

ASSESSMENT REPORT

**Programme Accreditation  
International Management and Leadership  
at the International Business College Mitrovica,  
Kosovo**

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## IMPRINT

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## 1. Preliminary note

The International Business College Mitrovica (IBC-M) in Kosovo was first institutionally and programme accredited by **evalag** in 2013 and reaccredited in 2018. In 2018 IBC-M decided to implement the new master's programme **International Management and Leadership** and is applying for a programme accreditation.

An international expert group from Germany and Switzerland carried out the accreditation procedure and assessed the college according to **evalag's** criteria for international programme accreditation dated 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016. These criteria refer to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) dated 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

The full compliance with the criteria is a requirement of awarding **evalag's** international quality label for programme accreditation.

## 2. International Business College Mitrovica (IBC-M)

The independent IBC-M foundation in Mitrovica Kosovo is a higher education institution that offers currently practice-oriented post-secondary professional education at European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level 5, and higher education at EQF level 6, respectively bachelor degree. Originally founded by SPARK, IBC-M has now completely separated from the founding organisation. It is registered as a non-profit foundation and granted by the European Union.

The College offers for its currently 154 students three Academic Profession (AP) degrees and three connected top-up professional bachelor degrees. The academy profession programmes are "Marketing and Management", "Public Administration" and "Environmental and Agricultural Management". The professional bachelor programmes are "International Sales and Marketing", "Public Service Management" and "Environmental and Agricultural Management".

The following table shows an overview of IBC-M key data of October 2018:

<b>International Business College Mitrovica (IBC-M)</b>	
Founding year	2010
Academic departments	4
Number of programmes	6
Academy Profession Degree (AP)	3
Professional Bachelor Degree (Bachelor)	3
Number of students	158
Planned number of students for Master's Degree	Max. 40 per academic year
Planned full time academic staff for the Master's Degree	15
Administrative and technical staff	17
Annual tuition fee for Master's Degree	2.000 EUR

### 3. The accreditation procedure

The assessment procedure was carried out with an informed peer review on the basis of a self-evaluation report provided by the college, a two-day site visit of an international expert group, an assessment report by the experts and the accreditation decision taken by **evalag's** Accreditation Commission.

The procedure applies the fitness for purpose approach, which assesses to what extent the programme complies with the criteria for programme accreditation. The point of reference is **evalag's** criteria for international programme accreditation that follow the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

These criteria focus, first of all, on the profile of the programme and its curriculum. Further, the criteria cover all aspects of the implementation of a study programme, its quality assurance and its resources. With regard to the criteria of programme profile and curriculum, **evalag** also assesses if the programme meets academic standards that are accepted in Europe and internationally.

The following six criteria are used:

- Programme profile
- Curriculum
- Student assessment
- Organisation of the study programme
- Resources
- Quality assurance

Depending on the degree to which the programme meets the criteria, the programme will be accredited, accredited with conditions or not accredited.

The experts express the extent of compliance of the criteria with the following assessments: passed, passed subject to conditions, suspension of the accreditation procedure or failed. Depending on the degree to which the programme meets the criteria, the programme will be accredited, accredited with conditions or not accredited.

As a first step of the procedure and as preparation for the site visit, IBC-M produced a self-evaluation report based on guidelines provided by **evalag**.

In parallel, **evalag** formed an expert team consisting of four experts including one student expert:

Prof. Dr. Paul Sudnik

University of Applied Sciences Munich, Department of Business Administration, Professor of International Management, Germany

Prof. Dr. Jana Brauweiler

University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz, Department of Natural and Environmental Sciences, Professor for Integrated Management Systems, Germany

Dr. Teita Bijedić

Researcher at Institut für Mittelstandsforschung Bonn (Institute for Small Business Research), Germany

Jana Kobler

University of Applied Sciences and Art Lucerne, Student Master of Science in Business Administration, Major Public and Non-profit Management, Switzerland

All experts had declared to be free of any conflict of interest.

The site visit took place from 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at IBC-M. During the site visit, the experts met with the director, head of departments, academic and administrative staff, students, graduates, and visited the facilities of the college.

The expert group produced an assessment report that was submitted to the college for correction of potential factual errors on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

From **evalag**'s side, Ulrich Rückmann managed and carried out the project.

The following assessment report is structured along the assessment criteria, which are the basis of **evalag**'s international institutional and programme accreditation. After a short description of the criterion each chapter starts with the current status regarding the criterion which is based on the information in the self-evaluation report of the college and gathered during the site visit as well as provided by IBC-M in writing after the site visit. On this basis, the experts group assess the criterion. Finally, the experts list their recommendations for further improvement.

## **4. Programme assessment**

### **4.1. Programme profile**

Teaching and learning is part of the core in higher education institutions. Therefore, the experts check whether the study programmes comply with the institutional strategy and national regulations. Further, they check if the intended learning outcomes of the programme are well defined, publicly accessible and whether they correspond to the type and level of qualification provided by the programme. They also consider whether the intended learning outcomes are based on academic or professional requirements (standards), public needs and the demands of the labour market and if they contribute to the employability of the graduates. The experts also check the academic standards of the study programmes and how research and teaching are linked. Moreover, the experts consider the international dimension of the programme and verify whether the qualification of the academic staff is adequate with regard to profile and objectives of the programme.

#### **Current status**

##### **Profile and strategy of IBC-M**

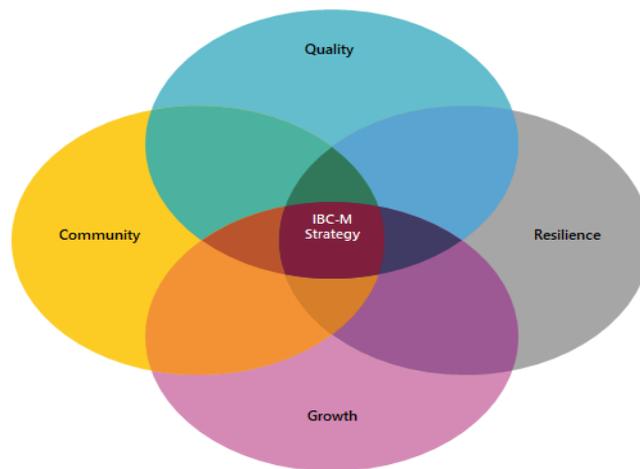
According to IBC-M's new statute the college is committed to supporting and promoting the following principles:

- Provide high-quality practice oriented international education at an affordable rate, following from its non-profit education;
- Apply the motto "From Theory to Practice" in all education and applied research activity;
- Support economic development by offering study programmes that develop professional skills relevant to the labour market;
- Add value to the professional world of work by undertaking applied research and consulting work;
- Promote socio-ethnic inclusion of ethnic groups and communities; and
- Enhance employment opportunities of students within Kosovo and internationally.

Currently, the college offers in total six programmes in three fields, each with a professionally oriented four-semester Academy Profession (AP) degree with 120 ECTS (ISCED 5) and a three-semester top-up professional bachelor with in total 210 ECTS (ISCED 6). The programmes were developed in close cooperation with Danish partner institutions (Tietgen Business College, Lillebaelt Academy and University College Lillebaelt) countries.

IBC-M is currently working on a new strategy that will focus on the time period of 2019 to 2022. The main vision of this strategy will be on par with the focus of the EU Support to turn IBC-M to become an internationally recognized centre of excellence for higher vocational education, that demonstrates socio-ethnic inclusion of the various groups and prepare them for careers and successes. The IBC-M will achieve this vision by providing quality education that supports the creation of more jobs and fosters a culture of lifelong learning for work.

The strategic plan will focus on tackling the four most pressing pillars in Kosovo education at the moment, as demonstrated by the chart below:



### **Business Administration**

The self-report claims that the Master's programme is unique among science and management master programmes since it provides a strong and advanced foundation in management whilst offering the opportunity to specialise in:

- a) Business Management and
- b) Environmental Management.

It will promote critical thinking and helps students to become responsible future leaders, choose a role within an organisation and contribute to its further development, or start their own business. The application of new innovations, technologies and associated know-how, including the transfer of technology knowledge through new courses and training will be a powerful driver of economic growth and sustainable development in the region. The two specialisations will be correlated to the existing bachelor offered programmes.

The specialisation in Business Management represents an education programme with a strong business focus that promotes and improves students' management competencies. Participants in this programme learn how to systematically identify and analyse business problems, provide suitable solutions, and make, as well as implement, appropriate decisions. The programme is designed to develop competences of highly skilled and innovative business managers and entrepreneurs needed to creatively address the issues of sustainable management in uncertain and dynamic global business environment.

The specialisation in Environmental Management includes waste management, energy efficiency among other environmental issues and topics. According to the self-report, the idea to structure and design exactly this kind of a programme follows market research on the needs and competition in the regional Balkan market. The curriculum is intended to be in line with those used at the world's leading schools in the relevant fields of study and consistent with the Europe 2020 strategy, the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training and the Bologna process.

In addition to teaching business management techniques, the programme focuses on developing and promoting leadership, innovation, negotiation, teamwork and communication skills. The newly acquired knowledge, as well as the interdisciplinary competencies and social skills taught in the programme, enable graduates to adequately master future management tasks and strategic leadership responsibilities.

The programme's objectives are defined according to the self-evaluation report as follows:

- Develop new labor market inputs in business and environment management profiles for the demanded workforce in the developing national and regional economy;
- Provide new opportunities for people of high integrity to develop unique and innovative labor market demanded professions in the spheres of business, management and environment;
- Offer an interesting learning environment with adequate theoretical and practical learning and working modalities in order to develop proper leadership skills and competences that will properly prepare their careers and give them a sustained competitive advantage

According to the self-evaluation report. Students in the programme will:

- Development of a new type of interdisciplinary professional profile at a Western Balkans level;
- Gain the knowledge and skills to engage with international management practices and help them become more sustainable;
- Acquire an understanding of how to manage a business whilst considering the implications that decisions will have on the business and environment;
- Learn to connect environment with business management approaches in order to develop integrative and long-term solutions to national and international market, environment, and social challenges;
- Demonstrate understanding and ethical responsibility about the impact of professional activities on environment and society;
- Gain ability to assess and analyse the business environment in the local and international markets.

After completing the programme, students should:

- Develop a critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts relating to practical and conceptual knowledge in the business and environment areas;
- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the application of different qualitative and quantitative methods of importance in business and environmental management;
- Critically analyse and compare theoretical concepts and notions and reflect on their practical use in the socio-economic contexts and environments;
- Demonstrate an operational breadth of competencies by using knowledge from different areas of management with specialization on business leadership and environment management practices;
- Attain accountability and sustainability for corporate and other organizations' management, environment, human resources for long-term development;
- Attain in-depth insight into current research and development in the areas of business and environment management and leadership;
- Prove an understanding of effective and efficient behaviour in business management and leadership by making relevant business decisions and taking care of their effective implementation;
- Be able to evaluate various business and environmental problems from a global perspective and know how to deal with them optimally in dynamic global business environment;
- Apply relevant theories and scientific methods to practical issues in business with regard to business management, marketing, finance, EU policies, etc.

They should also be able to:

- Independently seek, critically evaluate and integrate information to analyses and propose solutions to and participate in problem solving on complex issues in the areas of business management and environment;
- Critically, independently and creatively identify and formulate issues relevant to the area the programme concerns within a set timeframe;
- Demonstrate skills in the business and environmental area to make judgements with respect to scientific, social and ethical aspects, and demonstrate an awareness of ethical aspects of research and development;
- Engage and mobilize other professionals in addressing real managerial and leadership problem-solving situations, in an international and multicultural context.
- Develop original and creative responses and solutions to problems and issues practicing in a wide and often unpredictable organizational leadership and environmental situations;
- Initiate, measure and lead new change management practices in various organizational levels, as well as in critically changing socio-economic and environmental contexts;
- Plan and carry out a significant development project as part of internship in industry enterprise;
- Define and carry out a research master thesis project in the field of specialization (business or environment management);

At the end of the master program, students should be able to:

- Design, develop and manage financial and budgeting strategies in a changing and evolving organization environment in regard to supporting organization development and growth;
- Manage teams of professionals, contributing to the development of their professional knowledge and practice and reviewing their performance;
- Deal with complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.

The programme is designed for students from diverse background such as management sciences, social sciences, natural sciences and engineering. The degree is for individuals who want to pursue a career in management related to business and environment.

According to the self-evaluation report, the current education market in Kosovo and Western Balkans is lacking programmes that enable students to learn about the effects of business and other economic and social activities and their effects on the environment. This programme aims to provide the market with potential managers and administrators that will enable businesses and other entities to contribute towards a higher efficiency of the work processes within their sectors, thus contributing to an overall increase of sustainable development.

The programme aims to respond to the essential needs of an emerging private sector and developing environment related public /private sectors in Kosovo. Kosovo's economy is short on capable and skilled individuals that would complement and steer the process of private sector development as well as contribute fully to the public sector. The programme is drafted taking into consideration the most relevant factors and indicators that explain economic development and the process of new job creation in the local and international labour markets.

According to the information provided by IBC-M the need for the Master in **International Management and Leadership** with the specialisation in Business Management and Environmental Management is a frequently repeated request of IBC-M alumni, working professionals in these sectors, feedback from the staff, as well as IBC-M stakeholders. It is reflecting needs of the Kosovo market, as well taking into consideration developments of the European markets.

As Business Management graduates, students would be able to work in firms that are interested in changing their business strategy to a more sustainable direction. The graduates would be able to build a career in business management and entrepreneurship, environmental consultancy or corporate social responsibility. They could also become an environmental officer in a non-governmental or government agency or in national or international business.

### **Assessment**

The mission and goal of IBC-M is to support the sustainable development and growth of Kosovo society and economy. Such a mission fits comfortably with the need for implementation of this study programme. The experts appreciate the interdisciplinary and the "theory to practice" approach that IBC-M has installed for many years in its work by providing a wide range of academic, scientific and vocational skills and competences which will enable a proper transfer to the prospective students that attend this study programme.

The experts consider the masters' programme to be appropriately positioned as it gives the students a practise-oriented but also scientific-oriented education on a master's level preparing them well for the labour market or a further academic career. The objectives associated with the programme comply with the profile and the strategic goals of the institution and national regulations. The intended learning outcomes are well defined, publicly accessible and correspond to the type and level of qualification provided by the programme.

The experts consider, that the study programme offers the students a further qualification based on a first academic degree. The focus on management tasks within a company with a particular focus on leadership and the consideration of European and international requirements is well designed to enable a successful career entry. The two specialisations are well chosen. Mitrovica itself faces significant environmental challenges as a consequence of the many years of operation of the Trepca mine. The mine is no longer functional but its legacy remains. Graduates of the Environmental Management specialisation will be equipped to lead discourse on this very local issue as well as on environmental issues in the wider Western Balkans region.

Graduates of the other specialisation will have been immersed in the latest discourse in the field of Business Management and so will be equipped to lead existing organisations, or newly formed ones, in the implementation of the sustainable business models which are the future of the wider Western Balkans region.

The academic level of the programme is consistent with the fundamental nature and aims of the programme and complies with internationally accepted standards of international management, leadership and environmental management. The learning outcomes of the programme also comply with the International Standard Classification of

Education1 (ISCED) 7, which provide participants with advanced academic and professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a second degree.

The adopted innovative teaching and learning approach “From Theory to Practice” is unique in the region, appreciated by the students and academic staff and differentiates IBC-M from other higher education institutions. This approach is also used in the new degree programme and is furthermore amplified by the one year industry experience as a requirement for enrolment.

With regard to the college’s research activities, the experts learned in the interviews with the academic staff and external stakeholders that research cooperation and especially applied research oriented teaching takes place. Indeed, the college is a grant holder for a prestigious Erasmus + project. Furthermore, the college encourages its teachers and students to pursue applied research activities such as case studies, field trips, (joint) research projects and publications (with partner institutions and companies), participation in scientific conferences at IBC-M, in Kosovo or abroad in order to expand their knowledge and gain experiences. The experts are of the view, that the new master’s programme will further increase the research output beyond the already mentioned approaches of applied research.

Due to the international programme profile, which includes teaching exclusively in English language, opportunities for international mobility and a focus on European and international aspects of business administration, an international dimension is easy to recognize.

According to the experts, the qualification of the teaching staff is appropriate with regard to profile and objectives of the programme. They were impressed by the competent and motivated teaching staff of the college, who had actively planned the programme. In accordance to Kosovo law, the minimum qualification for teaching in a master’s programme is a Ph.D. in the field of teaching. This requirement is met by all teachers and is also a prerequisite for applying for the six vacant positions.

## **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations from the experts.

## **4.2. Curriculum**

This criterion comprises the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning methods. The experts check if the curriculum of the programme is adequately structured to achieve the intended learning outcomes and if it provides the necessary knowledge and methodological expertise of the relevant discipline(s). In addition, the experts review whether the institution employs appropriate student centred teaching and learning processes and methods, which pay respect to the diversity of students and their needs and encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process.

### **Current status**

Planned as a full time programme with 120 ECTS, it lasts for two 2 years. The programme is modularised and based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The regular workload of a semester is 30 credits, each credit being an equivalent of 30 working hours. The programme includes a mandatory internship.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/international-standard-classification-education-isced>, accessed 27<sup>th</sup> May 2019

The programme is structured as follows:

The programme starts with a common first semester with six compulsory courses. In second semester further four compulsory courses need to be completed, they will be complemented by two electives. After the first year students have to choose a specialisation, either Business Management or Environmental Management. In third semester students complete four compulsory and two elective courses in each specialisation. The fourth semester ends with an internship and the master thesis.

YEAR 1: 60 ECTS – General Year	
SEMESTER 1: 30 ECTS	
Courses	ECTS
Management and Organisational Studies	5
Financial Management – Core Concepts and Applications	5
Business and Natural Environment	5
EU Integration and Policies	5
Project Management	5
Human Resource Management and Development	
SEMESTER 2: 30 ECTS	
Marketing in Global Environment	5
EU Markets and International Trade	5
Financial Accounting and Reporting	5
Positive Leadership	5
Electives (Students select two courses) - Circular Economy - Cost-based Management - Innovation, Product and Process Management - Research methods in management science	10 (2 x 5)
YEAR 2: 60 ECTS - Specialisation: Business Management	
SEMESTER 3: 30 ECTS	
Strategic Thinking and Management	5
Business Economics	5
Entrepreneurship and Business Development	5
European Economics and Finance	5
Electives (Students select two courses) - Business and Employment Law - Managing Sales and Customer Relationships - Managing Professional Relationship at Work - Logistics and Supply Chain Management	10 (2 x 5)

YEAR 2: 60 ECTS - Specialisation: Environmental Management	
SEMESTER 3: 30 ECTS	
Applied Natural Resources Management	5
Environmental Science and Technology	5
Waste and Air Management	5
Landscape Management and Spatial planning	5
Electives (Students select two courses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Law-</li> <li>- Agricultural &amp; Resource Policy</li> <li>- Water Resource Management</li> <li>- Natural Disaster Risk Management</li> </ul>	10 (2 x 5)
SEMESTER 4: 30 ECTS	
Professional Practice (Internship)	15
Applied Research Project - Master Thesis	15

The language of instruction is English.

IBC-M uses the teaching and learning approach “From Theory to Practice”, which is a practise-oriented, problem-based teaching and learning methodology. The pedagogical concept is based on four different aspects of learning: conceptualisation, experimentation, experience and reflection. The students learn theoretical concepts, which they both apply in classroom situations and in practical real world environments, e.g. internships, and which they reflect with regard of the gained theoretical knowledge.

In the conceptualisation phase (mainly in class learning) the students acquire a theoretical knowledge through teacher structured lessons, in class exercises, real life examples provided by students, guest speakers or field trips. The experimentation phase (in lab learning) is working with real life problems in a controlled environment, which is conducted by real life cases, role playing, games and simulations, focus groups, debates, experiments, multimedia tools or group work and individual presentations. The experience phase (in field learning) works with the theoretical knowledge in a real life environment by guest speakers presenting real life cases, fieldwork and research, semester projects and the internship. The reflection phase (competence gaining) links recent knowledge and experience and interrelates it to earlier ones, which allows students to solve problems independently related to their profession. This happens through in class reflection exercises, pre-examination tutorials, reporting on the internship experience and the final thesis. Altogether the programme has a focus on applied sciences. It consists of about 50 % theoretical focus and 50 % practical learning.

All courses are held using contemporary teaching methods, such as problem based learning, game based learning, case study method, etc. During their studies, students are involved in practical work and internships in different companies that participate in the project.

## Assessment

The experts state that the curriculum is in general reasonably and appropriately structured and provide the necessary knowledge and methodological expertise of the disciplines in order to achieve the intended learning outcomes and objectives of each programme. The experts point out that the programme provides all the necessary knowledge of the disciplines needed.

In the first two semesters, students receive an advanced training and highly specialised knowledge of their management skills. These include aspects such as financial management, project management and human resource management. Also the important topic of ethics plays a role in the curriculum. The field of EU Integration and Policies as well as further training of research methods should also be emphasized. With the elective courses, students receive the possibility of a first individual specialisation, depending to their personal interests.

If the idea of „curriculum“ is to provide a formal education, which includes „education for life“ and „education for earning a living“, then this programme represents a vast array of learning activities and experiences toward both of these aims.

In the beginning of the second year students choose one of two specialisations. With the compulsory modules “Strategic Thinking and Management”, “European Economics and Finance”, “Entrepreneurship and Business Development” and “Business Economics” intended for the specialisation “Business Management” students acquire specialised problem-solving skills that are applicable in the management of a company. The foundation set by the curricular emphasis on perspectives of strategy, customer relations, business development and entrepreneurship, all under the umbrella of a „leadership“ outlook.

With the specialisation Environmental Management, students are enabled to tackle urgent environmental problems in the region and find solutions for them. This includes not only waste management, but also energy efficiency among other environmental issues like natural resource management and landscape management. A further specialisation is achieved through elective courses like “Water Resource Management” and “Natural Disaster Risk Management”. One of the litmus tests of a „good“ curriculum is the breadth of learning that it provides. Building on the foundations of core courses discussed above the proposed elective courses provide an eclectic yet relevant series of learning options to students. In summary, it can be stated that the modules of the specialisation "Environmental Management" can guarantee an interdisciplinary education with regard to the relevant legal, technical and management-related knowledge.

The internship and the master's thesis complete the studies, with IBC-M assuming that the master's thesis is written in the same company in which the internship was completed, which is an ideal stepping stone for prospective graduates to start their career. It also enables a connection between “theory and practice”.

The modularisation and the use of ECTS are adequate and the programme is documented clearly and transparently.

According to the experts, the "From Theory to Practice" approach ensures that students are placed at the centre of learning. Teaching methods such as real life cases, role playing, games and simulations, focus groups, debates, experiments, group work and individual presentations encourage students to play an active role in creating their own learning process. Due to the variety of forms of teaching, the diversity of students and their needs is also taken into account. Furthermore, the diversity of the manage-

ment curriculum enables the students for polyvalent careers, in established and international companies, public services as well as NGOs and business start-ups and ownership.

### **Recommendation**

There are no recommendations from the experts.

### **4.3. Student assessment**

The focus of the criterion lies on the organisation of student assessments. The experts check how the assessment of intended learning outcomes is organised and whether the amount and requirements of assessments are adequate with regard to the intended learning outcomes. They review if the requirements of the thesis reflect the level of the degree and if the assessment criteria are transparent and used in a consistent way. Moreover, they will examine whether the staff undertaking assessments are adequately qualified, which examination regulations exist and if they provide clear and fair regulations for student absence, illness and other mitigating conditions.

#### **Current status**

Students will be graded through a mix of examinations and class work. In most modules the assessment is divided in two parts: 1) Midterm examinations (exams which are given during the middle of the semester) and 2) Final examinations. Typical forms of examinations are: Assignments, projects, written tests, case studies, written exams, opinion papers, team projects, online discussions, peer assessments, individual reports, oral presentations, quizzes, individual research projects, weekly reaction paper, an internship report etc. Class participation will also be taken into account.

The programme ends with a master thesis project where the student completes an independent, interdisciplinary and practise-oriented project related to the level of the degree and writes a thesis on the project. The grade of the thesis project consists of the written thesis grade and the oral examination grade. The thesis grade counts 70 % and the oral examination of 45 minutes grade 30 % towards the overall grade. Exam results can be appealed; the appeals procedure is described in the study regulations.

The forms of examination are described in the programme handbooks and in examination regulations. IBC-M uses a 7-point grading scale from plus 12 as the best result to minus 3 for plagiarism as the worst. The grades can be transferred to the ECTS grading scale.

The programme has study, internship and examination regulations, which regulate the study process, internships, course and module examinations and the thesis project.

#### **Assessment**

The experts assess the examination system of the programme as appropriate. The different examination methodologies with written and oral exams, course assignments, case studies, internship reports and project work etc. provide the opportunity to assess different competences.

According to the experts, the assessment of intended learning outcomes is well defined, regulated and organised. The amount and requirements of assessments are ad-

equate with regard to the intended learning outcomes. The broad variation of the examination forms defined for each module enables the competence assessment of the students at different levels. But it is recommended to analyse the practicability of this procedure within the framework of module evaluations. Furthermore, the requirements of the thesis reflect the level of the degree. The assessment criteria are transparent and used in a consistent way. In addition, the staff undertaking the assessments are adequately qualified. Transparent examination regulations exist and provide clear and fair regulations for student absence, illness and other mitigating conditions and appeal procedure and they work as the experts heard from the students and graduates during the visit.

### **Recommendation**

There are no recommendations from the experts.

### **4.4. Organisation of the study programme**

With regard to the organisation of the study programme, the experts check the appropriateness of entry qualifications and the regulations for the recognition of qualifications (i.e. Lisbon Convention). They review whether the organisation of the study process allows the programme to be carried out in such a way that the intended learning outcomes will be achieved and whether the organisation of the study process takes the diversity of students and their needs into account. Other aspects are how the implementation of the programme is managed (roles and responsibilities) and whether the workload of the programme is adequate with respect to the necessity to reach the intended learning outcomes in the scheduled time frame. The organisation of the student life cycle (i.e. all (organisational) relationships between the student and the institution from enrolment to graduation) is also part of the criterion. Further, the experts check whether the student support and advisory services are suitable and in case of a cooperation with internal and external partner(s) how the cooperation is organised.

### **Current status**

IBC-M enrolls students for the winter semester, which starts in the beginning of November. For admission Students are supposed to have a Bachelor degree with minimum 180 ECTS and one year of working experience (includes volunteering, internships and professional engagements). Bachelor degree should be in a related subject area, such as: Business, Management, Economics, Finance, Commerce, Marketing, Environmental Sciences, Natural or Life Sciences, Technical Sciences, and other relevant subjects related to business, management and/or environment (Minimum average grade of 7.5 (Kosovo Grading Scale) or 7 (IBC-M Scale)).

Students should also be able to express themselves in proficient English, both orally and in written text. IBC-M conducts entry exams to ensure the quality and English language skills to all students. An Entry Exam will test student's English skills. Students will also be interviewed in English, to find out more about their motivations, commitment and English communication skills. Language tests like IELTS (6.0, with a minimum of 5.5 in writing) and TOEFL (82 points, no less than 20 in each category) are also accepted, if they are valid for a period of last two years at the moment of submission.

IBC-M recognises educational achievements of students, which have been acquired at other higher education institutions. The recognition of qualifications (e.g. Lisbon Convention) is sufficiently regulated in the study regulations of the college.

The college uses Google Classroom as its e-learning platform. The virtual learning environment is used by staff and students to create classes, distribute assignments, communicate, access learning materials, document sharing and collaboration and exam submission.

IBC-M has an extensive counselling system for students, which support students in different situations. The student service and career coaching unit assists the students in arranging their mandatory internships, signal and assists students that are at risk of falling behind in their study progress, helps to determine what career path students are interested in and helps to increase study motivation and reduce dropout rate. Furthermore, the lecturers are also easily approachable for students.

The teaching and learning forms, qualification goals of the programme, pedagogical concept, admission requirements, selection procedures, internships, study and examination requirements, recognition of achievements at other higher education institutions, regulations for student absence, illness and other mitigating conditions etc. are described in detail in the study regulations and module handbooks of the programme. The rules and regulations as well as the handbooks are available on the IBC-M website, are updated annually and adapted to changed requirements.

### **Assessment**

According to the experts the entry qualification and regulations for the recognition of qualifications are appropriate. Further, they state that the organisation of the study process allows the programme to be carried out in such a way that the intended learning outcomes will be achieved. The organisation also takes the diversity of students and their needs into account. In addition, the experts are convinced that the implementation of the programme will be systematically managed. The process, roles and responsibilities are clear and regulated.

The organisation of the study process allows the programme to be carried out so that the intended learning outcomes will be achieved and takes the diversity of students and their needs into account, including by recognising small class sizes, high flexibility in the timetable, online availability of materials and the problems of the students are handled well.

With regard to the workload of the programme, the experts had the impression that it is appropriately planned with respect to goal of reaching the intended learning outcomes in the scheduled time frame. Furthermore, the experts are convinced that the student life cycle, e.g. all (organisational) relationships between the students and the institution from enrolment to graduation, is well organised.

According to the experts, student academic life at the college is well organised. Lecturers are easily accessible for students, which they confirmed during the site visit. The services of the student service and career counselling unit are very helpful and support students in all important stages of the student life cycle.

### **Recommendation**

There are no recommendations from the experts.

## 4.5. Resources

The criterion focuses on adequate resource endowment and deployment to sustain the core activities. The experts check the existence and sustainability of a professional funding and financial management. They also check whether the qualification and number of the (academic) staff (full-time and part-time) are adequate to support the institutional strategy as well as to ensure the intended learning outcomes. Further, they review which strategies and processes for the staff recruiting and staff development are used and if the search, hiring and tenure procedure are in line with international academic practices. The resources, facilities and equipment are also part of the criterion. Therefore, the experts examine if the amount and quality of facilities and equipment allow the provision of the programme (library, laboratories, teaching rooms, IT equipment) and if the resources are adequate to reach the objectives of the programme and are in accordance with the institutional strategy.

### Current status

Since 2017, IBC-M is financed by the European Union Office in Kosovo. The funding is guaranteed until the end of 2022. Income from tuition fees paid by the increased number of students will also provide increased revenue for IBC-M. The continued and growing income from private sector training and research projects through IBC-M Business and Consulting Services Department will continue to increase as IBC-Ms reputation for excellence continues to grow and follows the trend of the last few years

It is planned that the academic staff of 15 persons will teach in the degree program, 13 are employed full-time, two part-time. At the time of site visit, 9 persons have already been employed. A further six lecturers will be hired until the beginning of the study programme. Kosovo law dictates that lecturers for a master's programme must hold at least a PhD degree. The workload of a full-time position is 40 hours per week, which translates to a teaching load of 9 hours per week. In addition, IBC-M employs 17 administrative employees.

Academic staff recruitment and selection for the master's programme follows a three-step procedure. Criteria for employment are a relevant Ph.D. degree, relevant work experience in the private and/or public sector and fluency in English. Once the staff need is confirmed, the position is publically advertised. The responsible head of department screens and preselects the applications according to a matrix with predefined criteria. Based on the rating score, the applicants are invited for a trial lecture with a succeeding question round, which is attended by the relevant head of department, teaching staff and students. The trial lecture is scored according to a predefined matrix. Based on the score candidates are invited for a second interview. Newly employed lecturers receive a peer class visit by another IBC-M lecturer.

IBC-M applies an evaluation and assessment system. The system includes a reflection meeting two months after an employee joined the institution. It also includes one annual evaluation meeting, which is a two-sided discussion with focus on the performance of an employee, and one annual assessment meeting, which is a one-sided feedback and assessment of an employee based on defined targets by his/her supervisor.

The IBC-M Staff Development Plan is a comprehensive and holistic approach to building strong, committed, accountable academic and administrative staff regulated through the IBC-M HR Manual. This includes: Accountability through Goal Setting, Measurement, and Performance Evaluation and Improved motivation through Financial (salary scales, bonuses) and Non-Financial Rewards, including professional development opportunities and capacity building.

Starting from the IBC-M's vision to become an internationally recognized centre of excellence for higher education, international experience is a crucial component of the IBC-M's operations. IBC-M takes an active part in Erasmus+ programmes for International Credit Mobility. All IBC-M staff, administrative and faculty, have access to international exchange opportunities. International exchanges for staff, which are awarded upon fulfilling certain criteria, are a key motivating factor and help to contribute to the international atmosphere of the college. IBC-M has inter-institutional agreements with different international partners in Europe: With regard to staff development, all staff members have one annual evaluation meeting and assessment meeting with the respective supervisor. Additionally, IBC-M provides administrative and faculty staff training with its international partners in Denmark, Finland and Portugal.

IBC-M owns two state-of-the-art and fully equipped campuses one in the North and one in the South of Mitrovica. The two buildings are in walking distance to each other, located on both sides of the river Ibar and shared facilities such as the library and cafeterias. IBC-M has a large auditorium, spacious and technical fully equipped classrooms (whiteboards, beamers and computers), modern offices, two IT labs, two canteens, study and recreational space and SRC office. Both campuses have Wi-Fi throughout and the classrooms are fully air-conditioned.

### **Assessment**

The experts appreciate, that the European Union ensures funding of the institution until the end of 2022. The EU funds cover most of the main operation cost of the college and allows the college to provide scholarships for less fortunate students. Furthermore, IBC-M is able to self-generate income from tuition fees, facility rentals and service training for external organisations. Moreover, it is likely that in the coming years the Government of Kosovo will take over part of the financing. Overall, the experts consider that the funding and the financial management of IBC-M is ensured and sustainable.

The experts consider the number of lecturers to be appropriate to offer the study programme as planned. Lecturers will have at least a Ph.D. degree. This ensures, that the qualification of the academic staff is adequate and that the intended learning outcomes will be achieved.

The academic qualifications of the teaching staff are appropriate for a master's programme and the qualification level of the teaching staff has improved over the years. The international background of the staff and the training provided by IBC-M ensures that the academic staff is able to teach according to the pedagogical concept "From Theory to Practice". The experts were very impressed by the dynamic and motivated teaching and administration staff they met during the site visit. The administrative staff is competent and extremely service oriented.

According to the experts, staff development is very well developed at IBC-M. They also appreciate the extensive support provided to the staff to improve the human resource in areas such as pedagogic practice, higher qualifications and general capabilities. The experts gained the impression that the staff is highly motivated and actively participate in the staff development measures offered such as workshops, international exchange etc.

The experts assess the recruiting procedures of IBC-M as appropriate and in line with international academic practice. The current staff/student ratio allows the college to maintain relatively small groups and a close contact between teachers and students.

The two modern campuses of IBC-M are outstanding and provide enough space and excellent equipment to carry out the programme and even accommodate the planned numbers of students. The technical equipment and IT infrastructure of the college are also up to date and encourages a high quality of teaching. Both facilities are well equipped to provide services, such as company training, summer schools or renting premises to external institutions. Each campus has a library. However, the library is in need of improvement with regard to the equipment with books and digital media. Although students can also use other libraries in Mitrovica or Pristina, with regard to the new master's programme and increasing university research the library should be continuously expanded and students should have a better access to digital media.

### **Recommendations**

The experts strongly recommend that the library should be continuously expanded and access to digital media should be successively increased.

### **4.6. Quality assurance**

The criterion focuses on the internal and external mechanisms used by the institution to monitor and improve its quality. The experts check the existing quality assurance concept of the institution, which indicators are used for monitoring the achievement of objectives and how the institution and the persons responsible for the programme systematically collect, analyse and use relevant information about their activities. Moreover, the experts examine whether quality assurance is used regularly, systematically and effectively for quality enhancement, if quality feedback loops are closed and how the institution fosters the development of a quality culture in general.

With regard to the study programmes the experts examine how they are designed, implemented and how their improvement is organised. Furthermore, they check if a quality assurance concept of the programme is available and how it is connected to the quality assurance system of the institution and what kind of quality assurance processes and instruments for programmes are implemented. The experts also review, how stakeholders (students, teachers, administration, employers etc.) are involved in the quality assurance process as well as whether the relevant programme information for students and prospective students is provided.

### **Current status**

IBC-M is committed to use quality management tools to continuously improve its services. IBC-M develops and refines:

- Clear policies, procedures and responsibilities;
- Carefully planned, monitored and regularly reviewed study programs;
- Transparent assessments, reflecting the knowledge, skills and competences of our students;
- Highly motivated, student oriented lecturers;
- High quality facilities and resources;
- Transparent and well-structured information, that will allow internal collective reflection on our institutional performance and our capacities as a higher education institution;
- Transparent information, which will allow internal and external stakeholders to assess our capacities and our performance.

Quality development is a common obligation, which involves all members and internal and external stakeholders of IBC-M. The final responsibility for the quality management of the IBC-M is with the IBC-M director. In general, quality management at the IBC-M is organized, following a quality cycle approach.

Quality assurance at IBC-M is designed according to the PDCA cycle. To assure and enhance its quality IBC-M uses internal and external quality assurance instruments which are coordinated by the quality assurance officer, but are in the responsibility of all members as well as internal and external stakeholders of IBC-M. The quality assurance instruments and processes are implemented and described in the IBC-M Quality Manual.

In order to implement its strategy, IBC-M defines annual goals for the college and departments, which are discussed in the academic council and on the next level in the departments. After internal agreement, the director compiles the goals and discusses them with the board of directors before they come into force.

IBC-M has a bi-annual staff assessment between the staff members and her/his supervisor following a formalised process. One of the meetings focuses on evaluating the performance of the employee, the other focuses on the assessment and the definition of targets and training needs. Additionally, IBC-M has implemented a complaint procedure for students and staff, which is laid out in the IBC-M Internal Policy-Complaint Procedure and accessible via the website and the IBC-M learning platform Google Classroom.

In order to achieve high quality in the core activity of teaching and learning, IBC-M regularly carries out student evaluations with standardised questionnaires on satisfaction with individual courses, teachers, studies in general as well as the facilities and services of IBC-M. In addition to that they carry out separate evaluation questionnaires on internships and dropout rates and also conduct freshman and graduates' surveys. The evaluations are summarised and analysed in reports including recommendations for actions. A variety of reports are published anonymously online on the IBC-M website. The reports are internally discussed with the appropriate stakeholders (e.g. director, administration, departments, management, academic staff and board of directors).

Externally, IBC-M regularly seeks external advice on quality matters. This includes systematically feedback from companies that employed IBC-M interns. The companies are asked about the quality of information available from IBC-M as well as about their satisfaction with the employed intern. The feedback is reflected in the IBC-M internship report, which is issued bi-semester wise.

The college regularly discusses the results of internal and external quality assurance instruments in order to reflect its activities and develop improvements where necessary. Due to the recent independences and transformation phase of IBC-M, the college will review its whole quality assurance system and will update and adapt it according to the new IBC-M governance structure.

IBC-M employs a full-time quality assurance and accreditation officer that deals with both internal and external quality assurance matters.

### **Assessment**

The experts observe a well-developed quality assurance system based on formal and informal processes. The academic and administrative staff, especially the assistant director/administration, quality assurance officer and head of student services, are very dedicated, act professionally and ambitiously and demonstrated that they have internalised the PDCA cycle.

The experts assess the instruments employed as well adapted for a small institution as IBC-M, professionally designed and coordinated by its quality assurance officer.

The college uses internal and external instruments in a professional way in order to assess their activities from different point of views and to get external feedback and expertise where necessary. They use the external support systematically to improve the internal capacities of the college, further to manage its quality independently.

The quality assurance activities focus mostly on teaching and learning, which is the primary focus of IBC-M, and administrative processes related to the well-being of students. The students confirmed during the site visit that they are very satisfied with the education and the student services at IBC-M. Students receive a feedback on the views they express in the student evaluation surveys.

The quality assurance concept used by IBC-M seems to be appropriate to assure and improve the quality of teaching and learning at the college. Moreover, the quality assurance instruments, which are currently in place, seem to be accepted and implemented throughout the institution and are used for further improvement.

### **Recommendation**

There are no recommendations from the experts.

## **5. Assessment**

### **Overall assessment**

The experts are very impressed by the good progress IBC-M has made in developing the institution, its programmes and especially in regard to integrated education for all students regardless of ethnic groups and communities. Over the last years, the college was able to consolidate and further develop the study programmes and build up good organisational capacities to run the college. IBC-M has developed sufficient management capacity to run the college independently.

It is to be expected that the new study programme will elevate the college to a higher level and increase the number of persons with a higher education degree. It will also increase visibility of IBC-M in Kosovo and abroad. The study program is well profiled and meets the needs of the region and gives answers to urgent issues such as environmental protection and management of small and middle sized companies.

IBC-M offers higher professional education in English and a modern practise-oriented, problem-based teaching and learning approach, which is innovative and unique in the region and differentiates the college and its programmes from all other higher education institutions in Kosovo and their offered programmes.

In terms of governance, IBC-M is now independent and the strategic decisions of the college; the academic decisions are made by the academics of the college. It was quite evident to the experts that IBC-M has built up considerable managerial capacities.

The implemented quality assurance system of the college is well developed and based on formal and informal processes. It is used for regular, systematic and effective quality enhancement and fosters the development of a quality culture in general.

The experts themselves experienced first-hand the peculiarities of the divided city of Mitrovica and the specific political environment in the region in which the college is located and operates. They were impressed by the highly motivated employees, how they handle special situations and respond to unforeseen challenges.

The experts wish IBC-M a successful further development of the institution and continued excellent supervision of the students. Moreover, they thank the college and its academic and administrative staff for their hospitality, the open and constructive discussions as well as the outstanding support during their site visit.

Overall, the experts see IBC-M on a good path and encourage the college to pursue its planned development path further.

#### Assessment levels

Level	Assessment	Description
A	<b>Passed</b>	The institution/programme fulfils or exceeds all criteria. All activities are in line with the profile and objectives of the programme and provided at a high academic level.
B	<b>Passed subject to conditions</b>	The institution/programme does not fulfil some relevant criteria. However, the institution should be able to remedy the shortcomings within nine months after the assessment.
C	<b>Suspension of the accreditation procedure</b>	The institution/programme does not fulfil relevant criteria, but it is likely, that the institution will be able to remedy the shortcomings within 18 months after the assessment. The HEI may apply for a resumption of the accreditation procedure.
D	<b>Failed</b>	The institution/programme does not fulfil relevant criteria, and the institution is not expected to be able to meet all assessment criteria within 18 months' time.

#### Assessment grades

No	Criteria	Assessment
1	Programme profile	A
2	Curriculum	A
3	Student Assessment	A
4	Organisation of the study programme	A
5	Quality assurance	A
6	Resources	A

## 6. Accreditation recommendation of the experts to the evalag accreditation commission

In the experts' considered opinion, the International Business College (IBC-M) meets **evalag's** criteria for international programme accreditation. Therefore, the experts recommend IBC-M for accreditation and awarding the **evalag** label for international programme accreditation.

The experts recommend IBC-M to consider and implement the following **recommendation** regarding the resources of IBC-M as a means of improving the college further:

- R 1** The experts strongly recommend that the library should be continuously expanded and access to digital media should be successively increased.

## **7. Accreditation decision of the evalag accreditation commission**

At its meeting on 8 July 2019, the **evalag** accreditation commission decides unanimously to accredit the study programme “International Management and Leadership (Master of Applied Sciences/MASc)” at International Business College Mitrovica (IBC-M) with the following recommendation:

- R1** The library should be continuously expanded and access to digital media should be successively increased.