depended on the activities of the Faculty, while faculty staff has continuously contributed to the prosperity of their professions in particular and the whole society in general.

The Mining Department of FG provides programs for two levels (Bachelor and Master) of University study in Mining Sciences with the scientific learning outcomes and contemporary practices that are being realized today in the mines.

The program *Mining MSc* is covering the labor market needs and development forecasts at the country level, taking into account the Mining Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo. The study program aims to meet the needs of the respective sectors of the mining industry in the country as well as the global mining industry.

## 2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

### 2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

**Standard 1.1.** *The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.*

It is stated in the SER that the mission of the study program is in line with the UMIB's overall mission statement, based on the three-year strategic plan and the FG mission as well as other industry stakeholders.

According to the information presented in the Website of UMIB the mission statement is too complex (9 points are indicated). The mission of University has to be stated briefly reflecting the uniqueness of UMIB. It reflects expectations of faculty to their graduates, but not its mission.

Objectives presented in the SER are department oriented, they do not address the study program and students performance.



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***Standard 1.2.*** *Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.*

It is stated in the SER that targeted learning outcomes are in line with the National Qualifications Framework and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area. The ET has to note that Learning Outcomes (LO) are not presented for the majority of courses in the SER. LO should be written in a consistent way. This will be helpful to the student and to the future employer. It should be possible to see a development of knowledge and skills from first year to third year. It is worth mentioning here that programme learning outcomes presented according to the EUR-ACE Framework Standards (<http://www.enaee.eu/publications/european-framework-standards>) would be more suitable and understandable (Knowledge and Understanding; Engineering Analysis; Engineering Design; Investigations; Engineering Practice; Transferable Skills). It was recommended by ET in 2014 and 2017 during the site visits in UMIB.

The LO of individual courses do not show the links to the main aim and LO of the program. There are no prerequisites: list of courses which have to be studied before (it was recommended in 2014 and 2017).

***Standard 1.3.*** *The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.*

Description of courses are provided in Syllabuses, but do not always specify the necessity and importance of the course in the program, in some cases (eg. Mine Ventilation II; Methodology of scientific research work; Applied Geomechanics; Mine Ventilation Design, etc.) the content of courses or topics have been presented instead of a short description.

LO are presented in many different forms, this part is named as course objectives, whereas some course syllabuses do not provide any LO or objectives (eg. Statistics for Geo-engineering; Mine Ventilation II; Applied Geophysics; Ground Improving Technique; Mining legislation and regulation, etc.). It is not clear for the ET how students are introduced to the specific courses if there are no LO at all.

There are some overlaps in the topics of *Mine Ventilation II* and *Mine Ventilation Design*, *Statistics for Geo-engineering* and *Mining geostatistics*. Some courses overlaps with courses of *Mining BSc: Technical mechanics of Rock* with *Rock Mechanics I BSc*. According to the general rules of programs structure it is suggested to propose individual courses for bachelor and master degree programs. Some courses in *Mining MSc* continue or overlap courses in



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*Mining BSc: Mine Ventilation II, Technology of surface mining exploitation II, Rock Mechanics II.* Individual courses in the master degree program would ensure a wider range of bachelors from different programs to be admitted to Mining MSc. The ET presumes that the course *Methodology of scientific research* work needs to be moved to first semester of program.

Teaching and evaluation methods as well as criteria's are provided for each individual course. All courses include lectures, some discussions, group work, and seminars. In some courses Power-Point presentations are defined as the teaching method, but this is just a tool to demonstrate. There is little evidence about advanced teaching methods in the SER, such as team work, individual project, lectures of invited practitioners, etc. Evaluation methods and criteria are presented for each individual course. In all courses regular attendance has impact for final grade (from 5 – 15 %), however neither the head of program nor teaching staff and students were able to explain what criteria are used for evaluation; physical attendance has been mentioned mostly (rather than satisfactory contribution to class).

In spite of the fact that impact of the final examination in all courses is 30 %, in the meeting with students ET realised that not all the teachers are keeping to the assessment criteria provided in the syllabus of courses. Students have mentioned that in some courses it is enough to assess tests, home works, etc.

***Standard 1.4.*** *There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.*

The UMIB Statute, which is in full compliance with the Law on HEI and the instructions of MEST, UMIB's internal regulations, internal regulations of the academic unit are available online in Albanian and English.

***Standard 1.5.*** *All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.*

All staff and students are compliant with the regulations mentioned above.

***Standard 1.6.*** *All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.*

It was noted in the SER that academic staff have an on-going internal discussion on policy improvement, harmonization of regulations and terms of reference as well as the definition of responsibility regarding program management and dissemination. This includes consultations





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with students and stakeholders. ET has observed that there is no clear system of responsibilities especially in quality management of course syllabuses. Attestation of courses by the head of program, head of department or study council over a certain period would be preferable.

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *To University and FG: Formulate the mission statement briefly and clearly showing uniqueness and oneness of UNIM and FG (one concise sentence);*
2. *To University and FG: Present Learning Outcomes (LO) of program according to the EUR-ACE Framework Standards;*
3. *The program aim and LO must be publicly accessible on the institutional web-site, as well as on other information channels. Assistance should be given to Head of program to write LO for the program in the appropriate form;*
4. *The Learning Outcomes for all courses need further consideration. Within each course the learning outcomes and the course description should show how each course is distinct and how it is related with LO of the program. Assistance should be given to academic staff members to write the learning outcomes for their course in the appropriate form.;*
5. *Content of courses has to be revised in order to avoid topic's overlap; avoid repetition and continuation of courses from Mining BSc;*
6. *Convey Methodology of scientific research work to first semester of program;*
7. *Define mandatory attendance of courses in Academy Policy (eg. 70 % of theoretical lectures, 100 % of laboratory, practical work or seminars are mandatory);*
8. *Accomplish SWOT directly and specifically related with the Mining MSc mission, objectives and administration; it can not be the same as for Mining BSc*

## 2.2. Quality management

**Standard 2.1.** *All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.*

It is stated in the SER that staff of the FG participated in self-assessments and is a part of the reporting and quality improvement processes in teaching and learning. However, during meeting with quality assurance representative the ET has ascertained that not all the members of staff are following regulations given by the Quality assurance manager, particularly while





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framing course syllabuses according to the example of KAA. Meeting with students showed a shortage of evaluation of courses and academic staff especially in a classes with small numbers. It was not clear for the ET which system of course evaluation is used: online or written?

**Standard 2.2.** *Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.*

Results of surveys are discussed during meeting of department. The implementation of the recommendations is limited by an absence of strong and clear system of QA.

**Standard 2.3.** *Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.*

The Quality assurance representative has no authority to accept or reject the documents related with program curriculum (course syllabus) and its delivery provided by academic staff.

**Standard 2.4.** *Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.*

SER does not include any information of admitted and graduated students number. The reasons of students drop-out are not indicated in the SER and were not clarified in staff and students meetings. A Supplementary document revealed high drop-out of students especially after the first academic semester, and a low percentage of admitted students graduated recently. The number of students admitted students in a period of 2014-2018 are not promising. Interventions by the FG will be needed to maintain or improve the numbers of students admitted and retained.

**Standard 2.5.** *Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.*

It is not clear how quality assurance processes are managed in the institution. A Central database would be very useful.

**Standard 2.6.** *Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.*



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There are no regulations as to how survey data is being collected. The establishment of an Alumni organization is a positive approach in gathering of worthwhile feedback about the program and its perspective; data will allow future evidence-based initiatives.

***Standard 2.7.** Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.*

Student attendance cannot be a sole indicator of student performance. This could be altered to satisfactory performance during attendance, or contribution to group work during attendance, or other.

***Standard 2.8.** The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.*

It is said in the SER that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared annually as well as the recommendations issued are incorporated into the SER as part of the re-accreditation process which takes place every three years for the respective programs. Strengths and weaknesses of institution, faculty, department and programs have to be discussed annually in the meetings of responsible bodies, and strategic plan of development and improvements indicating due dates and responsible person have to be drawn. The ET does not think that these reports have to be done just in case of accreditation of program.

***Standard 2.9.** The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.*

The Quality assurance system is still under development. The FG intends to adapt many instruments for quality monitoring, despite the fact that there is no systematic control of QA in whole institutions, leading to challenges for the FG.

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**



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1. *Establish a clear Quality assurance system showing the authority of QA and direct responsibilities of academic staff and head of programs, and indicate their roles in the decision making;*
2. *Enforce the implementation of the Regulation of QA and evaluation at UMIB at all levels;*
3. *Develop quality assurance culture in the institution, faculty, department the same strategy at all levels;*
4. *Establish the central database where public program curriculum together with courses syllabuses, students assessment and grading, online evaluation of courses and academic staff would be visible;*
5. *Compose teaching course attestation system in whole institution in order to reach the uniformity of each course syllabuses;*
6. *Ensure regular annual revision of program;*
7. *Discuss reasons of students' drop out and foreseen procedures and responsible persons to ensure more stable ratio of admitted and graduated students;*
8. *Accomplish SWOT directly and specifically related with Mining BSc quality assurance.*

### **2.3. Academic staff**

**Standard 3.1.** *Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.*

All UMIB staff are hired through the competition procedures, where by announcement of the competition all requests for the announced position and job descriptions are submitted. The competition is in accordance with MEST guidelines, Labor Law, UMIB Statute and UMIB Internal Regulations. After the completion of the competition procedures and the selection of the staff, the decision is issued with the description of the works that must be performed by the employee and the contract is signed, where is also the description of the works.

The ET has found Table 4 and Table 5 not very informative: column Loads for Lecturing (workload) denotes just position not accurate hours, there is no information presented in columns Administrative activities, examination, and consultations and Research. Supplementary documents (CV) of some academic staff was not provided.



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**Standard 3.2.** *The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.*

The teaching staff are in compliance with the Administrative instruction.

**Standard 3.3.** *Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.*

It is reported in the SER that most of the academic staff have only one primary job and this is FG. However, some of the academic staff have a primary job in the FG as well as a partial time of engagement within the other UMIB academic units or another institution outside the UMIB. The ET consider that engagement of academic staff in another UMIB academic unit can not be considered as a part time job as FG is the structural unit of UMIB.

**Standard 3.4.** *At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.*

It is stated in the SER that 60% of the academic staff in the study program are full-time employees and 40% are part-time staff. In the opinion of the ET a complete list of staff involved in this program, including academic staff, would show real situation in the program.

**Standard 3.5.** *For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.*

There are enough full-time staff with PhD in the program for every 60 ECTS. In the opinion of the ET the complete list of staff, including academic staff would show the real situation in the program.

**Standard 3.6.** *Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.*

According to the SER academic staff are supported and encouraged in terms of professional development, scientific advancement and mobility through various programs. There is no



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evidence of modes and facts of professional development in the SER. It was suggested by the ET in 2017 to establish a *Plan for development of academic staff*.

**Standard 3.7.** *The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.*

It was noticed in the staff meeting that staff are engaged in the academic community, available for consultations, involved in students assessment and mentoring of diploma work as well as research activities.

**Standard 3.8.** *Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.*

As it is stated in Standard 2.1 Report of the ET there is no measurable data presented. The *evaluation by students* questionnaire was requested as an supplementary document but was not received.

**Standard 3.9.** *Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.*

There is no systematic approach for quality enhancement of teaching strategies and of learning materials. This should include continuous professional development opportunities and updating of e-resources.

**Standard 3.10.** *Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.*

According to the law, teachers retirement is at the age of 65. Information about staff turnover would be useful for the deeper analyses.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**



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1. *Provide complete list of academic staff in a future SER indicating course taught by staff member in the program and total workload (in hours) per year in the program;*
2. *Establish Plan for development of academic staff with measurable targets, budget allocated for the implementation, and responsible person;*
3. *Ensure evaluation of all academic staff and study courses taught after each academic semester, and any appropriate responses or actions to be taken; highlight excellent work as well as some aspects to be improved;*
4. *Enclose English language skills development in staff development plan;*
5. *Additional staff development in the area of program curriculum development, Learning outcomes framing would be helpful, and essential for alignment with the EHEA;*
6. *Accomplish SWOT directly and specifically related to Mining MSc program and not the same as for Mining BSc.*

#### **2.4. Educational process content**

**Standard 4.1.** *The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer specially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.*

The SER states that the *Mining MSc* study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These are most clearly stated in the SER under the mission statement. The development of the student's personality is not explicit in the program. Bench-marking with 2 universities (Zagreb and Leoben) is a good exercise. The ET recommend that some analysis of this bench-marking should be included in the SER, together with actions arising from the exercise.

**Standard 4.2.** *The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.*

The awarding of ECTS and the appropriate hours of study are documented in the SER and SER supplement. This aligns with the Bologna framework. However, due to the absence of clear learning outcomes in a large number of course descriptions, it is not possible for the ET to fully assess whether or not the NQF and EHEA are complied with.





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**Standard 4.3.** *The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.*

The disciplines within the program have a logical flow, with respect to scientific content. It is not possible for the ET to be sure of the general and specific competencies gained due to the absence, in large part, of the learning outcomes. According to the SER and information given during a meeting with staff, the likelihood is that these competencies are gained, but the ET saw no concrete evidence.

**Standard 4.4.** *The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.*

The full course descriptions / syllabuses are attached to the SER. The learning outcomes stand out as the main cause of concern. There are a small number of courses with valid learning outcomes (eg. Mining Hydrogeology). The majority of courses do not contain valid learning outcomes. Two previous reviews and recommendations to the FG have stated very clearly that this must be addressed. This is for the benefit of students, but also for the benefit of academic staff. Assessment of learning outcomes cannot take place constructively, and be validated, if learning outcomes are not clear for everyone concerned. The UMIB and FG indicated that staff development to help design appropriate learning outcomes had taken place. In the meetings with staff the ET learned that there had been no staff development in teaching and learning during the past 6 years. The ET recommends that staff development in designing learning outcomes is provided and that staff participate in this activity. This can be delivered by peers who are experienced at writing learning outcomes, or by outside bodies.

**Standard 4.5.** *If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.*





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The ET was grateful for translation provided by a small number of staff and students. It is essential that the knowledge of English and/or other European languages is encouraged and that staff act as role models for students.

Although English is contained in the first year curriculum of the Mining B.Sc., it is only optional. The ET recommend that English is mandatory and is taken as curricular or co-curricular courses during both years of the degree.

***Standard 4.6.*** *The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.*

According to the comments in the meetings with staff and students, the students and staff have a good partnership. Although there may be discussions of learning outcomes, this is not clear from the SER or the meetings with staff and students.

***Standard 4.7.*** *Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.*

There is some indication that teaching strategies have diversified since the last quality review. However, according to the SER and supplement of courses, there is a heavy reliance on lectures (where students have to remain silent). The students appreciated the practical classes, field classes and work experience with industry. Assessment criteria or marking schemes were not included in the SER.

***Standard 4.8.*** *Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.*

The course descriptions contain some information on the weighting of assessments, and these descriptions are available to students. Success criteria and assessment rubrics were not provided in the SER or to the ET during the site visit. The ET recommends that examples of assessment with marking schemes or rubrics are included in the SER or available for scrutiny by the ET during the site visit.



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**Standard 4.9.** *Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.*

The ET were not given assessment criteria or rubrics in order to verify standards. Bench-marking with other institutions has been carried out to assist validation. The ET recommends that analysis of the bench-marking activities are included in the SER. A sample of thesis work was provided during the site visit. The ET recommend that each thesis has an abstract in English, or other widely used European language, to help the student disseminate the work.

**Standard 4.10.** *Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.*

The UMIB has policies and practices for such events. The ET was not given a link to policies and procedures. In the meeting with students the ET learned that there are policies that allow students to repeat examinations, and take longer than 2 years to complete the Mining M.Sc.

**Standard 4.11.** *If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ECTS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.*

During practice stages the students have tutors assigned to guide them. Students make presentations on certain aspects of practical/fieldwork, or write reports, and this forms part of the assessment. For most courses the practice learning outcomes are not stated clearly and the ET are not aware of the assessment criteria.

**Standard 4.12.** *In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.*



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The UMIB and FG have cooperation agreements with outside bodies such as industry, in order to facilitate the practice and research stages of the Mining M.Sc. The students indicated they would like more of these practice activities.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. The ET recommend that some analysis of bench-marking activities should be included in the SER, together with suggested actions arising from the exercise.*
- 2. The ET recommends that staff development in designing learning outcomes is provided and that staff participate in this activity. This can be delivered by peers who are experienced at writing learning outcomes, or by outside bodies.*
- 3. The ET recommend that English is mandatory and is taken as curricular or co-curricular courses during all years of the degree.*
- 4. The ET recommends that examples of assessment with marking schemes or rubrics are included in the SER or available for scrutiny by the ET during the site visit.*
- 5. The ET recommend that each thesis has an abstract in English, or other widely used European language, to help the student disseminate the work.*

## 2.5. Students

The SER was supplemented during a meeting with students. There were 7 student representatives involved in the meeting with students, including from the Masters in Mining.. These students had not been involved in the development of the SER.

The ET were impressed by those students who made their points in Albanian and English. The ET asked students if they intended to seek jobs, or further study, within Kosovo or whether they were hoping to go abroad on graduation. The group were split, with several choosing to go abroad to gain experience, and different cultural perspectives, before returning to Kosovo to contribute to their home country.

The students were very positive about the Faculty of Geosciences. They appreciated the small group numbers on the courses and the consequent close relationship with the academic staff. Their main requests for improvement were:

1. A greater amount of time spent in the field. They felt that field-based learning greatly consolidated the theory that they studied on campus. This includes visiting and working with geoscience agencies and industries. Working in the off-campus laboratories or in the



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field can lead to research topics for the students to investigate. The students would appreciate their expenses being reimbursed if they are doing work that benefits the outside bodies

2. Greater encouragement and opportunity for periods of study abroad. One postgraduate student described the benefits and follow-on opportunities from his own study semester abroad.

***Standard 5.1.*** *There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.*

The study program respects the institutional admission procedure and consistently applies requirements to all students. A link to relevant documentation and standards in the SER would be valuable. This should include recognition rules for foreign qualifications, and for prior learning outside of the higher education institutions.

***Standard 5.2.*** *All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.*

All students enrolled possess a high school diploma or equivalent. The staff focus group indicated that this is not adequate preparation for the Mathematics which the students must undertake at Bachelor's level. This causes students to leave the institution and are not retained in order to progress to M.Sc.Mining. Analysis and monitoring of year to year progress and completion rates could assist staff of the FG in providing assistance for students in difficulty.

***Standard 5.3.*** *The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.*

The Master's students enjoyed the later 'flipped classroom' approach which involved reading a scientific paper and then having a colloquium on the topic, and the problem-based learning approach. The SER indicates that practical student-based exercises are organised in small groups. The students expressed an interest in the potential of online conferences/connections with students and lecturers in other countries. They were very pleased to have a professor who had published 3 text books on topics relevant to their courses and who was considered a national role model in Kosovo.



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**Standard 5.4.** *Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.*

The SER states that students are subjected to tests and evaluation by teachers at the beginning of the semester, so that support activities can be organised, such as additional hours of exercises, consultation with teachers, and peer-to-peer work. The student focus group indicated they were very happy with the availability of staff to give them feedback on their performance and assist them if needed.

**Standard 5.5.** *The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.*

The results of the students are certified on an academic transcript. All results are recorded in the University Management System (SMU).

**Standard 5.6.** *Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.*

No details of flexible treatment are given in the SER. The ET learned from the student focus group that flexible treatment allows students to take longer than 2 years to complete their Master's degree if necessary. The students can repeat courses that they have failed. The ET are not aware of any other flexible treatment of students with special situations (such as students with disability undertaking field-work). Support services such as student counselling in cases of emotional, financial or family-related problems, career guidance, international matters, legal advice, etc. should also be documented in the SER.

**Standard 5.7.** *Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.*

The SER did not include recent admission numbers and retention or completion rates. The University management System captures this data and a hard copy is held by the FG. The ET requested this data from the FG.

**Standard 5.8.** *Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.*



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The SER indicated that close consultation between staff and students ensures that the work submitted by students is original, and that it is possible to use plagiarism detection software if there is any doubt. There is no anti-plagiarism software, no evidence on its existence in SER.

***Standard 5.9.** Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.*

The SER indicates that information is contained in a University Statute of rights and obligations. A link to this Statute is required.

***Standard 5.10.** The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.*

The SER indicates that there is a University Statute of Transfer. A link to this Statute is required.

***Standard 5.11.** Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.*

The student focus group indicated they were very happy with the availability of staff to give them feedback and help them to progress and ensure understanding and apply their learning.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. The ET recommends that the FG continue, and further develop, their close relationships with industry, Council for the Mines & Minerals, and the Geological Survey of Kosovo to address the student Request 1. Application could be made to Erasmus+ to fund residential field courses. This would require international partners in Europe and a clear articulation of the benefits of field-based learning.*
- 2. The ET recommend that all students of the Masters in Mining develop fluency in one other European language that is commonly spoken eg. English. This would greatly enhance the opportunities for mobility and employment as expressed in student Request 2.*





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3. *The ET recommends that 'Project Management' be a core subject rather than an optional subject. The need to work beyond the discipline, to develop transferable skills, and work in interdisciplinary teams could be enhanced through such a course.*
4. *Not all students finish their Master's courses in 2 years. The ET recommends that where possible the students are encouraged to complete within 2 years for their own benefit.*
5. *Develop stronger Regulations of study courses assessment indicating shorter periods of possible assessments.*

## 2.6. Research

***Standard 6.1.*** *The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.*

According to the SER, the FG has the scientific research objectives that are related to the UMIB research development plan. However, the main objectives and priorities are not indicated in the SER. The development plan has been developed just a few months ago, therefore no results were achieved or provided. It is mentioned in the SER that financial resources are limited, while logistical and human resources are sufficient. The ET found it difficult to ascertain whether human resources are allocated well for achieving the proposed research activities as a plan was not provided in the SER.

***Standard 6.2.*** *Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.*

Since there is no Research development plan with budget indicated, it is difficult to analyse the teaching staff involvement in research. According to the SER, UMIB statute specifies the promotion regulation of academic staff which clearly defines how many publications each teaching staff should have to be promoted to academic degrees: professor must have at least 5 papers (or 5 points), associated professor at least 3 works (i.e., 3 points), professor assistant at least 1 (at least 1 point) of research published in international scientific journals. During the evaluation of the candidates presented in the competition, papers should be published in the candidate's field, in the journals that are indexed on the respective academic platforms. The ET has observed that the list of publications of program teaching staff does not show active research performance: a few papers (no





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publications in 2019, few in 2018), majority published in the local journals without impact factor; authors are not visible in Web of Science. The ET would like to emphasize that the list of publications prepared is not according to common regulations, there is no uniformity in bibliographical details presentation, the list is not subdivided into clearly defined categories: 1. Indexed in the Web of Science with Impact Factor (International Publisher or National Publisher); 2. Indexed in the Web of Science without Impact Factor (International Publisher or National Publisher); 3. Articles in conference proceedings; 4. Other conference abstracts and non-peer reviewed conference papers. The first group is the most preferable, such a distribution would show research output of teaching staff.

**Standard 6.3.** *Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.*

It is stated in SER that policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program: First Stage Researcher (R1) (Up to the point of Ph.D.); Recognized Researcher (R2) (Ph.D. holders or equivalent who are not yet fully independent); Established Researcher (R3) (Researchers who have developed a level of independence); Leading Researcher (R4) (Researchers leading their research area or field). In the opinion of the ET these have to be supported with recognizable research results.

**Standard 6.4.** *The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.*

The ET ascertained that research area and teaching activity of academic staff are in the same field.

**Standard 6.5.** *The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.*

According to the SER, UMIB has a policy of research recognition. Academic and research staff have published number of books, scientific articles in special journal, articles on conference proceedings. The ET has observed that the list of publications of program teaching staff does not show active research performance: few recent papers (no publications in 2019, few in 2018), majority published in the local journals without impact factor; authors are not visible in Web of Science.



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**Standard 6.6.** *Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.*

As the number of publications of academic staff is relatively low it is difficult to confirm validity of research.

**Standard 6.7.** *Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.*

According to the SER, each academic staff member has published at least one scientific/applied research publication for the past three years (2017-2019). The ET could not find this tendency for every member of staff.

**Standard 6.8.** *Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff.*

All the publications of academic staff are under the name of UMIB.

**Standard 6.9.** *Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.*

The ET believes that policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.

**Standard 6.10.** *Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.*

The ET noted that Student projects (Undergraduate or Master's theses) may be linked to the research area of FG academic staff.

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**



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1. *Develop the Research development plan of UMIB clearly showing priority areas and specified indicators, adapt this plan for the research activities of FG;*
2. *Encourage staff to publish their scientific achievements in the journals indexed in the Web of Science with impact factor in order to increase recognition of researchers and institution;*
3. *Determine the same platforms and journals at all levels;*
4. *Indicate platforms level in the list of publications for all academic staff (1. Indexed in the Web of Science with Impact Factor; 2. Indexed in the Web of Science without Impact Factor; 3. Articles in conference proceedings; 4. Others);*
5. *Ensure at least one scientific publication per year for all categories of academic staff in the indicated (internationally recognizable) platforms;*
6. *Encourage students actively participate in research activities, present research papers at conferences;*
7. *Improve English language skills for all categories of academic staff in order to extend international cooperation and publishing opportunities;*

## **2.7. Infrastructure and resources**

*(Insert all comments or observations, commendations and suggestions relating to this general area and its allocated standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation manual. Consideration should be given to the adequacy of processes and results achieved in each of the standards.)*

**Standard 7.1.** *The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.*

Currently human resources are adequate for the Mining Masters. programme. The Senior management of the FG took the ET on a site visit of the new UMIB building. The FG has been allocated a large physical space in the new building, in the basement and on the 2nd floor. There is huge potential for improved teaching and research activities. However, this space is not being fully utilised due to lack of equipment and other resources. Equipment has remained in the old building, and Mining Masters students have practical classes there. The new laboratories have not been fitted out with benches etc. Although the FG has some appropriate equipment, there is still a need for basic equipment for teaching, such as microscopes (only 2 exist and must be used for teaching and research for all programs), additional geophysical equipment, and GPS capability. Some lectures are held in the new building. New furniture promised for teaching rooms has not materialised. The SWOT analysis of the infrastructure



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highlights a lack of e-resources in the library, and a lack of books in the Albanian language. The library is not fully resourced and functional.

In a meeting with the head of programme and teaching staff the ET were told that delivery of new equipment was imminent. The senior management indicated that equipment would be moved from the old building very soon.

The ET recommends that the move to the new building is completed as soon as possible. This can only be done however, if laboratories and libraries are fitted out and resourced. Finance for teaching depends largely on the Government funding allocation to UMIB and subsequent allocation to FG. Senior management must address this urgently and closely monitor the progress.

***Standard 7.2.*** *There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.*

A brief financial plan for the next three years is included in the SER. However, it is not clear whether this plan is adequate for the needs of the program. Actual figures are not given (only anticipated % contributions). The academic staff indicate that they must rely on government decisions on future funding allocations, and subsequent UMIB decisions. They indicated that funding secured from other sources goes directly to the government, so that they do not have control of finances.

***Standard 7.3.*** *The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years:*

- a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;*
- b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence;*
- d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.*

The SER states that such documents exist and are housed in the UMIB offices. However, equipment is at a minimum, and should be supplemented. The new library has reading rooms and group work rooms. It needs to be completed and stocked. The SWAT indicates that e-resources are not adequate and there are not enough books for students in the Albanian



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language. The ET recommends that a library needs-analysis is conducted for this programme and that senior management in FG address the needs identified. The access to e-resources is particularly important, for example for final year thesis projects.

**Standard 7.4.** *The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.*

There are adequate spaces for students in lecture theatres/rooms. The FG is still using the practical laboratories in the old UMIB building.

**Standard 7.5.** *The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:*

- a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;*
- b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;*
- c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years;*
- d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for;*
- e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.*

The new library will have adequate seating for the students. The book stock and e-subscriptions are a cause for concern among teaching staff. The students, in their meeting, indicated they were satisfied with the library resources (old library). The ET recommends that a library needs analysis is conducted for this programme and that senior management in FG address the needs identified. The access to e-resources is particularly important, for example for master's thesis projects.

**Standard 7.6.** *The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.*



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There are ramps and lifts which will assist any students with mobility challenges. The ET are not aware of infrastructure for students with hearing or sight impairment.

**Compliance level:** 80% - Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *The ET recommends that the move to the new building is completed as soon as possible. This can only be done however, if laboratories and libraries are fitted out and resourced. Finance for teaching depends largely on the Government funding allocation to UMIB and subsequent allocation to FG. Senior management must address this urgently and closely monitor the progress;*
2. *The ET recommends that a library needs-analysis is conducted for this programme and that senior management in FG address the needs identified. The access to e-resources is particularly important, for example for Master's thesis projects;*
3. *Establish data basis to structure scientific publications of academic and research staff;*

**3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET**

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program *Mining MSc* offered by *UNIVERSITY OF MITROVICA "ISA BOLETINI"* is *Substantially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends to *accredit* the study program for a duration of *3 years* with a number of *15* (at least) students to be enrolled in the program.

**Expert Team**

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**Chair**

**Bettie Higgs**

(Signature)

**Bettie Higgs**

(Print Name)

**25/06/2019**

(Date)

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**Member**

(Signature)

**Regita Bendikiene**

(Print Name)

**25/06/2019**

(Date)