UNIVERSITY "ISA BOLETINI" IN MITROVICA

MINING ENGINEERING BSc

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

2025, MITROVICA

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INTRODUCTION

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-Evaluation Report (SER) submitted by University: Mining (BSc)*
- *Information obtained during meetings with management of the faculty of Geoscience, quality assurance representatives and administrative staff, holder of study program, teaching staff, students, graduates and employers*
- *Information obtained during site visit*
- *Additional documents requested by ET:*
- *number of publications by academic staff involved in the study program*
- *the research income of the Department of Geosciences, expressed in thousands of euros*
- *the number of students from study programme who have participated in the Erasmus+ mobility programme, indicating separately the number of students who have gone abroad for part-time studies and internships'*

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- *the number of students who came to the Faculty of Geosciences for part-time studies and/or international internships*
- *the average age of the teachers implementing the study programme during the 2020–2024 academic years*
- *information on the visits of the programme teachers to foreign institutions for teaching mobility (outgoing), as well as the number of incoming teachers from international institutions for teaching mobility*
- *the number of PROJECT PROPOSALS submitted for the last year by the teaching staff of programme under the evaluation*
- *the number of PROJECTS IN IMPLEMENTATION by the teaching staff of programme under the evaluation*

- *the students' timetables for the academic year 2024-2025, per semester - an example of plagiarism checking of the final thesis*
- *an evidence of the existence of a database with graduates (alumni)*
- *examples of surveys for students, teachers, administrative staff, alumni, and employers of graduates*
- *reports, which include results and analyses of surveys from point 12 for 2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2023/2023, and 2023/2024*
- *a regulation or a document stating key performance indicators used for monitoring the quality of the program and corresponding numerical values for 2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2023/2023, and 2023/2024*
- *list of all changes to curricula during the period 2021-2024*
- *an example of a signed contract that regulates student practice (between student, employer, and HEI if it is a tripartite contract or an equivalent)*
- *link to publicly available data on pass rate, drop rate, and graduate employment data*
- *curse-specific student completion rates for 2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2023/2023, and 2023/2024*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

● *Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of KAA, February 2024.*

Site visit schedule

Programme Accreditation Procedure at University "Isa Boletini" Mitrovicë	
Programmes:	**Mining Engineering, BSc** *(Accreditation)* **Sustainable Mining Development, MSc** *(Accreditation)* **Mineral Deposits, MSc** *(Re-accreditation)*
Site visit on (hybrid):	*29-30 April 2025*
Expert Team:	*Mrs. Regita Bendikiene* *Mrs. Badea Ana-Cornelia* *Mr. Ervin Rems*

	Milot Hasangjekaj, KAA
Coordinators of the KAA:	Arianit Krasniqi, KAA

Site Visit Program

Time	Meeting	Participants
Day 1 **09:00 – 09:50**	*Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programmes are integrated*	**Festim Kutllovci**, *Dean* **Muhamedin Hetemi**, *Vice Dean* **Afrim Osmani**, *Vice Dean*
09:50 – 10:35	*Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff*	**Natyra Misini,** *Senior Quality Assurance Officer* **Arber Blakqori**, *Administration staff* **Muhamedin Hetemi,** *Vice Dean for Quality Assurance and International Cooperation*
10:35 – 12:05	*Meeting with the program holders of the study programmes* **Mining Engineering, BSc Sustainable Mining Development, MSc**	Izet Zeqiri Kemajl Zeqiri Rafet Zeqiri Gzim Ibishi Muhamedin Hetemi
12:05 – 13:05	*Lunch break*	
13:05 – 13:30	*Visiting facilities*	
13:30 – 14:20	*Meeting with teaching staff*	<u>***Mining***</u> *Ahmet Tmava Nazmi Hasi Gani Maliqi Frasher Brahimaj Astrit Shala Ujmir Uka Ariana Sadiku Blerina Hasani* <u>***Geology***</u> *Gani Maliqi Flurije Kabashi Ahmet Tmava Naser Peci Islam Fejza*
14:20 – 14:30	*Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts*	
Day 2 **09:00 – 09:15**	*Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated*	**Festim Kutllovci**, *Dean* **Muhamedin Hetemi**, *Vice Dean* **Afrim Osmani**, *Vice Dean*
09:15 – 10:10	*Meeting with the program holders of the study programme* **Mineral Deposits, MSc**	Sylejman Hyseni Bedri Durmishaj
10:10 – 10:55	*Meeting with students*	<u>***Mining***</u> *Arjanit Ademi Leonard Shala Drinor Shefkiu*

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		Sabedin Hasani *Leonis Zejnullahu* *Shpat Neziri* *Bajram Fetahu* *Çlirim Hasani* ***Geology*** *Besnik Xhema* *Antigona Koci*
11:00 – 11:45	*Meeting with graduates*	***Mining*** *Islam Ahmeti* *Shkurta Shyti* *Alban Hasani* ***Geology*** *Enes Muzaqi* *Faton Hetemaj*
11:45 – 12:30	*Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders*	***Mining*** *Skender Sallahu* *Jahir Gashi* *Fatmir Hyseni* ***Geology*** *Ramiz Krasniqi* *Edmond Pllana* *Skender Sallahu*
12:30 – 12:35	*Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts*	
12:35 – 12:40	*Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program*	
12:40-13:40	*Lunch break*	

A brief overview of the programme under evaluation

The Mining Study Program at the Faculty of Geosciences, University of Mitrovica "Isa Boletini," offers Bachelor level education designed to provide students with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills in mining sciences, supported by modern curricula, scientific advancements, and current practices in geosciences. The program is closely aligned with the Mining Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo and addresses the evolving needs of the labor market by preparing students for careers in the mining-research industry, environmental institutions, design-research centers, and academia. With strong local and global employment potential, the program ensures graduates are well-equipped to contribute to the development of the mining sector both nationally and internationally.

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PROGRAMME EVALUATION

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The programme evaluation consists of 7 standard areas through which the programme is evaluated.

1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION

Standard 1.1 The study program is in line with the higher education institution's mission and strategic goals, needs of society and it is publicly available. (ESG 1.1)

The program Mining BSc is clearly in line with UIBM's mission and strategic objectives, as it emphasises modern curricula, applied research and compatibility with national and global industry trends, thus meeting both academic and social needs. However, while the objectives are ambitious, the actual public accessibility of these objectives and their measurable implementation - for example, transparent reporting on societal impact or student outcomes - need to be more clearly demonstrated to ensure alignment is not only stated but also effectively implemented.

Standard 1.2 The study program Is subject to policies and procedures on academic integrity and freedom that prevent all types of unethical behaviour. The documents are publicly available, and staff and students are informed thereof. (ESG 1.1)

The Faculty of Geosciences' website provides easy access to relevant academic regulations, schedules, and forms, which supports transparency and adherence to academic integrity and freedom. However, while the documents are publicly available, the website's effectiveness in preventing unethical behaviour depends on the degree to which staff and students actively engage with and are fully informed about these policies, rather than just having access to them. The site could benefit from more interactive or proactive measures, such as reminders or training on academic integrity.

Standard 1.3 Relevant information is collected, analysed and used to ensure the effective management of the study program and other relevant activities and such information is publicly available. (ESG 1.7)

The program Mining BSc demonstrates a structured approach to gathering and using relevant information, with a curriculum aligned to national and European qualifications frameworks, stakeholder consultation, international cooperation and industry involvement, all contributing to informed decision-making and continuous improvement. However, while many initiatives and activities are documented, the process of systematically analysing this information and making it publicly available - especially in terms of concrete results and data transparency - needs to be clearer and more coherent to fully meet the standard.

Standard 1.4 The delivery of the study program is supported by appropriate and sufficient administrative support to achieve its goals in teaching, learning, research, and community service. (ESG 1.6)

The University Statutes and the Code of Ethics provide the formal ethical and administrative framework that supports the implementation of the study program, in particular by ensuring professional conduct in teaching, learning and research. However, while these documents set out important principles, the absence of a specific Code of Ethics for Research and the need for clearer implementation mechanisms indicate that administrative support, particularly in the area of research governance, is still evolving and may not be fully adequate to meet the growing needs of the program.

Standard 1.5 The recommendations for quality improvement of the study program from previous internal and external quality assurance procedures are implemented. (ESG 1.10)

The improvement report reflects that recommendations from previous internal and external quality assurance procedures have been acknowledged and addressed in the study program. However, these recommendations are not supported by clearly defined indicators or measurable outcomes, making it difficult to assess the effectiveness and progress of the implemented improvements.

ET recommendations:

1. *Formalise ongoing industry feedback by introducing regular, documented consultation cycles, such as biennial Industry Council meetings, where minutes and follow-up are recorded, to ensure that industry input is systematically included in curriculum updates and that alignment with market needs is maintained.*

2. *Accelerate the finalization and implementation of the research-specific ethics code by prioritizing its approval, ensuring clear communication to staff and students, and integrating it into training programs to strengthen integrity and accountability in all research activities.*

3. *Strengthen data-driven program monitoring by fully utilizing the UMS to generate and analyze metrics on learning outcomes, course effectiveness, and graduate employability, ensuring regular review by program holders and academic quality teams for informed, evidence-based improvements.*

4. *Improve the accessibility and transparency of quality assurance documents by ensuring they are clearly presented online in multiple languages (including English) and written in a user-friendly manner to engage all stakeholders, including students, alumni, and employers.*

5. *Formalise student participation in curriculum review by setting up formal mechanisms such as end-of-semester feedback surveys, student panels and student representation on curriculum committees to ensure a consistent and diverse contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.*

6. *The development of learning outcomes must adhere to recognized academic frameworks and standards, ensuring that graduates meet both national qualification frameworks and international best practices. Learning outcomes must be uniquely tailored to reflect the specific competences, knowledge areas and skill sets associated with each academic programme. Outcomes should not be replicated across faculty at bachelor and master level. Programs should clearly state how their graduates stand out from others, based on subject matter and professional expectations of the discipline.*

2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Standard 2.1 The study program delivery is subject to an established and functional internal quality assurance system, in which all relevant stakeholders are included. (ESG 1.1)

The team of experts believes that the study program delivery is subject to an established and functional internal quality assurance system, in which the most relevant stakeholders are included. We identified that the HEI has established an internal quality assurance system. Generally, this system complies with national regulations (Law for Kosovo Accreditation Agency, Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Kosova, KAA regulations) and Standards

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and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The quality assurance system includes all relevant aspects related to the delivery of the study program. Specifically, this includes evaluation of academic staff by students, self-evaluation of academic staff, alumni questionaries, evaluation of academic staff by the dean, evaluation of services by students and professors, evaluation of study programs by final year students, and questionnaire for external stakeholders. The team of experts notes that this could be supplemented by evaluation of study programs by students of all years, and not only final-year students, which could provide additional insights for quality improvement. These approaches are well-regulated by the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Regulation at the university level. The regulation is appropriate and publicly available. Notably, the regulation is complemented by the Quality Measurements Instrument Package, which enables an appropriate level of quality assurance procedures across the institution and also allows a comparison between different study programs. The team of experts notes that all regulations related to quality assurance are easily available to all stakeholders and are up to date. The person in charge of quality assurance procedures is a vice dean for quality and international cooperation, a post at the faculty level. Additionally, the quality assurance of the study program is supported by a quality assurance coordinator at the faculty level. Quality assurance is the focus of the coordinator; the coordinator does not have teaching obligations and is responsible for monitoring the study program. The quality assurance regulation stipulates careful consideration of inputs, processes, and outcomes in quality assessment. In principle, that would lead to the formation of a Plan-Do-Act-Check cycle, i.e., a cycle for continuous improvement. However, while the PDCA cycle is appropriately addressed at the regulatory level, the team of experts notes gaps in its implementation (see also standard 2.3). The monitoring plan for the implementation of the quality assurance procedures for the study program is adequate. Specifically, based on the outcomes of the internal quality assurance system, the Studies Committee, together with the program coordinators, reviews the evaluation results and recommends appropriate modifications to the Faculty Council for the improvement of the program. This, generally, enables the participation of various groups of relevant stakeholders.

Standard 2.2 The study program is subject to a process of design and approval established by the HEI. (ESG 1.2)

The academic program undergoes a structured development and authorization procedure defined by the faculty and the university, according to the team of experts. The objectives of the study program are well-defined, clear, and aligned with the mission of the faculty and the university. The team of experts particularly commends the high alignment of this mission and objectives with the needs and expectations of the social environment of the institution. In other words, the development of the study program aligns with the HEI mission and strategic goals. As already stated in standard 2.1, the Studies Committee, together with the program coordinators, reviews the evaluation results and recommends appropriate modifications to the Faculty Council for the improvement of the program. This guarantees that the study undergoes a formalized internal quality assurance procedure and is approved formally by competent bodies. Additionally, this allows for the continuous improvement of the program. The quality assurance procedures, as previously described in the evaluation of standard 2.1, include

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teaching staff, administrative employees, students (internal stakeholders), alumni, and employers of graduates (external stakeholders). Based on discussion during the visit of the HEI, external stakeholders are indeed visibly involved in the development of the program. The previously described well-defined procedure of program approval includes participation of relevant stakeholders. Key performance indicators for monitoring the quality of the study program delivery are defined in appropriate regulations, at the program level. The team of experts finds these indicators appropriate, however, there is room for improvement, especially in monitoring the research activity. The achievement of key performance indicators is well documented, regularly.

Standard 2.3 The study program is periodically monitored and reviewed to ensure its objectives are achieved. The monitoring of the study program involves stakeholder participation. (ESG 1.9)

While the monitoring of the study program generally involves stakeholder participation, the team of experts believes that the monitoring and reviewing of the study program is insufficient overall. Both aspects are well addressed from a regulatory standpoint, however the implementation is not adequate in all aspects. The team of experts notes that the relevance of the program to the needs of society is ensured. This is a result of concrete adjustments to the program, such as the transition from a 3+2 system to a 4+1 system. Indeed, these adjustments are based on established quality assurance procedures that involve the participation of external stakeholders. However, the team of experts believes that all changes to the program should be evaluated more carefully, considering all implications of a specific measure/change in the program. Additionally, all stakeholders, including students and alumni, shall be more actively involved in the evaluation of proposed program revisions. The discussion during the site visit also reveals that, in practice, the estimated student workload allocations (ECTS) and the achievement of defined learning outcomes are not systematically evaluated and considered when identifying revisions needed for program development. This is in striking contrast with internal regulations, which address this aspect adequately. We also note that quality assurance procedures for obtaining stakeholder feedback rely mostly on questionnaires but lack other forms that can bring important additional insights, such as focus group discussions, which should be organized systematically and documented. While we note that the university indeed regularly conducts questionnaires for key stakeholders, and formally analyses their responses, we note a lack of direct implications of these findings for the program development. Thus, while the Plan-Do-Act-Check cycle is envisioned in regulations, this cycle is not fully formed in practice. In other words: while the collected information indeed is analyzed, the concrete actions that would ensure that the program is up to date are insufficient. This is also evident from the insufficient implementation of recommendations from previous external evolutions by KAA. The results of the monitoring process and action plans are, generally, sufficiently communicated. However, the lack of well-defined and sufficiently ambitious concrete action plans, as noted previously, weakens this communication. The expert team also emphasizes that the self-evaluation report submitted to KAA, which should serve as the basis for evaluation, was not prepared following updated KAA standards.

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Standard 2.4 All relevant information about the study program is clear, accurate, objective, upto-date and is publicly available. (ESG 1.8)

All pertinent details regarding the study program are generally presented in an exemplary manner: clearly, accurately, objectively, and with up-to-date information that is readily accessible to all stakeholders and the general public. Specifically, all policies, regulations, and guidelines on the study program are publicly available on the university website. We emphasize that the website is structured very well and, thus, allows anyone to access relevant documents with ease. Similarly, the information specific and crucial for this study program (admission criteria, recognition of qualifications, enrolment quotas, syllabuses, learning outcomes, credits, assessment methods, final qualification) is easily available in the same manner. The information on pass rate, dropout rate, and graduate employment is objectively collected by the institution. However, this data is not made publicly available, as stipulated by KAA.
Overall, all the publicly available information is accurate, reliable, and presented objectively. It is also regularly updated to ensure it remains relevant and precise.

ET recommendations:

1. *Expand the evaluation of study programs to include feedback from students in all years, not just final-year students.*
2. *Enhance the quality and relevance of key performance indicators related to research.*
3. *Incorporate focus groups as a component of the quality assurance procedures to gather additional insights beyond questionaries.*
4. *Address the gap between existing QA regulations and policies and their implementation.*
5. *Ensure that the SER is prepared in accordance with up-to-date evaluation standards set by KAA.*
6. *Information on pass rate, dropout rate, and graduate employment should be publicly available.*

3. ACADEMIC STAFF

Standard 3.1 The study program delivery is supported by teaching staff who are recruited in line with national legislation, and internal regulations in effect, and it is based on objective and transparent procedure. (ESG 1.5)

Recruitment and appointment of academic staff are conducted through a transparent competition process, aligned with the Labor Law, MEST instructions, UIBM Statute, and internal regulations. Public announcements include job descriptions and eligibility requirements, ensuring equal opportunity and non-discriminatory selection. The appointment process includes clear criteria such as scientific publications, professional activity, and research contribution, as required for each academic rank.
Although the recruitment process is well-regulated, ET notes that there is no mention in SER of whether external peer review or independent academic committees are involved in the selection to ensure academic impartiality. The institution could improve the transparency of recruitment results and post-selection feedback mechanisms for unsuccessful candidates.

Standard 3.2 The study program is supported by sufficient permanent academic staff who are adequately qualified to deliver the study program. (ESG 1.5)

It is stated in SER that over 70% of the academic staff are full-time employees, ensuring a stable academic workforce. There are four PhD-qualified professors designated as program holders, fulfilling the requirement of one PhD per 60 ECTS, in line with accreditation standards. The majority of staff have their primary employment at FGS, ensuring availability and commitment to the program.

Despite having a sufficient number of qualified staff, ET notes that research productivity is low. There is limited involvement in international publishing and few scientific papers indexed in Web of Science (WoS) or Scopus. The academic staff's international recognition and research impact remain limited, as their publications are not widely cited. A large portion of the academic engagement is focused on teaching rather than research, affecting the integration of cutting-edge knowledge into the curriculum.

Standard 3.3 The study program is supported by teaching staff who are subject to advancement and reappointment based on objective and transparent procedures which include the evaluation of excellence. The advancement of staff arises from the higher education institution's strategic goals and is in line with the legislation and internal regulations in effect. (ESG 1.5)

The advancement process is clearly regulated and based on criteria such as teaching, research, and professional activity. Staff undergo self-evaluation, student evaluation, and supervisor evaluation regularly, with digitized data collection and reporting by the quality assurance unit. The results of evaluations are used to improve teaching and program delivery, indicating a feedback-driven quality culture.

ET found that there is a lack of strategic alignment with international benchmarks, advancement is not strongly linked to international publications, research grants, or global academic collaborations. Unfortunately, even if the process is described as formalized, academic excellence, when it comes to high-quality research results, is not the main factor driving progress.

Standard 3.4 The academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is entitled to institutional support for professional development. (ESG 1.5)

All academic staff received basic and advanced teaching certifications through collaboration with the Center for Excellence in Teaching at the University of Pristina. The university provides flexible scheduling to allow staff to participate in professional development activities. UIBM supports staff who face difficulties and promotes participation in scientific advancement and mobility programs.

ET observed that professional development appears to be more focused on basic teaching skills, with less emphasis on research training, international publishing, or advanced academic networking. There is an ongoing need for improvement in didactic and pedagogical competencies, as many staff may still lack modern teaching skills. Involvement in Erasmus+ or international mobility programs is low, limiting exposure to global teaching practices and research collaboration.

Standard 3.5 External associates who teach at the study program have adequate qualifications and work experience for the delivery of the study program and achievement of the intended learning outcomes. (ESG1.5)

The institution regularly invites external experts, including retired professors and industry professionals, to share practical experiences and complement theoretical teaching. These guest lecturers bring valuable real-world perspectives, particularly in the field of mining and environmental sciences.

However, the qualifications and selection process of external partners are not described in detail. It is unclear whether their academic credentials are systematically checked or aligned with institutional quality standards. Long-term planning and consistency in the involvement of external experts are not addressed, which may affect continuity in teaching quality.

ET recommendations:

1. *Encourage scientific publication in internationally recognized journals (e.g. Web of Science, Scopus) through performance-based bonuses or incentives.*
2. *Set annual research output targets aligned with international academic standard.*
3. *Recognize and reward international experience as part of staff appraisal and promotion processes.*
4. *Provide mandatory continuous training in modern teaching methods, including digital tools, active learning strategies, and student-centered teaching.*
5. *Develop clear criteria and evaluation processes for selecting external associates based on qualifications, experience, and alignment with program goals.*

4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT

Standard 4.1 The study program intended learning outcomes are formulated clearly, precisely, and comprehensively according to the best practices; they are aligned with the published institution's/academic unit's mission and strategic goals, and are publicly available. (ESG 1.2)

ET found that the academic staff/teachers are continuously enabled to review/revise their syllabi and then adequately prepare the syllabi. This is done according to the procedures established by the university/faculty. The syllabuses show that there are clear outcomes. The Mining Engineering study program at the Department of Mining aligns with the overall mission of UIBM, reflecting the three-year strategic plan and mission of the faculty, along with the goals of other industry stakeholders and current global mining trends.

Standard 4.2 The study program intended learning outcomes comply with the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework level descriptors. (ESG1.2)

The alignment of the study program with European and global higher education standards, along with the integration of scientific and professional research that combines theory and practice, focused on the local, regional, and global mining industries, support the comprehensive development of students and serve as a foundation for achieving equality with the more developed parts of the world.

ET considers that the intended learning outcomes are aligned with both the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). The BSc program in Mining Engineering, offered by the Department of Mining, is classified at Level 6 of the NQF. It also corresponds to Level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), which encompasses academic and professional programs leading to in a Bachelor's degree. To earn the Bachelor's degree, students must demonstrate the required knowledge, skills, and competencies for each subject, as well as for the program as a whole, within the designated study period.

Standard 4.3 The content and structure of the curriculum is coherent and enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes and to progress smoothly through their studies. (ESG 1.2)

The institution follows a systematic approach that is both planned and cyclical, regarding the curriculum development process.
Rather than considering study programs as static end products, the institution treats them as dynamic educational frameworks that evolve in response to academic advancements and societal needs.
From the discussions it emerged that this progressive approach is guided by the Vice Dean for Quality and International Cooperation, in collaboration with the Vice Rector for Quality Development, who spearhead reforms to align the curriculum with Bologna principles and broader European Higher Education trends.

Standard 4.4 If the study program leads to degrees in regulated professions, it is aligned with the EU Directives and national and international professional associations. (ESG 1.2)

ET considers that by aligning academic programs to European and global higher education standards and integrating scientific and professional research that links theory with practical applications in the local, regional and global mining sector, students are empowered to develop holistically. This approach ensures their competitiveness and prepares them to meet international benchmarks, promoting parity with advanced educational systems worldwide.

Standard 4.5 The intended learning outcomes of the student practise period are clearly specified, and effective processes are followed to ensure that learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students (if applicable). (ESG 1.2)

The study program is designed to address both national and international sectoral needs within the mining industry, aligning its learning outcomes with multiple frameworks: the National Qualifications Framework, the European Higher Education Area's Qualifications Framework, and global mining engineering standards.
To ensure industry relevance, the program's development incorporated consultation with an industrial advisory board, bridging academic objectives with professional requirements. This dual focus on local applicability and international benchmarks positions graduates to meet diverse challenges across mining sectors worldwide while maintaining rigorous academic standards. The program's structure reflects this comprehensive approach through its curriculum design, learning methodologies, and continuous engagement with industry stakeholders.

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Standard 4.6 The study program is delivered through student-centred teaching and learning. (ESG 1.3)

From discussions at meetings with students and teachers it emerged that at the beginning of each semester, instructors articulate the course's intended learning outcomes during their introductory presentations, detailing how these objectives develop over time and their specific connections to geology, mining, and industrial practice. Student attendance at lectures is required, and active participation is emphasized, with explicit encouragement for students to seek clarification during class discussions. To further support learning, faculty members hold dedicated consultation hours for at least four hours weekly, ensuring the possibility for additional guidance.

Teachers' consultation timetable and on-site discussions prove that teachers are open to discussing and resolving issues raised by students. During the site-visit the students confirmed that they have the opportunity to discuss the progress with learning outcomes with the teacher. There is also implemented the UMS system, to communicate with all students by sending them the learning materials.

Standard 4.7 The evaluation and assessment used in the study program are objective and consistent, and ensures that intended learning outcomes are achieved. (ESG 1.3)

ET found that the curriculum's learning outcomes are aligned with clearly defined summative assessment criteria, employing methods that are purposefully selected and periodically reviewed to ensure their effectiveness. Throughout the semester, these learning outcomes are continuously reinforced – not only through regular review but also by demonstrating their practical applications in real-world contexts.

At the outset of each course, instructors transparently communicate all continuous assessment procedures to students, with detailed specifications documented in the publicly accessible syllabus available through the University Management System (UMS). Student evaluation occurs progressively throughout the semester.

Standard 4.8 Learning outcomes are evaluated in terms of student workload and expressed in ECTS. (ECTS 1.2)

From the discussions it emerged that students receive enough information about the subject's workload, expected learning outcomes, and competencies to be acquired upon completion. The syllabus is structured to serve as an essential guide for the academic staff involved in course delivery.

The institution imposed a standardized format for syllabi, ensuring consistency across programs. Learning outcomes are evaluated in relation to student workload and quantified in ECTS credits, being aligned with European higher education standards.

ET recommendations:

1. *Establish a specialized e-learning platform to support full course digitization, foster interactive digital pedagogy and assessments in real time.*
2. *It may be useful to introduce a discipline for the purpose of training in specific legislation, law and legal regulations related to the field of study.*

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3. *The implementation of a dedicated academic discipline focused on research ethics and integrity would establish formal training in scholarly best practices. Such a course would systematically address ethical research conduct, proper attribution methods, and the application of major citation styles (including APA, IEEE, and Chicago) for diploma projects and academic work. By institutionalizing this training, students would develop consistent, standards-compliant documentation skills essential for rigorous scholarship. This initiative would particularly benefit final-year research projects, where meticulous citation practices are paramount to maintaining academic integrity and producing publication-quality work.*

5. STUDENTS

Standard 5.1 Clear admission policies, including requirements, criteria and processes for the study program are clearly defined and are publicly available. (ESG 1.4)

The team of experts confirms that clear admission policies (including requirements), criteria, and processes for the study program are clearly defined and are publicly available. Specifically, the requirements and criteria for admission are clear, well-defined, and publicly available on the university website. The same applies to the admission procedures. All crucial legal actions related to admission procedures are published on the university website. Admission of both national and international students is regulated appropriately. The main requirement for admission is in line with international standards and national legislation. Specifically, a high school graduation diploma or State Matura is required for admission. The university regulations clearly define the decision-making procedure concerning the admission criteria. This ensures that the selected candidates have adequate prior knowledge and competencies. As stated, the admission criteria and process are well-regulated and very transparent. Thus, the team of experts believes that the criteria and process are consistently and fairly applied to all students. No cases of discrimination were identified by the team. However, the institution could implement additional mechanisms for the systematic prevention of discrimination. Procedures for recognition periods of the study are adequately regulated by the university-level regulation. The team of experts, however, is unable to assess the practical implementation of this regulation.

Standard 5.2 Student progression data for the study program are regularly collected and analyzed. Appropriate actions are taken to ensure the student's completion of the study program. (ESG 1.4)

The team of experts notes that the student progression data is collected and analyzed. The team of experts also notes that actions, to ensure the student's completion of the study program, are sometimes taken. However, proof of a direct cycle between student progression data, actions, and their results is not provided. For example, while the discussions during the site visit demonstrate that appropriate assistance and counseling are available to students who face difficulties, this is not sufficiently supplemented by systematic monitoring of the progress of individual students. We note that the study program indeed is subject to regular monitoring of student progression rates and student completion rates. The changes/adjustments that were made to the study program, suggest that these parameters have also been considered. However,

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the institution should communicate this within the context of Plan-Do-Act-Check, as stipulated by internal regulations and KAA. The institution did not provide proof that the results of regular monitoring of student's progression are distributed to staff and students. These results are also not made publicly available. We believe that both aspects could be addressed if the monitoring of progression rates were more formalized within the QA procedures. The team of experts notes that the progression possibilities (continuation of study on a higher level or change of study at the same level) are adequately defined within the study program. This ensures that students know what they can achieve with their qualifications. The university-level regulations adequately regulate the procedures and conditions related to the transfer and recognition of qualifications granted by other institutions.

Standard 5.3 The study program ensures appropriate conditions and support for outgoing and incoming students (national and international students). (ESG 1.4)

The team of experts asserts that conditions and support for outgoing and incoming are not appropriate. On one hand, the internal regulations of the institution formally set a suitable framework that enables conditions for outgoing and incoming student mobility. This includes the regulation at the university level that enables recognition of ECTS credits. However, statistical data reveals that students consistently do not participate in outgoing mobility. Note that this data has been provided only at the specific request of the team of experts and was not included in the self-evaluation report. This data should be critically addressed within the internal quality assurance procedures and concrete measures should be taken to improve this metric The team of experts is aware of the specifics of the student body (the majority of students are employed). However, concrete analyses could identify possible mechanisms for stimulating outgoing mobility. This is specifically concerning considering that the institution successfully enables and promotes the mobility of staff, but not student mobility. In this context, the team of experts concludes that the students are insufficiently informed about the possibility of international exchange mobility programs and not sufficiently stimulated to participate in these programs. Similarly, there were no incoming mobility students that would participate in the study program. While the information on application procedures and conditions is available online in English, the team of experts identified no participation of foreign students in the program. The institution should actively address this shortcoming by analyzing drivers for the lack of foreign students and attempting to take appropriate actions. For instance, considering that the program is delivered in Albanian, this limits the interest of foreign students who do not speak the language. This could be addressed by providing selected courses in English, at least for potential incoming mobility students. The team of experts notes a lack of activity of the institution in attracting foreign students. As a result, the team is unable to assess the support provided to these students. Similarly, due to the lack of incoming and outgoing student mobility, this mobility cannot be evaluated through the analysis of feedback from students who participated in an international exchange.

Standard 5.4 The study program delivery is ensured through adequate resources for student support. The needs of a diverse student population (part-time students, mature students, students from abroad, students from under-represented and vulnerable groups, students with learning difficulties and disabilities, etc.) are taken into account. (ESG 1.6)

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Resources for student support are adequate and consider the needs of a diverse student population. A large population of students are students that are employed, in addition to their full-time studies. The team of experts commends the efforts of the institution that enable the successful study of this less conventional group of students. The resources for student support are enabled by professional, administrative, and technical staff at the faculty and the university. The team of experts deems the number of employed support staff sufficient. The support staff is appropriately qualified to adequately assist in study program delivery and provide student support. Students are well-informed about the services. All the relevant information is publicly available and easily accessible to students. Students receive appropriate guidance on study and career opportunities. Specifically, teaching staff is available to students through office hours, which are appropriately regulated, and readily available via e-mail, for any study-related questions. Additionally, the program is highly integrated with visits and active participation of prospective employers. The students emphasize a particular satisfaction with the career opportunities available to them and the support provided in that regard. Structures and procedures for appeals and complaints include both appeals regarding student knowledge assessment as well as the right for complaints and recommendations regarding the study content and institutional matters. Corresponding regulations are publicly available and easily accessible to students. The university provides students with extracurricular activities to a certain extent. While the team notes some recent advances in this regard, there is still significant room for improvement that would make university campus more welcoming to students.

ET recommendations:

1. *Enable, support, and actively stimulate participation of students in outgoing mobility.*
2. *Identify and execute actions needed to attract foreign students.*
3. *Formalize assistance procedures for students who face difficulties.*

6. RESEARCH

Standard 6.1. The study program aligns with the institution's/academic unit's mission and the research strategic goals.

The institution's stated commitment to aligning its mining engineering program with international best practices demonstrates a forward-looking approach to curriculum design. The explicit incorporation of national strategic priorities, including useful minerals, hydrocarbons, and environmental hazard mitigation, suggests responsiveness to both economic imperatives and societal needs. The inclusion of environmental, safety, and socioeconomic principles reflects contemporary mining education trends. Yet, their operationalization requires interdisciplinary teaching methods, field-based learning components and third-party sustainability auditing.

Standard 6.2. The academic staff engaged in the study program is committed and supported to achieve high-quality research work and/or professional activity.

ET recognizes the commitment of the academic staff delivering this study program and confirms they receive adequate institutional support to maintain high standards of professional activity.

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Staff maintain active engagement with sector developments through research and professional activities. This integration reinforces the relevance and currency of the educational content, fostering a cohesive connection between research outcomes and classroom instruction.

Standard 6.3 The academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is encouraged to participate in different aspects of cooperation with national and international partners.

The academic staff involved in the study program are actively encouraged to engage in collaborative research with national and international partners, as outlined in the university's research plan. However, current limitations in financial support for scientific research projects hinder full participation. To address this, the university's Strategic Research Plan includes provisions for establishing a dedicated research fund, aimed at enhancing institutional research capacity and fostering sustainable academic partnerships. The research activities are governed by the Regulation on Research Ethics and Academic Integrity.

Standard 6.4 The teaching staff engaged in the study program has a proven record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.

Academic staff actively conduct specialized research within their professional fields, ensuring direct alignment with their teaching responsibilities. Their scholarly contributions and academic advancements are primarily derived from these discipline-specific research activities, which are linked to the study program's curriculum.

However, only few teachers collaborate through EU programs like ERASMUS+ and COST, and international. A 2022/23 Ministry-funded project involved both the faculty and students, yielding published results. Staff contribute to conferences through organizational/editorial roles, demonstrating broad scholarly engagement.

ET believes that there is, however, room for improvement in the research area, by intensifying collaborations at EU and international level.

ET recommendations:

1. *While the current support possibilities sustain program quality, opportunities exist to further enhance interdisciplinary collaboration, technology integration, and adoption of international best practices. These improvements would strengthen the program's alignment with evolving global standards in mining education.*

2. *To strengthen international engagement and professional networking, all teaching staff should maintain updated profiles on globally recognized platforms (e.g., ResearchGate, ORCID, LinkedIn). This would increase visibility of expertise and research, facilitate collaboration with peers and industry partners, align with global standards for academic transparency, showcase contributions to teaching and research and improve the h-index values. Implementation could include the following: institutional guidelines for profile maintenance, workshops on effective platform use, integration with annual review processes. This approach would support the university's goals for internationalization and research impact.*

3. *Proposal for a Research Grant Support Office: To enhance competitive research funding success, we propose establishing a specialized unit dedicated to project identification, systematic tracking of open calls (EU, national, industry), real-time*

alerts for relevant funding opportunities, proposal development, technical analysis of call requirements, consortium building with qualified partners, professional grant writing support, regular training on proposal writing, database of successful applications as templates. This approach would lead to a 30-50% increase in proposal submissions, improved funding success rates, stronger international research networks. This strategic investment would position the university as more competitive for Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, and other key programs.

4. *To maximize the visibility and impact of scholarly work, fostering the development of scientific articles in partnership with international academics and specialists. Such collaborations not only broaden the dissemination of research findings but also significantly enhance citation potential through expanded professional networks and cross-border engagement.*

7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

Standard 7.1. The HEI ensures adequate premises and equipment for performing education processes and research. ESG (1.6)

The Faculty of Geosciences offers sufficient physical space, totalling approximately 6,400 m², which includes classrooms, laboratories, offices, and amphitheatres. Classrooms and laboratories are equipped with projectors, computers, internet access, and other teaching tools, ensuring a contemporary learning environment. The software room is equipped with licensed geoscience-related software (e.g., ArcGIS, RockWork, MinePlan 3D, NetProMine), which supports applied digital learning in the field. The Faculty includes dedicated laboratories for physics, chemistry, informatics, geomechanics, and microscopy, allowing for practical training across foundational and specialized courses. Facilities are adapted for students with special needs, including ramps, elevators, designated parking, and accessibility in amphitheaters. Academic and administrative staff are equipped with modern IT equipment, including computers, printers, and internet access.

During the visit laboratories were observed to be empty during the expert visit, suggesting underutilization and a possible disconnect between facility availability and academic scheduling or practice-based instruction. Despite reports of completed infrastructure, students stated that the dormitory and canteen were not operational, limiting access to essential student services and affecting student life. There is no documented strategy for ongoing investment in laboratory equipment, which may risk obsolescence and limit future academic and research capabilities.

Standard 7.2 The HEI ensures adequate library resources for study program. (ESG 1.6)

Students have access to the UIBM library, which features a modern study hall for 250 students, equipped with computers and reading spaces. A digital book management system has been developed, enabling cataloguing, tracking of loans/returns, and remote access to information on book availability. FGS students and staff currently benefit from access to the EBSCO digital library, supported by the Erasmus+ Research Cult project, which provides online academic materials and 24/7 internet access. The library also has regulations and usage procedures clearly outlined, ensuring structured and fair use by all users.

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During the visit, the ET observed that the University does not provide access to major international academic databases, such as Web of Science or Scopus, which limits the ability of academic staff and students to carry out high quality research or to access the most recent global publications. Long-term access to the EBSCO library is uncertain, as it currently relies on external project funding and is not yet guaranteed through internal university resources. The majority of literature is in Albanian, limiting students' exposure to international academic content and literature.

Standard 7.3 The study program is appropriately funded to deliver its intended educational activities and research. (ESG 1.6)

The Faculty of Geosciences receives funding through Kosovo's state budget, coordinated by the Ministry of Finance and MESTI, with multi-year allocations ensuring financial stability. A percentage of student tuition fees is allocated to the faculty to improve the quality of education and cover incidental costs. The faculty also participates in internationally funded projects (e.g., HERAS+, Erasmus+), which help improve infrastructure and inclusion efforts.

The SER does not indicate how much funding is allocated directly to the Mining BSc program, nor are the principles for allocating funds between programmes and faculties clear. There is no financial strategy for equipment investment or research development, which could undermine future academic growth and innovation. Some services, including access to digital libraries, are dependent on temporary project-based funding, creating uncertainty about continuity once projects end.

ET recommendations:

1. *Introduce mandatory practical sessions and clear laboratory timetables within the curriculum to ensure consistent student presence and use of laboratories. This will help bridge the gap between available infrastructure and actual academic engagement.*

2. *Enrich library resources by acquiring more literature in English and other widely used academic languages, ensuring broader access to international scientific knowledge, especially for research and advanced-level studies.*

3. *Create and implement internal guidelines that detail how funds are allocated to each study program, including the BSc in Mining. This would improve transparency and help align financial resources more closely with specific program needs.*

4. *Allocate funding and institutional support to secure subscriptions to international academic databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and SpringerLink. Access to these platforms is crucial for high-quality teaching, up-to-date research, and academic publishing.*

5. *To start operating the dormitory and canteen, which, although completed, remain unused.*

FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT TEAM

1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION	Substantially compliant
2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT	Substantially compliant
3. ACADEMIC STAFF *Mandatory	Substantially compliant
4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT	Fully compliant
5. STUDENTS	Substantially compliant
6. RESEARCH	Substantially compliant
7.INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES *Mandatory	Substantially compliant
Overall Compliance	**Substantially compliant**

OVERALL EVALUATION AND JUDGMENTS OF THE ET

Based on the expert team's assessment and the compliance level determined as **Substantially compliant**, the final decision is **positive**.

Accreditation duration: **three (3) Years**

Approved student quota: **20 Students**

Expert Team

Chair
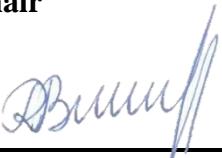
(Signature)	Regita BENDIKIENĖ	06 06 2025
	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

(Signature)	Ana Cornelia BADEA	06 06 2025
	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

Ervin REMS

		06 06 2025
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