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UNIVERSITY "ISA BOLETINI" IN MITROVICA

SUSTAINABLE MINING DEVELOPMENT MSc

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: Sustainable Mining Development (MSc)*
- *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'*

- *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*
- *two examples of admission decisions in which a student is conditionally admitted to an MSc program, with the condition being that the student must pass specific additional exams before full admission. Each example should clearly state the decision made (i.e. conditional admission based on passing exams) and specify which exams the student is required to pass as part of the admission condition.*

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)*

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Site visit on (hybrid):	*29-30 April 2025*
Expert Team:	*Mrs. Regita Bendikiene* *Mrs. Badea Ana-Cornelia* *Mr. Ervin Rems*
Coordinators of the KAA:	*Milot Hasangjekaj, 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*	***Mining*** *Ahmet Tmava* *Nazmi Hasi* *Gani Maliqi* *Frasher Brahimaj* *Astrit Shala* *Ujmir Uka* *Ariana Sadiku* *Blerina Hasani* ***Geology*** *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*	*Sylejman Hyseni* *Bedri Durmishaj*

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	Mineral Deposits, MSc	
10:10 – 10:55	*Meeting with students*	***Mining*** *Arjanit Ademi* *Leonard Shala* *Drinor Shefkiu* *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 Sustainable Mining Development study program at the Faculty of Geosciences, University of Mitrovica "Isa Boletini," offers Master level education designed to prepare students with a strong foundation in mining sciences through contemporary curricula, scientific achievements, and practical field applications. The program is aligned with the Mining Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo and developed based on labor market research, addressing the current and projected needs of the mining sector both locally and globally. Graduates are equipped for immediate integration into the mining-research industry, environmental institutions, designresearch centers, and academia, with strong employment potential in national and international markets.

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PROGRAMME EVALUATION

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)

It is stated in SER that the study program Sustainable Mining Development MSc aligns with the higher education institution's mission and strategic goals by emphasizing contemporary education, research, and addressing national and global mining issues. However, while the programme reflects the broader objectives of the authority, it is not clearly defined in terms of specific implementation and regular updating in response to the changing needs of society and industry, which may affect its ability to respond to real-time changes in the field.

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 website structure of the Faculty of Geosciences supports transparency by making regulations, schedules, and relevant forms publicly accessible, which aligns with standards on academic integrity and freedom. However, while making documents available is a positive step, the effectiveness of these measures depends on how actively students and staff engage with their content – simply publishing them does not guarantee awareness or compliance with ethics policies.

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 study program Sustainable Mining Development MSc demonstrates a comprehensive approach to collecting and analysing information through engagement with internal and external stakeholders, including industry and alumni, which supports effective program management and alignment with labour market needs. However, while this process looks credible on paper, its real impact depends on how consistently this information is analysed and whether the results and updates are fully transparent and accessible to the public, not just to institution administration.

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 program MSc Sustainable Mining Development at Faculty of Geosciences demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting teaching, learning, research and service to the community through a wide range of activities, partnerships and infrastructure development, including administrative structures such as the Institute of the Faculty of Geosciences and the use of the University Management System (UMS). However, while the scope of the initiatives is

commendable, the actual adequacy and effectiveness of administrative support should be critically assessed - in particular whether staff capacity, funding and responsiveness adequately respond to the growing needs of internationalisation, research and student-centred learning.

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. *Strengthen administrative support by increasing the number of qualified personnel dedicated to academic and research functions, and ensure they receive continuous training to effectively manage responsibilities related to international collaboration, research administration, and student services.*
2. *Establish a centralized academic support unit within the Faculty to coordinate teaching, learning, and research activities, streamline communication, and assist staff and students with curriculum development, mobility programs, and grant-related processes.*
3. *Enhance digital infrastructure by upgrading and integrating tools within the University Management System (UMS) to improve course delivery, student feedback, research tracking, and communication, ensuring system usability and reliability at all levels.*
4. *Implement regular feedback mechanisms by establishing structured channels such as surveys and focus groups for students and staff, aimed at evaluating administrative support services and informing targeted improvements based on identified needs.*
5. *Develop a long-term strategic support plan that aligns administrative services with the Faculty's goals by anticipating future needs in teaching innovation, internationalization, and research growth, including provisions for budget allocation and infrastructure development.*
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)

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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 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

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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 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

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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.

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 of teaching staff is conducted through transparent and competitive procedures, published publicly with clear criteria. The process is aligned with national legislation (MEST, Labour Law), the UIBM Statute, and internal regulations. Employment contracts and a code of ethics are provided to all selected candidates. The SER does not specifically mention diversity, equity, or active efforts to attract high-performing or internationally recognized employees.

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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)

Over 70% of staff are full-time, with doctoral qualifications relevant to the field. The study program is led by a designated PhD holder per KAA accreditation criteria. Program meets the standard of 1 full-time PhD-qualified staff per 60 ECTS, in line with national accreditation requirements.
ET observed that despite meeting quantitative requirements, staff engagement in international academic and research activities is limited. Few publications in internationally indexed journals (e.g., WoS, Scopus); current academic impact is low in visibility and citation. Also academic staff's participation in international mobility programs (Erasmus+) is minimal.

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)

Advancement and reappointment are regulated based on transparent criteria, including scientific, research, and professional activity. Regular evaluations are conducted through student feedback, self-assessment, and supervisor monitoring. Evaluation outcomes are digitized and used in reporting and decision-making.
ET noted that the evaluation of excellence is still largely based on quantitative local activity, not international benchmarks. Staff promotions are not strongly linked to international publications or teaching innovation. Didactic competence and pedagogical improvements are not robustly included in promotion metrics.

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)

The academic staff have received certification in teaching through collaboration with the Center for Excellence in Teaching (basic and advanced levels). There is a high flexibility in workload scheduling to support development and research. External experts are engaged for knowledge sharing, and participation in roundtables and seminars is encouraged.
Even though training exists, it is limited in scope and mostly local, advanced pedagogical skills and international teaching standards are not prioritized. Even though scientific development is encouraged, actual research output and mobility remain underdeveloped. There is no clear strategy or funding to support international conference attendance or research visits.

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)

External associates are invited from industry and academia, particularly retired professors and field experts. Their role is valuable in bridging theory with practice and enriching the curriculum.

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However, ET observed that there is no formal system for evaluating the impact or effectiveness of external lecturers. Their involvement appears limited, only partially integrating into the long-term goals of the program or quality assurance mechanisms.

ET recommendations:

1. *Set specific research output targets linked to academic advancement (e.g., at least one publication in WoS or Scopus every two years).*
2. *Develop a mobility strategy to promote and support participation in Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, and bilateral academic exchange programs.*
3. *Set institutional goals such as: "Each academic staff member should participate in at least one international mobility or project within a 3-year period."*
4. *Make didactic training and classroom innovation a requirement for promotion and annual evaluation*
5. *Invite international pedagogical experts to offer intensive teaching workshops and certifications tailored to higher education*
6. *Encourage staff to present papers at recognized international venues, not only local ones, and provide awards or recognition for accepted papers.*

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 confirms that academic staff are systematically supported in reviewing and updating their syllabi in accordance with institutional procedures, ensuring all course materials maintain clearly defined learning outcomes. The syllabi demonstrate rigorous alignment with both pedagogical standards and industry requirements, reflecting a structured approach to curriculum quality assurance.
Furthermore, the Sustainable Mining Development program is showing a strong institutional alignment, having been developed in direct accordance with UIBM's strategic mission and the The Sustainable Mining Development program's six core competencies, from sustainable practices to technical software use, directly advance institutional goals of industry-aligned education and innovation. Course designs systematically build these outcomes, as verified by curriculum documentation.

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 study program maintains full alignment with both the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education(EQF), adhering to the three established qualification cycles and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), where one academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS credits. Specifically designed to meet Level 7 requirements of the NQF, the program simultaneously fulfills all

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essential standards of the European Framework, ensuring its educational rigor and international compatibility.
The approach ensures that the program's learning outcomes remain aligned with both national and European qualification frameworks while meeting evolving industry requirements.

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's curriculum development process follows a planned, cyclical approach that treats study programs as dynamic frameworks evolving alongside academic progress and societal changes.
Most courses require lecture/exercise attendance, with active participation encouraged. Faculty provides weekly consultations (4+ hours). Students undergo continuous assessment via tests, seminars, fieldwork, and projects, using regularly reviewed criteria aligned with learning outcomes.

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)

The ET's thorough evaluation confirms the institution's master program exemplifies best practices in aligning academic rigor with professional preparation. By integrating international education standards and industry requirements, the curriculum achieves a balance between theoretical depth and practical relevance that distinguishes it as a regional leader in mining education.
The program demonstrates compliance with the quality frameworks like the European Qualifications Framework, EUR-ACE engineering standards, and UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education. Students engage simultaneously with core scientific principles, environmental sustainability challenges, project management considerations occurring across the mining sector.
The program's successful integration of academic standards with professional preparation offers a replicable model for mining education across comparable geoeconomic contexts, with appropriate adaptations to local mineral profiles and workforce needs.
ET considers that this comprehensive approach produces graduates who are not just technically proficient but equipped to lead the mining sector's transition toward more sustainable and technologically advanced practices.

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)

Not applicable

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

ET considers that the faculty provides multiple student centered support mechanisms to ensure student success, like assistance during lectures, or meeting with professors during designated

consultation hours. These sessions serve both to guide underperforming students and to offer targeted academic support to those in need, highlighting the faculty's commitment to inclusive education and student development.
The program emphasizes formative feedback throughout all learning activities - from numerical problem-solving exercises to mine site simulations - ensuring assessment actively supports the learning process. Summative evaluations incorporate professional-standard deliverables including technical reports, research papers, and operational case analyses. All assessment methods align with clearly defined competency rubrics that are regularly reviewed in consultation with industry partners, maintaining rigorous academic standards while ensuring professional relevance.

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)

The MSc Sustainable Mining Development Program has established an integrated framework for evaluating student progress and providing academic guidance. The program's assessment methodology combines continuous monitoring of learning outcomes with systematic quality enhancement, ensuring students develop both theoretical knowledge and professional competencies across the aspects of sustainable mining education.
Through structured interactions between faculty and students, the program maintains an ongoing dialogue about learning objectives and their achievement. This collaborative approach informs regular improvements to both individual courses and the overall curriculum. Professors are required to make themselves available for student consultations for at least four hours each week, offering dedicated support for academic work ranging from research projects to thesis development.
A key feature of the assessment process is the guaranteed opportunity for students to review their graded examinations and colloquia within three days of results being published, ensuring transparency and timely feedback.
ET confirms that this well-structured system provides consistent academic guidance while maintaining rigorous evaluation standards, noting particularly its implementation of recommendations from previous review cycles. By combining robust assessment practices with comprehensive student support, the program creates an optimal learning environment that aligns fully with European standards for higher education.
The framework demonstrates the program's commitment to educational excellence through its balanced focus on evaluation, feedback quality, and continuous improvement based on both academic standards and professional requirements in the sustainable mining sector.

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

The university supports faculty in continuously reviewing and refining their course syllabi according to established institutional guidelines. These syllabi serve as detailed roadmaps for student learning, clearly outlining course objectives, expected outcomes, workload requirements, instructional approaches, and assessment criteria.

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By providing this comprehensive information, syllabi enable students to make informed decisions about their course selections while preparing them for the academic expectations ahead.
Students benefit from understanding both the competencies they will develop and the level of commitment required to succeed in each course, based on the workload expressed in ECTS. The syllabus development process reflects the institution's commitment to transparency in teaching and learning, ensuring alignment between faculty expectations and student preparedness. Through regular updates and revisions, syllabi maintain their relevance and effectiveness as foundational tools for academic planning and achievement.
ET sees as a good point the course selection while clarifying both what students can expect from the course and what will be expected of them, including the competencies to be gained and the necessary time investment for master the subject.

ET recommendations:

1. *To sustain and elevate the program's excellence, we recommend advancing industry collaboration through deeper integration of sector professionals in course instruction while introducing specialized micro-credentials within the MSc framework. These focused certifications in emerging fields like green mining technologies, AI-driven mineral exploration, or circular economy applications in extractive industries would equip graduates with cutting-edge, niche competencies that align with global mining sector evolution. This dual approach of enhanced practitioner involvement and modular credentialing would further bridge academic preparation with industry demands, future-proofing both student careers and the program's competitive edge.*
2. *Establish a specialized e-learning platform to support full course digitization, foster interactive digital pedagogy and assessments in real time.*

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 the admission procedure 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 bachelor's degree diploma is required for admission. The bachelor's degree has to be obtained in the field that is suitable for continuation on the master's level of the study program. Candidates with bachelor's degree diplomas from other fields can be admitted to the program, provided they pass additional exams before admission to the program. The team of experts reviewed several such examples and believes that the content and the scope of such examination are appropriate. This is integrated into a well-defined decision-making procedure about the admission criteria. 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, 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 generally do not participate in outgoing mobility programs. The only exception is one student in 2023-2024. Note that this data has been provided only at the specific request of the team of experts and was not included in the selfevaluation 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

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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)

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:

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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 faculty's research strategy combines prioritized scientific planning, an institutional research fund, and an annual conference to drive innovation in geosciences while ensuring sustainable funding and knowledge exchange.
The university's strategic research plan includes creating a dedicated research fund to enhance institutional research capabilities. This fund is foreseen to be financed through the commercialization of services provided by academic units established under the strategic plan.
The Faculty of Geosciences has its Research Institute, which has implemented open access policies for research infrastructure in line with European best practices, being active in working to train and prepare academic staff for participation in international research programs, including Erasmus+, COST actions, and Horizon Europe projects.
Taking all these aspects into account, ET considers that the study program aligns with the institutional mission and the research strategic goals.

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.

Research forms an intrinsic component of the academic activities within master program. The current faculty members bring teaching and research experience to the program, as evidenced by their scientific publications and active participation in both domestic and international conferences. This research foundation represents one of the program's basis in scientific investigation and scholarly work.

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 university encourages academic staff to pursue collaborative research with national and international partners as a key component of its research strategy. While such partnerships represent a strategic priority, their full potential remains constrained by current limitations in research funding.
To address these financial challenges, the university's Strategic Research Plan proposes establishing a dedicated research fund. This initiative aims to strengthen institutional research capacity while fostering long-term academic partnerships through sustainable funding mechanisms.
All research activities operate within the framework established by the Regulation on Research Ethics and Academic Integrity.
ET considers that the integration of these elements: collaborative opportunities, enhanced funding structures, and robust ethical governance, creates a comprehensive system designed to support research.

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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.

The academic staff's career progression reflects an established system where promotion to senior ranks consistently requires demonstrated research excellence over time, fully aligning with Standard 3.1's emphasis on research-based career advancement. Documentation in the SER confirms the faculty members participation in scientific conferences at both national and international levels, including contributions to organizational and editorial committees. While acknowledging these strengths, ET has identified opportunities for enhanced research development, particularly through expanded collaboration within EU frameworks and broader international partnerships. This strategic focus would further elevate the institution's research profile while maintaining its commitment to rigorous promotion standards based on scholarly achievement.

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.*

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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 (FG) has a total physical space of approximately 6,400 m², which includes classrooms, laboratories, offices, and other supporting infrastructure sufficient to support the teaching and learning needs of all study programs. Laboratories and classrooms are equipped with contemporary tools such as projectors, computers, internet access, and specialized licensed software relevant to geosciences (e.g., ArcGIS, RockWork, MinePlan 3D). The institution has developed modern sports fields, a library, and digital learning platforms (UMS) that enhance communication and the learning process. The software lab and computer facilities are fully functional and aligned with course requirements. Infrastructure accommodates students with special needs, including accessibility features such as ramps, elevators, and adapted amphitheatres.
During the expert visit, laboratories were found to be empty, raising concerns about whether practical exercises are being actively integrated into the curriculum. Despite the construction of the dormitory and canteen, these facilities are not yet operational, impacting student welfare and campus life. There is no strategic plan in place for continuous investment or upgrading of equipment, potentially limiting future readiness and technological advancement. Standard 7.2 The HEI ensures adequate library resources for study program. (ESG 1.6)

The FG students have access to a modern university library with space for 250 students and approximately 30 computers. A new library management system allows for digital cataloguing and remote access, which is planned to be expanded further in the future. Students and staff currently use the EBSCO online library, accessed via the Erasmus+ Research Cult project, with plans for institutional funding to maintain access post-project.
During the visit, the ET noted the lack of access to leading international scientific databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, ScienceDirect or SpringerLink, which limits the availability of high quality peer-reviewed literature for advanced academic and scientific work. The majority of the library materials are in Albanian, which may limit exposure to broader international scientific discourse and resources, especially in technical and scientific fields. There is no clear strategy to systematically expand or diversify the library's physical and digital collections to better support research and international academic engagement.

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

The University of Mitrovica "Isa Boletini" (UIBM) receives public funding from the Government of Kosovo, with budget projections secured for 2024 and forecasted through 2027, ensuring a degree of financial sustainability. The Faculty of Geosciences benefits from a percentage of student tuition fees, which can be used to improve teaching quality and cover unforeseen expenses. The FG management is involved in the broader university-level financial planning processes.

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ET noted that the Faculty does not have autonomy in financial planning and management, as all financial decisions are centralized at the university level. It is unclear how much funding is allocated specifically to the MSc Sustainable Mining program, and there is no transparency regarding the principles or criteria used for fund distribution across programs. There is no dedicated funding mechanism or long-term investment strategy for laboratory equipment, infrastructure upgrades, or research activities at the program level.

ET recommendations:

1. *Establish institutional subscriptions to key international databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and other relevant repositories to ensure access to high-quality, peer-reviewed research materials.*
2. *Develop and implement a strategic plan for the continuous upgrade of equipment and facilities.*
3. *Ensure the operationalization of the student dormitory and canteen facilities to meet the needs of students.*
4. *Consider granting faculties or departments more financial autonomy to manage and allocate resources specific to their needs, particularly in terms of laboratory equipment, research funding, and infrastructure maintenance.*

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: **10 Students**

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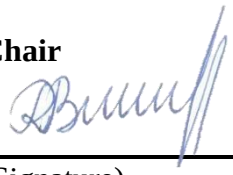
Expert Team

Chair



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

(Signature)

Member

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

(Signature)

Member

Ervin REMS

06 06 2025

(Date)

(Signature) (Print Name)

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