



# **Institutional Review of Higher Education Institutions in Albania**

**Report of the Institutional Review of  
Marin Barleti University**

**December 2016**

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## About this review

The overall aim of Institutional Review is to assess the extent to which each HEI meets the Albanian State Quality Standards which came into force in 2011. Institutional Review is a peer-review process with each review team composed of a mix of UK reviewers appointed by QAA and Albanian reviewers appointed by the Albanian Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (APAAL). The review team is led by a QAA reviewer.

The resulting reports will serve not only for institutional accreditation based on the extent to which the HEI meets the standards, but will also inform the HEIs, Albanian government, the public and students how each HEI meets the standards. This report also helps the HEI to identify priorities for enhancement (the process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported).

The Albanian State Quality Standards have been grouped under five Evaluation Areas: the Organisation and its Management; Resourcing; the Curriculum; Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research; and Students and their Support. This report identifies features of good practice, recommendations, affirmations of actions in progress and weaknesses for each Evaluation Area, together with a judgement as to how well the HEI meets the standards. The judgements that the reviewers may assign are: standards are fully met; standards are substantially met; standards are partly met; or standards are not met.

Finally, the reviewers conclude by recommending a summary judgement to APAAL's Accreditation Council. This overall judgement is one of four levels:

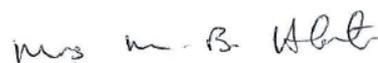
- **State Quality Standards are fully met**
- **State Quality Standards are substantially met**
- **State Quality Standards are partly met**
- **State Quality Standards are not met.**

As part of the report writing process, QAA has provided expert support to the review team by ensuring that the team supports the findings made in the report with evidence, and also by proofreading and summarising the full report for the summary below.

### Review team

Mrs Mandy Hobart

Lead Reviewer



Professor Jeremy Bradshaw

Reviewer



Dr. Gjergj Thomai

Reviewer



## **The context of this review**

HEI 'Marin Barleti University' or IAL 'Universiteti Marin Barleti' (UMB) is a private higher education institution situated in Tirana, Albania. The institution was established in 2005 as a non-public school of higher education, and in 2009 received approval from the Council of Ministers to offer Master's degrees. In 2012 the University was approved by the Ministry of Education and Sport to host a third cycle 'Doctorate in International Family and Community Studies' validated by Clemson University. The University fosters a humanistic approach to its provision in line with its mission, which is to prepare students to accomplish their professional goals to the benefit of the communities in which they work and live.

The University is made up of two faculties, the Faculty of Law, Social and Political Sciences, and the Faculty of Applied Sciences and Economics, along with three research institutes, offering 20 undergraduate and eight postgraduate qualifications. In the academic year 2015-16 the institution had 1,062 students enrolled on its full and part-time degree and diploma programmes.

The HEI was the first in Albania to organise its provision into major and minor programmes, offering a wider range of choice of qualifications ranging from diplomas to degrees. Provision includes first and second cycle qualifications in fields including information technologies, business law, marketing, international business, international relations, management, public administration, English, and social psychology. A range of professional development qualifications are also offered to support lifelong learning in business and professional community. Collaborative agreements have been established with a range of western universities in Europe and in the USA, and collaborative provision has been developed with universities in Bari and Rome.

## Summary report

HEI Marin Barleti University (MBU) is a private HEI located in Tirana, offering undergraduate first and second cycle programmes delivered in Albanian, and hosting a third cycle doctorate programme in English, validated and offered by Clemson University in the USA. The HEI has two faculties and delivers its provision across two sites, each with its own facilities including library, laboratories and classrooms, which are modern and well maintained. The Mission of MBU is to prepare students to accomplish their professional goals and to pursue their interests to the benefit of the community. MBU is also affiliated to international chairs, including the Jean Monnet Chair and the UNESCO Chair which provides opportunities for the institution to engage in social and scientific research. In 2015-16 MBU had 1,062 students enrolled on first and second cycle programmes.

A self-evaluation report was developed by a team at the HEI which included senior staff, academic and support staff and a student representative. Drafts were circulated to a wider audience for comment, before being finalised and approved by the Rector.

The visit took place on 22 and 23 September 2016. The review team was made up of two senior higher education reviewers from the UK and one experienced higher education member of staff from an Albanian institution. The review team was supported by the Review Manager and note-taker provided by the Albanian Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (APAAL). The review team was provided with a self-evaluation report and the portfolio of supporting evidence eight weeks in advance of the review visit, and supplemented by additional documentation requested by the team. In all 79 documents were considered. Through the reading of the documentation the team familiarized themselves with the structure, policies, management procedures and nature of teaching and research activity undertaken by the HEI. Evidence considered by the review team included the Statute of the University, Academic Regulations, Annual Reports, Admissions Policy, list of external agreements and memoranda, list of research projects, examples of programme information and evidence of deliberative meetings.

A series of meetings took place during the visit, which allowed the team to gain a clearer understanding of responsibilities, procedures and the views of staff and students. The team met with the Rector, senior managers, students, lecturers and administrative and support staff, as well as external partners and employers. Notes were taken at all meetings as a source of reference and evidence for the review team only. The review team was also given a tour of the campus, and viewed the libraries, teaching areas, laboratories, and offices, and provided with a demonstration of the University's online and electronic information systems. Having reviewed all evidence available, the team reached the conclusions set out below.

The HEI meets the standards for management and organisation. A clear deliberative structure, and the monitoring and evaluation of performance at faculty and institution level is in place which supports the effective organisation of programmes, including use of information gained through partnerships. Good practice was noted in the University's systematic approach in responding to issues raised by quality processes, and the use of partnerships to provide graduates with opportunities to undertake placements and internships, and to assist them to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding required for future employment. The Senate and the Rectorate work to ensure that institutional developments are carefully planned and implemented and that external partnerships and market intelligence are used to inform the programme offer.

Effective management of resources which meet standards was evidenced through transparent management of Human Resources, clear procedures for financial management in line with statutory requirements, and the introduction of electronic management

information systems which allows for tracking of student data. Facilities are of a good standard and comply with both programme needs and mandatory standards. The quality of academic and sports facilities, the improved intranet systems, the free support provided to high school students in preparation for final examinations represent good practice. The further development of the library to increase the number of titles available would further enhance provision.

Curriculum is managed to promote lifelong learning in line with the University's Mission, and students benefit from a range of internships and placements. Employment related skills development along with a range of continuing professional development awards represent good practice in supporting working professionals in a range of sectors. The work with employers to inform curriculum development, and the new online information systems which support effective analysis of student data are ongoing areas of work which ensure quality standards are met.

The University has in place effective systems for the management of teaching, learning, assessment and research which meet quality standards. The comprehensive approaches used to review provision annually and to follow up on identified areas for development is good practice. Good practices were also found in staff development and support for staff and students to engage in external projects.

Students are well supported to engage with academic activities as well as sports and cultural activities. Good practices were found in the orientation of students joining the university, sports and social clubs provision and the use of student feedback and consultation to inform improvements. Of particular note, is the range of information, advice and guidance provided to students to enhance and promote employability, which also extends to alumni. The continued development of library resources and online forums will further support student engagement.

The team concluded that the Quality Standards are fully met by the University in all five key areas covered.

## **Summary of findings**

### **Good practice**

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- MBU's systematic approach in responding to issues raised by quality processes through the construction and execution of action plans (paragraph 1.8)
- the use of partnerships to provide information and Market Research which assists the University in producing graduates with appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding (paragraph 1.11)
- the high standard of equipment in all teaching areas which provides students with a high quality learning environment (paragraph 2.9)
- the sports facilities which effectively support sports programmes, extracurricular activities and provide community facilities in the evenings (paragraph 2.9)
- the free provision and support provided to final year high school students to prepare them for their examinations and progression to higher education (paragraph 2.11)
- MBU's approach to lifelong learning, which is promoted through the use of elements of degree programmes including minor modules, to provide continuing professional development (paragraph 3.4)
- the management of student internships and placements, which effectively supports the development of practice-based knowledge (paragraph 3.10)

- the clear and comprehensive systems for the annual review of programmes and follow up of key actions(paragraph 4.1)
- MBU's systematic approach to staff development which motivates staff to engage with training and external opportunities(paragraph 4.6)
- the comprehensive support provided to academic staff to facilitate engagement with externally funded projects and the inclusion of students in related activities(paragraph 4.10)
- the clear orientation programme supports students to understand the range of guidance and advice available(paragraph 5.5)
- the consultation with students to inform annual reviews and enhancements(paragraph 5.8)
- the range of clubs and activities available to students including sporting, cultural and academic events enhance the student learning experience(paragraph 5.10)
- the ACC follows up on alumni who may not have found work and continues to support them with vacancy notifications, advice and guidance (paragraph 5.11).

## **Weaknesses**

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in relation to this Evaluation Area.

## **Recommendations**

The review team did not make any recommendations in relation to this Evaluation Area.

## **Affirmation of action being taken**

The review team affirms the following actions already in progress:

- the development of the new online systems for data management and information to promote broader access for staff and students(paragraph 2.13).

## **Summary of judgements for each Evaluation Area**

- 1 The Standards for the Organisation and its Management are fully met.
- 2 The Standards for Resourcing are fully met.
- 3 The Standards for the Curriculum are fully met.
- 4 The Standards for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research are fully met.
- 5 The Standards for Students and their Support are fully met.

## **Summary judgement**

The review team recommends to the Accreditation Council that at HEI Marin Barleti University the State Quality Standards are fully met.

## Detailed report

### Evaluation Area 1: The Organisation and its Management

1.1 The HEI has appropriate and effective systems in place for the organisation and management of its provision, which ensures quality standards are met. The governing bodies of HEI 'Marin Barleti University' (MBU) are the Rectorate, the Academic Senate, the Board and the Ethics Council. **[1 Statute, 3 Academic Regulations, 12 Board of Trustees Meeting]** The Rector is the chief governing authority, assisted by a Vice-Rector and an Executive Director, who together form the Rectorate. **[1 Statute, 3 Academic Regulations]** The Rector chairs the Academic Senate, which has responsibility for academic decisions. Its duties and authority are defined in the Statute which includes ensuring the vision of the University is supported. **[1 Statute, 66 Senate Calendar]** The membership of Academic Senate includes the Rector, Executive Director, Vice-Rector, deans of faculties, directors of research institutes, and the head of the Office for Quality and Standards. In order to provide adequate representation across the entire institution, there are also elected members, comprising two academic staff members from each faculty, one member of the administrative staff and two representatives of the Student Union. **[1 Statute; 11 List of Senate decisions 2011-2016]** The Academic Senate debates issues and new initiatives, and recommends amendments to the Statute as required. **[1 Statute]** The Ethics Council consists of seven elected members that represent the academic staff and provides advice to the Rector on ethical issues as needed. **[1 Statute; Chapter III Standard I.1 and Standard I.2]**

1.2 Shareholders in the institution are represented by the Board, which considers general institutional policy, management, development, and strategic planning. Board members are members of the general public who bring their experience in administrative, economic or sociocultural roles to the University. **[1 Statute, 67 Board Calendar]** Students are represented on the Senate through the election of two student representatives. **[1 MBU Statute article 35; Chapter III Standard I.2]** The Rectorate prepares proposed budgets in line with organisational priorities, which is discussed and approved by the Board. **[1 Statute; 13 List of Rectorate Decisions; M2 Rector; M3 Senior Staff; Chapter III Standard I.2]** Decisions are published on the intranet, and available to staff and students. **[M6a IT Demonstration; M4 Students; M5 Academic Staff]**

1.3 There are two faculties: the Faculty of Law, Social and Political Sciences with three departments and two research institutes; and the Faculty of Applied Sciences and Economics with three departments and one research institute. The faculty structures and staffing conform with legal provision for higher education and have been approved by the Ministry of Education and Sport, and their management is governed by appropriate regulation. **[1 Statute; 3 Academic Regulations; 44 Staff Handbook]** Each faculty has a Faculty Council which operates as a collegial decision-making body of the faculty and decides on the most important priorities linked to teaching, research and training. **[1 Statute; 6 Regulation of Department of Law; Chapter III Standard II.1]** Each Faculty Council consists of the Heads of Department and between five and seven members who are elected by the academic staff of the faculty. **[3 Academic Regulation; 4 Regulation of Applied Sciences and Economics Faculty]** There is also a Deanery for each faculty, comprising the Dean, Vice-Dean and the Heads of Departments whose function is to provide strategic oversight of the academic and research activity of the faculty. **[1 Statute' 3 Academic Regulation; 4 Regulation of Applied Sciences; Chapter III Standard I.2]**

1.4 The University structures provide a range of opportunity for constructive debate including senior post-holders, academic and administrative staff, and student representatives. Debates take place at programme, department, faculty and institution level,

with final authority resting with the Academic Senate and the Rector. **[1 Statute; 11 List of Senate Decisions 2011-16]** Staff are encouraged to contribute to developments and review discussions, and student representatives are encouraged to attend faculty meetings. **[5 Internal Regulation of the Department of Law; 4 Regulation of the Applied Sciences and Economics Faculty]** Student views are embedded in the decision-making process through programme evaluation, feedback on teaching, and institution-wide surveys. **[02 Student questionnaires; M4 Students; M7 Support Staff]** The involvement of staff and students was confirmed by senior management, teaching and support staff as well as students met by the review team. **[M2 Rector, M5 Teaching Staff, M4 Students, M7 Support Staff, 1 Statute; Chapter III Standard I.2 and Standard I.3]**

1.5 MBU has drafted a strategic development plan which sets out its aims and objectives up to 2020. **[2 Strategic Development Platform]** Development of the strategy and its ongoing review are informed by regional and national development priorities and by the extensive network of external links, including a number of international institutions with which MBU has agreements. The Rector and the Academic Senate review developments on an ongoing basis. **[M2 Rector, 15 List of Agreements & Memoranda; 1 Statute; Chapter III Standard I.5]** MBU also participates in a number of international activities **[19 List of activities 2011-16]** which build its engagement with new research and developments at a European and global level including through the Erasmus project. **[20 list of conferences; Chapter III Standard I.4]**

1.6 MBU developed its 2010-20 strategy in alignment with the wider Albanian state agenda for extending democratisation, instituting reform with a view to modernisation and pursuing full accession to Europe. **[2 Strategic Development Platform; M2 Rector]** The MBU's stated vision is to be a world-class university that aspires to think globally while remaining committed to local and regional priorities and the principles of lifelong learning, **[2 Strategic Development Platform; M2 Rector; M3 Senior Staff]** including through engagement with employers and professional bodies, against which, to date, progress has been made. **[10 List of activities; 41 Projects]** The 10-year strategy is underpinned by a five-year development plan and a three-year roadmap that provide detail and identify shorter-term objectives on the way to achieving the strategy. **[2 Strategic Development Platform; Chapter III Standard I.5]**

1.7 The Rector carries responsibility for ensuring that the strategic objectives of the Board are achieved. The Rector is assisted in this role by the Vice-Rector, who works closely with the deans of faculties and directors of research institutes to ensure that the institution's strategic goals are realised in its daily activities. **[M2, Rector; M3 Senior Staff, 1 Statute, 3 regulations]** The University aims to have measurable goals linked to objectives that are reviewed by the Rectorate and Senate. **[M3 Senior Staff, 76 Action Plans, 2 Strategy; Chapter III Standard I.5]**

1.8 The Commission for Quality Assurance is responsible for ensuring compliance with quality standards. The Unit for Internal Quality Assurance is composed of two offices – the Office for Bachelor Studies and the Office for Master's Studies, and responsible for developing and publicising evaluation activities across the University. **[1 Statute; 3 Academic Regulations; M3 Senior Staff; M7 Support Staff; Chapter III Standard I.4]** Annual Reports on academic and research activities are prepared by the Rectorate and submitted to the Ministry of Education and Sport. **[8 & 9 Annual Reports]** The reports draw on student performance data, admission and compliance with regulations. **[M4 Students, M7 Support Staff, 57 - 59 Decisions of Senate]** Programme and department reports are discussed at a department and institution level, and evaluated by ad hoc Commissions made up of academic and quality staff, external experts and students. **[13B 3, 7. 18, 31, 32, 43, 51-54, 57]** The Reports form the basis for the institutional evaluation and review and include recommendations for improvements. **[62 Work analysis for the Faculty of Law, Social**

**&Political Sciences; 76 Action planning linked to annual monitoring; Chapter III Standard I.6]** Reports are made available to staff and students through the institutions' intranet, and include information on analysis of compliance with quality standards, project requirements and collaborations. **[M2 Rector, M4 Meeting with Students; M5 Academic Staff]M6a IT Demonstration]** Progress with the institutional strategy and annual reports is monitored through the construction of action plans that are discussed at senior management and department level. **[M2 Rector, M3 Senior Staff, 76 Action Plans]**The review team identified as **good practice** the University's systematic approach in responding to issues raised by quality processes through the construction and execution of action plans and ongoing evaluation of progress. **[Chapter III Standard I.4; ESG Standard I.1]**

1.9 Market research is undertaken to inform new programme develop as well as the monitoring of demand for programmes. For example, the drafting of the Bachelor's degree in banking was informed by input from experts drawn from the sector. **[13 Rectors decisions section B - 3, 18; M6 External Partners and Employers]**MBU also consults with local high schools to gather information as to student requirements and likely progression aspirations, and monitors applications for subject provision. **[M6 External Partners and alumni, M2 Rector, M5 Teaching, M3 Senior staff, 36 Student enrolments; 39 Exam, Course, Grade evidence, 41.2 IEB Project and Activities; Chapter III Standard I.4]** Students have access to advice through the Alumni and Careers Office on gaining employment following graduation. **[31 Alumni & Careers Office Strategic Plan]**

1.10 MBU is working to develop a collaboration network at national, regional and international levels that forms an integral part of the institutional strategy. **[2 Strategic Development Platform]** Partnership with local institutions has benefited the students through frequent guest lectures and internship and placement opportunities, as well as participation in external projects. **[M3 Senior Staff, 19 Activities, 20 Lectures, conferences and workshops; IEB Project and Activities]**MBU has a range of different types of agreements, especially where students are sent for placements. **[M3 Senior Staff, 15 List of agreements, 17 List of Mobility]**MBU has established links with regional and international organisations and universities including Clemson University and the University of Arkansas Clinton School, as well as with Italian universities. **[15 list of institutional agreements, 16 List of International Activities; Chapter III Standard II.1]**The University also hosts a doctorate in International Family and Community Studies, offered by Clemson University through the medium of English. **[8 Annual report, 2 Strategy, 15 Agreements; Chapter III Standard II.1]**MBU also has working agreements with European universities which facilitates engagement in visits and exchanges as well as agreements for working on joint projects and joint degrees, and in particular with the University of Bari and the University of Naples for collaborative provision. **[15 List of Agreements and Memoranda; M3 Senior Staff; M5 Academic Staff; Chapter III Standard III.2]**

1.11 The HE uses its external partnerships to inform curriculum development, gain market information and provide employment opportunities. External members of the Board discuss and inform the development of partnerships which can add value to the students' learning opportunities and employability. **[19 List of activities; 15 List of agreements; M6 External Partners and Employers]**There is, where possible, a focus on mutual benefit, with the University offering the use of its facilities for employer training, as well as offering opportunities for employers and professional practitioners to act as part-time lecturers. **[M3 Senior Staff, M6 employers and alumni, 15 list of agreements, 41 IEB Activities]** The Alumni and Careers Office compiles and updates employer and alumni contacts which forms the basis for a diverse network of work-based contacts. The intelligence gathered and contact details help to provide students with placement and employment opportunities. Further, through regular contact with alumni, the Alumni and Careers Office is able to provide ongoing intelligence on market needs and opportunities for employment and course development. Students reported that the support with finding placements and work was

ongoing and helpful. **[31 Alumni and Career Office Strategic Plan; 28 Data about Alumni graduates; M7 Support Staff; M6 External Partners and Employer]**The review team identified as **good practice** the use of partnerships to provide information and market research which assists the University in producing graduates with appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding.**[Chapter III Standard III.1 and Standard III.3]**

1.12 Staff are encouraged to attend international conferences and to take part in lecturer exchange programmes, and the University has participated in the international Tempus project among other initiatives. **[M3 Senior Staff, 15 list of institutional agreements; 16 List of International Activities; 17 List of Mobility]** Staff are supported to take part in exchange visiting lectureships, including through the Fulbright Programme with American Universities. **[17 List of Mobility agreements & data; 16 List of international activity participation; 10 List of Staff UMB Braingain Fulbright; M5 Academic Staff]** This work supports the broader development of MBU and its staff and as well as providing opportunities to build institutional links.**[Chapter III Standard III.3]**

1.13 MBU aims to be Bologna-compliant and to offer internationally-oriented curricula.**[2 Strategy, SER p9]** The HEI states it is open to admitting students from other countries, and has hosted some American students for summer visits and activities. **[15 list of institutional agreements; 16 List of International Activities]** Institutional data shows that the number of student exchanges is increasing year on year.**[Institutional data]** A number of lectures have been delivered by foreign teachers and visiting academic staff.**[15 list of institutional agreements; 16 List of International Activities; Chapter III Standard III.4]**

1.14 MBU meets the quality standards for management and its organisation as evidenced by the deliberative meetings structure, and monitoring and evaluation of performance at faculty and organisation level. The Senate and the Rectorate work to ensure that institutional developments are carefully planned and implemented and that partnership and market intelligence are used to inform the programme offer. The systematic consideration of issues and action plans, and work with partners to support practice-based learning, represent good practice.

## **Findings**

### **Good practice**

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the University's systematic approach in responding to issues raised by quality processes through the construction and execution of action plans(paragraph 1.8)
- the use of partnerships to provide information and Market Research which assists the University in producing graduates with appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding(paragraph 1.11).

### **Weaknesses**

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in relation to this Evaluation Area.

### **Recommendations**

The review team did not make any recommendations in relation to this Evaluation Area.

### **Affirmation of action being taken**

The review team did not affirm any actions already in progress in relation to this Evaluation Area.

## **Judgement**

**The Standards for the Organisation and its Management are fully met.**

## Evaluation Area 2: Resourcing

2.1 MBU has a clear organisation structure which sets out the responsibilities for the management of resources. Staff vacancies are advertised on the University website, social networks and newspapers. **[18 Advertisement for vacant jobs; 74 Statement on evidence; 1 Statute]** Overall responsibility for the management of recruitment lies with the Rector, with decisions discussed and ratified by the Board and the Senate. **[1 Statute; 11 List of Senate meetings; 12 Board of Trustees]** The recruitment policy and criteria are managed by Human Resources in accordance with statutory requirements and legal regulations. **[1 Statute; 3 Academic Regulations; Law No. 9741 2007; 13 List of Rector's Decisions, Orders and Directives]** Where appropriate, the University seeks to recruit former students and employers into part-time teaching roles. **[10 List of staff; M3 Senior Staff; M5 Academic Staff; M6 External Partners; M7 Support Staff]** Staff with qualifications and teaching experience gained abroad are recruited to further assure the quality of teaching and research. Experience of teaching in a Western university is a requirement for professors. **[10 List of Staff; 1 Statute; 3 Academic Regulations]** The organisation chart is accessible on the internet for all stakeholders. **[77 Website links - organisation chart and diagram of decision making; Chapter III Standard IV.1; ESG 1.5 Teaching Staff]**

2.2 Integration of new staff is supported by Human Resources as set out in the HEI Statute, including familiarisation with organisation functions and facilities. **[1 Statute; 03 staff questionnaire; SED p.19]** New academic staff are supported by a more experienced colleague who acts as a mentor, and encouraged to engage in a range of activities including training, workshops and social events. **[19 List of Activities; 20 List of Conferences, workshops and training activities; M5 Academic Staff; M7 Support Staff]** As part of the University integration procedures, both academic and support staff are involved in the production of course materials and brochures for prospective students, and in supporting Open Days and events. **[45 & 46 Brochures; 47 Bachelor Psychology; 48 Bachelor Sociology; 74 Statement on Additional Evidence; M7 Support Staff; Chapter III Standard IV.2]**

2.3 MBU operates a policy of periodic assessment of its staff skills, which also impacts on promotion applications. **[40 Template assessment forms; 8 & 9 Annual Reports]** The process is facilitated by Human Resources and results included in annual reports, with a particular focus on matters relating to research and external project activities. **[8 Annual Report 2014-15; 9 Report on the scientific research and projects 2015]** The Action Plan for 2013-14 developed by the Rectorate, for example, sets out the requirements for departments to monitor the performance of all staff. **[75 Action planning linked to Annual Monitoring; M2 Rector]** The resulting training plan reflects identified staff development needs and planned institution developments. **[20 List of Conferences, Workshop & Training /B, C; 2 Strategic Development Platform; Chapter III Standard IV.3]**

2.4 MBU encourages academic staff to engage in programmes and projects with universities in Europe and the USA through a range of memoranda of collaboration. **[16 List of international activity; 17 List of Mobility Agreements; M5 Academic Staff; M3 Senior Staff]** Open lectures delivered by experienced MBU staff and guest lecturers from other institutions are open to all staff. **[20 List of Conferences, workshops and training; M3 Senior Staff; M5 Academic Staff]** Lecturers also have the opportunity to study for qualifications (up to one year) in foreign universities. **[17/ B list of Mobility agreements; M3 Meeting Staff; M5 Academic Staff]** On a more local level, MBU organises a range of activities to promote social dialogue and cooperation with different institutions. **[1 Statute, M4 Students; M5 Academic Staff; 19 List of Activities; Chapter III Standard IV.3]** Staff are aware of their responsibilities and line management in accordance with the regulations set out in Staff Handbooks, which include teaching workload requirements, programme regulations and institution guidelines. **[1 Statute; 3 Academic Regulations; 13 List of**

**Rectors' Decisions, Orders and Directives; 70 Teaching hours and workload; M3 Senior Staff; M7 Support Staff; Chapter III Standard II.2]**

2.5 Through its Statute, regulations and manuals, the University demonstrates a clear social development policy. **[1 Statute; M3 Senior Staff]** Staff and students are encouraged to engage in social projects as well as roundtable discussions and workshops. Organised events promote institutional engagement with social and community development, including through sports activities. **[41 Projects; 42 BIRD Activities; M4 Students; 1 Statute; M5 Academic Staff; M7 External Partners]** To support staff welfare, MBU has a policy of life and health insurance which includes agreements with private companies to offer access to medical services for its staff. **[15/A List of Agreements; M3 Senior Staff; Chapter III Standard IV.4]**

2.6 Financial oversight and budget planning are managed in accordance with statutory regulations. The Rectorate is responsible for drafting the budget following the rules and standards for public financial management. **[51 Budgetary /Financial Statements; M7 Support Staff]** The proposed budget is submitted to the Senate for discussion and approval, and thereafter to the Board for final ratification. **[1 Statute; 51 Budgetary /Financial Statements; 11 List of Senate Discussions; 13 Board of Trustees Meeting]** Once agreed, budget allocations are delegated to faculties and to departments. **[M 2, Rector; M3 Senior Staff; M5 Academic Staff]** The implementation of financial policies is the responsibility of the Finance Office which operates in accordance with legal requirements, and produces financial statements that are transparent to external stakeholders. **[51 Budget and Financial Statements; M3 Senior Staff; Chapter III Standard VI.2]** Financial and budgetary control is supported by internal and external audits. Each fiscal year, balance sheets and financial statements are audited by expert accountants, and reviewed by Tax Office experts prior to external audit. **[1 Statute; 51 Budgetary/ Financial Statements; Chapter III Standard IV.1 and Standard IV.3]**

2.7 MBU has an intranet and management information system providing access to course information and a data-base of student enrolments and results. **[49 Intranet; M6a IT Demonstration]** The system is managed by the IT Office with input from admissions and faculty staff. **[M6a IT Demonstration; 29 Internal regulation of student data registration]** The intranet is the main repository for student and staff data, information on study programmes, academic offers, and relevant legal documentation as well as associated reports. **[49 Intranet; M6a IT Demonstration]** Alumni information is also recorded on the system to inform ongoing communications with graduates. **[28 Data about Alumni; Chapter III Standard VII.1]**

2.8 Staff and students have access to online resources through the intranet, including course information and materials. **[75 Information on Campus 1 resources; 44 Staff Handbook]** Computer systems have been set up in cooperation with an external company who have assisted MBU to install both appropriate software and to equip both campuses with computers. **[15A List of Agreements; 4.2 IEG Project & Activities]** Students have access to computers in laboratories, computer science rooms and the library, as well through laptops made available for their use. Lesson plans and teaching support materials are also made available online. **[75 Information on Campus 1; M7 Support Staff; M4 Students; Chapter III Standard VII.2; ESG 1.6 Learning Resources and Student Support]**

2.9 MBU is responsible for keeping and updating a record of all facilities, which are maintained to a high standard. MBU keeps a record of all facilities across both its campuses, and has plans in place for the expansion of its facilities. **[2 Strategic Development Platform; Chapter III Standard VII.3; 15/A, List of Agreements; 79 Information on Campus 1; M2 Rector; site visits]** The high standard of equipment in teaching and learning

areas includes modern furnishings, computers and projectors. To obtain feedback on the quality of logistics and premises, a number of student surveys are organised, and their results inform the ongoing development of provision and facilities. **[40 Questionnaire templates, M3 Meeting with Senior Staff; M5 Academic Staff; M7 Support Staff]** The equipment in all teaching areas which provides students with a high quality learning environment is **good practice**. Libraries and conference rooms support teaching activities as well as conferences, workshops and other events. **[site visit; 20 list of Conferences; M7 Support Staff]** Recent developments include the building of a sports hall to support the physical education and sports provision, and the leasing of additional premises to support the full range of sports studies. **[01 SED p 22; site visit; 2 Strategic Development Platform; M2 Rector; M7 Support Staff]** The new sports hall is also made available to the local community in the evenings. **[M6 External Partners]** The building of the sports facilities to support sports provision, extracurricular activities and provide local community facilities represents **good practice**. MBU also pursues a policy of preserving its academic, cultural and scientific heritage as part of its ongoing responsibilities for effective resource management. **[38 The policy of the preservation of institutional heritage; Chapter III Standard VII.4]**

2.10 While the University has libraries on both of its campuses, only a relatively small number of books are available in hard copy, although a larger number of texts are available electronically to support students on all programmes. However, as yet electronic texts are only accessible on campus, though the University is working to make the library more accessible, course specific and efficient. **[site visit; M4 Students; 02 Student Survey]** The staff and students also have access to online titles through agreements with Clemson University, the Ottenheimer Library at Arkansas University and the Oregon Electronic Library. **[site visit; M7 Support Staff; 01 SED p33; 15 List of Agreements; 16 List of international activity]** The lack of accessibility of library resources to students other than through the IT facilities on campus is identified as an area for development to enhance broader accessibility. The review team suggests an increase in the range and number of titles and textbooks should be made available through the campus libraries to support studies for undergraduate students. **[Chapter III Standard VII.5]**

2.11 MBU demonstrates **good practice** in the support for high school students in their final year in preparing for the State Maturity Exams, which supports their progression into higher education, both at MBU and other universities. **[M3 Senior Staff; M5 Academic Staff; M7 Support Staff; 01 SER p 23]** Free sessions offered to high school students include English Language tests, subject-related preparation and use and access to broader institution facilities. Such engagement demonstrates MBU's commitment to supporting access to higher education, and engagement with the needs of the local community. Feedback is also sought from students to help further develop provision. **[M2 Rector; 40 Questionnaire templates; M3 Senior Staff, 01 SER p 23; M5 Academic Staff; Chapter III Standard VII.6]**

2.12 Both campuses are situated in the city's green belt and the facilities meet statutory requirements. Premises are fitted with air-conditioning/heating and building materials prevent humidity and noise pollution. **[01 SER p24; 1 Statute; site visit; Information on Campus 1]** Teaching, technical premises, libraries, audio-visual rooms, and laboratories offer good quality accommodation, with good acoustics and equipment. For the IT and Architecture Department provision, MBU provides a suitable technical infrastructure including software programmes. **[75 Information on Campus 1; site visit; M4 Students; M5 Academic Staff]** Floorplans show the height of teaching rooms is above 3.0m, and windows occupy a surface that exceeds 20 per cent of the floor surface. **[42 BIRD Projects and Activities; 79 Floor Plans & site visit; SED p.24]** All buildings conform to requirements for emergency exit stairways and fire protection. The University has generators and water storage tanks on both campuses. **[42 Technical Fire Protection Certificate, Environmental Plan; site visit; M3**

**Senior Staff; M5 Academic Staff; M7 Support Staff; Chapter III Standard V.1]** Staff are provided with office space, with senior staff having individual offices, while more junior staff are provided with shared office space. **[75 Campus information; site visit]**

2.13 The Rector's office is responsible for maintaining all relevant documentation related to the management of the University. Documents are kept in hard copy and include records of the decisions made by the Senate and the Board. **[M2 Rector; M7 Support Staff; 8 Annual Report; 49 Intranet; 74 Statement on Additional Evidence]** At department level, the coordinator keeps hard copy of the syllabi and curricula of the Bachelor and Master programmes. **[M3 Senior Staff; M5 Academic Staff; 24 Curricula; 27 Master and Bachelors Programmes]** The introduction of the electronic database supports the recording of student applications, registrations, prior qualifications and grades in line with legal requirements. **[M6a IT Demonstration; M7 Support Staff; 3 Academic Regulations]** The University Secretariat maintains a permanent student registry (in paper and in electronic format) including information on student evaluations/assessments and any changes that occurred during the programme. MBU is moving to electronic storage which will improve accessibility of information, and support monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems. **[29 Internal regulation on student data; M7 Support Staff]** Teaching plans and obligatory course credits for different levels are accessible to staff and students. **[49 Intranet; M6a IT Demonstration; M3 Senior Staff; M5 Academic Staff; M7 Support Staff]** The team affirms that the development of the new online systems for data management and information, which will promote broader access for staff and students. **[ESG 1.7 Information Management and Chapter I Standard V.2]**

2.14 The quality standards for Resourcing are fully met. The Institution offers very well equipped and maintained teaching accommodation and sports facilities along with new online systems for accessing information, which enhance the learning experience and represent good practice. The support for final year high school students in preparation for final examinations is also good practice. Library facilities would benefit from further development including off-site access. Systems for data management and information continue to be developed to offer greater accessibility.

## **Findings**

There is evidence to indicate that the University is meeting the standards.

### **Good practice**

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the high standard of equipment in all teaching areas which provides students with a high quality learning environment (paragraph 2.9)
- the sports facilities which effectively support sports programmes of study, extracurricular activities and provide local community facilities (paragraph 2.9)
- the free provision and the support provided to final year high school students to prepare them for their examinations and progression to higher education (paragraph 2.11).

### **Weaknesses**

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in relation to this Evaluation Area.

### **Recommendations**

The review team did not make any recommendations in relation to this Evaluation Area.

### **Affirmations**

The review team affirms the following action already in progress:

- the development of the new online systems for data management and information which will promote broader access for staff and students (paragraph 2.13).

## **Judgement**

**The Standards for Resourcing are fully met.**

## Evaluation Area 3: The Curriculum

3.1 Clear systems are operated to ensure the quality standards applying to the curriculum are met. The University offers Bologna-compliant first and second cycle programmes in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Sport, provisions of the Albanian legislation, and stipulations of its own Statute and Academic Regulations. **[SER p27, 1 Statute]** Since 2012, it also hosts a doctoral programme in Social Science through collaboration with Clemson University. **[M3 Meeting with Senior Staff, SER p28, 62 Fac Law and Social Science report, 65, Annual report, 15 List of agreements, 52/A Accreditations]** Bachelor programmes are structured as major and minor subjects, which MBU claims makes the awards more attractive to students and employers. The structure allows students to tailor their programmes according to the requirements of their intended career. **[SER p27, 1 Statute, 6 Regulations for bachelors in law]** MBU provides clear information about its provision which is available through its website and through open days and programme information leaflets. **[M4 Students; website -[www.umb.edu.al](http://www.umb.edu.al) ; 45 & 46 Brochures]** A clear admissions system is operated which reviews students' capabilities as evidenced by prior academic achievement, and categorised by MBU's admissions and academic staff. **[36 Admissions Policy and criteria; 6 Regulation of Masters Programme; M7 Support Staff; Chapter I Standard I.1; ESG 1.8 Public Information]**

3.2 Student numbers have increased rapidly over recent years (544 in 2013/14 to 1,026 in 2015/16), and senior staff indicated that the emphasis is now on quality rather than quantity of intake. **[M3 Meeting with Senior Staff, Institutional data]** Despite the recent growth in numbers, MBU is still operating within its capacity and staff to student ratios are healthy and in line with statutory requirements. **[M3 Meeting with Senior Staff, Institutional data]** The Statute allows the institution to engage in lifelong learning, through the provision of short-term study programmes, either independently, or in collaboration with public or private bodies. **[1 Statute, 15 List of Agreements and Memoranda]** The Division of Applied Sciences offers a wide range of short courses on Business and Management, Informatics (mostly courses in common software packages, such as Microsoft Office), English Language, and a Graduate Certificate in International Family and Community Studies (with Clemson University, USA). **[Evidence 2 Strategic plan, 52 Accreditations; Chapter I Standard I.2]**

3.3 The research institutes have a number of projects that involve continuing education, which form part of MBU development strategy. **[2 strategic Development Platform; M3 Senior Staff]** The Albanian Institute for Public Affairs works closely with schools to provide training and continuing professional development courses. **[41.1 AIPA annual report; M6 Meeting with Employers]** The Barleti Institute for Research and Development hosts projects such as the Tirana Innovation Hub project. These projects aim to promote and support social inclusion and sustainable employment programmes for young people through capacity building and partnership development. **[41, BIRD annual report; M6 Meeting with Employers; Meeting with Students]** The Institute of Education Barleti has a large number of training modules in pre-university education for teachers and education heads. **[41.2 IEB annual report]** MBU also works with institutions of pre-university education in joint activities and projects that promote the University and help to prepare high school students for admission to undergraduate provision. **[Evidence 41; Evidence 41.1; Evidence 41.2; Evidence 20; Chapter I Standard I.3 and Standard I.4]**

3.4 Academic minor modules have been offered as short courses for parties outside of the institution and are now also offered as short-term preparatory studies and elective studies for students in fields such as Public Administration, Psychology, Finance, Economics, Sociology and Education. Upon completion of these preparatory courses, attendees are issued a certificate. **[M2 Self-evaluation team, M3 Senior staff, 3 regulations, 52 accreditations]** The review team considers MBU's approach to lifelong

learning to be **good practice**, which is promoted through the use of elements of degree programmes including minor modules to provide continuing professional development and access to higher education, as well as supporting employability knowledge and understanding. **[Chapter I Standard I.4]**

3.5 Programme approval and review processes ensure that study programmes are offered in line with local, national and international trends. They include consideration of local and national requirements, as informed by agencies, businesses and ministries, and by data on employment of graduates. **[M3 senior staff, 43 QA policy, 61 programme analysis, 61 programme analysis]** MBU also collaborates with higher education institutions in Albania, Europe and beyond. **[15 Agreements, 58 programme approval, 59 programme approval]** These partnerships contribute to the programmes of study offered by MBU, ensuring they reflect current national and international trends and enhance employability. **[M2 Self-evaluation team, M5 teaching staff]** Teaching staff confirmed that engagement with alumni is important in ensuring that the programmes provide students with the necessary skills for employment. **[M5 Academic Staff; 31 Alumni & Careers Office Strategic Plan; 28 Data about Alumni]** This was further confirmed by employers who had worked closely with the University to inform and develop the curriculum. **[M6 Employers]** Many of the projects coordinated by the research institutes generate labour market information that is used to further refine the curricula. **[41.1 IPA Projects and Activities, 41.2 IEB Project and Activities, 42 BIRD Project and Activities]** The review team commends the University's work with employers which constructively informs curriculum development. **[Chapter I Standard I.4; ESG 1.2 Design and Approval of Programmes]**

3.6 The organisation of programmes at undergraduate level into major and minor modules supports an integrated approach to teaching and learning. Subject specialisms can be brought together to reflect areas of interest, and support the management of teaching, research and administrative roles of individual lecturers. **[1 Statute; 3 Academic Regulations; M5 Academic Staff]** Teaching workloads are managed in accordance with statutory requirements set out by the Ministry of Education and Sport, and reflected in employment contracts. Academic staff are able to take on additional teaching where they do not have larger research commitments. **[SER p. 29; 37 Workload for full and part-time lecturers; 44 Staff Handbook; M5 Academic Staff; Chapter I Standard I.1]**

3.7 MBU provides easily understandable information about its programmes for students. **[45 & 46 Brochures; 47 Bachelor Psychology; 48 Bachelor Sociology]** During the first week of the academic year, lecturers provide students with the course syllabus, including detailed information on the course topics, evaluation and associated assignments. **[25 curriculum, 26 Detailed course schedule]** The objectives of the study programmes are set out in the regulations of every study programme. **[6 bachelors prog regulations, 7 masters prog regulations, 27 example programmes]** The content of the study programmes, including a timetable of classes, is made available to students on MBU's website. **[SER, IT demonstration, M4 students, M7 Support staff]** Students reported being satisfied with the clear and sufficient information available to them from their teaching staff and from the Institution's website. **[M4 Students; 02 Student Survey]** MBU also runs an orientation session, 'the Week of Accommodation', that introduces new students to the University and their studies. This was well received by students. **[SER p30, M4 Students, 16 Accommodation Week programme]** The review team confirms the continuing development of the online information system which enhances access to reliable programme information for students. **[Chapter I Standard I.6]**

3.8 First cycle study programmes provide students with subject knowledge, general scientific methods and principles. **[6 first cycle regulations, 24.2 BA programme, 26 Course schedule, 27 programme examples, 47 bachelors programme, 48 bachelors programme]** Both first and second cycle programmes include opportunities for research and

practice-based experience. **[7 Second cycle regs, 24.1 Masters curriculum, 22 practicum dossier, 24 practicum dossier, 60 programme analysis]** Students reported that they are provided with a wide range of opportunities to participate in projects, and to take part in research and internships, and felt well supported by the University. They consider the balance between theory and practice in their programmes to be about right, and appreciate the information they receive on student transfer, credits and progression. **[M4 Students; 34 Internal regulation on transfer of students; Chapter I Standard I.7 and Standard I.11]**

3.9 Staff and student mobility are considered priorities for MBU, and study programmes are put together to support students engaging in exchanges and external activities. The programme structures incorporating major and minor modules support such mobility. **[M1 SER Team, M5 Academic Staff]** MBU makes good use of its wide range of partnerships for staff and student exchange and proactively includes students in projects whenever possible. **[M3 Senior Staff, 15 list of institutional agreements; 16 List of International Activities; 17 List of Mobility; Chapter I Standard I.10]** Institutional data reports show increasing student mobility, which for second cycle students is supported by the requirement to take an internationally recognised test in a major European language such as English, French, German, Spanish or Italian. **[8 Annual Report;]** The enhancement and diversity of teaching methods is supported by the institution, and students have opportunities to attend open lectures, round-table discussions and to meet with representatives of external organisations. Teaching is delivered by staff who are affiliated with one of the MBU research institutes, and over 70 per cent of teaching staff are full-time employees. **[20 List of conferences; 16 List of international activity participation; 37 Workload for full and part-time teaching staff; Chapter I Standard I.8]** Practice-based learning is a feature of a number of undergraduate programmes, and each student is expected to compile a 'Practicum Dossier' to support their applied vocational and professional learning. **[22 & 23 Practicum Dossiers; Chapter I Standard I.9]**

3.10 To help prepare students for employment, the University offers a large number of internships, placements and projects in external organisations and has multiple agreements in place to allow these to take place. **[15 Agreements, M4 Meeting with Students, M5 Meeting with Teaching staff, M6 Meeting with Meeting with Employers]** As previously noted, practicums form part of many of the study programmes offered by the Institution and students report that they find these useful and of value. **[24 & 25 Curriculum contents: 26 Course schedule, 27 Masters & Bachelor Programme Examples]** Students felt well supported in the development of professional skills and knowledge, **[M4 Meeting with Students; 02 Student questionnaire]** and employers reported that the students were well prepared and motivated. **[M6 Meeting with Employers, 28, 23 practicum dossiers]** The review team considers the management of student internships and placements which effectively supports the development of practice and practice-based knowledge to be **good practice. [Chapter 1 Standard I.2]**

3.11 The management and development of the curriculum delivered by MBU meets the quality standards. The University has sound systems in place for the development of the curriculum and works constructively with external partners and employers. The approach to lifelong learning through professional development provision and the management of internships which support students to gain practice-based knowledge represent good practice. The continued work with employers to inform curriculum developments and the online information systems which provide students with accessible information were confirmed as effective.

## **Findings**

### **Good practice**

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- MBU's approach to lifelong learning, which is promoted through the use of elements of degree programmes including minor modules to provide continuing professional development(paragraph 3.4)
- themanagement of student internships and placements, which effectively supports the development of practice-based knowledge(paragraph 3.10).

### **Weaknesses**

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in relation to this Evaluation Area.

### **Recommendations**

The review team did not make any recommendations in relation to this Evaluation Area.

### **Affirmation of action being taken**

The review team did not affirm any actions already in progress in relation to this Evaluation Area.

## **Judgement**

**The Standards for the Curriculum are fully met.**

## Evaluation Area 4: Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research

4.1 Effective mechanisms are in place to manage the quality and standards of teaching and research to meet quality standards. MBU's provision is clearly described in a range of hard copy and online documentation available through the website and intranet. **[25 curriculum, 26 Detailed course schedule, 6 bachelors prog regulations, 7 masters prog regulations, 27 example programmes, M6a IT demonstration, M4 students, M7 Support staff]** Syllabi, semester schedules and examination questions are produced by departments, faculties and academic secretaries to ensure that full documentation for the management of programmes is in place. **[1 Statute; 3 Academic Regulations; M4 Academic Staff; M7 Support Staff]** Study programmes are subject to continuous improvement through a process of annual review that forms part of a review of each of the programmes. Programme review includes consideration of the labour market intelligence, the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, student feedback, transferable skills development and marketing. **[60 Annual prog review; 61 Analysis of the Department; 62 Work analysis for the Faculty of Law & Social & Political Sciences]** These reviews are then considered during the departmental review, which looks at all research and teaching activities, including student performance. **[61 Departmental review]** These in turn feed into faculty review. **[62 Work analysis for the Faculty of Law & Social & Political Sciences]** The review team considers the clear and comprehensive systems for the annual review of programmes and follow up on key actions to be **good practice.** **[Chapter I Standard II.1 and Standard II.3; ESG 1.9 Ongoing Monitoring and Review of Programmes]**

4.2 Assessment requirements and regulations are set out in the Statute and Academic Regulations in compliance with the quality standard. **[1 Statute article 74; 3 Academic Regulations articles 49 - 56]** Exam questions are approved by the Head of Department and exam results and student profiles of achievement are kept by the faculty academic secretaries and released to students through a confidential online system. **[M4 Academic Staff; M7 Support Staff; 3 Academic Regulations]** Students are entitled to appeal results with such complaints being addressed to the Head of Department. **[5 Internal Regulation of the Department of Law; Regulation of first cycle study programme in law, [Chapter I Standard II.2]**

4.3 In addition to annual review of study programmes, the University uses a range of procedures for the assessment and monitoring of its teaching process. These include student assessment, teaching appraisal, questionnaires and analysis of student performance. **[01SER p35, 40 Questionnaire template, 61 Department review, 62 Faculty review, 43 QA Policy, 64 Observation of teaching]** Lecturers are observed with their groups and provided with feedback on their performance. **[Chapter I Standard II.3]**

4.4 Staff appraisal includes observation of teaching and inspection of course documentation, and is carried out on an annual basis. The Internal Quality Assurance Team observes teaching and prepares an assessment report based on information collected in the surveys, peer observation and Head of Department observation. **[64 Observation of Teaching]** The reports are then considered by the relevant Head of Department who prepares a summary of the evaluation and defines the goals for the prospective academic year. This summary is discussed with the lecturer and is signed by both parties, who will use the data as part of the evaluation of the course. **[M3 Senior staff, 43 QA Policy, 64 Observation of Teaching; Chapter I Standard II.4]**

4.5 Two weeks before the end of each semester, the Office for Quality and Standard Assurance in Bachelor Studies surveys student opinion on their programmes of study by way of a questionnaire. The data is then analysed for each course and considered at

department and Senate level. **[40 Questionnaire, 65 Annual Report on activity, 11 Senate Decisions, 43 QA Policy, 62 Faculty review]** Students told the review team that they had observed changes to the teaching provision in response to student feedback through the questionnaires, and recognised that their voice informed changes and improvements in the delivery of learning and teaching. **[M4 Students; Chapter I Standard II.4]**

4.6 Student questionnaire data contributes to the 360-degree evaluation of members of the teaching staff and is used to tailor training and development activities for teaching staff. **[M5 Academic staff, M3 Senior staff, 62 Faculty review]** There are many opportunities available for staff training and development, including regular staff training sessions run by experienced in-house lecturers, or by guest lecturers invited from domestic or foreign universities. **[19 List of activities]** Each employee is entitled to take up to seven days of paid leave per academic year for attendance at conferences, seminars and training sessions, and departments encourage and support their staff to develop their teaching skills. **[M5 Academic staff, M3 Senior staff, 1 Statute, 20 Workshops and courses, 68 Staff manual]** The team considers MBU's systematic approach to staff development which motivates staff to engage with training and external opportunities to be **good practice.** **[Chapter I Standard II.4]**

4.7 Staff workloads are kept under review. Teaching, research work and administrative responsibilities are weighted according to the job position and determined by the line manager. Teaching workload is based on domestic legislation and is linked to the academic title and the experience of the teacher, and averages out at around 300 hours per year. **[37 workload, 70 teaching hours, 68 staff manual; Chapter II Standard I.1]**

4.8 MBU sets out its research priorities in the annual plans and reports. **[M3 Senior staff, 9 Report of research activity; Institutional Data; 03 Staff questionnaire]** The University has three research institutes that facilitate interdepartmental cooperation in research. **[M1 SER Team; 2 Strategic Development Platform]** These institutes are: the Barleti Institute for Research and Development, a centre for interdisciplinary research in the field of economic, scientific, technological, social and cultural development; **[42 Bird Report, [www.bird.edu.al](http://www.bird.edu.al)]** the Albanian Institute for Public Affairs, a centre for research related to the democratisation, good governance, socioeconomic development, and European integration process; **[41.1 IPA Report, [www.aipa.al](http://www.aipa.al)]** and the Barleti Education Institute IEB, that focuses on education development and prospects, curricula and didactic innovations. **[41.2 IEB Report, [www.education.umb.al](http://www.education.umb.al)]** Staff are attached to one of the research institutes in line with their department and subject specialism, and expected to carry out research as appropriate. **[4 Regulation of Applied Sciences & Economics Faculty; M5 Academic Staff]** Staff undertake individual research with results presented at a minimum of one MBU conference, publish papers in the institution's 'Geopolitics' journal, or undertake team research with other staff and students which inform and develop the research and knowledge base of the research institute, and may further inform teaching and learning, with results also being published. **[71 List of scientific works published; 9 Report on scientific research and projects 2015; Chapter II Standard I.1]**

4.9 Departments are the fundamental units of the University and, as such, play an important role in promoting the research activity of their staff. **[4 Regulation of Applied Sciences and Economics Faculty, 5 Internal Regulation of the Department of Law]** Departments set their research priorities in liaison with the research institutes. **[SER p37, 4 Regulation of Applied Sciences and Economics Faculty, 5 Internal Regulation of the Department of Law; Chapter II Standard I.2]** MBU encourages and assists staff to apply for external funding, typically for projects concerned with student education, professional development of lecturers, or projects which tackle issues important to society, such as social, economic, technological and social development, democratisation and good governance, or innovations in education. **[42 Bird Report, 41.1 IPA Report, 41.2 IEB Report; M6**

**Employers; M7 Support Staff]** The research institutes have had considerable success in attracting external funds, including awards from the Tempus and Erasmus+ programmes. Through the Erasmus framework, MBU cooperates with public and private universities in Albania and elsewhere in Europe, and has established networks of partners on issues related to central and local government, business and law, and the economy. **[42 Bird Report, 41.1 IPA Report, 41.2 IEB Report, 63 Report on scientific research]** Erasmus funding has also enabled MBU to undertake work through the Jean Monnet Chair, which aims to promote excellence in teaching and scientific research in the field of European studies, and the UNESCO Chair in Multiculturalism, Intercultural Dialogue and Human Rights in the Balkans. **[65 Report of activity, 15 Agreements]** The HEI also cooperates with a range of state agencies and institutions with connections to its study programmes. **[15 List of Agreements]** Students, as well as staff, have the opportunity to take part in research projects. **[17 Mobility report, M4 Students; Chapter II Standard I.3 and Standard I.4]**

4.10 Research priorities are set annually by MBU. Appropriately qualified staff are employed with international experience and qualifications as appropriate to their role. **[10 List of Staff - Brain Gain Fulbright]** Individual staff members are allocated research time in their workload, **[68 Staff manual]** and are required to present their work annually to at least one internal scientific conference, or to publish a scientific article in a renowned journal, or to engage with external and collaborative projects. **[35 Scholarships, 9 Annual report, 63 Annual report]** Staff reported that their research informs their teaching. **[M5 Academic staff]** Staff are supported to engage with conferences, events and scientific innovations through collaborative opportunities such as the Erasmus programme, which provides access to broader initiatives including those associated with the Jean Monnet Chair and the UNESCO Chair. Resulting research work is linked to community and social innovation initiatives and studies. **[16 List of international activity participation; 42 BIRD Project]** Staff are supported to travel and undertake research-related trips nationally and internationally, with time and expenses funded by MBU. **[M5 Academic Staff; M3 Senior Staff; 19 List of Activities]** **Students are offered the opportunity to engage with research projects, as appropriate, which enhances their broader learning experience. [M4 Students; 8 Annual Report 2014-15]** MBU has a system of online information on personnel research activities, on staff publications, and every year, departments compile the list of their scientific activities and publications. **[9 Annual report, 63 Annual report, 71 Publications]** The review team considers the comprehensive support provided to academic staff to facilitate engagement with externally funded projects and the inclusion of students in related activities to be **good practice. [Chapter II Standard II.5 and Standard II.6]**

4.11 The HEI places emphasis on the need to publish research results and to raise its profile through conferences, workshops and online media. **[SER p. 38; 1 Statute; 20 List of Conferences, workshops]** Copyright is protected in line with legislation, and staff are encouraged to publish their papers through well-respected international journals. The Dudaj publishing house is owned by MBU shareholders, and staff are encouraged to publish books that support taught provision. A list of research activities is compiled annually by departments and these inform the institutional annual review and evaluation of research activities. **[71 List of scientific work published in 2015-16; 9 Report on the Scientific Research and projects 2014-15; M3 Senior Staff; M5 Academic Staff; Chapter II Standard I.7 and Standard I.8]**

4.12 Teaching, learning, assessment and research are effectively managed by MBU. Students confirmed that they are well supported and have access to relevant information. The University has comprehensive annual reviews and action plans and a systematic approach to staff development which represent good practice. The support for staff to engage with externally funded projects and the inclusion of students in projects supports staff and student development and was also identified as good practice.

## **Findings**

### **Good practice**

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the clear and comprehensive systems for the annual review of programmes and follow up on key actions(paragraph 4.1)
- MBU's systematic approach to staff development which motivates staff to engage with training and external opportunities(paragraph 4.6)
- the comprehensive support provided to academic staff to facilitate engagement with externally funded projects and the inclusion of students in related activities(paragraph 4.10).

### **Weaknesses**

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in relation to this Evaluation Area.

### **Recommendations**

The review team did not make any recommendations in relation to this Evaluation Area.

### **Affirmation of action being taken**

The review team did not affirm any actions already in progress in relation to this Evaluation Area.

## **Judgement**

**The Standards for the Curriculum are fully met.**

## Evaluation Area 5: Students and their Support

5.1 Mechanisms are in place for supporting students at all stages of their engagement with the University. Admission of students to undergraduate programmes is managed in line with the regulations set out by the Ministry of Education and Sport. **[M2 Rector; SE Report]** Entry requirements are clearly set out in MBU's Admissions Policy, **[3 Academic Regulations; 36 Admissions Policy; M7 Support Staff]** which covers both undergraduate and postgraduate provision, and information to prospective students and other stakeholders is provided on the website. **[M4 Students; M7 Support Staff; website and M6a IT Demonstration]** Recently developed systems allow MBU to monitor the levels of interest in individual programmes including through levels of activity linked to website information, applications and campus visits. **[M6a IT Demonstration; M7 Support Staff; M4 Students]** Data collected along with feedback from student surveys informs the review of marketing and external communications, and helps senior management identify the need for any further student focused information. **[M7 Support Staff; 8 Annual Report; 36 Admissions Policy; Chapter I Standard III.1; ESG 1.7 Information Management]**

5.2 The admissions criteria applied to short courses and postgraduate provision are approved by the Senate and managed by the Rector's Office. **[11 List of Senate Meetings; 13 List of Rector's Decisions; M7 Support Staff]** The provision of awards combining major and minor modules has proved attractive to businesses, and the University works with local employers and professional practitioners to identify provision which supports continuing professional development. **[M6 External Partners; M5 Academic Staff; 2 Strategic Plan 2020; 42 BIRD Project; Chapter I Standard III.1]**

5.3 MBU has a clear and effective annual plan of activities which supports the recruitment of students. The admission process is made up of three main elements: gauging level of student interest through the monitoring of website interest and enquiries; the quantity of completed applications submitted to the Office of Admissions and Recruitment; and the admissions process including interviews and meetings with students. The Office of Recruitment and Admissions keeps files on all applications and admissions. **[36 Admissions Policy; M7 Meeting with External Partners; 45 & 46 Brochures; 36 Admissions Policy; M7 Support Staff]** The Office of Recruitment and Admissions works with the Student Dean, and is responsible for the preparation of planned student recruitment and induction activities. **[M7 Support Staff; 1 Statute; 37 Admissions Policy]** These include Open Days, lectures, brochures, website information, free courses to prepare high school students for Maturity exams, and visits to high schools. **[8 Annual Report; 36 Admissions Policy; M7 Support Staff; M4 Students]** Students confirmed that the information provided is helpful. **[M4 Students; M7 Support Staff; 02 Student questionnaire responses; Chapter I Standard III.2 and Standard III.3]**

5.4 The University has a clear and inclusive policy of supporting students from identified groups. These include students from ethnic minority backgrounds, deprived environments, those with parents who have died or been injured in the service of their country, as well as gifted students. **[36 Admissions Policy; 8 Annual Report]** Students from identified groups are eligible to receive full or partial scholarships. **[19 List of Activities; 35 List of scholarships]** Some areas on the second campus have been made accessible for students with physical disabilities. Part-time study options are offered in a number of programme areas including social sciences, finance and business management. Such provision supports lifelong learning opportunities for those in employment or needing to work whilst studying. **[8 Annual Report; M4 Students; 8 Annual Report; Chapter I Standard III.4]**

5.5 MBU has a well-organised process for the orientation and integration of new students. Orientation is supported by a week of activities which assists students to gain information about the regulations, programme content and the broader social and academic

opportunities offered. **[69 Accommodation Week programme; M4 Students; M7 Support Staff; 02 Student questionnaire]** Students are also able to access additional information from the Office for Academic Orientation, secretaries and the Student Dean. **[M4 Students; M7 Support Staff]** The clear orientation programme supports students to understand the range of guidance and advice available to them, and represents **good practice**. The Office for Academic Orientation is also responsible for providing advice on study options and progression to higher studies, along with transfer information. **[27 Study Programmes; 34 Internal Regulation of Transfer; Chapter III Standard III.3]**

5.6 A good level of support is provided to students. Access is provided to detailed programme information through the intranet along with lecture notes and course materials. **[M4 Students; 71 List of scientific works published 2015 - 16; 49 Intraneti; 02 Student questionnaire]** To ensure sufficient academic support, MBU complies with the statutory staff to student ratios. **[1 Statute; 11 List of Senate Decisions; M3 Senior Staff]** Programme tutorials are offered to all students. For students with additional support requirements, special tutorials and support packages are provided and agreed by the Head of Department and the Rectorate. **[13 Rector's Decisions; 26 Course Schedule; M5 Academic Staff; Chapter I Standard III.6; ESG 1.3 Student Centred Learning]**

5.7 Libraries are located on each campus providing access to key texts, the majority stored electronically, and accessible during normal working hours. Students also have access to online libraries, for example the Oregon Library in the USA, which provide materials in other languages. **[M4 Academic Staff; 15 Agreements and Memoranda; M3 Senior Staff; 01 SE Report]** New texts are added to the libraries based on department requests, and subject to budgetary constraints. **[51 Budget/Financial statements; 74 Statement on additional evidence; M3 Senior Staff; M7 Support Staff]** Students can only access electronic library texts on campus, as discussed in Area 2: Resourcing, and the continued development of online systems to allow remote access would enhance student learning opportunities. MBU also operates strict procedures to guard against plagiarism and copyright infringement. **[3 Academic Regulations; M3 Senior Staff; 15 List of Agreements; 3 Academic Regulations; Chapter I Standard III.5]**

5.8 Students are able to provide feedback to MBU through surveys, tutor discussions, elected student representation on the Senate and faculty meetings, as well as through formal and informal meetings with tutors. All student feedback informs annual reviews. A Student Union composed of student representatives elected by peers annually, also provides feedback on behalf of the student body. **[40 Questionnaire template; 02 Student questionnaire; M4 Students; M5 Academic Staff]** Students confirmed they are consulted on resources, campus developments and other initiatives including participation in external and research projects. **[65 Report on Institutional Activity; M4 Students; 02 Student questionnaire; M7 Support Staff]** The consultation with students to inform annual reviews, facilities developments and enhancements represents **good practice**. The Student Dean's office is responsible for providing assistance and support where student issues have been identified. **[3. Academic Regulation; M7 Support Staff; M4 Students; 02 Student Questionnaire; Chapter I Standard II.7]**

5.9 Students can communicate with academic staff through the MBU email system and tutor intranet pages, but not as yet with each other through forums to support group work or broader communications linked to studies and social activities. **[M6a IT Demonstration; M4 Students; 49 Intraneti]** The continued development of online systems to further support student communications would further enhance provision. **[Chapter I Standard III.3]**

5.10 The University offers its students access to a number of sporting and social activities including a championship volley-ball club, a football team, student clubs and social events. **[32 Self-organisation Student Office; List of Student Training; M4**

**Students]**Financial and careers advice is available through the Office on Student Issues and the Alumni and Careers Office. **[32 Student Clubs; 1 MBU Statute; 31 Alumni and Careers Office]** Students report that they are able to engage with a wide range of activities including conferences, and collaborative initiatives linked to externally funded project work, which enhances their learning experience. **[32 Self-organisation student office plan; 33 List of student training; M4 Students]**The range of clubs and activities available to students including sporting, cultural and academic related events, including the UMB publication of the 'Student Voices Journal' authored by students, enhances the learning experience and promotes student engagement, and represents **good practice.** **[Chapter I Standard III.8]**

5.11 The Alumni and Careers Office (ACC) maintains a comprehensive list of alumni and data on their employment, which is updated annually. Statistics indicate graduate employment to be in the region of 80 per cent. **[28 Alumni data - Graduate employed; M7 Support Staff]**The ACC provides assistance to students in their final year of study through support with job-seeking skills, careers information and guidance. **[31 Alumni and Careers Office; 33 List of Student Training; M7 Meeting with Support Staff]**The ACC also follows up on alumni who may not have found work and continues to support them with vacancy notifications, advice and guidance which represents **good practice.** **[31 Alumni and Careers Office; 33 List of Student Training; Support Staff; M4 Students]**Formal agreements with employers and alumni support students to find work placements for practice-related experience. **[15 List of agreements; 31 Alumni & Career Office Strategic Plan; M6 External Partner; M4 Students]**In addition, information about Employment Fairs and vacancies notified to the University through its network of employers and alumni are made available to students. **[33 List of vocational & Employment Training; 28 Alumni database]**The effective network of employers and alumni, as noted in paragraph 3.10 effectively supports student internships and placements. **[Chapter I Standard III.8]**

5.12 The Institution satisfies the standards for 'Students and their support'. Robust mechanisms are in place to support student orientation which includes the provision of clear information and guidance, learning expectations and tutor support. The Alumni and Careers Office support in finding post-graduation employment, the use of student feedback to inform developments as well as the range of extracurricular activities represent good practice. The University has strategies in place to continue to build up library resources and provide mechanisms to support group communications.

## **Findings**

### **Good practice**

The review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the clear orientation programme supports students to understand the range of guidance and advice available(paragraph 5.5)
- the consultation with students to inform annual reviews and enhancements(paragraph 5.8)
- the range of clubs and activities available to students including sporting, cultural and academic events enhance the student learning experience(paragraph 5.10)
- the ACC which follows up on alumni who may not have found work and continues to support them with vacancy notifications, advice and guidance (paragraph 5.11).

### **Weaknesses**

The review team did not identify any weaknesses in relation to this Evaluation Area.

### **Recommendations**

The review team did not make any recommendations in relation to this Evaluation Area.

### **Affirmation of action being taken**

The review team did not affirm any actions already in progress in relation to this Evaluation Area.

## **Judgement**

**The Standards for Students and their Support are fully met.**