

Assessment Report

International Programme Accreditation
Psychology (B.Sc.)

**at the Public International
Business College Mitrovica (IBCM),
Mitrovica, Kosovo**



Impressum

EVALAG

Evaluationsagentur Baden-Württemberg
Stiftung des öffentlichen Rechts
Europaplatz 11, 69115 Heidelberg

www.evalag.de

Content

I.	Introduction	4
II.	HEI (profile)	5
III.	Assessment procedure	7
IV.	Programme Assessment.....	9
	1. Programme profile	9
	2. Curriculum	11
	3. Student Assessment.....	15
	4. Organisation of the Study Programme	18
	5. Resources	19
	6. Quality Assurance	23
V.	Final Assessment.....	26
VI.	Statement of the university.....	27
VII.	Accreditation Recommendation of the Expert Group to the Accreditation Commission.....	29
VIII.	Accreditation Decision of the Accreditation Commission	30
IX.	Annexe	31
	Annexe 1: Assessment criteria for international programme accreditation.....	31
	Annexe 2: ESG.....	34
	Annexe 3: Overview of documents	35

I. Introduction

The assessment procedure was carried out with an informed peer review on the basis of a self-evaluation report provided by the University, two half-days of online visit of international experts while the EVALAG Project Manager was present on campus and an assessment report.

The procedure applies the fitness-for-purpose approach which assesses to what extent one or several study programmes comply with the criteria. The point of reference are EVALAG's criteria for international programme accreditation that follow the **European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area dated 15 May 2015 (see annexe 1 and 2).**

The criteria focus, first of all, on the profile of the programme and its curriculum. Furthermore, the criteria cover all aspects of the implementation of a study programme, its quality assurance and its resources. With regard to the criteria of programme profile and curriculum, EVALAG also assesses if the programme meets academic standards that are accepted in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).¹ The following six criteria are applied: Programme profile; Curriculum; Student assessment; Organisation of the study programme; Resources; Quality assurance.

The experts express the extent of compliance regarding the criteria. It refers to the following levels of assessments: passed, passed subject to conditions, suspension of the accreditation procedure or failed. Depending on the degree to which the study programme meets the criteria, it will be accredited, accredited with conditions or not accredited. Furthermore, the accreditation commission may decide about a suspension of the assessment procedure.

¹ The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is a group of 49 countries that cooperate to achieve comparable and compatible higher education systems throughout Europe. Member countries of the EHEA follow the directives of the so-called Bologna Process to achieve these goals.

II. HEI (profile)

The Public International Business College Mitrovica (IBCM) is a higher education institution in Kosovo. Since July 2023, IBCM is a public college. It provides higher education for free. Currently, it offers 4 Bachelor programmes and one Master programme. The target group of IBCM are students from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Diversity and inclusion are at the heart of its mission. Therefore, all programmes are taught in English. In 2024, there were 756 students at IBCM. Teaching takes place on a face-to-face basis in two facilities: one campus in South Mitrovica and one campus in North Mitrovica. There is a short walking distance between the two campuses of approximately ten minutes.

IBCM aims at providing higher education to students and supporting the economic development in the Mitrovica region and in other regions in Kosovo and beyond. In the past, more than 80% of IBCM graduates have found jobs within 6 months of graduation. As a result, a lot of graduates including graduates with non-majority backgrounds now hold senior positions in the Kosovo administration.

Historical evolution

IBCM was first registered in the Netherlands and Kosovo as an international nonprofit-foundation in 2010. The main purpose was to boost economic prospects and alleviate ethnic tensions in the region, there was clear commitment to European integration.

At the moment of its initiation, there were several financial supporters such as the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation from Kosovo, international development agencies, including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission and the NGO SPARK Nederland. SPARK Nederland supported IBCM financially till 2018. Then, in March 2018 IBCM received the legal status of a local independent not for profit educational foundation in Kosovo, under the umbrella of the Law for free association, No. 03/L-134. In 2023, it became a public institution of higher education with the statute "college". It represents Kosovo's first public college.

Profile

IBCM has emphasized a modern educational approach in its study programmes and has focused on good contacts with the industry and a good employability of its graduates, focussing on labour market needs and flexible career paths. Core areas for IBCM are environment and agricultural management, marketing and sales, public administration and social work, and applied IT. In addition to traditional study programmes, IBCM offers short courses in the form of microcredentials depending on the labour market needs in the region. When IBCM was transformed into a public college, it created three faculties and abandoned its former structure with administrative units for

each study programme. The three faculties are the following: Faculty of Environment, Technology and IT, Faculty of International Business Management, Faculty of Social Sciences. Each faculty is headed by a dean.

There is a commitment to diversity and inclusion and European values such as mobility for students. This is visible because of the high number of Erasmus + projects IBCM has or is currently carrying out. In particular, there is an emphasis on equal opportunity and improving access to education and employment to a broad group of students, making it inclusive and society-relevant regardless of gender, ethnicity (and language), age and physical ability.

III. Assessment procedure

This assessment procedure deals with a study programme IBCM recently created. It is a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology. For the time being (April 2025), no students are enrolled, the programme did not start yet.

As a first step of the procedure and in preparation for the site visit, IBCM submitted a self-evaluation report in November 2024. At the same time EVA-LAG formed an international expert panel consisting of two experts including one student expert.

The expert group is comprised of:

- **Dr. Julie Papastamatelou**, Professor of Psychology at University of Applied Management Studies Mannheim (Germany) and Psychologist
- **Gaga Gvenetadze**, Student of Applied Social Psychology at Tbilisi State University in Tbilisi (Georgia)

Originally, there were three members in the expert group. Shortly before the finalization of the report, one expert withdrew from the assessment procedure. This expert does not wish her/his name to be indicated in the report. Since Professor Papastamatelou is a professor and she is working as a psychologist, she represents the higher education institutions as well as business.

All experts declared to be free of any conflict of interest. The virtual site visit (see annexe) took place on February 3 and 11, 2025. While the first part of the visit took place entirely in a virtual format, the project manager was present on campus on February 11 and the experts participated via a video conference. During the visit, the expert panel had interviews and talks with the leadership of the university and the faculty, academic and administrative staff and students, alumni and employers. Students and alumni who were interviewed were coming from other study programmes (as of April 2025, there are no students enrolled in the study programme in psychology).

After the site visit, the university received a feedback letter from the experts. Subsequently, the university handed in revised documents, aiming at taking into consideration some of the experts' concerns. The drafting time for the ensuing report was prolonged due to a demand from the experts to have more time to work on the report. While IBCM insisted on an accreditation commission meeting in May 2025, the report is now transferred to the accreditation commission without the statement of IBCM. At its meeting in May, the EVALAG accreditation commission decided to postpone the decision until the statement of the university is provided. This is a standard procedure: The accreditation commission decides once the report – including the university's statement – is submitted to the commission.

The following assessment report is structured along the six assessment criteria. After a short description of the criterion, each chapter starts with a presentation of the current status regarding the criterion. The chapters are

based on the information from the self-assessment report of the university as well as the information acquired during the site visit. In this light, the expert panel assesses the criterion. Finally, the experts provide their recommendations for further improvement.

The assessment report was written with contributions from the above-indicated experts. It is based on the information the expert group received. The different sources of this information are the following: self-evaluation report (SER) and annexes submitted at the end of November 2024; interview slots during the site visit and a variety of further documents submitted at a later point throughout the assessment procedure. Regarding the latter: There was a diversity of documents and revised versions that were submitted at different points in time, therefore, there is an overview of all submitted documents in annexe 3.

The original version of this report contained three conditions. One condition regarding an anti-plagiarism tool and one condition regarding electives were erased once the university handed in its statement at the beginning of June 2025. The experts opted for this because they did not see any ground any longer for these two conditions.

It is standard procedure to present a short table in this section. This table contains some key data regarding the study programme (number of students to be enrolled, date that is scheduled for the start of the programme and further). Unfortunately, the university did not complete the corresponding form despite several requests to do so.

IV. Programme Assessment

1. Programme profile

Criterion

Experts evaluate whether the objectives of each programme are in line with the profile and the strategic goals of the institution. Furthermore, they assess if the intended learning outcomes of the programmes are well defined, publicly accessible and whether they correspond to the type and level of qualification provided by the programme. They also consider whether the intended learning outcomes are based on academic or professional requirements, public needs and the demands of the labour market, and if they contribute to the employability of the graduates. The experts evaluate the programmes' relation to research (procurement of scientific methods in theory and practice, research-based teaching). They assess whether the profile and objectives of the programmes comply with internationally accepted standards. The experts consider the international dimension of each programme and verify whether the qualification of the academic staff is adequate in terms of the profile and the objectives of the programme.

Current Situation

The Psychology programme is a Bachelor degree programme based on six semesters. Overall, it comprises 180 ECTS. The number of annual enrolments for this study programme is 60. Students learn the basics of psychology, learn main theories and methods of psychology, obtain basic psychological skills and discover research in psychology. According to the psychology handbook, students shall understand the history of psychology as well as its general structure and the connection between its disciplines. Students should develop a depth in understanding of underlying principles, theories and concepts in the discipline. They will be able to apply knowledge and skills of psychology in a manner that is reflexive, culturally appropriate and sensitive to the diversity of individuals.

The programme aims to prepare students for the job market, but it was also taken into account that some students wish to go further and continue their studies in psychology.

The university has referred to standards from APA and EuroPsy regarding educational goals of undergraduate psychology programmes. The self-evaluation report highlights the following pillars to describe the educational goals:

- a) Knowledge base and applications of psychology
Students understand the complexity of human behaviour and brain processes, they will be able to identify and describe various psychological theories and how these theories have been and

can be applied within various sociocultural contexts, subfields of psychology and historical contexts.

b) Scientific inquiry and critical thinking

Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis and interpretation, while evaluating and applying ethical research standards. Furthermore, students will be able to distinguish between evidence-based research versus anecdotal and pseudoscientific material. Students can evaluate the plausibility of multiple potential outcomes.

c) Values in psychological sciences and communication, psychological literacy and technology

Students should develop the ability of confronting value questions and have a commitment to general human ethic principles.

Furthermore, students will be able to produce written research according to APA standards. Their oral communication skills will comprise identifying and classifying different sources and publications and dealing with these inline with scientific standards.

The university indicates further educational goals of the study programme: Students shall learn how to carry out experimental research methods in psychology, how to report on research findings and how to apply psychology to human emotional and behavioural problems. Furthermore, students shall learn how to evaluate information critically, apply appropriate methods and analytical procedures to answer questions in psychology. Students shall be able, by the end of the study programme, to identify psychological assessments. A focus of the programme is on the practical aspect of the knowledge. For example, students shall be able to identify different options regarding psychotherapeutic approaches in a given situation.

The faculty has highlighted that it worked with partner universities to develop the curriculum, for example with Sapienza University in Rome. This was done in the light of a possible future cooperation for a double degree programme.

Following the overall pedagogical concept of the institution with its From Theory to Practice Approach, the pedagogical concept of the programme relies heavily on classes where students take a very active role. The learning process takes place via different experiments and in-lab learning. This means students work with real life problems in a controlled environment without communicating with the outside world. The university highlights in-field learning, too, where students apply their theoretical knowledge in a real-world environment. This takes place in fieldwork, semester projects and guest speakers presenting real life problems to be solved by students.

There is a course in the second semester where students learn quantitative research methods. Throughout their studies, students develop skills in hypothesis testing, data collection and statistical interpretation. Teachers and

lecturers use practical examples when teaching research skills. Subsequently, students are encouraged to carry out their own small research projects.

Assessment

The programme successfully covers:

- Core psychological knowledge (theories, history, interdisciplinary connections).
- Scientific inquiry & critical thinking (research methods, data analysis, ethical standards).
- Applied psychological skills (assessment, intervention strategies, evidence-based practice).
- Professional & ethical competencies (communication, psychological literacy, cultural sensitivity).
- The emphasis on APA standards, empirical research, and evidence-based practice ensures academic rigor.

The programme enhances skill application. In addition, active student participation (semester projects, collaborations) fosters engagement. Quantitative research training (from hypothesis testing to independent research projects) strengthens analytical abilities.

The experts have seen that there are undertakings to collaborate with universities, one with the University of Zagreb and one with the South East European University in Tetovo. While these collaborations do not yet contain any concrete information, i.e. they do not allow any conclusions to be drawn about the concrete form of the collaboration within the framework of the study program, the experts see these in a positive light.

One expert highlights that benchmarking would be a useful approach to identify (further) partnerships with other universities.

All experts agree that the curriculum reflects global psychology standards with supporting student mobility. Students appreciate the international environment and identify strongly with IBCM's values. The programme enhances the university's reputation and meets learner expectations.

The expert group considers that the criterion is fulfilled.

2. Curriculum

Criterion

The second criterion concerns the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning methods. The expert panel evaluates whether the curriculum of the programme is adequately structured to achieve the intended learning outcomes and whether the curriculum provides the necessary knowledge and methodological expertise of the relevant discipline(s). The experts also eval-

uate the organisation of the learning process, especially regarding appropriate student-centred teaching and learning methods and encouragement of learners to play an active role. Furthermore, the expert panel reviews whether the diversity of students and their needs are taken into account.

Current Situation

There are six semesters, in each semester, students acquire 30 ECTS. The intended learning outcomes (ILO) deal with basic knowledge about psychology and a comprehensive understanding of human behaviour. The study programme encompasses theoretical knowledge and practical expertise in psychology and related disciplines. Analytical thinking is considered one of the main skills students acquire during this study programme. It is a central learning outcome and perceived as a fundamental prerequisite for professional practice in psychology and related fields as well as for advanced studies. According to the Theory-to-Practice-Approach, the study programme starts with theoretical knowledge and an introduction into different subdisciplines. Subsequently, the sights are set on the practical relevance of the acquired knowledge.

The first semester starts with basics in psychology. This course provides students with a broad overview of psychological principles, history, theories and applications, serving as a cornerstone for understanding the field of psychology. In the second semester, there is an introductory course on quantitative research methods and in the third semester, there is an introductory course on qualitative research methods.

The ensuing semesters focus on work-based learning and significance of theoretical knowledge for students' future work environment.

Furthermore, there is a course in developmental psychology which deals with the question how individuals undergo cognitive, emotional and social growth across the lifespan. Students also attend a course for Academic English and Writing. It was added to the curriculum to ensure that students' reading, writing and critical thinking skills are on a good academic level that enables them to communicate clearly at a professional level. The first semester is completed with a course on the psychology of motivation and emotions where the mechanisms that drive behaviour and emotional responses are put forward. Students shall learn how these processes influence decision-making. Furthermore, there is a class on Biopsychology in the first semester. It deals with the biological underpinnings of human behaviour, providing students with insights into how the brain, nervous system and genetics influence cognition, emotion and behaviour. The perspective of this course is a holistic perspective on mental processes and actions.

The second semester is dedicated to a deepening of students' knowledge in psychology and it introduces into research, cognitive and social psychology. During the class on cognitive psychology, students find out about the mental processes underlying learning, memory, perception and problem-solving. This will enhance their understanding of how people process information and

make decisions. The statistics class and the course on quantitative research methods class provides students with access to research design and data analysis. The statistics course will enable students to understand how critical evaluation of psychological studies works. The course on quantitative research methods implies that students learn basic skills such as hypothesis testing, data collection and statistical interpretation. The course on Social Psychology focuses on understanding how individuals' thoughts, feelings and behaviours are influenced by their social environment. Different pathways for critical analysis of group dynamics such as, for example, prejudice and persuasion as well as their impact on human behaviour are central subjects in this course. For the second semester, students can choose two electives.

Throughout the third semester, there is a course on qualitative research methods that introduces students into non-numerical approaches of social sciences such as how to design, conduct and interpret qualitative studies using techniques like interviews, focus groups and thematic analysis. These techniques are essential for students because they are the groundwork for understanding psychological phenomena. During the third semester, there also more specialized topics in the curriculum. There is a course on Personality Psychology which deals with personality traits and how they influence various aspects of life, from relationships to decision-making.

In Educational Psychology, a further course during the third semester, students become acquainted with psychological foundations of learning and teaching. By exploring theories such as behaviourism, constructivism, and social learning, students will understand how individuals acquire knowledge and develop skills, preparing them to design effective educational interventions. Finally, in addition to two electives, there is a course on clinical psychology in the third semester. It deals with evidence-based treatments, the therapeutic relationship and ethical considerations in clinical practice.

Courses in the fourth semester aim to deepen students' understanding of psychological processes, individual differences, and intervention strategies, preparing them for advanced practice and research in psychology. There is a course on assessment in psychology. It contains principles and practices of psychological testing and evaluation. Students will learn how cognitive abilities, personality traits and emotional functioning are measured. Skills in this area are important elements for a future work environment where informed decisions in clinical, educational and organizational settings play an important role. The course about Intervention Approaches 1 introduces students to foundational therapeutic techniques and strategies used in psychological interventions. Intended learning outcomes are applying evidence-based approaches for addressing various psychological issues and taking into account ethical considerations for effective practice. The course on neuropsychology in the fourth semester deals with the relationship between brain function and behaviour, providing students with insights into how neurological processes influence cognition, emotions, and behaviour. They will study brain disorders,

assessment techniques, and rehabilitation strategies, preparing them to address neuropsychological challenges in diverse populations.

An internship of 150 working hours is part of the fourth semester. It provides students with hands-on experience in real-world settings. The university has included the internship in the curriculum because it fosters students' professional development and their understanding of psychological practice and because this is a requirement. It prepares them for careers in counselling, mental health and related fields. Students hand in two written reflections on their internship, one at mid-internship and a second one at the end. There is a course in psychopathology that deals with psychological disorders, their symptoms, causes and classifications. Students will learn about diagnostic systems like DSM, ICD and they will learn how to critically assess mental health challenges and how to gain insights into the development and treatment of various conditions. While referring to the intervention skills from the first class, intervention approaches 2 introduces advanced techniques for addressing complex psychological issues. Students will explore evidence-based methods for designing and delivering effective therapeutic interventions tailored to diverse populations and contexts. A course on ethics in psychology is scheduled for the fifth semester. It highlights the importance of ethical principles and professional standards in psychological practice. Students will learn to navigate complex ethical dilemmas, focussing on confidentiality, informed consent and professional integrity.

In the fifth semester, there is also a course about counselling and psychotherapy. It deals with the different ethical and legal aspects of the profession, technical tools needed for practice in the profession as well as with reflections on the impact of counselling on different groups. In this semester, students also start an internship that offers hands-on experience in applying psychological knowledge and skills in real-world contexts. Under supervision, students will engage in professional activities, integrating theory and practice while developing their competencies.

The last semester is dedicated to thesis writing. Students shall demonstrate their capacity for critical thinking, independent analysis and application of theoretical knowledge to an issue in psychology. They conduct original research and respect academic writing standards. Furthermore, a third internship is scheduled for this last semester.

Many courses are organized on an interactive basis where learners take an active role in their learning process. Problem-based learning, case-based approaches and field trips are important elements of the teaching process in all semesters. Furthermore, there is a focus on work-based learning which is visible in IBCM's vision 2025-29, its implementation of existing study programmes as well as in this new curriculum. Due to the variety of assignments, formative assessments prevail.

Furthermore, a large number of courses have been listed as electives. The information about the electives is complete with the exception of some teachers' names.

Assessment

The expert team welcomes the recent switch from 210 ECTS to 180 ECTS with six semesters. A positive is the work-orientation of the study programme: Internships are well integrated into the curriculum.

The programme demonstrates strengths in student engagement, international alignment (APA/EuroPsy) and practical pedagogy. There were previous concerns regarding the order of courses. These were lifted because the course about cognitive psychology is now scheduled for semester 2 in the new module handbook (version from March 2025).

The programme fulfills the criterion, this assessment applies with one restriction regarding resources (lack of academic staff). Therefore, it will be further elaborated on in chapter 4.5 (see condition 1).

3. Student Assessment

Criterion

The third criterion focuses on the organisation of student assessments. The expert panel evaluates how the assessment of intended learning outcomes is organised and whether the amount and requirements of assessments are adequate. They also decide whether the requirements of the thesis reflect the level of the degree. Furthermore, the experts look at the transparency of the assessment criteria and whether they are used in a consistent way. Further criteria deal with the qualifications of teaching staff undertaking assessments and examinations regulations and whether these provide clear and fair regulations for student absence, illness and other mitigating conditions.

Current Situation

Lecturers use different forms of assessment methods, it is up to them to decide about the specific assessment methods in their courses, but they have to coordinate this with the faculty leadership. The university describes the following forms of assessment.

final exam	Comprehensive assessment at the end of a course to evaluate students' understanding of key concepts, theories, and applications. Often, final exams include a mix of multiple-choice questions, short answers and essay-style answers.
------------	--

semester projects	Students apply course concepts to a real-world or simulated problem. Typically, there is a written report or presentation at the end of it.
case studies	Students examine real-life or hypothetical scenarios related to the course topic. Students are expected to evaluate problems, propose solutions and justify their recommendations.
research papers	In-depth written assignments where students investigate a specific topic, synthesize scholarly literature and present findings in a structured format respecting academic writing standards.
Presentations	Students prepare and deliver content on a given topic in an oral presentation. Important skills: Communication skills, understanding of the subject matter and the ability to engage an audience.
quizzes and short tests	Brief assessments in the form of multiple-choice, short answer, or with a problem-solving design.
group projects	Collaborative tasks where students work in teams to complete a project, presentation, or report. Group projects assess teamwork, problem-solving, and the ability to integrate diverse perspectives.
practical assignments	Hands-on assessment where students demonstrate skills or apply theoretical knowledge to solve problems or complete tasks.
Role-playing and simulations	Interactive assessments where students assume roles or participate in simulated scenarios to apply knowledge in practical, real-world contexts.
Peer reviews	Activities where students evaluate each other's work based on established criteria.
Practical exams	Performance-based assessments
Problem-solving exercises	Tasks requiring students to apply theoretical concepts to specific problems or scenarios.
Midterm assignments	Assessments conducted midway through the semester to find out about students learning progress.

The choice of the assessment method depends on the intended learning outcome. Often, it is a combination of different assessment methods. If students learn practical skills, the lecturer will choose a practical exam, a presentation or a case study. This is the case for example with the Educational Psychology

and Learning Theories where students create an assessment concept to evaluate learners' progress. An example for a combination of different forms is the class on qualitative research methods. It is indicated that class interactivity, quizzes, course assignments, field observation and a final examination will be taken into account for the assessment. Regarding practical skills and assessment methods, students learn in the PsychTech Lab. This is a psychological laboratory that is equipped with AR, VR and Psytech VR ASEBA, NovoPsych and other hardware and software, it enables students to learn how to use most advanced technology in the process of assessment and intervention in the field of psychology.

Assessment methods are indicated in the Psychology handbook with detailed information regarding each course. The grading scheme corresponds to the Danish grading scheme with a scale from 12 to -3 with 12 being the best mark for an excellent performance. According to information given during the site visit and in the SER, IBCM works with Grammarly. But the university highlighted in its statement that this is incorrect. It said it now works with PlagiarismCheck.org.

There is a standard check for all submitted work and paper from students. If a work that was submitted by a student represents more than 15% of similarity, the work is considered to be plagiarism and marked with -3.

The university has handed in a regulation for the Bachelor thesis. It contains information about the process, the assessment criteria, the length and the grading. The Bachelor thesis is graded with a priority on the written work. It is 70% of the grading and the oral part/defence represent 30%.

Assessment

The experts have seen that there is a wide variety of assignments or exams in this study programme. This fits with the institution's profile as a modern higher education with a focus on student-centered learning. Teaching methods such as case-based learning, problem-based learning and in-field learning are important elements. Communication with students from other study programmes has revealed that this is an important feature for them. Furthermore, they appreciate the integration of practical work experience into the curriculum via internships or experiments.

The experts estimate that the variety of assessment methods is fine.

During the site visit, there were a number of statements from students which led to the conclusion that there is an insufficient knowledge among students about the institution's plagiarism policy.

Furthermore, the experts observe that there is confusion regarding the anti-plagiarism tool, this relates to both students and lecturers. This is the reason why the experts believe there is a need for transparent communication about the institution's anti-plagiarism policy. Since IBCM now says in its statement that it is using a new tool, the experts no longer see the need for a condition

as they consider this to be an adequate tool and concluded that the criterion is fulfilled. Nevertheless, they see the need for more transparent communication. This issue will be addressed in chapter 4.6.

The expert group considers that the criterion is fulfilled.

4. Organisation of the Study Programme

Criterion

This criterion focuses on the implementation of the programme. The expert panel assesses the appropriateness of entry qualifications and the regulations for the recognition of qualifications (i.e., Lisbon Convention). The experts check whether it is possible for students to achieve the intended learning outcomes given the organisation of the study programme. Furthermore, experts analyse whether the university administration and the teaching staff take into account the diversity of students and their needs. The experts evaluate how the implementation of the programme is managed (roles and responsibilities) and whether the workload of the programme is adequate in the light of the intended learning outcomes and the time frame. The organisation of the student life cycle (i.e., all (organisational) as well as relationships between the student and the institution from enrolment to graduation) are also part of this criterion. The experts review the care services and student advisory services as well as cooperation arrangements with internal and external partners (if applicable).

Current Situation

The study programme in Psychology will be located at the faculty of Social Sciences. One assistant professor is responsible for the coordination of the study programme.

Student and career services offer assistance to students regarding internships. Students can come to the student and career services and receive advice on internships in the region. Students can apply for different scholarships (for more information, see next chapter).

Students from other study programmes interviewed during the site visit reported that administrative and academic staff has been very supportive and encouraging in the past. They explain this with the good teacher-student ratio which implies that professors are easily accessible and often know students' names.

Course evaluations take place on a regular basis in all study programmes offered by the university. These evaluations comprise questions regarding student workload, too. Many students start working in their last year of studies. One of the reasons for this may be financial reasons. It is expected to be similar for the psychology students. Therefore, the issue of workload plays an important role.

There are formal channels for students to raise their voice. There is a student representation in the Academic Council. The Academic Council academic body of the College and it is responsible for setting up general strategic issues related to research, studies and teaching. There is a budget for student activities each year. Students can propose different activities to the Academic Council. Usually, these activities deal with social activities or study trips. Furthermore, there are two student representatives in the Study and Quality Committee (one from the Bachelor level and one from the Master level; see chapter on quality assurance). Furthermore, students can raise concerns in the focus groups (see chapter on quality assurance).

Students can benefit from different mobility possibilities, IBCM is currently participating in 13 Erasmus+ partnerships. It is a standard procedure at IBCM that outgoing students are supported by administrative staff from student and career services. Outgoing students can sign learning agreements and ask their lecturers at IBCM for advice regarding an appropriate course selection.

Assessment

The experts are convinced that the study programme will be organized in a professional manner, taking into account the intended learning outcomes. The experts are convinced that there is good and supportive learning environment and that there a lot of informal channels students in case of conflicts and concerns. In addition to these informal channels, there are also institutionalized paths for students to address concerns.

The experts think that students in this study programme will benefit from the Erasmus+ network IBCM has created over the years.

The expert group considers that the criterion is fulfilled.

5. Resources

Criterion

At the core of this criterion are appropriate resource endowment and deployment in the involved faculties. The experts evaluate the existence of sustainable funding and financial management and whether the staff is adequately qualified and sufficient to ensure the intended learning outcomes. They review the HEI's strategies and processes for staff recruiting and staff development. The experts examine if the amount and quality of facilities and equipment (library, laboratories, teaching rooms, IT equipment, etc.) allow the provision of the programme and if resources are appropriate in light of the programme's objectives.

Current Situation

Since IBCM turned into a public higher education institution in 2023, the funding is coming from the ministry. The university has written in its SER that the total available budget for the whole institution in 2024 was €2,130,223.78.

IBCM has submitted a budget plan for 2025-2028. It plans to increase its staff from 55 (academic and administrative) full-time staff to 89 full-time staff till the end of 2028.

IBCM plans to recruit one part time staff for psychology in 2026, in 2027 they envisage to employ one more full-time staff.

IBCM's intention to enhance and strengthen its governance structures are an important element of this strategy to expand. According to IBCM employees, the institution will continue to develop its original mission while drawing on state budgetary support through a reformed funding formula as the best solution that ensures its long-term sustainability. One further reason for the expansion plans is a continuous increase in student numbers in recent years.

Students do not pay fees.² Students can apply for scholarships. There are different categories of scholarships:

- Merit-based scholarships
- Scholarships for subsidizing student accommodation
- Affirmative scholarships for communities
- Scholarships for students with a low-income background

These scholarship programmes contribute to the university's mission of enhancing the diversity of its student body.

The faculty of social sciences will be responsible for the study programme. The study programme comprises 6 semester and 180 ECTS. Kosovo law stipulates one academic staff member for each 60 ECTS that are taught. In the module handbook, there are four professors indicated as responsible academic staff. All four are assistant professors. The position of an assistant professor at IBCM requires a PhD as well as teaching and research academic experience.³ The university has submitted five CVs for teaching staff (four assistant professors and one lecturer). Among them, there are three with a doctorate in psychology, one professor's doctorate is in education and the other one is preparing a doctorate in political science.

Three of the assistant professors have long-term professional experience in clinical work, work with social service providers, training and counselling and working as a psychologist.

Additionally, IBCM has indicated names of further assistant professors who will be responsible for the elective courses.⁴ These assistant professors have

² Public higher education institutions do not have any tuition fees. But students repeating a semester have to pay tuition fees.

³ According to an internal IBCM regulation, only staff with a PhD can become an assistant professor.

⁴ There are 16 electives indicated in the module handbook. Six names are indicated for some of these electives. Some electives are just indicated with their title without any lecturer names.

different academic backgrounds depending on the content of the elective course.

IBCM recruits academic staff according to the needs of each faculty for their study programmes. The recruitment procedure is an open competitive call. Vacancies are indicated in a national platform as well as on the IBCM website and on social media. There is an internal regulation for academic promotion that defines the criteria for the different positions of academic staff such as assistant professors, associate professors and full professors. The main criteria for recruiting academic staff are academic and professional experience as well as commitment to the institution's values. A selection committee is created that is in charge of the evaluation process. There is a first phase in the evaluation process where IBCM verifies whether candidates meet the criteria, subsequently, there is a written examination. All candidates who successfully pass the first screening are invited for demo lessons. Then, there is an interview with the candidate usually conducted by the selection committee. Finally, the selection committee publishes the final decision on online platforms and communicates it to all candidates.

Teaching takes place on two campuses: IBCM Riverside Campus, located in South Mitrovica and IBCM Riverview Campus in North Mitrovica. There is a walking distance of around 10 minutes between the two campuses. Classrooms are equipped with smart boards, whiteboards, projectors and computers. At the riverside campus, there are two classrooms, one consultation room, an auditorium, a debriefing room and five computer laboratories including a PsychTechLab. In total, there is a capacity to accommodate 520 students in this building. At the riverview campus, there is one auditorium, four classrooms and one IT laboratory. In total, there are 187 seats for students on this campus. It is planned that the psychology courses will be held at the auditorium and consultation room. PsychTech Lab is a psychological laboratory which is equipped with tools for augmented reality, virtual reality, Psytech VR⁵, Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment and No-voPsych⁶ and other hardware and software.

The PsychTech Lab is planned for in-house practical learning and demonstration, including some experimental work (using the equipment and tools already stipulated).

There is one library on each campus with study areas for individual study as well as for teamwork. IBCM offers access to JSTOR and will soon buy access to another digital library. IBCM is planning on expanding its library of printed and digital books. Faculty members can request the purchase of specific books.

⁵ Is a company that works with virtual reality in the context of mental health.

⁶ Is a software that helps mental health service providers to use psychometric science.

The libraries comprise over 2000 print media (18000 copies in total), they are equipped with computers with access to a range of online academic databases, journals and research resources. The library is open from 8:00 to 20:00 on workdays.

The communication between students and professors is organized with google classroom and Moodle as virtual learning environments. Students access learning material and online resources, document sharing and collaboration, information regarding assignments and assignment and exam submissions.

Assessment

The experts have seen that the university is well equipped regarding classrooms, laboratories and technology, computer and software as well as libraries. The two campuses are not far from each other which means students do not spend their time commuting from one place to the other.

The experts are convinced that the university has defined processes and criteria for recruitment of academic staff. They are transparent. There are rules for the requirements regarding the different positions at IBCM (full professor, associated professor, assistant professor and lecturer). Past recruitment procedures have respected the processes and criteria. For example, there is the requirement that assistant professors need a PhD in the relevant field to be eligible for the position.

For the experts, the majority of the academic teaching staff in this study programme have a firm academic background. They consider this background to be sufficient for their teaching tasks in the study programme and see it in a positive light.

The expert group is concerned about the number of academic staff and the capacity in human resources in this study programme. This represents a significant problem regarding the programme's implementation. Considering the curriculum of a three-year programme and a total of 26 compulsory courses, three internships that also require mentors, plus 16 listed elective courses and a total of three teachers with training in psychology, the number of teachers needed is undoubtedly underestimated. The experts have misgivings regarding the workload of academic staff members. These concerns should be seen in the light of an envisaged student cohort with up to 60 students in each cohort.

The experts are aware of the national requirement in Kosovo about the need for one PhD holder for 60 ECTS in a study programme. The experts are also aware that IBCM, once there is a national accreditation of the study programme, will employ one more part time teaching staff (see chapter 4.5). Furthermore, the experts are aware that IBCM has said in its statement that it will employ another full-time teaching staff in 2027 for this study programme. Nevertheless the experts have decided to highlight their concern by formulating a condition. Taking into account the plans IBCM has for the

future, it will be easy for IBCM to come up with empirical evidence for the fulfilment of this condition in due time.

Condition 1:

The university increases the number of academic teaching staff at least by one full time academic staff – or, alternatively two part-time staff - within the first year of the first student cohort.

The expert group considers that the criterion is not fulfilled.

6. Quality Assurance

Criterion

This criterion focuses on the internal and external mechanisms used by the institution to monitor and improve the quality of the study programme: how the study programme is designed and implemented and how its improvement is organised.

The experts evaluate the quality assurance concept of the programme and what kind of quality assurance processes and instruments are implemented, which indicators are used for monitoring the achievement of the programme's objectives. The experts look at how the institution and the people responsible for the programme collect, analyse and use relevant information about their activities. Moreover, the experts examine whether quality assurance is used regularly, systematically and effectively for quality enhancement and if quality feedback loops are closed. It is also evaluated how stakeholders (students, teachers, administration, employers) are involved in quality assurance and whether relevant programme information for students and prospective students is provided.

Current Situation

The university uses different evaluation tools: course evaluation, focus groups and alumni and employer surveys. Each semester, each course is evaluated by students. The evaluation takes place on an anonymous basis. The feedback is reviewed by departments heads to ensure continuous improvement. During the site visit, members from the university said that, in case the feedback from students falls below a specific threshold, there is a meeting between the dean, the study programme director and the quality assurance director to discuss further steps.

According to the Regulation on Quality Assurance issued in early 2024, there are programme quality standards. The programme quality standards are based on the European Standards and Guidelines. It is the task of the quality assurance officer and the Study and Quality Committee to conduct surveys

and to propose measures for quality improvement. The Study and Quality Committee meets regularly and at least ten times a year. Its members are: Deans and heads of programmes, two student representatives, the vice rector for quality assurance and the quality assurance officer. The Quality assurance officer gathers results from surveys and combines them to aggregate data so that the Study and Quality Committee can use them for reflections on quality improvements.

Focus groups are meetings between students and the study programme coordinator. They are held at the end of every semester. These discussions provide qualitative insights into teaching methods, curriculum effectiveness, and student satisfaction. The study programme coordinator discusses with the dean which measures could be envisaged in light of the outcome of these discussions.

Furthermore, IBCM carries out alumni and employer surveys on an annual basis. This is done because the university underlines the significance of employability, skills relevance and employer satisfaction. According to IBCM, the results from these surveys are analysed on the faculty level and again, measures are identified to better adjust the study programme to industry demands.

IBCM disposes a complaint and appeals management. Students can file complaints by submitting a message in a complaints box on campus. The quality assurance director reviews the complaints. In case of complaints about assessments, students are encouraged to talk to the lecturer first. According to the students met during the site visit, most lecturers are easily approachable in case of student concerns or complaints.

When students were asked about the university's plagiarism policy, there was some uncertainty and confusion.

Assessment

Experts have seen that there are quality assurance mechanisms in IBCM. These are institutionalized via the Quality Assurance Regulation. The university takes into account feedback from different stakeholders and uses the information to reflect on quality improvements for each study programme. Different examples were given where feedback from students in existing study programmes was taken seriously and consequently, changes were undertaken to improve the situation. Students from other study programmes interviewed during the site visit confirmed this. Therefore, experts estimate that it will work similarly for the new study programme on psychology.

The expert group considers that the criterion is fulfilled.

Nevertheless, the experts highlight that the Quality Assurance Regulation is quite a new document outlining different responsibilities. Therefore, there is

a need to monitor in how far its provisions are known by all members of the university. This concerns also their implementation.

Recommendation 1:

The university should ensure that all members of the university are aware of the Quality Assurance Regulation and its content.

During the site visit, it turned out that students are not familiar with the institution's plagiarism policy. Therefore, the experts recommend that the university introduces more transparency and clarity regarding its plagiarism policy.

Recommendation 2:

The university should publish an anti-plagiarism policy on its website and regularly inform students and lecturers about it.

V. Final Assessment

Overall assessment

The experts have identified strengths in the study programme and its design. These strengths are to be found in the programmes profile, the organisation of the study programme and the quality assurance system that is set in place. Therefore, the experts consider that all criteria are fulfilled except for 4.5 (resources).

Overview

Criterion ⁷	assessment result	Information on conditions
1 Programme profile	fulfilled	None
2 Curriculum	Fulfilled	None
3 Student Assessment	Fulfilled	None
4 Organisation of the Study Programme	Fulfilled	None
5 Resources	not fulfilled	condition 1 (academic staff)
6 Quality Assurance	Fulfilled	None

The experts have seen a variety of positive points in this new study programme. These are, for example, a diversity of assessment procedures and the focus on practical issues and the link between theory and the reality of the business world. This approach fits well with the overall strategy of IBCM as a business-oriented higher education institution with strong links to the industry and to public administration. At the beginning of the assessment procedure, the experts had misgivings about the order of courses in the curriculum (see section 4.2). But IBCM took this as an incentive to review the curriculum and submitted a reviewed version of the curriculum. Therefore, the experts think that the study programme is on a good path. Nevertheless, they see need for improvement (see the condition and the two recommendations).

⁷ For more information on each criterion, see annexe 1.

VI. Statement of the university⁸

We believe the conditions set forth in the expert report have not sufficiently taken into consideration all submitted facts and evidence, demonstrated also during the on-site visit, and thus has possibly led to the factual inaccuracies. Clarifications and documentation submitted during the process were only partially acknowledged, and several conclusions were drawn despite clear evidence to the contrary. For example, the concerns about the elective courses, staff resources, and research scaffolding were addressed in detail with supporting materials.

Our staff includes five full-time psychology academics and a structured recruitment timeline that aligns with both programme growth and national legal constraints that prevent hiring prior to accreditation. Additionally, the concerns regarding plagiarism software are based on a technical error and do not reflect the actual tool used, which has been accepted in other accredited programmes.

We reaffirm our full commitment to continuous improvement and quality assurance.

We are fully prepared to begin implementation in October 2025 and we are pleased to confirm support from **South East European University** in North Macedonia to engage in academic collaboration, including staff mobility opportunities that can help with the staff. Also, we just got a confirmation from Department of Psychology at University of Zagreb to support Psychology program in the process of implementation. In the next two year, we will actively be engaged in new collaborations with other university partners in Europe.

In light of these points, we respectfully request a reconsideration of the conditions imposed. We remain committed to delivering a high-quality Psychology programme that meets both national standards and international academic expectations, and we are confident that the documentation and plans submitted support full accreditation without conditions.

Finally, we have provided our feedback and comments throughout the report to provide needed clarifications in several raised points, and we attach the following evidence as per our feedback provided:

1. CV's of the programme staff involved (5 full-time academic staff),
2. MoU with South East European University,

⁸ This text is a summary of the university statement. The university addressed a letter to the accreditation commission (see annexe i)

3. Confirmation of Intent for Cooperation with the University of Zagreb (MoU in Progress),
4. Workload plan,
5. Contract for Plagiarism Software (plagiarismcheck.org),
6. List of partners,
7. Regulation on Study and Quality Committee.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and professional engagement.

VII. Accreditation Recommendation of the Expert Group to the Accreditation Commission

The expert group recommends to the Accreditation Commission to award the label of international programme accreditation including condition C1 and the two recommendations.

VIII. Accreditation Decision of the Accreditation Commission

The EVALAG Accreditation Commission decided in its meeting on June 30, 2025, to award the EVALAG label for international programme accreditation to the study programme Psychology (B. Sc.) offered by IBCM without conditions and two recommendations.

The Commission decides to award it without conditions because it believes that IBCM has already declared its intention to employ an additional teaching staff member in 2026. Therefore, it does not see any ground to keep the condition C1.

IX. Annexe

Annexe 1: Assessment criteria for international programme accreditation⁹

The accreditation criteria used by the EVALAG international programme accreditation have been put into effect by the EVALAG Foundation Board. They refer to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and include an analysis of Part 1 of the ESG.

1. Programme profile

Profile and objectives of the programme

The expert team checks

- 1.1. whether the objectives of the programme are in line with the profile and the strategic goals of the institution
- 1.2. whether the intended learning outcomes of the programme are well defined and publicly accessible
- 1.3. whether the intended learning outcomes correspond to the type and level of qualification provided by the programme
- 1.4. whether the intended learning outcomes are based on academic or professional requirements (standards), public needs and the demands of the labour market and contribute to the employability of the graduates
- 1.5. whether the (academic) study programme is related to research (procurement of scientific methods in theory and practice, research based teaching)
- 1.6. whether the profile and objectives of the programme comply with internationally accepted standards
- 1.7. the international dimension of the programme
- 1.8. whether the qualification of the academic staff is adequate with regard to profile and objectives of the programme.

2. Curriculum

Curriculum and teaching and learning methods

The expert team checks

- 2.1. whether the curriculum of the programme is adequately structured to achieve the intended learning outcomes
- 2.2. whether the curriculum provides the necessary knowledge and methodological expertise of the relevant discipline(s)
- 2.3. whether the learning experience is organised in a way that takes the diversity of students and their needs into account, employs appropriate student-centred teaching and learning methods and

⁹ Decision of the Foundation Board, February 18th 2016, updated December 1st 2017

encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process.

3. Student assessment

Organisation of student assessments

The expert team checks

- 3.1. how the assessment of intended learning outcomes is organised
- 3.2. whether the amount and requirements of assessments are adequate with regard to the intended learning outcomes
- 3.3. whether the requirements of the thesis reflect the level of the degree
- 3.4. whether the assessment criteria are transparent and used in a consistent way
- 3.5. whether the staff undertaking assessments is adequately qualified
- 3.6. whether examination regulations exist and
- 3.7. whether they provide clear and fair regulations for student absence, illness and other mitigating conditions.

4. Organisation of the study programme

Implementation of the programme

The expert team checks

- 4.1. the appropriateness of entry qualifications
- 4.2. the regulations for the recognition of qualifications (i.e. Lisbon Convention)
- 4.3. whether the organisation of the study process allows the programme to be carried out in such a way that the intended learning outcomes will be achieved and whether the organisation of the study process also takes the diversity of students and their needs into account
- 4.4. how the implementation of the programme is managed (roles and responsibilities)
- 4.5. whether the workload of the programme is adequate with respect to the necessity to reach the intended learning outcomes in the scheduled time frame
- 4.6. how the student life cycle is organised (i. e. all (organisational) relationships between the student and the institution from enrolment to graduation)
- 4.7. whether the care services and student advisory services are suitable
- 4.8. in case of a cooperation with internal and external partners: how the cooperation is organised.

5. Resources

Deployment of resources (finances, personnel, facilities) to sustain HEI programmes

The expert team checks

- 5.1. the sustainability of funding and financial management
- 5.2. whether the number and qualification of academic staff (full-time and part-time) is adequate to ensure intended learning outcomes
- 5.3. which strategies and processes for the staff recruiting and staff development are used
- 5.4. whether amount and quality of facilities and equipment allow the provision of the programme (library, laboratories, teaching rooms, IT equipment)
- 5.5. whether the amount and quality of the resources provided are adequate to reach the objectives of the programme.

6. Quality assurance

Internal and external quality assurance of the programme

The expert team checks

- 6.1. how study programmes are designed and implemented and how their improvement is organised
- 6.2. whether a quality assurance concept of the programme is available and how it is connected to the quality assurance system of the institution
- 6.3. what kind of quality assurance processes and instruments for programmes are implemented
- 6.4. whether quality assurance is regularly, systematically and effectively used for quality enhancement
- 6.5. whether quality feedback loops are closed
- 6.6. how the persons responsible for the programme systematically collect, analyse and use relevant information
- 6.7. how stakeholders (students, teachers, administration, employers) are involved in quality assurance)
- 6.8. whether relevant programme information for students and prospective students is provided.

Annexe 2: ESG

European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

For the 2015 version, see

<https://www.enqa.eu/esg-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance-in-the-european-higher-education-area/>

Annexe 3: Overview of documents

Overview of documents submitted by IBCM between November 2024 and March 2025	
Document	Date of submission
SER and annexes 1 – 18	25 November 2024
SER and one annexe (study programme handbook)	8 January 2025
Complaint boxes	February 2025
IBCM QA Manual	February 2025
Evaluation Report from focus groups	February 2025
KPI Plan for 2025_IBCM College	February 2025
Course Evaluation Report for Academic Year 2023-24 (one for each faculty)	February 2025
revised SER	5 March 2025
Revised handbook Psychology	5 March 2025