# *UNIVERSITY "ISA BOLETINI" MITROVICA BACHELOR (BA) BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT*

## Programme

## REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

*2022, Kosovo*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit: 01.03.2022**

**Expert Team (ET) members:**

- Prof. dr hab.  Dorota Dobija
- Dr. Mikus Dubickis
- Giga Khositashvili

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

- Flamur Abazaj, SO for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Ilirjane Ademaj Ahmeti, SO for Evaluation and Monitoring

**Sources of information for the Report:**

1. SER
2. Additional information requested
- Information about the latest faculty recruitment plus the minutes documenting the recruitment/selection process.
- A list of trainings related to teaching quality provided in the recent year and the names of faculty teaching on the evaluated BA programme attending these trainings
- A list of trainings related to research provided in the recent year and the names of faculty teaching on the evaluated BA programme attending these trainings
- A list of tranings provided to faculty related to the quality of online teaching during Covid-19 and the names of faculty teaching on the evaluated BA programme attending these trainings
- Information if faculty in evaluated beyond teaching quality. Faculty evaluation form and frequency, if applicable (beyond of assurance of learning)
- Learning outcomes matrix on the programme level documenting how each course contributes to the program learning outcomes.
- An example how the quality assurance process contributes to the changes on the programme level and individual course level (how example).

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- List of courses using the flipped classroom and list of courses where problem-based learning is used.
- Information on e-resources available in the library
- Regulations on Bachelors Studies
- Regulation on studies disciplinary responsibility
- Agreement with the providers of Academic Databases
- Agreement with the provider of similarity detection software
- Career development center description and information of its activities
- Code of Ethics
- Diploma Supplement Sample
- University Web-page
- Data collected during the interviews and other information provided by the University after the visit

**Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations**

● *Accreditation Manual, Re/accreditation of bachelor and masters study programs, Kosovo Accreditation Agency.*

### 1.2. Site visit schedule

**Site Visit Programme**

| Time | Meeting | Participants |
|------|---------|--------------|
| **09:00 – 09:40** | Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated | 1.Prof.Asoc. Dr.Qazim TMAVA-Dean<br><br>2.Prof.Asoc. Bashkim BELLAQA-Vice Dean |

| 09.45 – 10.25 | Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff | 1.Prof. Ass. Filloreta DEMIRI, Cor. Qualit. Assur. <br><br> 2.  Ass. Milaim Mehmeti, PhDc, coordinator <br><br> 3. Mr Avdyl BEQIRI, secretary, <br><br> 4.Mrs   Krenare BASHOLLI, referent, |
|---|---|---|
| 10:30 – 11:20 | Meeting with the heads of the study programme: | 1.  Bashkim BELLAQA, Prof. Asoc. <br> 2.  Qazim TMAVA, Prof .Asoc. <br> 3.  Isa TAHIRI, Prof. Dr. <br> 4.  Filloreta DEMIRI, Prof. Ass. |
| 11:20 – 12.00 | Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site) | Lunch break |
| 12:00 – 12:40 | Meeting with teaching staff | 1.  Prof. Asoc. Esat DURGUTI, <br> 2.  Prof. Asoc. Ajtene AVDULLAHI, <br> 3.  Prof. Ass. Ylber JANUZAJ, <br> 4.  PhDc Besart HAJRIZI, <br> 5.  PhDc Bese SADIKAJ, <br> 6.  PhDs Arif KRASNIQI, <br> 7.  Prof. Ass. Sahit SURDULLI, <br> 8.  Prof. Ass. Arbnor AJETI, |
| 12:40 – 13:20 | Meeting with students | 1.  Festim MURATI, student <br> 2.  Ariona RUSHITI, student <br> 3.  Sevdije ZEQIRI, student <br> 4.  Arlinda SHERIFI, student <br> 5.  Rrezon HAZIRI, student <br> 6.  Plotmira HAZIRAJ, student <br> 7.  Ardita SELIMI, student |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | 8. Rinesa KAJTAZI, student |
| | | 9. Erion KELMENDI, student |
| 13:25 – 14:05 | Meeting with graduates | 1. Mrs  Florina THAQI, |
| | | 2. Mrs  Qendresa DRAGAJ, |
| | | 3. Mr Shend MUSLIU, |
| | | 4. Mrs Donjeta DRAGAJ, |
| | | 5. Mrs Albulena VALLQI, |
| | | 6. Mrs Enisa BASHOTA, |
| | | 7. Mr Orion NIMANI, |
| 14:10 – 14:50 | Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders | 1. Mrs Vesa BROJA, |
| | | 2. Mr Luan MEHMETI, |
| | | 3. Mr Behxhet NIMANI, |
| | | 4. Mr Arif KADRIU, |
| | | 5. Mr Nehat BERISHA, |
| | | 6. Mr Arlind EMINI, |
| | | 7. Mr Visar BRAHIMI, |
| | | 8. Mr Visar IDRIZI, |
| 14:50 – 15:00 | Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts | |

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

The Faculty of Economics (hereafter FE) is organized as an academic unit of the University "Isa Boletini" in Mitrovica (hereafter UIBM). The UIBM was established as a public higher education institution in Kosovo in 2013. At the time of the site visit, the FE offers two levels of study: bachelor (three-year studies) and scientific master (two-year studies). The FE defines its mission to implement,, effective education that contributes to better economic and social development at the national level by providing a high-quality

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education and research using modern practices and creating equal opportunities for all"
(SER, p.14).

This statement complies with the overall mission of UIBM, which emphasizes

,, is to provide quality teaching for preparing staff in unique areas for Kosovo, the region
and beyond, dedicated to conducting research, professional projects and professional
counseling in the service of sustainable development and increasing well-being and social
advancement. SER, p. 7).

The FE states in the SER that „the Faculty of Economics aims, through the review and
expansion of educational, research and entrepreneurship programs, to achieve the highest
levels of education in the region by preparing economists, managers, entrepreneurs,
accountants, financiers, and bankers who are competent to respond to labor market and
social needs". SER, p. 14).

The FE also provides also information of the goals of business and management
programmes.

They include (SER, p. 14)

- To provide knowledge and skills in different areas like management,
  entrepreneurship, finance, bank, accounting and to give a holistic understanding
  of a business system.
- To equip students with the adequate skills and aptitudes as per local and beyond
  labor market demand.
- To equip students with independent work skills, a critical thinking approach, good
  knowledge of the contents in the field of economics and economic problem
  solving skills.
- To support personal development of students, involving them in research
  activities that will contribute in students' integrity, prepare them to continue
  further academic studies and thus to contribute to the community and relevant
  stakeholders.
- To develop business and entrepreneurial aptitude and mindset among the students.
- To widen the knowledge of software used in banking, finance, accounting and
  management.

- **To offer opportunities for cooperation with businesses and industry by identifying
  the current problems faced by the business community and trying to find
  solutions in order to serve the community.**

It is however unclear is these goals are relevant for the evaluated program or for the portfolio of the programs offered at FE.

## 2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

*The institutional evaluation consists of 7 subheadings through which the administration, organisation and management of the institution, as well as teaching and research are assessed.*

### 2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

***UIBM's mission*** *is to provide quality teaching for preparing staff in unique areas for Kosovo, the region and beyond, dedicated to conducting research, professional projects and professional counselling in the service of sustainable development and increasing well-being and social advancement.*

***The mission of FE*** *is to implement effective education that contributes to better economic and social development at the national level by providing a high-quality education and research using modern practices and creating equal opportunities for all.*

***The mission of the bachelor program Business and Management*** *is to prepare professionals that will be able to manage a business, to solve complex business problems and make sound business decisions by educating them with advanced knowledge, research, skills, and by contributing in community in the field of management and entrepreneurship, bank, finance and accounting.*

Both – university's and faculty's mission statements are very general. The program mission statement does not contradict HEIs mission, but the statements also do not show the institution's and program's uniqueness.

Intended learning outcomes are not clear – there is more than one list of outcomes. Outcomes defined in the SER look more like objectives and not outcomes. There are also "skills" and "social competences" defined. A clear seven to ten ILO statements should be formulated.

ET believes that the study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept. However, there is a place for improvement in study program ILO statements. Study course descriptions could contain a teaching, learning, and assessment methods

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matrix to support continuous improvement in didactics. Support for doing research should be expanded (see more in the Research section of the report).

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

*With regard to plagiarism, academic staff and students comply with the requirements of the Code of Ethics. Any scientific work, which is done by academic staff and students, must be original work. Also, within UIBM, specifically in the SMU Platform, there is a Module against Plagiarism. UIBM is also a partner in the Erasmus + "ResearchCult" project, under which, among other things, all UIBM staff and students have access to anti-plagiarism software.* ET did not find that the staff and students would not comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct. At the same time, it seemed, the students who participated in the evaluation visit were instructed on what to tell the experts. If that was the case, that is not appropriate.

In general, the HEI is adapting to changes and requirements, reviewing policies and regulations, and implementing recommended mechanisms. At the same time, students could be more involved in program management.

The institution has set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at the study program level. Course completion and other data are being collected; however, an accessible central database and regular data analysis are recommended. Considering the information gathered during the interviews, ET believes that the concepts of gender justice and the promotion of equal opportunities for students in special situations are put into practice at the level of the study program.

| Standard | Compliance | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| Standard 1.1. The study program mission complies with the overall mission statement of the institution. | X | |
| 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. | | X |

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

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. A clear seven to ten study program ILO statements should be formulated.
2. Study course descriptions could contain a teaching, learning, and assessment methods matrix to support continuous improvement in didactics.
3. Support for doing research should be expanded (see more in the Research section of the report).
4. Students could be more involved in program management.

### 2.2. Quality Management

Considering the information gathered during the evaluation visit as well as the additional requested information after the visit, the expert team tends to agree with the assessment provided by the HEI in the SER of the program: *As part of the activities of the Faculty Strategic Plan in the framework of quality development, in coordination with the quality*

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*office at UIBM, all academic staff participates in the self-assessment process and cooperates with the reporting and improvement processes in their field of activity.*

The responsibilities of internal stakeholders and students are defined. University could consider defining the responsibilities of external stakeholders too. Regarding services and resources provided by other parts of the institution, the university representatives mentioned that they could be used if necessary. Therefore, the ET is not sure about the strategic and systematic integration of services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.

Survey data is being collected from students, graduates, and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available. The HEI is stating in their SER of the program: *The evaluation of the overall quality of the program is developed through the evaluation of its constituent components. Some of these components were evaluated twice a year, and some once a year in each academic year.* However, for transparency and a holistic approach, it would be advisable periodically (annually) to prepare one self-assessment report on the overall quality of the program for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses. In addition, a comprehensive reassessment of the program that is conducted at least once every five years would be advisable. Policies and procedures for conducting this reassessment should be published; program assessment should involve external stakeholders (e.g., experienced people from relevant industries and professions, and experienced faculty from other institutions).

Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes. However, it is also currently not identifiable whether and how the results of the internal quality assurance system (evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success, and employment of graduates) are considered for further development of the study program (strategy). In addition, there is information on the degree to which the defined results are being achieved, but no information on what is being done to approach 100%. The experts' team believes that the reports are provided to program administrators on the delivery of each course, and appropriate adjustments are made in plans for teaching. However, it is recommended that the relevant evidence is kept.

Students, who are the most critical partner for the successful implementation of the studies, are mainly involved in quality assurance only by filling in the assessment questionnaires. Although this is a challenge by default, the University should move towards higher engagement of students in their academic life at the HEI. Although not all the required standards are met fully, the experts' team found that there is continuing improvement in

performance and the quality assurance arrangements for the program are regularly evaluated and improved.

| *Standard* | Compliance | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Yes** | **No** |
| *Standard 2.1.* All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity. | X | |
| *Standard 2.2.* Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes. | X | |
| *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. | X | |
| *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. | X | |
| *Standard 2.5.* Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance. | X | |
| *Standard 2.6.* Survey data is being collected from students, graduates, and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available. | X | |
| *Standard 2.7.* Results of the internal quality assurance system have been taken into consideration for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates. | | X |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Standard 2.8.* The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (e.g., every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses | X | |
| *Standard 2.9.* The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved. | X | |

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. University could consider defining the responsibilities of external stakeholders too.
2. Strategic and systematic integration of services and resources provided by other parts of the institution should be considered to enhance interdisciplinarity.
3. It would be advisable periodically (annually) to prepare one self-assessment report on the overall quality of the program for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.
4. In addition, a comprehensive reassessment of the program conducted at least once every five years would be advisable. Policies and procedures for conducting this reassessment should be published; program assessment should involve external stakeholders (e.g., experienced people from relevant industries and professions and experienced faculty from other institutions).
5. Keep the evidence on the reports provided to program administrators on the delivery of each course and adjustments made in plans for teaching.
6. University should move towards higher engagement of students in their academic life at the HEI.

### 2.3. Academic Staff

The FE is a relatively small faculty with 11 full-time faculty distributed among different ranks, including 7 faculty members with a Ph.D. The expectations from the faculty regarding their performance are reasonable and include teaching, research and professional activity. It is however unclear that is meant by "professional activities". Some of the faculty seems to take more administrative roles – it is not clear how this contribution is considered to be a part of "professional activity". Usually, the business schools would also expect its faculty to contribute to the third mission as well.

The FE sets the general guidelines about its expectation in terms of faculty performance. It seems that the focus is put on the first dimension (quality of teaching). It is difficult to expect the same type contribution coming from different faculty members. Some faculty members may be willing to devote his/her time mainly to research and teaching(learning), some other faculty would be willing on the other hand to contribute to teaching(learning) and professional activity. Some faculty may wish to contribute to the Faculty's mission by developing international research projects and publications, some other faculty members would be more predestined to develop university-industry collaborative projects, leading to programme level innovations. The FE could give some more attention to rethinking of what kind of contributions would be expected from the faculty Acknowledging the importance of all contributions important of to the mission of the FE and may have an important positive motivating effect on the faculty members.

While the expectation about research performance is rather high (publications in Scopus or WoS), the FE seems not to support this type of activity beyond standard financing the participation in the conferences and also publication fees. Especially, the research performance expectations should be defined more clearly. The 80% of the compliance with the expectation related to publication is a very general indicator (SER, p. 82). If the FE's ambition is to have faculty to publish in the top journal, the individual faculty need to be motivated to do so. There might be substantial differences in a publication in Scopus and top journal included in WoS. It is therefore important to motivate faculty to aim higher. One of the ways of doing this could be an incentive system (for instance monetary bonuses) for publication with high IF.

Additionally, publications are the result measure of performance. Since research is becoming increasingly expensive (including the one related to socials science), there is a need for

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supporting faculty with appropriate research funds and/or additional resources helping the faculty to apply for research funding.

The faculty provides teaching trainings as quality of teaching seems to be an important indicator measures across courses and faculty. However, the FE could be also press faculty to develop teaching materials, local case studies and more interactive teaching tools (e-learning materials to replace some of the lectures or supplement the existing materials. Also, some e-learning materials and e-courses are available via Internet and the FE could incorporate it in its teaching.

In sum, the ET suggest considering development of a more diverse model of possible contribution of the faculty members to the mission of the FE and in particular to the mission of the evaluated programme. The system eventually could be linked with the appropriate evaluation criteria as well as reward system.

| *Standard* | Compliance | |
|---|---|---|
| | **YES** | **NO** |
| 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. | x | |
| 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. | x | |
| 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 | x | |
| 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. | x | |
| 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 | x | |
| Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties. | x | |
| 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. | x | |

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

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. Develop a faculty performance expectation model and related performance indicators acknowledging that faculty contribute to the program mission is a multiple ways.

### 2.4. Educational Process Content

The evaluated Business and Management program is a broad profile program offering knowledge in relation two specialisations: Banking, Finance and Accounting as well in Management and Entrepreneurship. The program meets the requirements of the level 6 of national and European Framework for Qualifications. The flow of courses and disciplines covered seems to be coherent.

However, the ET did not find evidence to the claims included in SER (p. 95) that " he knowledge that the program aims to provide is a very advanced knowledge about the field of study including critical understanding of theories and principles defined according to the levels of Bloom taxonomy, some of which are fundamental to the field, but still are interrelated to various fields, as a basis for original thinking as well as in the research aspect. The pedagogical aspect of the program is to provide and use integrated knowledge of principles, terminology within a subject or field of study to reach some judgment about applicable theories and practices. The program also aims to provide students with knowledge on demonstrating detailed knowledge and understanding how the acquired knowledge of a subject or area of specialization is applied using a range of techniques defined on data collection or research methodology.

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The statement above does not seem to the consistent with the ET findings. The programme offered at the bachelor level does not need to be expected to give advanced knowledge in the field. Also, scanning the course provided in the degree does not support this claim as they seem to be rather standard. At the same time the FE claims the need for the integration of the knowledge toward the end of the bachelor program but offers no information how it is bing done. Additionally, some more thought could be given to the role of research on the bachelor programme. Therefore, the ET would suggest rethinking the approach to the philosophy of the educational programme the FE is offering. There is no need for "a very advanced knowledge" on this level of education. However, there is need for more "knowledge integration" and rethinking the role of research methods at the bachelor level of the education.

Additional point the ET would like to make relates to the competition on the market place and fast developments in in management and in the broadly defined financial sector would require a more flexible approach in terms of specialization and selection of courses to students. This may be a strategic choice; however, the FE could be encouraged to consider redesigning the program to allow for more flexibility. At present the students are only given a choice of electives courses on more general level. Also, allowing for specialization, some additional room could be provided for more up-to-date content for instance the use of big-data, fintech, or automated data processes, IA application, Python programming, etc. The program and especially the specialization in Banking, Finance and Accounting could also benefit from a closer cooperation with professional organizations such as CIMA or ACCA. The ET recognizes that the FE uses teaching materials consistent with the international requirement, but perhaps an added value for the students could be recognition of the course towards ACCA or CIMA qualifications. These professional organisations have similar arrangements with many universities around the globe.

The students, alumni and employers were in general satisfied with the competences the programme offers to its students and alumni. However, all external stakeholders interviewed during the site visit as well as the students suggested more fucus on practical experience.

The FE could also focus more on developing collaborative agreements and use them to enhance a potential for practical experience for the students. The ET recognises that each course has a build practice related in component. However, the students could be more involved in the development of bigger practice oriented project. Perhaps some space could be made to a longer practical module run by the FE faculty in cooperation with companies/NGO/financial sector intitutions. During the module the students could work in groups to solve a practical problem provided by the practice or on a real like businecss plan which later could be implemented by the authors. In order to find time, problably some modification need to be made to the current programme. Another suggestion could be to create a small business inclubator within the FE

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where the business ideas by the students could be brough to the next level. This could be also a source of competetive advangate for the FE, increasing the attractiveness of the evaluated programme.

Another solution would be to request internship build into the programme, where students would be requested to get involved in solving a real problem for the company they work for.

| *Standard* | Compliance | |
|---|---|---|
| | **YES** | **NO** |
| *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 especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality. | X | |
| *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. | x | |
| *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. | x | |
| *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. | x | |
| *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* | x | |
| *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. | x | |

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| *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 | X | |
| *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. | X | |
| *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. | x | |
| *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. | x | |
| *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 ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organizations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program. | | x |
| *Standard 4.12.* In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organizations/practical training units | x | |

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**
1. Consider redesigning specialisations and introducing of a separate module aimed at giving students an opportunity to use their knowledge and skills on solving a real-life problem.
2. Recognition of the programme by ACCA or CIMA or other professional organisations could be a very important value added to students and a source of competitive advantage.
3. Conduct a benchmarking exercise regarding the bachelor program against an aspirational group of HEI. The ET recognises that some kind of a benchmarking has been done with the use of big data analytics, however, this method does not allow more

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a more in-depth analysis related to the actual methods uses, the specific topics covered, added value of the programme or practice-based - research-based orientation.

4. Consider creating the business incubator (or entrepreneurship lab) for the students with good business ideas.

## 2.5. Students

Regulations on Bachelor Studies at the university defines the rule that students can be admitted to this study program. In addition to graduating from secondary school (with a list of 12 years of study) or presenting the results of the Matriculation exam, some of the subjects define additional exams, which applicants should take. The final decision on admitting the students are made based on the scores they are given for the outcomes of secondary school and entrance exam. According to SER those details are known to all interested applicants in advance. The entrance procedures are done by the university central administration and students are required to present either a high school diploma with records or the matriculate exam results (in addition to the ID card and Birth Certificate) after they are enrolled at the program. In addition to this, there is a possibility of making a transfer form another university, usually twice a year, the university announces the number of the vacancies for the transfer and the procedure is in accordance with local legislation rules.

According to SER the number of the students in theoretical classes can be 100 and in classes with practical activities the maximum is defined as 50. The university highlights the activities that are seen to support teachers/lecturers to make the class interactive and effective. During the interviews both students and alumni stated that the maximum number of the students in the groups were reasonable and they did not have any problem with this issue. Academic staff named a few interactive tools they are using in their classes, as well as underlined the importance of feedback. The panel asked students about the feedback they get from the teachers, as students stated the feedback is usually provided within a week, with using the email or LMS of the university. The panel thinks that in addition to the individual comments academic staff might start each class with speaking about the common mistakes, in order to enhance the quality of feedback and guarantee students clearly understand it. As it was declared

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during the interview with the academic staff and students, there is a possibility that students are getting consultation from their lecturers in addition to the classes they have, usually some students prefer to have individual or a consultation in a small group.

The learning outcomes of the students are being assessed with different activities designed by the academic staff, all the grades are saved in Student's file, Registry Book and in LMS platform, if that was an activity designed with using this tool. In addition to this, University Management System guarantee that all the study records are kept and analyzed in a way to get statistical data related to program completion, grading, exam passing and some more. As stated during the interviews this data is used to plan activities accordingly, the reports are accessible in the university web-page. During the interviews student mention that the grades are accessible for them through this platform. The panel also asked if they knew their rights regarding the filing of complaint, as students state they need to address the dean within the two working days after being notified of the grades. One student recalls the case when she/he used this possibility and addressed to dean. During the interview's students highlighted the case of flexibility from faculty with regard to handling the exams, namely, a student who was participating in the Erasmus Plus exchange program was allowed to take exams separately.

The university subscribed to plagiarism detection software and implemented it in different subjects. Students confirm that the papers submitted by them are checked with the system, they even recall the cases when the papers were given back to further improve, or in some cases they were not graded due to the plagiarism. Academic staff are actively using the system; however, the academic integrity policy of the university is not that clear regarding plagiarism/similarity percentages. It is highly recommended that universities focus more on prevention rather than detection and try to avoid having a defined number of the percentage in the rule, as 20% of similarity would not be a problem if it is not a plagiarism, on another hand 15 % of similarity might be a direct plagiarism. Thus, the panel thinks universities must provide additional training to academic staff and students to explain the definitions of similarity and plagiarism percentages and further develop the awareness raising campaign.

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Students are represented in the Faculty Council; Quality Assurance, Disciplinary and Appeals Committee. In addition to this, students can make complaints about the quality of teaching, infrastructure and other issues. During the interview's students confirmed that they are familiar with this possibility, moreover they initiated some changes already, namely, suggested some courses that should be included in the program, as well as some infrastructural issues and activities related to internationalization (as they demand bigger number of vacancies on Erasmus Plus Mobility).

The Career Development Center at the university is responsible to provide different internship and employment possibilities to students, spread the information as well as provide support in drafting their CVs and motivation letters. Students confirmed that they get quality services from the center and some of them named the internship they took with support of the center.

| *Standard* | Compliance | |
|---|---|---|
| | **YES** | **NO** |
| Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organizing students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students | X | |
| 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 | X | |
| Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process. | x | |
| Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed. | x | |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record. | x | |
| 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 | x | |
| 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. | x | |
| Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original | | X |
| 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 | X | |
| Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs are clearly regulated in formal internal documents. | x | |
| 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. | x | |

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. Recommended to enhance the implementation of the services and mechanisms that will ensure the principles of Academic Integrity are met in all and every form of assessment (oral presentations, quizzes) and elaborate more on contract cheating in order to guarantee the quality teaching and learning.

2. It is suggested that academic staff provide information about the common mistakes in addition to individual feedback to make it more effective.

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### 2.6. Research

In the SER, the University states that: *The FE has set out its research objectives in the Research Plan. The research plan is related to the Research Strategy at the University level. The FE research plan has the following objectives: 1. Capacity building for research - scientific activities; 2. Functionalization and modernization of research infrastructure; 3. Establishing and strengthening partnerships. This plan is based on sufficient financial resources to carry out its activities and includes the following actors: - Academic staff, and, - Students. Research by academic staff and students is done through: - Institutes; - Journals; - Conferences.*

As additional information after the visit shows, there is a development, but no plan is designed yet. There is no information on resources allocated for achieving the objectives. The defined objectives are general (SMART framework is recommended).

*The academic staff of FE, in their scientific research work, find support from the support schemes of UMIB, in which case each paid publication, in a journal located on the platforms Web of science and Scopus, is covered at 70% of the amount. UIBM also supports participation in scientific conferences.*

Publications costs should be 100% covered, and funding for the research work itself should be provided. In addition, it is recommended to provide a differentiated bonus system for publications of a certain quality level.

Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified (as a requirement). Assessment of research performance is considered in the Dean's questionnaire. In addition, also students' questionnaires could be supplemented with the relevant questions (assessment of the integration of the research results in the study course)**.**

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

The academic staff publishes their work, research results are presented at conferences. The academic staff more or less has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity. Consultations to the stakeholders occur through the university's Innovation Centre (e.g., as part of a project that aims to reduce unemployment). Although the study program is only at the bachelor's level, more activities could be implemented in this context, including at the international level. In addition, strategies for identifying and capitalizing on the expertise of teaching staff and students in providing research and development services to the community could be planned and implemented. As well as more cooperation with local industry and with other research agencies in terms of joint research projects, shared use of equipment, and cooperative strategies for development. Research is validated through publications. However, co-operation with external stakeholders is mainly

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related to the promotion of employment of graduates; there is no technology transfer. The rights of ownership and intellectual property at the HEI are regulated by the law on copyrights, the code of ethics in UMIB, regulation on disciplinary procedures for staff, and regulation on disciplinary procedures for students. However, there should be procedures set out for the commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.

Not 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 (e.g., Isa Tahiri, Hajrizi Besart, Milaim Mehmeti, Arif Krasniqi, Sadikaj Bese). P.S. Not all the publications can be found, e.g., Comparative Analysis of the Interest Rates of Bank Loans for SMEs: Evidence from Kosovo and North Macedonia. Random examination of the publications revealed that not all the academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff (e.g., Ylber Januzaj, Bese Sadikaj). Random examination of study course descriptions (e.g., Business Communication, Supply Chain Management and Logistics, Social Entrepreneurship, Organizational behaviour, Human Resource Management) reveals that they do not include information about academic staff's research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field. In addition, it can be concluded that the list of literature has not been updated for some time in a few study courses.

The FE periodically co-organizes scientific conferences while proceedings are published. During the interviews with students and alumni, the panel found that students recall few cases of participation in research projects. Considering the information mentioned in the self-assessment and obtained during the visit, the involvement of students in research and other activities can be considered as corresponding to the level of the bachelor's program.

The information obtained during the visit shows that in the context of the conditions defined by the university, assistance, and support is given to teaching staff to develop collaborative research arrangements with colleagues in other institutions as well as support for junior teaching staff. At the same time, support, in general, should be increased, especially for international activities and basic research.

Experts team did not find that:

1) the HEI is monitoring and supporting staff's contribution to attracting financial resources through research/applied/artistic projects and products;

2) the staff capacity to generate such financial returns would be considered in the individual performance review system.

| Standard | Compliance |
|---|---|

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|  | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 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. |  | X |
| 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. | X |  |
| 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. | X |  |
| Standard 6.4 The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity. | X |  |
| Standard 6.5. The academic and research staff publish their work in specialty 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 abroad. | X |  |
| 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. |  | X |
| 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. |  | X |
| Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff. |  | X |

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|---|---|---|
| Standard 6.9. Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field. | | X |
| Standard 6.10. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students. | | X |
| Standard 6.11. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities. | X | |

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

Recommendations:
1. While defining scientific/applied research objectives
1.1. sufficient financial, logistic, and human resources should be allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives;
1.2. SMART framework is recommended.
2. Publications costs should be 100% covered, and funding for the research work itself should be provided. In addition, it is recommended to provide a differentiated bonus system for publications of a certain quality level.
3. Students' questionnaires could be supplemented with assessing the integration of the research results in the study courses.
4. To expand cooperation and collaboration with external stakeholders, including expertise, consultancy, and technology transfer.
5. Strategies for identifying and capitalizing on the expertise of teaching staff and students in providing research and development services to the community could be planned and implemented
6. Cooperation with local industry and with other research agencies in terms of joint research projects, shared use of equipment, and cooperative strategies for development could be planned and implemented
7. There should be procedures set out to commercialize ideas developed by staff and students.
8. Make sure that each academic staff member and researcher

8.1. has produced at least an average of one scientific / applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years;

8.2. publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated.

9. Make sure that study course descriptions include

9.1. information about academic staff's research and scholarly activities relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field;

9.2. an updated list of the literature.

10. Internationalization of all the research-related activities should be expanded.

11. Support for the staff should be increased, especially for international activities and basic research.

12. Consider

12.1. monitoring and supporting staff's contribution to attracting financial resources through research/applied/artistic projects and products;

12.2. the staff capacity to generate such financial returns in the individual performance review system.

## 2.7. Infrastructure and Resources

Due to the nature of the online site-visit we were not able to see the existing infrastructure and resources. We based our evaluation on the SER and additional resources provided by the school.

UIBM buildings are erupted with classrooms, reading room and computer room providing solid space for academic staff and students for the study program. From the financial plan presented in the SER (p. 145), it can be concluded that there is a sustainable financial basis for implementation of the study program. However, the ET would like to encourage the FE to analyze the financial resources on the program level.

The library collections gather both printed and e-resources. During the interviews with students it was stated that they frequently used library borrowing service, those textbooks needed during their studies. In addition to this some of the alumni mentioned to used the reading halls and co-working space at the library. Although the university is subscribed to academic databases, students and alumni seemed not to use it that much. The library services are not that diverse, it does not offer student support academic services (referencing, avoiding plagiarism, using academic databases) that are needed for quality teaching and learning. The reading halls in the

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library is sufficient to the number of the students. There is no wifi coverage at the university yet. As stated during the interviews all the university buildings are adapted for people with special needs.

| Standard 7 | Compliance | |
|---|---|---|
| | YES | NO |
| 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 considered. | X | |
| 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. | | X |
| 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:<br>a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;<br>b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;<br>c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence;<br>d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula. | X | |
| 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. | X | |
| Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:<br>a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;<br>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; | X | |

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|---|---|---|
| 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; <br> 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; <br> e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission. | | |
| Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs | X | |

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**
1. Provision of internet services for faculty and students on Campus
2. Further development of library resources both printed and digital ones.
3. Develop student support academic services at the library in information seeking and Information Literacy.
4. Preparation of the financial plan on the programme level.

## 3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The online visit left a positive impression about the friendly academic and non-academic staff, students, graduates and the employers. All of them provided a positive view about the prospects of the Faculty, for many aspects of its functioning. The online visit as well as the materials provided for the evaluation of the programme allowed to evaluate the programme according to the Standards used by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency. Some additional suggestions for improvement are intended for further successful development of the evaluated programme and are based of international experiences.

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The main recommendations for improvement:

1. A clear seven to ten study program ILO statements should be formulated.

2. Study course descriptions could contain a teaching, learning, and assessment methods matrix to support continuous improvement in didactics.

3. Support for doing research should be expanded (see more in the Research section of the report).

4. Students could be more involved in program management.

5. University could consider defining the responsibilities of external stakeholders too.

6. Strategic and systematic integration of services and resources provided by other parts of the institution should be considered to enhance interdisciplinarity.

7. It would be advisable periodically (annually) to prepare one self-assessment report on the overall quality of the program for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.

8. In addition, a comprehensive reassessment of the program conducted at least once every five years would be advisable. Policies and procedures for conducting this reassessment should be published; program assessment should involve external stakeholders (e.g., experienced people from relevant industries and professions and experienced faculty from other institutions).

9. Keep the evidence on the reports provided to program administrators on the delivery of each course and adjustments made in plans for teaching.

10. University should move towards higher engagement of students in their academic life at the HEI.

11. Develop a faculty performance expectation model and related performance indicators acknowledging that faculty contribute to the program mission is a multiple ways.

12. Consider redesigning specialisations and introducing of a separate module aimed at giving students an opportunity to use their knowledge and skills on solving a real-life problem.

13. Recognition of the programme by ACCA or CIMA or other professional organisations could be a very important value added to students and a source of competitive advantage.

14. Conduct a benchmarking exercise regarding the bachelor program against an aspirational group of HEI. The ET recognises that some kind of a benchmarking has been done with the use of big data analytics, however, this method does not allow more a more in-depth analysis related to the actual methods uses, the specific topics covered, added value of the programme or practice-based - research-based orientation.

15. Consider creating the business incubator (or entrepreneurship lab) for the students with good business ideas.

16. Recommended to enhance the implementation of the services and mechanisms that will ensure the principles of Academic Integrity are met in all and every form of assessment (oral presentations, quizzes) and elaborate more on contract cheating in order to guarantee the quality teaching and learning.

17. It is suggested that academic staff provide information about the common mistakes in addition to individual feedback to make it more effective.

18. While defining scientific/applied research objectives

18.1. sufficient financial, logistic, and human resources should be allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives;

18.2. SMART framework is recommended.

19. Publications costs should be 100% covered, and funding for the research work itself should be provided. In addition, it is recommended to provide a differentiated bonus system for publications of a certain quality level.

20. Students' questionnaires could be supplemented with assessing the integration of the research results in the study courses.

21. To expand cooperation and collaboration with external stakeholders, including expertise, consultancy, and technology transfer.

22. Strategies for identifying and capitalizing on the expertise of teaching staff and students in providing research and development services to the community could be planned and implemented

23. Cooperation with local industry and with other research agencies in terms of joint research projects, shared use of equipment, and cooperative strategies for development could be planned and implemented

24. There should be procedures set out to commercialize ideas developed by staff and students.

25. Make sure that each academic staff member and researcher

25.1. has produced at least an average of one scientific / applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years;

25.2. publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated.

26. Make sure that study course descriptions include

26.1. information about academic staff's research and scholarly activities relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field;

26.2. an updated list of the literature.

27. Internationalization of all the research-related activities should be expanded.

28. Support for the staff should be increased, especially for international activities and basic research.

29. Consider

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29.1. monitoring and supporting staff's contribution to attracting financial resources through research/applied/artistic projects and products;

29.2. the staff capacity to generate such financial returns in the individual performance review system.

30. Provision of internet services for faculty and students on Campus

31. Further development of library resources both printed and digital ones.

32. Develop student support academic services at the library in information seeking and Information Literacy.

33. Preparation of the financial plan on the programme level

| Standard | Compliance level |
|---|---|
| 1. Mission, objectives and administration | Substantially compliant |
| 2. Quality management | Substantially compliant |
| 3. Academic staff | Fully compliant |
| 4. Educational process content | Substantially compliant |
| 5. Students | Substantially compliant |
| 6. Research | Partially compliant |
| 7. Infrastructure and resources | Substantially compliant |
| **Overall compliance** | Substantially compliant |

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the Bachelor of Arts study program "Business and Management" offered by the University Isa Boletini Mitrovica is **substantially compliant** with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation Manual and, therefore, recommends *for reaccreditation of* the study program with a maximum intake of 60 students a year.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant
**Length of accreditation:** 3 years
**Proposed enrolment**: 60 students

**Expert Team**

**Member**

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**Prof  dr hab. Dorota Dobija**          28/03/2022

(Signature)                          (Print Name)                          (Date)

**Member**

Dr. Mikus Dubickis          29/03/2022

(Signature)                          (Print Name)                          (Date)

**Member**

Giga Khositashvili          29/03/2022

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