**UNIVERSITY OF MITROVICA "ISA BOLETINI"**

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**GUIDELINE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MITROVICA "ISA BOLETINI"**

**Mitrovica, 2020**

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1. **General information**

On 06.03.2013 the Government of the Republic of Kosovo established the Public University of Mitrovica, while on 31 May, 2013 the Assembly of Kosovo ratified the decision. Based on the Provisional Statute, approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, within the University of Mitrovica "Isa Boletini" (UMIB) there are six faculties: Faculty of Geosciences (FGS), Faculty of Food Technology (FFT), Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering (FMCE), Faculty of Law (FL), Faculty of Economics (FE) and Faculty of Education (FE).

Within these faculties, the total number of programs accredited in UMIB until September 2019 is 20 programs within two levels: Bachelor and Master. The first programs accredited by KAA are: Faculty of Geosciences and Technology, as well as the Faculty of Applied Technical Sciences in 2012, which have been part of the University of Prishtina. In 2014, we had institutional accreditation, where the University of Mitrovica was accredited with 23 programs within 6 faculties. Then, in 2017, the University of Mitrovica with decision number Ref: 535/17 dated 6.7.2017, was re-accredited at the institutional level for the period of one year, from 1 October 2017 until 30 September 2018 and 11 programs were re-accredited. Then, with the decision number Ref.468 / 18D dated 18.5.2018, the period of institutional accreditation of the University of Mitrovica "Isa Boletini" was extended, for the period of one year, 1 October 2018 until 30 September 2019 and the accreditation period was extended for another year by the SCQ for 11 other programs. In addition, by the same decision in 2019, nine other programs have been accredited in bachelor and master studies at the University of Mitrovica "Isa Boletini", until 30. 09. 2022.

* 1. **The legal basis of the quality assurance process in UMIB:**

UMIB bases its quality assurance process on its Statute, the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo, the Regulation on Quality Assurance and Evaluation, and the Instructions issued by the KAA. In addition, UMIB, takes as a key reference the NQF, the instructions provided by ENQA, as well as the Bologna process, according to which:

1. HEIs should have policies and procedures for quality assurance and standards for the programs offered and diplomas awarded through a continuous process of quality improvement.
2. Institutions should have formal structures for periodic evaluation of their programs.
3. Students should be graded according to criteria and procedures applied consistently.
4. Institutions should provide qualified and competent staff for the subjects and they should be accessible during the evaluation process and should be included in the comments on evaluation.
5. Institutions should provide adequate resources and support for students for each program.
6. Institutions must ensure that they collect, analyze and use relevant information for effective management.
7. Institutions should regularly publish objective information on programs and diplomas.
	1. **Principles and values on which the UMIB quality is based**

Quality assurance in UMIB is based on principles and values such as:

1. Responsibility;
2. Transparency;
3. Accountability;
4. Academic integrity;
5. Continuous improvement;
6. Inclusiveness.

The notion of quality culture is understood as the composition of two separate groups of elements: "shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitment to quality" and "a structural / managerial element with defined processes that enhance quality and aim to coordinate efforts" (EUA, 2006). As we can see, many elements are similar to an organization's cultural approach.

As we can see, quality culture is a complex structure that encompasses all internal actors and many internal processes. The most important parts of the whole process are communication, trust and participation - the main elements of the educational process (formal or informal). Building such a culture requires many years of work and great commitment from everyone.

The quality culture at UMIB dates back to the last century, because the foundations of higher education in Mitrovica were laid with the opening of the Technical High School in 1961. In 1970, within the Technical Faculty, the departments of Mining, Technology and Metallurgy were opened, initially in Mitrovica, the school year 1970/71, and then continued in Prishtina until the establishment of the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy in Mitrovica in 1974. The Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy in Mitrovica was established by the Law on the Establishment of the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy by the Assembly of Kosovo on 22 July 1974. In the founding year the studies were organized in the following departments: Mining, Technology and Metallurgy, and in the school year 1980/81 the department of Geology was opened. The establishment of the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy was of great importance for the whole of Kosovo. It was the “Trepça” Mining and Metallurgical Plant that was in great need of engineering staff from the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy. The graduates from the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy and the Technical High School have taken their deserved place in the Kosovo Power Plant, and the entire industry and economy of Kosovo.

Based on these faculties and based on the tradition of over 60 years of higher education in Mitrovica, on 06.03.2013 the Government of the Republic of Kosovo established the Public University of Mitrovica "Isa Boletini".

Quality culture is a component that includes all the principles within it. Quality culture at UMIB depends on external and internal quality assurance processes. Legal aspects, KAA guidelines, national strategies for higher education, as well as European space rules, as external factors have a direct impact on quality culture. Internal factors on which the quality culture in UMIB is based are the internal quality measurement processes carried out by the QAO, the policies at the institutional level and their supervision that is made possible by the CCQAA, as well as by the commitment of the senior management of UMIB and the University Senate.

1. **Quality assurance structure**

**2.1 Internal quality assurance**

The University of Mitrovica Isa Boletini has a number of mechanisms and instruments that play a very important role in quality assurance.

At UMIB the internal quality assurance as mentioned above is done by several mechanisms and includes a wide range of stakeholders. Internal quality assurance at UMIB includes:

1. Students;
2. Academic staff;
3. Administrative staff;
4. Business and other stakeholders from the labor market;
5. Management, and,

 f) UMIB graduates.

The bodies of UMIB that deal with quality assurance are:

**UMIB Senate**, which is the body that approves all policies related to quality assurance. The UMIB Rector, who is responsible for providing the necessary financial support to all quality assurance bodies and mechanisms, accepts recommendations from the quality Office and turns them into development policies, guides and oversees the work of the Vice rector for quality, as well as appoints the central Coordinator for academic development. The vice rector for quality development manages the academic part of quality management; manages the external quality process in the accreditation process, manages ex officio with the CCQAA, and implements quality development policies set by the Rector and the Senate. Dean of the Academic Unit: appoints the quality coordinator in the academic unit; organizes meetings with academic staff to discuss with each of them the findings from quality measurement questionnaires; manages the process of accreditation and re-accreditation of programs; presents on the agenda of the faculty council issues related to quality assurance; organizes discussions on quality with academic staff, administrative staff and students. Provides cooperation agreements and opens the faculty towards projects related to increase in quality. Council of academic units: holds regular monthly meetings to discuss internal quality; approves new programs and those under re-evaluation; approves self-assessment reports.

At UMIB, the main bodies that manage the quality assurance process are:

1. Central commission for quality assurance and evaluation (CCQAE);
2. Quality assurance office (QAO);
3. Quality coordinators in academic units.

**2.2 Central commission for quality assurance and evaluation (CCQAE)**

CCQAE is the main body in UMIB which deals with the quality assurance process. This commission is an advisory body to the UMIB Senate on quality issues. CCQAE members are proposed by the Rector and approved by the UMIB Senate for a 4-year term. After the end of this term, at least 1/3 of the members of the CCQAE must continue to be part of it in order to ensure continuity in the work of the Commission.

**Composition of CCQAE**

CCQAE in its composition provides a comprehensive inclusion as follows:

1. Vice rector for quality;
2. Quality assurance officer;
3. Up to 6 representatives of academic staff from different academic units;
4. 1 student representative.

**Procedures for electing members:**

1. Vice Rector for quality (ex-officio);
2. The Rector proposes two members (1 academic, 1 administrative);
3. A student representative delegated by student organizations;
4. The head of the Quality assurance office at the central level is automatically appointed (ex-officio);
5. The head of the Quality Assurance Office of the academic unit is automatically appointed (ex-officio);
6. At the beginning of each academic year, in its first session the commission e lects the chairman of the commission. The chairman is elected by a majority vote of the members of the commission. The task of the chairman of the commission is to organize the work of the commission.

**Duties of CCQAE**

CCQAE has the duty to:

1. design a guide for quality assurance assessment activities;
2. design instruments for qualitative and quantitative assessment;
3. draft and review assessment / self-assessment reports;
4. review self-assessment reports for institutional and program accreditation;
5. review self-assessment reports for institutional re-accreditation and programs related to the level of addressing issues raised by the KAA;
6. approve the members of the working groups for the realization of the assessments as needed;
7. manage the process of publishing evaluation reports.

**2.3 Quality Assurance Office (QAO)**

The UMIB quality assurance office is an independent office that reports directly to the UMIB Rector only. This office is committed to raising the quality of UMIB by implementing the entire institutional policy. The office consists of quality officials, recruited through a public competition. Quality officials at QAO are not part of UMIB's academic staff. The Office takes care of quality measurement, through all instruments of the instrument package in UMIB. The Office drafts reports with findings and recommendations for each questionnaire developed, and sends it to the Rector of UMIB. In addition, the office sends the data from the questionnaires to the Dean of the academic unit in order to plan for the development of the academic staff and continuous improvement.

The office has the mission that ensures a quality level of teaching, learning, study programs, research and administration of UMIB through the implementation and continuous improvement of quality and ensure that the mechanisms and procedures for achieving quality are functional. Fulfilling this mission is in line with the mission of the institution and serves to fulfill its vision to be the best public university in the country and the region, and to prepare staff that will contribute to the development of the local and global community, in specific areas of study.

**The tasks of QAO are:**

* To provide professional and administrative support and management, guidance and support for quality assurance at all levels of the institution and assist in the organization of institutional accreditation and study programs;
* To formulate strategies, policies, mechanisms, procedures and various practices for assurance and advancement of academic quality in the institution;
* To promote the culture of quality within the institution;
* To advise on the approval and development of study modules and programs;
* To develop strategies and assist in the advancement of teaching and learning;
* To coordinate the agenda of activities with quality coordinators at the level of study areas;
* To prepare all documents related to accreditation or re-accreditation, various internal evaluation reports in collaboration with all faculties and coordinate visits of foreign experts for accreditation or re-accreditation.

The quality assurance office has a senior quality officer who is also the manager of the office, and other officials. The duties of the senior official of the QAO are:

1. Provides administrative and professional support for quality assurance procedures and mechanisms at UMIB;
2. Distributes questionnaires for academic, administrative and student staff, analyzes data collected through quality assurance mechanisms, and based on questionnaire analysis drafts reports on the academic and administrative services provided by UMIB;
3. Provides administrative and professional support for the institutional accreditation process and programs at the University and provides technical support to the UMIB quality assurance commission;
4. Controls the applications of the University according to the checklist of the University, the accreditation agency and the relevant legal acts;
5. Monitors the progress of University applications from preparation to application to implementation of recommendations and maintains and reviews the files of the accreditation process and prepares relevant reports and analyses;
6. Participates in the drafting of materials and documents related to scientific research and coordinates their implementation (science strategy, brochures, etc.);
7. Provides appropriate advice, guidance and services to academic staff in the development of research projects (e.g. information on donor funds, legal issues, possible collaborations with the business community, etc.);
8. Serves as a contact person at UMIB for scientific research projects, such as ERASMUS +, Horizon 2020, performs other tasks assigned to him by the supervisory officer.

**2.4 Quality Coordinator of the academic unit**

1. The quality coordinator of the academic unit is appointed by the Dean of the unit and he/she is directly accountable only to the Dean. Quality coordinator at the level of academic units: Provides guidance to academic staff and students regarding the practical and academic aspects of ECTS implementation; Instructs the relevant department and the study commission of the academic unit during the accreditation / re-accreditation process to design / review study programs; In cooperation with the management of the academic unit, takes care and monitors the involvement of all stakeholders (academic staff, students, alumni, businesses or members of the Advisory Board) in drafting / reviewing study programs; Provides support to the process of evaluating subjects and teachers, the process of self-assessment of academic staff, the process of evaluation of administrative staff, meetings of faculty councils, regular meetings of academic staff in order to discuss issues of interest in teaching, learning or research, Organizes information sessions for academic staff and students regarding the Bologna process; In cooperation with the management of the academic unit organizes data and information related to the scientific / artistic activity in the academic unit (recording of scientific works, artistic performance, professional and scientific projects); In cooperation with the official for international cooperation, he/she advises the management and students of the academic unit regarding the realization of student mobility - "Learning Agreement" (in accordance with the decision of the academic unit, explains the academic procedures of credit recognition, agreement, transcript of notes, monitoring before and after mobility, etc.)

**His/her main duties and responsibilities are:**

1. Works in close consultation with the Dean, the QAO and the vice-rector for quality;
2. Acts as a supporter of quality assurance within the faculty;
3. Develops, directs, plans and offers strategy as well as quality processes;
4. Provides services and assistance for the implementation of best practices and initiatives;
5. Advises on the approval and development of study modules and programs;
6. Supports implementation for quality improvement strategies;
7. Provides support for the evaluation of the Group of External Evaluation Experts and for the accreditation process;
8. Is responsible for organizing and collecting questionnaires for students and academic staff;
9. Prepares the feedback on the fulfillment of the recommendations for the respective faculty, from the evaluation process, written in the form of an improvement plan and discusses and regulates it in cooperation with QAO.
10. **Internal quality assurance process**

Internal quality assurance at UMIB includes:

1. Students;
2. Academic staff;
3. Administrative staff;
4. Business and other stakeholders from the labor market;
5. Management, and,
6. UMIB graduates.

The internal quality assurance policy is defined by the CCQAE, and implemented by CCQAE and QAO.

Internal quality assurance is based on:

1. Planning;
2. Measurement;
3. Management;
4. Execution; and,
5. Improvement.

All of this is made possible only after all the necessary information has been collected. The information collection process is managed by CCQAE. The information is collected from these instruments (to harmonize with the package of instruments):

1. Self-assessment reports from the academic and administrative units of UMIB, which aim to measure:
* background, number of students;
* the number of employees and their CVs;
* data on facility and infrastructure;
* programs / courses;
* academic / research publications and activities;
* list of internal and external partners.
1. questionnaires designed by CCQAE and implemented by QAO together with quality coordinators in academic units. The following questionnaires are developed as follows:
* Questionnaire with students on the learning process for each professor and assistant. This questionnaire is conducted twice a year, at the end of each semester.
* Questionnaire with students to evaluate administrative and managerial services at UMIB. This questionnaire is conducted twice a year, at the end of each semester.
* Questionnaire with academic staff on processes developed at UMIB. This questionnaire is conducted once a year, at the end of each academic year.
* Self-assessment of academic staff. This questionnaire is conducted at the end of each semester to see the assessment that professors and assistants have of their performance.
* The questionnaire with the administrative staff, which is conducted once a year, at the end of each academic year to see their impression of their performance, as well as to get familiar with the needs that arise in their work.
* The questionnaire with the management of UMIB, the central one and that of the academic units, to measure their performance, and the performance of the academic staff and to get acquainted with the needs that appear during their work. This questionnaire is conducted once a year, at the end of the academic year.
* Questionnaire with business and community. This questionnaire aims to see the needs of business and the community, to enable UMIB to provide new programs in line with the labor market, as well as to review existing programs. This questionnaire is conducted once a year, at the end of the academic year, respectively at the beginning of the new academic year.
* The questionnaires with UMIB - ALUMNI graduates are conducted once a year, at the end of each academic year, to measure the fact that their studies have been in line with their workplace, and to receive suggestions for changes in programs. of studying and initiating new programs.

**Data collection and storage**

Following the completion of any type of internal quality assurance procedure, the QAO draws up a summary report and makes it public on the UMIB website. The report should be a summary of the facts and their interpretation. The report also contains examples of questionnaires and methodology used to gather and analyze information. It must be understandable. Reports are made after each evaluation phase, and the general report is made after the collection of evaluation reports of student opinions, teachers' opinion, and archival documents. The report contains the general parts for the university and the part of the special reports for the academic and administrative units. QAO shares detailed reports with the Rector of UMIB, CCQAE, Deans of academic units and quality coordinators in academic Units.

**Improvement process**

Following the drafting of the reports, UMIB and the academic units improve the areas for which the assessment has turned out to be poorer.

This assessment includes:

* 1. Drafting of the improvement plan based on the final report
	2. Syllabus analysis
	3. Proposing changes to syllabuses
	4. Proposing staff training
	5. Communicating recommendations and collecting comments from staff
	6. Preparing the final action plan for improvement.
1. **External quality assurance**

External evaluation in UMIB, as well as for all HEIs in Kosovo is dependent on the Kosovo Accreditation Agency. UMIB respects all procedures, regulations and norms set by the KAA and the SCQ. The process of external quality assessment includes UMIB programs, in the process of accreditation and re-accreditation, as well as the institution itself in the processes of re-accreditation and accreditation. UMIB is in line with the Law on higher education, NQF, European principles for higher education, Administrative Instructions, and the manual for external quality assurance.

When one of the academic units applies for a new program, before it is approved, the faculty that plans to offer the program must address and document supporting material. To get started, a new program must be taken as a basis:

1. Document justifying market need for the program;
2. Support from faculty and other external organizations and evaluations by academic and professional experts;
3. Necessary space to develop the program;
4. The required number of academic staff, and adequate number of staff in specialization to develop the program.

The process of validation of a program, whether in accreditation or re-accreditation, goes through the KAA, respectively the SCQ. When applying for new / accreditation processes for the institution or programs, UMIB goes through a self-assessment phase which aims to:

* create the conditions which, based on the analysis and the results of the internal evaluation, must publicly confirm and validate, through the external evaluation process, the strengths of the institution and evaluate the efficiency of its policies and procedures for assuring and continuously improving the quality;
* present their perspective on how the institution exercises its responsibilities in two areas of vital interest within the institutional assessment: providing quality programs, publicly motivated by comparable standards and, on the other hand, adequately exercising public responsibility and accountability for the education it provides;
* present its assessment on the efficiency of internal structures and quality assurance mechanisms; the means to ensure the accuracy, as well as the complete and reliable character of the information published by the institution, its practices and procedures regarding the mission and the main objectives of the institutional assessment;
* give the Expert team the opportunity to understand how the institution provides performance standards and indicators institutionally and at the level of study programs. Thus, the team can reach its conclusions regarding the level of trust that the institution of higher education can guarantee.

Self-assessment documents should:

• be honest and relevant;

• be concise and supported by attached documents;

• be public on the institution's website;

• present an appropriate balance between self-criticism and self-assessment.

The overall structure of the self-assessment report should include the following:

* Introduction - a general presentation of the institution / study program, its mission and objectives, leadership, management structures, staff administration, students and their socio-economic background, relevant contextual information about the field in which the institution operates , teaching, learning and curricula;
* The main body - includes the perspective of the institution that it meets the standards and performance indicators included in this manual and also a SWOT analysis for each of the general areas.

The main body will also include the evolution of institutional / programmatic performance over the period since the last external evaluation;

* Appendices - all documents that support the elements presented in the main body. This part must only be submitted in electronic format (pdf).

The whole process is evaluated by a team of Experts who are engaged by the KAA, and all of them are certified experts in the EU space. For the purpose of the new / accreditation process, UMIB engages the central coordinator for academic development to act as the provider's main link to the expert team;

The coordinator, like any other representative of the education provider, will not be present during the meetings that take place between the team of experts and students, staff, employers, etc.

The responsibilities of the Coordinator in the external quality assessment process include:

* submitting or ensuring the submission of self-assessment documentation;
* providing information to the KAA to enable the agency plan the evaluation process;
* informing the interviewees that the team of experts will meet during the field visit about the arrangements of the evaluation process;
* informing all students and employers about the evaluation process;
* cooperating with KAA experts and coordinators regarding the use of provider's facilities by the team, for example, work/meeting rooms;
* ensuring that interviewees are available for scheduled meetings and, if necessary, arrange additional meetings as required by the experts;
* ensuring that the necessary documents are available to experts and facilitate the submission of additional documents, if the team of experts requests any;
* obtaining the external review report and ensuring the correction of possible factual errors; coordinating communication between the KAA and education providers in any subsequent matters, such as further planning.

In order to ensure a smooth re-accreditation process, guarantee the quality of field visits through objectivity and professionalism, and coordinate close communication between expert teams and higher education institutions at all stages of the process, the KAA delegates at least one representative of the agency who accompanies the team of experts for the entire duration of the field visit. The KAA Coordinator (s) does not play an active role and does not contribute to the decisions on the recommendation of the KAA expert team for the education provider.

**Assessment**

During the field visit or in the process of drafting the report, the team of experts has the right to request additional documentation that supports them in the assessment, in full, of the performance of the education provider against the standards and performance indicators included in current manual. However, the team of experts may only request additional documentation that the provider has already mentioned during the field visit or through the self-assessment report; the team cannot ask the education provider to provide new documentation. The assessment results are included in the External Review Report, a document that complies with the overall structure provided by this manual and its models; the team leader ensures that the External Review Report is taken collectively by all members of the Expert team. The KAA validates the report if: it complies with the overall structure provided by the KAA Accreditation Manual, and, secondly, if there is a coherent flow between the reporting body and the recommendation of the Expert team (the recommendation should be fully supported by evidence and arguments), included in the report body). The validity process may include further communication between the KAA and the expert team so that the External Review Report is in line with current guidelines. The External Review report is sent to the education provider giving it the opportunity to correct any possible factual errors that may have been involved. During this communication, the institution may not provide further information and evidence that was not mentioned during the field visit or through the self-assessment report. Any such new evidence can only be entered into a new evaluation process that will represent a specific request to the KAA. After receiving possible comments from the education provider, the team of Experts analyzes whether the corrections need to be operated on, finalizes the reports and submits them to the KAA.

The external Review Report will be discussed and approved by the State Quality Council. The Council may take one of the following decisions;

In the initial accreditation:

- Not to be accredited;

- To be accredited conditionally;

- To be accredited for 3 years.

In the case of re-accreditation:

- Not to be accredited;

- To be accredited conditionally;

- To be accredited for 3 years.

- To be accredited for 5 years.

1. **Conclusion**

For UMIB, the quality management component is a strong and crucial point for the development of the institution: teaching, learning, research, community service, and the fulfillment of its mission and vision. A well-defined structure of stakeholders dealing with quality assurance in UMIB, as well as a clear procedure for the development of activities towards the provision of this component, make the institution serious and determined towards a secure future in Higher Education.

This Guideline is a guideline document for all parties involved in the quality assurance process. We are aware that the quality assurance process is dynamic, changeable and always in progress, so even this guideline will change whenever UMIB advances and improves along the way. UMIB is committed to making this guideline a "living document", vis-a-vis the progress from year to year.