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***UNIVERSITY OF MITROVICA “ISA BOLETINI”
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN
PRODUCTION ENGINEERING***

ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

21 March 2021, Tallinn - Riga



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 11 February 2021

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- *Asnate Kažoka, PhD student*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Naim Gashi, KAA Director*
- *Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*
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- *Ilijane Ademaj Ahmeti, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*
- *Leona Kovaci, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*

Sources of information for the Report:

- [1] *Self-Evaluation Report, University of Mitrovica “Isa Boletini” (UMIB), Bachelor of Science in Economic Engineering, Mitrovica, 2021*
- [2] *Syllabi of the study programme*
- [3] *CVs of the study programme academic staff*
- [4] *Decisions for scholarships*
- [5] *Publications of the academic staff*
- [6] *Quality Assurance and Assessment Regulation, <http://umib.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/5.-Internal-Regulation-Faculty-of-Education-QUALITY-ASSURANCE-AND-ASSESSMENT-REGULATION-1.pdf>*



- [7] Regulation of the Quality Assurance and Evaluation at the University of Mitrovica “Isa Boletini” <https://www.umib.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Regulation-of-the-quality-assurance-and-evaluation-at-the-University-of-Mitrovica.pdf>
- [8] Regulation on the Procedures and Criteria of Selection, Promotion and Appointment of Academic Personnel at the University of Mitrovica “Isa Boletini” <https://www.umib.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/7.7.1.-Regulation-on-the-procedures-and-criteria-of-promotion-selection-and-appointment-of-academic-staff-UMIB.pdf>
- [9] Code of Ethics <https://www.umib.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/anglisht-Kodi-Etik-final.pdf>
- [10] Regulation on Student Responsibility and Disciplinary Procedure <http://umib.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/15.-Regulation-on-students-disciplinary-responsibility.pdf>
- [11] Guideline for Quality Assurance at UMIB, available on <https://www.umib.net/en/quality-assurance-office/regulation-and-guidelines/>
- [12] Regulation on Bachelor Studies at the University of Mitrovica “Isa Boletini”
- [13] Regulation on Disciplinary Measures and Procedures against Mitrovica University Staff <https://www.umib.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/REGULATION-ON-DISCIPLINARY-MEASURES-AND-PROCEDURES-UMIB.pdf>
- [14] University of Mitrovica “Isa Boletini”. Institutional Evaluation. Report of the Expert Team. 2019
- [15] University of Mitrovica “Isa Boletini”. Institutional Evaluation. Report of the Expert Team. 2020 <https://www.umib.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Raporti-i-pyetesoreve-Bachelor.pdf>
- [16] Key performance indicators <https://www.umib.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/5.1.6.-Key-Performance-Indicator.pdf>
- [17] Examples of filled in questionnaires
- [18] Photos from the University Management System
- [19] Monitoring results of the labour market demands
- [20] Information about student participation in scientific projects
- [21] Samples of thesis, including samples of thesis prepared in cooperation with the industry
- [22] List of thesis topics
- [23] Lecture schedules for study programme



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- [24] *Sample of an academic record*
- [25] *Annual report for the Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering 2019*
- [26] *Statistics about graduates*
- [27] *Contract between the Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering and enterprise*
- [28] *Contract between the Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering and Trepca*
- [29] *Decision for the Study Commission in the Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering*
- [30] *Decision of the Senate for the transfer of students*
- [31] *Financial plan for the University of Mitrovica “Isa Boletini”*
- [32] *List of participants in professional trainings*
- [33] *Minutes of meetings of quality assurance officials*
- [34] *Declarations about scientific sessions related to study programmes*
- [35] *Staff improvement plan*
- [36] *Strategic plan monitoring report*
- [37] *Model of syllabus*
- [38] *Samples of success reports*
- [39] *Work plan of the Central Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation*
- [40] *Strategic plan of the Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering*
- [41] *UMIB Strategic plan 2019 - 2021*
- [42] *Examples of different grading criteria in study programmes*

Sources referenced from [1] to [12] were provided prior to the online evaluation interviews together with the self-evaluation report, whereas the sources from [13] onwards were requested and received upon the interviewing or found on the UMIB website.

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *Standards and performance indicators outlined in the Kosovo Accreditation Agency’s Accreditation Manual, 2018.*



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- *The European Qualifications Framework*
- *The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*

1.2. Site visit schedule

09.00-09.40 *Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated*

09.45-10.45 *Meeting with the heads of the study programme “Economics Engineering”*

10.50-11.50 *Meeting with the heads of the study programme “Production Engineering”*

11.50-12.30 *Lunch break*

12.30-13.20 *Meeting with quality assurance representatives*

13.25-14.15 *Meeting with the teaching staff*

14.20-15.00 *Meeting with the students*

15.05-15.45 *Meeting with the graduates*

15.50-16.30 *Meeting with the employers of graduates*

16.30-16.40 *Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts*

16.40-16.50 *Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and programme*

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

The University of Mitrovica “Isa Boletini” (UMIB) is a public university and was established in 2013 on the basis of the Higher Technical School (founded in 1961).

The university consists of six (6) faculties - Faculty of Geosciences, Faculty of Food Technology, Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Education. It currently offers 20 study programmes on bachelor's and master's level.

The BSc Production Engineering was first accredited in the reporting period 2012 - 2015 and was reaccredited in 2017 for the period of 3 years.



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Work of the expert team has been based on the self-evaluation report [1] prepared by the UMIB in January 2021 (hereafter referred to as: SER), as well as on supplementary information and documentation listed in Section 1.1. All the documentation was provided either by the UMIB/KAA or has been publicly available via different channels.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the assessment process did not include site visits to UMIB locations. The evaluation has therefore been done entirely via online interviews and by means of document consultation. Although this has not had any influence on the objectiveness of the assessments made, nevertheless the process has still been somewhat hindered by the inability to undertake physical inspection of the UMIB facilities and operational procedures.

As given in Section 1.2, online meetings were held with the following stakeholder groups and attendees:

- *UMIB Management, attended by Prof. Dr. Hakif Zeqiri, Assoc.Prof. Dr. Lumnije Thaçi, Prof. Dr. Ahmet Latifi, MSc. Artan Osmani;*
- *academic staff members acting as the heads of the study programme “Economic Engineering”, attended by Assoc.Prof. Dr. Lumnije Thaçi, Assoc.Prof. Dr. Fisnik Osmani, Assoc.Prof. Dr. Besnik Hajdari;*
- *academic staff members acting as the heads of the study programme “Production Engineering”, attended by Prof. Dr. Ahmet Latifi, Prof. Dr. Avdi Salihu, Dr. Sc. Fitim Zeqiri;*
- *quality assurance representatives, attended by Assoc.Prof. Dr. Muzafer Shala, MSc Berat Ujkani, MSc. Artan Osmani;*
- *academic staff members, attended by Arianit Maraj, Halil Sadiku, Besmir Sejdiu, Labinot Kastrati, Arberie Krasniqi, Muhamet Hajrizi, Melihate Shala, Edita Bekteshi, Granit Hajra, Blerina Voca, Shpetim Salihu;*
- *graduates, attended by Arian Mehana, Leutrim Uka, Jeton Korenica, Diellza Haxhimehmeti, Drilon Beqiri, Ardian Tahiri;*
- *representatives from the industry, attended by Mendim Mustafa (Symbolt), Bajram Mustafa (Trepça Sha), Naser Rexha;*
- *students.*



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2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

According to the SER [1] the UMIB has an ambitious vision and labour market-oriented mission. During the meeting with the expert team Dean Hakif Zeqiri pointed out overall strategic goals related to study programme goals. The study programme mission supports the goals in the area of Production Engineering. Regarding the previous study programme evaluation in 2017 there have been improvements in curricula development, equipment updates and increase in international collaboration. The number of staff members has increased and publishing in recognised journals and proceedings is promoted by UMIB grants. The revised strategic plan 2019-2021 [41] includes activities for training the staff members, investments and quality improvement. The new campus building is ready and planned investments are supported by the new campus environment. The situation is analysed and presented in the SWOT analysis, included in the SER. However, the market analysis referred to in SER Fig 3.3.2.1 is 8 years old and does not reflect the current state, as meanwhile due to the digitalisation of the industry the companies and their need for engineers has changed. Also, the quality office in 2019 produced a report, based on the results of different questionnaires, recommended UMIB management to bring its programs as close as possible to the specifics of the labour market.

The regulations on the UMIB website <https://www.umib.net/en/regulations/> related administration, mission and objectives are thorough and available.

The study programme has classical concept, corresponding to other Production Engineering study programs in comparable universities, and the content of it has been monitored. However, regarding the study programs at the faculty, there was no evidence of a clearly defined concept of target Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The institution has not set KPIs at the level of the study programme. The student admission rate and drop-out rate are not defined in strategic agenda. The recent number of graduates at Production Engineering (6 in 2019 and 8 in 2020) is relatively low, making sustainability of the study program questionable. There was no evidence neither in SER nor in the additional materials provided, whether the low output rate was analysed, what measures were made, and what are the strategic goals to increase the number of graduates. The management of the study programme is not clearly defined, as there are three responsible professors pointed out in SER. The data on the study programme are

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reported to the faculty management. Systems have been established for collecting statistics in a centralised way by using PowerBi, with the data available on the university website under tab “Statistics”.

Regarding the didactical concept, the importance of e-learning and targeting the coverage of curriculum with e-learning supported courses was not discussed in SER. At the same time, in summary report on questionnaires conducted with students 2020 the students in general have given positive comments about the whole process of online learning processes at UMIB and have praised all the management who have done a very good job in organising the online learning.

The current relation of the study programme with research is not clearly stated. The course projects, where students can put effort into practical solving of industrial or academic research problems, are currently missing. While UMIB has a new campus, it should be possible to find rooms to accommodate group work based research.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. It is recommended to carry out job market analysis regarding Production Engineering and revise the concept of the study programme according to the recent needs of enterprises.*
- 2. Compile own strategic plan of Production Engineering for FMCE: KPIs like admission rate, drop-out rate should be monitored and reported regularly to FMCE and UMIB administration. Currently the KPIs at “Key performance indicators” are on an overall level but without yearly target values related to study programmes.*
- 3. Set strategic goals and enablers for the study programme to cover all obligatory courses by supportive e-learning materials/courses.*
- 4. Establish study programme advisory boards involving employers, academic staff representatives, and students to meet on a regular basis at least once in semester to analyse the progress and content of the study programme, admission, graduation and drop-out rates.*
- 5. Appoint a single Program Director responsible for the development of the study programme with separate funding depending on the number of students at the study programme.*



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2.2. Quality management

UMIB has developed a Regulation on Quality Assurance and Evaluation [7] which has been functional since 2018. The regulation states that “*evaluation activities should be carried out in order to identify and promote good practices and identify the elements that are required for the intervention for improvement*”. Through analysing the UMIB regulatory framework, remarks of the previous expert teams for institutional evaluation and examples of implementation, the expert team has come to a conclusion that currently the quality assurance processes in UMIB are mainly internally driven and not dependent only from the external (accreditation) requirements and that the established mechanisms are generally fit for purpose and used well. In this light the expert team would like to commend the UMIB staff for the significant progress achieved since 2019.

However, as most of the quality assurance mechanisms are still at a rather early stage, the expert team would like to list a number of shortcomings and areas for further improvement.

The SER refers to the Strategic Plan of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Computer Sciences (FMECS) 2019 - 2021 [40] which is claimed to include a range of quality assurance related activities; however, the strategic nature of the document is missing and it almost exclusively focuses on the development history of UMIB and general information on the study programmes offered by the FMECS. The expert team would advise reconsidering the purpose of this document. If the aim is to present separate strategic objectives of FMECS and link them with quality assurance activities, it has to be clearly demonstrated.

At the same time SER refers to Quality Assurance and Assessment Regulation [6] and Regulation on the Quality Assurance and Evaluation" [7] which are both published on the UMIB website (English version). While the Regulation on the Quality Assurance and Evaluation is a rather detailed document, the Quality Assurance and Assessment Regulation refers only to the role of the Quality Assurance Coordinator. The existence of two documents with a very similar title is not clear and even confusing. The expert team would suggest consolidating them in one institutional regulation describing all the processes, involved parties and their responsibilities.



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The Regulation on Quality Assurance and Evaluation is complemented by the Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the University of Mitrovica [11] developed in 2020 which are published on the UMIB website. While the regulation refers to the guidelines and the different purpose of the documents is evident, it would be suggested to further analyse the two documents and ensure that their content does not overlap.

In the end of 2020 UMIB has established the Central Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation which is responsible for managing all quality assurance related activities.

The evaluation processes in UMIB are clearly defined and their regularity is fixed - student evaluation of the academic staff takes place 2 times a year, self-assessment of the academic staff 2 times a year, alumni survey once per year, deans evaluation of the academic staff 2 times per year, deans self-assessment once a year, evaluation of services by students and professors once a year, assessment of study programmes by senior students once a year and external stakeholder questionnaire once a year. However, the expert team could find little evidence on how the questionnaires for different stakeholder groups are developed and planned to be improved. In the future it would be recommended to consult the relevant stakeholders in regard to the content of the survey intended for them. In regard to the student questionnaires, it would be suggested to involve the Students Parliament in continuous improvement of these questionnaires.

At this point the expert team could identify summary reports based on the student evaluation of the academic staff and study courses, questionnaires conducted with alumni, questionnaires conducted with the external stakeholders and the self-assessment of the academic staff. All reports have been produced either in the academic year 2019/2020 or in the end of 2020 thus confirming the recent nature of the assessment instruments. In the future it would be recommended to incorporate the results of all questionnaires in the overall activity reports either on the programme or on the faculty level to the extent that demonstrates the progress since the last report.

Also, at this point all reports have been prepared on the central UMIB level and, while there are a number of issues that can be evaluated on the central level, the expert team would suggest reporting also on the programme or at least faculty level. Such reports on programme level, in addition to the feedback from all stakeholders related to the study programme, could also reflect



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the changes made to content of a study programme, the statistical data on students in the particular study programme (admission, progression, graduation), changes in the composition of the teaching staff, reasons for different changes etc.

In regard to the self-evaluation of the academic staff, the expert team would like to make a slight remark that while the assessment was launched on 29.06.2020, the replies are claimed to be received starting from 20.06.2020.

While all the available reports on different assessments contain a set of recommendations for the UMIB management and during the discussions the expert team learned that several recommendations have already resulted in improvements, it was difficult to identify any documents that would show how the results of these assessments have been systematically translated into the improvement measures and used for further improvement of different aspects of UMIB and FMECS study programmes in particular.

The expert team would also like to make a note on the participation rate of surveys and thus the representativeness of the results. For example, for the self-evaluation of the academic staff, out of only 69 responses received, 11 were from the FMECS. While the expert team is aware of the recent establishment of all tools and this tool in particular, it would be strongly recommended to introduce relevant mechanisms for raising the participation rate in all evaluation processes in the future.

In the future it would also be advised to take these assessments to the next level, integrate them into regular quality assurance processes and perform a documented regular internal reporting on the implementation of all the recommendations formulated.

As the rest of the evaluation processes are heavily based on questionnaires for different stakeholders, the expert team commends the development of KPIs [16] and the role foreseen for the quality assurance system in the monitoring of the strategic objectives achievement. KPIs have been defined for all activity areas of UMIB and are related to the strategic objectives of UMIB. However, at this stage no reports on study programme level that would include the results of KPI monitoring have been presented.

Overall, there has been a noticeable progress of UMIB in developing a functional internal quality assurance system. While up to now the improvement of quality assurance arrangements

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themselves has rather been a reaction to the recommendations from external experts and UMIB has been keen to implement them, the expert team hopes that in the future these improvements will become more and more internally driven. After achieving the compliance with the formal requirements, the next target is a system that reflects the UMIB strategic goals and assists UMIB in reaching them but at the same time minimises the administrative burden for UMIB staff and students. In this regard the expert team would recommend the UMIB to look for best practice and advice from other higher education institutions also outside Kosovo.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *To reconsider the aim of the Strategic Plan of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Computer Sciences 2019 - 2021 and adjust the content accordingly;*
2. *To streamline and consolidate the Quality Assurance and Assessment Regulation and the Regulation on the Quality Assurance and Evaluation;*
3. *To review the content of all questionnaires regularly through involving the relevant parties, for example, Students Parliament in revising the questionnaires for students;*
4. *To incorporate the results of all questionnaires as well as the monitoring results of certain KPI in the overall activity reports either on the programme or on the faculty level and make them available publicly;*
5. *To develop a functional mechanism for systematical translation of the recommendations derived from the stakeholder surveys (questionnaires) into certain improvement measures;*
6. *To introduce mechanisms for raising the participation rate of UMIB staff, students and stakeholders in all evaluation processes.*

2.3. Academic staff

Academic staff at FMECS amounts to 23 full time members from which 14 possess Dr. Sc academic degree and 8 are PhD students in teaching duties. However, two of them have been in doctoral studies more than 6 years. Compared to the previous evaluation, the number of full

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professors has increased. All staff members active in the teaching process on a full-time basis are corresponding to requirements of Law of Labour. The average age of academic staff members is 43 years, which is a good and future-oriented result. The teaching related academic staff election processes are clearly stated. The full-time positions status is well described and corresponding to regulations, 90% of full-time employees dedicated to teaching at UMIB is a good result. The number of full-time professors has been increased to 3 and corresponds to the amount of credit points of the study programme.

Suggestions from teaching staff in 2019: although it seems satisfactory, communication between academic and non-academic staff needs to be intensified for good. A greater need for professional training, especially on teaching methodologies was also pointed out.

There is a plan for staff members development. The results of the academic staff evaluation are taken into account for promotion purposes and renewal of contracts. However, when analysing the publication activity, then in several cases the recent publications regarding the last 3 years were missing or were on low level. At PowerBi analysis of research, for 2017-2019 27 journal papers were listed, thus a journal paper per academic staff member for three years, corresponding to target value (at least one research paper in three years per academic staff member). The participation in national and international conferences is supported by a grant system. However, there was no clear system of ranking the publications and motivating staff members to target higher scientific visibility described in the SER.

In meeting with the expert team, the staff members communicated via translator. The academic English is important when targeting visibility, but also for preparing better specialists for the local industry. The lack of study books and literature in Albanian was also mentioned as a weakness in the SER.

Academic staff members are involved in learning materials preparation. The e-learning was mentioned in the SER, but without a clear number of study programme related e-courses.

The Quality office in 2019, based on the results of different questionnaires, recommended UMIB management to increase the involvement of academic staff, administrative staff and students in the processes of extensive policy-making consultation at UMIB.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

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ET recommendations:

- 1. Motivation of the academic staff members currently in PhD student status to get a degree in time should be considered.*
- 2. Motivation of staff members to publish in high-level journals (ranked Q1 and Q2) should be increased.*
- 3. Motivation of staff members to participate in international conferences and support of academic English teaching to staff members should be increased in terms of higher education internationalisation and to enable all staff members to participate in international projects.*
- 4. The importance of preparation of e-courses should be underlined and monitored to achieve larger coverage in study programme.*

2.4. Educational process content

The study programme provides skills and competences, essential for the engineering industry in Kosovo. The modules of the study programme are well designed and corresponding to NFQ. However, the team work and entrepreneurial skills building, which are so important in the European Higher Education Area are not evident from the overall curriculum.

The course sequence is logical, but provided learning outcomes of the programme are too general. The importance of digitalisation skills is not evident, while the whole production engineering sector in Europe is targeting Industry 4.0. Preparation to digital and sustainable production is vital in the EU policies, and a university study programme should set the learning outcomes also targeting the future developments.

The UMIB quality office, after reviewing the answers of bachelor level students in these questionnaires in 2020, and after analysing all questions and comments, at this stage of development institution, recommended to review the course curriculum in order to create the possibility of interconnection of knowledge gained between subjects (first year subjects to serve in second and third year subjects and not to be in the same year with the subjects from which students should gain knowledge for these subjects.)



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The courses in curriculum have well described analytical descriptions.

Standard 4.5 requires to take actions to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. In meetings with the expert team most of the students and staff members presented in Albanian. In SER p35 the UMIB has brought out difficulty in finding literature in Albanian language. Language skills of the majority of students and academic staff members currently do not enable use of study materials in English or German available through electronic library resources.

In the Alumni survey in 2019 it was suggested that the relationship between professors and students should be closer. Students at the meeting with the expert team were satisfied with information provided by academic staff regarding study content and expected learning outcomes.

The teaching strategies in SER are listed, but e-learning was not considered. Also, various forms of assessment are stated at SER, but modern e-learning enabled e-test, self-evaluation tests were not included.

Student assessment is well regulated, and organisation of exams includes reporting and analysis. Internship in companies is part of the study programme and the workload is defined in ECTS. There are agreements between UMIB and partner organisations to arrange the internship.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Learning outcomes of the study programme should underline also digitalisation, circular economy and green eco-friendly approach aspects of production engineering.*
- 2. The content of the study programme is lecture-oriented. A separate course project, targeted to team-building and problem-solving should be included.*
- 3. To become more international, and to promote Erasmus exchange, the curriculum should include some speciality courses taught in English.*



4. *The study program does not include free choice studies, enabling students to take restricted amount courses from other specialities, or other universities. Such a free choice studies possibility e.g., in amount of 5 ECTS should be introduced. Especially considering digitalisation of industry, the free choice studies module would enable students interested in IT to take additional courses from Informatics Engineering.*
5. *The robotisation is vital for factories of the future. The course “Manufacturing Automation and Robotics” is recommended to enlarge towards collaborative robotics. Also, a collaborative robot (cobot) is recommended to purchase as investment to the university lab, enhancing modern teaching and research both online and offline programming.*

2.5. Students

Admission procedure for the bachelor students in UMIB takes place according to the general framework in Kosovo and is further detailed in the Regulation on Bachelor Studies [12]. The study programme “Production Engineering” is open to all secondary school graduates in Kosovo or abroad and an admission exam in three subjects defined by the faculty is foreseen. Success at admission exam comprises up to 40 points of the total admission mark (maximum 100 points) and the candidate has to pass at least 40% of the admission exam in order to be considered for studies.

The SER (p.37) states that there is a defined maximal size of the student group for different activities - 80 students for lectures, 30 students for exercises and 15 students for laboratory practical exercises.

During the interviews and also from the results of the student questionnaires the expert team did not find any evidence that student groups would be over capacitated.

The SER (p.37) states that according to the Regulation for Bachelor Studies [12] the feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments must be made within 10 days after the date of the exam. However, in the Regulation provided the expert team did not evidence any fixed deadlines for issuing (announcing) marks for the exam. It would be suggested to introduce internal deadlines for issuing marks for different types of assessment.

As a result of the study programme the students are issued a diploma and this is confirmed by the Regulation for Bachelor Studies [12]. The SER (p.38) states that all course grades constitute



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the academic record or transcript which can be easily generated by the University Management System (SMU) at any time and the screen shots from the SMU [18] confirm it. However, the expert team would like to note that according to the European best practice, in addition to the diploma, all graduates should receive a diploma supplement in Albanian and English which would include the full track record (subjects covered and marks assigned).

The formal regulations in UMIB foresee different possibilities of flexible treatment and the SER states that all the individual requests from students have been approved.

A possibility for extending the duration of studies and a possibility for keeping the full-time student status in special occasions as well as a temporary suspension from studies is foreseen by the Regulation on Bachelor Studies [12]. Also, the Regulation on Bachelor Studies [12] states that the faculty dean, upon the student's request, may enable the student to take an exam earlier, if such student participates in an international exchange programme or is part of a practical education abroad during the timeline of exams. The expert team would like to suggest a broader formulation of such cases to allow more flexibility for the dean to decide, for example, in case of urgent health issues, family conditions and other. It would be important that such special cases are not counted as a failure of the exam and do not prevent the student from receiving a scholarship or other benefits. Although the UMIB staff and students have a close relationship and the majority of issues seem to be solved directly between the professor and students, it is suggested to formalise all policies of such kind in order to make them transparent and reliable.

The SER states that the results of progression/completion for study courses are collected each semester and submitted to the faculty management in the form of a report. The expert team did not evidence such reports and assumed that they would not be published separately. However, during the discussion with UMIB quality assurance representatives, the expert team was convinced that there are regular actions taken based on this reports/information. The expert team would like to emphasise that the recently defined KPI [16] of the UMIB include, among others, the students admitted for each study programme, student academic performance, abandonment of studies, student transfer, graduation etc. and would suggest that in the future these data are analysed and included in the annual/semestral reports in aggregated format.

There are not yet samples of such annual/ semestral reports that would include these KPIs but the intention of UMIB to monitor these indicators is evident.

The UMIB Code of Ethics [9] refers to the academic integrity issues. UMIB states that for materials submitted in English the Turnitin software is used while for the materials in Albanian



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a special module of the SMU is used. While appreciating the actions taken by UMIB, the expert team concludes that the current practice is not effective in addressing the academic integrity issues. The expert team would encourage the UMIB management to take further actions in ensuring the authenticity of all student works - both in Albanian and English - and to provide further guidance to the students in regard to the plagiarism issues.

Student rights and obligations, including the right to complain about the quality of teaching, are defined by the Regulation on Bachelor Studies [12] and explained in the Student Handbook. While this is not a central subject of the programme review, the expert team would like to point to the importance of accessibility of the regulatory framework for all the involved parties. The expert team does not question the fact that UMIB website presents a number of documents related to the UMIB regulatory framework both in Albanian and English but there are important documents that are not easily accessible on the website, for example, the Student Handbook and the full list of main regulatory documents (<https://www.umib.net/en/regulations/>). This raises the question to what extent the UMIB community can independently familiarise themselves with the regulatory framework and follow the changes. The expert team would thus suggest organising internal and external audit of the website to identify the improvement needs, especially in regard to the accessibility of information.

The Regulation on Bachelor Studies [12] states the possibility to complain against the decision rendered by the university bodies, academic units with regards to their rights and obligations where the complaint has to be submitted within 15 working days after the decision. While the expert team appreciates the different possibilities for complaints, from the regulation it was not entirely clear in what situations this complaint would be applicable and it would be suggested to elaborate on this more, both in the Regulation and also the Student Handbook.

The Regulation on Bachelor Studies [12] also states that students can contest the assessment marks. While the procedure itself is clear, the expert team would suggest that the assessment of the commission could be contested on the central UMIB level.

The candidates who were not admitted in the first year of studies can complain within two working days after the announcement of the results of selection.

In regard to the change of the study programme within UMIB, the expert team would recommend reconsidering the possibility for transfer only in the second year of studies. The expert team would assume that the decision to drop-out is often taken at a rather early stage of



studies - after the first semester or even earlier - therefore the possibility to change a study programme could minimise the drop-out rate in UMIB.

The SER (p.38) states that in the beginning of semester each member of the academic staff has to set consultation hours at least twice a week. During the discussion's students confirmed the availability of the academic staff for consultations.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Introduce internal deadlines for issuing marks for different types of assessment;*
2. *Issue to all graduates a mandatory diploma supplement in Albanian and English which would include the full track record (subjects covered and marks assigned);*
3. *Revise the regulations in regard to flexible student treatment in exams in cases where the student is not able to participate in the exam due to objective reasons other from those currently prescribed by the regulation and ensure that such special cases would not be counted as a failure of the exam and would not prevent the student from receiving a scholarship or other benefits;*
4. *Include the results on student progression/completion for study courses as a part of the annual/semestral reporting process and present them as a part of the public reports;*
5. *Take further actions in raising the student awareness about plagiarism issues and ensuring the authenticity of all student works;*
6. *Further elaborate on the possibility to complain against the decision rendered by the university bodies, academic units with regards to the student rights and obligations;*
7. *Introduce a possibility to contest the assessment of the commission on the central UMIB level;*
8. *Reconsider the student transfer possibilities at earlier stages of studies.*

2.6. Research

The study programme research objectives are general and related to serving the local industry needs. Strategic plan of the UMIB development foresees internationalisation.



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There is a clear promotion matrix regulating academic levels of professors and researchers. The quality of publications is monitored and used as indicators in evaluation for promotion. It is expected that each academic staff member has published at least one publication in the last three years. FMCE staff members involve students in research work. Academic staff carries out mainly individual research (SER page 41). There was evidence of collaborative research arrangements with colleagues in other institutions and in the international community.

Regarding to the provided recent publications, the main topics are: re-engineering of production systems; economic growth of Kosovo; linear accelerator technology for medical treatment; metal cutting theory; transmuted families of distributions; performance Measurement of the electronic procurement; Semantic Sensor Web Architecture; e-participation and e-governance; network security systems. Thus, only a few research topics are directly related to the Production Engineering field.

There is a clear system considering the value of publications to be used in elections/re-elections. However, not all academic staff members have a publication record from the last three years. Also, the publications are not always not related to Production Engineering or the related IT field.

Research is validated in publishing activity mostly. Academic staff members have participated only in a few projects, and mostly as individual researchers. There was missing evidence for each academic staff member's scientific/applied research activity in the last three years.

Researchers are expected to combine the research experience and activities with teaching - include the results of their research in the study process. It is a problem that the Production Engineering research does not involve the students due to a missing research agenda, but also there are no Engineering projects included in the study programme.

IPR and ownership policies are well defined and made publicly available, enabling commercialisation of research related intellectual property. Suggestions from the teaching staff in the 2019 quality assurance report recommended that teaching and scientific research should be more balanced. The suggestions from Alumni in 2019 recommended to have more space for scientific research work by students during their studies.

Students are involved in university related research, and there were several diploma works developed in cooperation with industry.

The current list of thesis topics included relevant topics, most of the thesis were academic, while few of them were developed specifically for a certain enterprise.



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Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The forming of a research group in Production engineering, having strategic research topics is recommended.*
- 2. Publishing in the Production Engineering field should be promoted.*
- 3. The cooperation of Production Engineering study programme related researchers and industry should be intensified to involve students into R&D projects coming from industry.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

UMIB is a publicly funded institution therefore the basic resources for implementing the accredited study programmes are ensured through public funding. All UMIB premises are owned by the UMIB itself meaning that it has full control over the material and technical equipment used. The state budget is allocated to UMIB on an annual basis. From the information provided the expert team learned that there has been a decrease in budget for 2021 compared to the one for 2020. A separate UMIB budget line in 2021 is foreseen for capital investment - equipping the laboratories, especially in regard to information technology, and the construction and regulation of the infrastructure of the constructed facilities.

As the expert team was not provided a full overview of the UMIB general and especially financial resources allocated for the implementation of the particular Study Programme nor any long-term perspectives of the faculty or UMIB itself, it cannot judge on the sufficiency of the resources in the long term. At the same time, the expert team did not receive any evidence that currently there would be a lack of resources that would seriously hinder the implementation of the Study Programme. The expert team would suggest that in the future the UMIB focus on attracting additional resources through research and service to society in order to compensate for the resources not allocated from the state budget. For internal resource allocation and reporting purposes and further external assessments, the UMIB is strongly encouraged to identify and develop the budget lines affecting the implementation of a certain study



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programme (financial plan on the level of study programme in short- and medium-term perspective). The fact that UMIB receives a state budget allocation and can ensure the core functions within the resources available does not serve as sufficient evidence for judging on the long-term implementation perspective and sustainability, especially in case of new study programmes that are yet to be developed.

The UMIB library has a collection of 1486 titles in different quantities but most of the resources are available in one copy only. The vast majority of the titles are in Serbian, Albanian or Russian. Currently the majority of the items published in English are for entrepreneurship or food science and technology. While the study programme is implemented in Albanian only, the expert team would like to emphasise that engineering is a highly international sector. Even if the study process itself is conducted in Albanian it is important to use international resources and expose all students to the international environment within the possibilities available to UMIB (international literature, guest lecturers, MOOCs, language courses etc). Also, the majority of resources for general engineering, including the Economic Engineering study programme, have been published before the year 2000. It is stated in the SER that UMIB has an agreement with the National Library of Kosovo. While it is an excellent possibility for the UMIB staff and students, the expert team questions to what extent this possibility is applicable in the everyday study process due to the physical distance between Mitrovica and Prishtina. UMIB itself mentions the lack of access to scientific databases as one of the weaknesses related to resources. Also, the teaching staff and students in the surveys (2019; 2020) have indicated the need for improving the physical library and creating access to electronic databases. The SER (p.49) states that the students are provided access to UMIB francophone library but the expert team questions the extent to which the student and staff language skills are sufficient for using this library. The expert team would strongly recommend the UMIB to cooperate with other institutions in order to provide access to international scientific databases for its staff and students.

The expert team would like to commend the UMIB for a well-developed SMU which allows for easy and transparent process management. The information provided to the expert team confirms the multi-use purpose of the SMU and the different functions incorporated.

The UMIB premises are well adapted to students with physical disabilities. The entrance to UMIB is possible with a wheelchair, there are elevators, parking lots and also the amphitheatre is accessible with a wheelchair.



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Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. To develop a medium or long-term financing strategy for the study programme (or the faculty in general) which would be based also on external sources of financing;*
- 2. Explore the possibilities for renewing the library collection, through including recently published editions for the use in this study programme, preferably in English language.*
- 3. Explore the possibilities for securing access to international scientific databases.*



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3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT TEAM

The University of Mitrovica “Isa Boletini” (UMIB) is a relatively new university, but has a modern campus building and informative and well-designed digital information sharing capability through homepage and PowerBi analysis tool used. The evaluated BSc in Production Engineering program is an important study programme for local industry, in order to offer them engineers capable to increase profitability and push the economy forward.

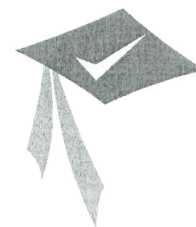
Due to the Covid-19 crisis, the assessment process did not include any site visits to UMIB locations. Also the interaction with the interviewed stakeholders was done only through electronic means. Within these circumstances the expert team has made every effort to make the conclusions sound, substantiated by concrete evidence and not a result of speculation or misjudgement.

As a result of the assessment process, the expert team has formulated a number of recommendations. However, the expert team would like to emphasise that all recommendations should be primarily seen as guidelines for improving the quality of the study programme and processes in UMIB overall. It is the autonomy of UMIB to decide on whether and how these recommendations will be put into practice. Nevertheless, in addition to the recommendations made, the expert team would also like to make a few general comments on the matters to be complimented for, as well on those which leave room for improvements. These are as follows:

1. The university has been developing very fast and the changes in improvement of the study environment and availability of university related information sharing are impressive. Also, the recommendations made in previous evaluation in 2017 have been considered and there was clear evidence of positive effect of made changes in the study programme.
2. The university enjoys a reputation of a renowned higher education institution in the Republic of Kosovo by both students and employers, and the academic staff members involved in the Production Engineering study programme are research-oriented and highly qualified.



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3. Finally, the university is to be complimented for its high standards in the available infrastructure, thus enabling the curricular and extra-curricular activities on a high level.

In addition,

1. It is recommended to set high goals in setting up a Production Engineering research group with additional funding for promotion of digital and green production, but also with clear KPIs regarding study programme success monitoring, but also R&D activities in cooperation with local industry, business sector and municipal authorities.
2. Also, regarding internationalisation, the improvement of English among staff members and students should be necessary through additional language courses but also staff and students' exchange.
3. The organisation of studies is recommended to be modernised through introducing free choice studies module, but also adding into the study programme a project-based course, enabling students to solve real life tasks from industry or research.

In conclusion, the expert team considers that the study programme Bachelor of Science in Production Engineering offered by UMIB is *Substantially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends to *accredit* the study program for a duration of **three** years with **100** students to be enrolled on the programme.

Expert Team

Chair

21.03.2021

(Signature)

Tauno Otto

(Date)

Member

21.03.2021

(Signature)

Asnate Kažoka

(Date)