Decision of the Accreditation Commission of AQAS

on the study programme

"Romanian Language and Literature and English Language" (B.Ed.)

offered by Alecu Russo Bălţi State University/Moldova

Based on the report of the expert panel and the discussions of the Accreditation Commission in its 62nd meeting on 22nd/23rd of February 2016, the Accreditation Commission decides:

1. The study programme **"Romanian Language and Literature and English Language" (Bachelor of Education)** offered by **Bălţi State University (Moldova)** is accredited according to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

   The accreditation is **conditional**.

2. The study programme essentially complies with the requirements defined by the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version. The required adjustments can be processed within a time period of nine months.

3. The conditions have to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the conditions has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **30th of November 2016.**

4. The accreditation is given for the period of **five years** and is valid until **30th of September 2021**.

Conditions:

1. The module descriptions must be revised in order to improve the transparency on the programme:

   a. The learning outcomes must be described in a transparent way; correlations between learning outcomes and contents must be stated in a clear way.

   b. The description of the "prior competences" must be revised in a way that it is clearly stated what prior knowledge is necessary to enrol in a course.

   c. It must be clear in which semester a module is offered.

   d. The faculty must apply the European model to describe competences of translation.

   e. It must be clear which modules obligatorily form part of the curriculum.

2. The target level for English on the programme level must be defined clearly, e.g. by referring to the "Common European Framework for Languages".
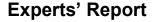
The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programme:

1. The number of intended learning outcomes should be reduced so as to fit for purpose (Bachelor's level) and should be described in a more transparent manner at the global level of the programme as well as at the module/course level for coherence reasons.

2. On the faculty level, the efforts towards the practical implementation of internationalisation should be strengthened and students should be encouraged to take part in mobility options.

3. The faculty should extend the amount of English practice courses and the English classes should be divided according to the level of proficiency. In addition, extra-curricular activities in English should be offered.

4. It is recommended to use more computer-based programmes, especially in the phonetics classes.

5. As for the methodology of teaching English, recent developments such as task-based instruction should be implemented.

6. It is recommended to integrate newer aspects of linguistics such as pragmatics, discourse analysis and theoretical aspects of Second language acquisition in the curriculum.

7. More student-centred delivery methods should be integrated in the programme in a way that the students are empowered in class to be more self-confident and to develop more learner autonomy.

8. The university should facilitate a more user-friendly access to the international research literature.

9. The faculty should strengthen its efforts to implement the quality assurance measures provided by the university and to apply the structures and use the evaluation results in order to improve the programme.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Accreditation Commission refers to the attached assessment report.

Die Auflagen wurden fristgerecht erfüllt.
Die Akkreditierungskommission bestätigt dies mit Beschluss vom 19./20.02.2018.

Experts' Report

on the study programme:

"Romanian Language and Literature and English Language" (B.Ed.)

offered by Alecu Russo Bălţi State University/Moldova

Visit to the University: 12th/13th of November 2015

Panel of Experts:

Prof. Dr. Christoph Gabriel	Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Institute of Romance Studies
Prof. Dr. Titela Vilceanu	University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Theory and Practice of Translation
Prof. Dr. Gülşen Musayeva Vefali	Eastern Mediterranean University, Education Faculty, English Language Department
Ana Maria Nisioiu	Qualifications expert at the Romanian National Qualifications Authority, Bucharest (representative from the professional field)
Karolina Pietkiewicz	University of Warsaw, Translation and Interpreting (Major) and Didactics of Foreign Languages (Minor) (Student representative)

Coordinators:

Ronny Heintze / Dr. Katarina Löbel	AQAS e. V., Cologne, Germany

1. Introduction

This report results from the external review of the Bachelor programme "Romanian and French Language and Literature" offered by Alecu Russo Bălţi State University, Moldova. The review is based on the criteria that where developed jointly as part of a TEMPUS project under participation of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova. They are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) developed by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and presented to the Bologna Follow-Up group in 2005.

The University produced a Self Evaluation Report (SER). The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Accreditation Commission on 18th/19th of May 2015. The Accreditation Commission nominated the before mentioned expert panel and the University did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

After a review of the SER, on the 12th/13th of November 2015 a site visit to the University took place. On site, the experts interviewed different stakeholders and consulted additional documentation and student work. The visit concluded with the presentation of the preliminary findings by the group of experts to the University representatives.

2. General Information

Bălţi State University is a public institution, financed from the state budget, assigned as a structure of higher education in the Republic of Moldova that develops its activity according to the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, the Education Code, the Code on Science and Innovation of the Republic of Moldova and other relevant documents.

The University has four faculties: 1. the Faculty of Philology; 2. the Faculty of Exact, Economic and Environmental Sciences; 3. the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Psychology and Arts; and 4. the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences. The University has about 6,000 students (undergraduate students, Master's students and PhD students) in 44 programmes in 26 different fields of studies within the before mentioned four faculties. In 13 specialised departments, the employees provide educational services in Romanian, Russian and in a small number of programs, in English, German and French.

The study programme "Romanian Language and Literature and English" language belongs to the general field of study of Educational Sciences and is offered by the faculty of Philology.

3. Profile / Outcomes of the Programme

The study programme "Romanian Language and Literature and English language" is a programme of professional formation in Romanian and English language. The programme aims to give the graduates the possibility to work as a teacher of Romanian Language and Literature and English language at gymnasium, in training centres or professional schools. The objective of the programme is furthermore to provide students with the opportunity to acquire and develop the skills and knowledge necessary to be able to understand the current discussions and trends in Linguistics, as well as to be able to participate in educational research both in European and Romanian settings. The graduates can also work as public relations officers or translators. Graduates are also supposed to have the possibility to continue his/her studies in a Master's programme in the field of education sciences; Master's Degree programmes in the field of didactics of Romanian Language and Literature and English language, or Master's Degree Programmes in the sphere of educational management.

On the general/non-field specific level, graduates should possess:

- the ability to systematically analyse the concepts, theories, and issues arising from the philological and psycho-pedagogical sciences;

- the ability to identify potential connections between aspects of knowledge in the field and their application in educational policies and contexts;

- the ability to perceive the diversity of learners and the complexity of the study process;

- the awareness of the context-variety in which the teaching/learning of language and literature can be carried out;

- the ability to conduct/ monitor educational programmes;

- the ability to evaluate programmes and educational materials;

- the ability to engage in philological or teaching research in various contexts.

Besides others, the field specific competencies are listed as follows. Graduates are supposed to:

- demonstrate knowledge/understanding of the fundamental concepts in the field of philology (linguistics, literary theory and history), pedagogy, and psychology;

- know the lexicographic and scientific resources of documentation concerning accuracy of oral and written expression in the studied language;

- possess the functional use of language, respecting the norms of the language at all levels and for all functional styles;

- know the history of literature (national and universal), the contemporary literary process, the history of literary language and linguistics;

- know the works/texts of national and world literature;

- adjust the curriculum to specific educational contexts/to build the different contexts in which learning takes place;

- develop training projects from different perspectives;

- evaluate correctly educational programmes /materials and academic results;

- be able to apply modern research methods in philology and in sciences of education;

- be able to carry out independent research in problems of linguistics, history of literature, literary theory, and sciences of education.

The admission to the study programme "Romanian Language and Literature and English Language" is processed according to the specific regulations for organising and carrying out the admission to higher licensed education at Bălţi State University. According to the mentioned regulations the admission is given based on a contest. The candidate selection happens according to their school marks and field abilities in the chosen professional field.

Experts' Evaluation

The programme profile fits the 70-year-old university and faculty's strategic priorities and professed values, i.e. vocational training, having a clear focus: to train prospective teachers of Romanian language and literature (major) and English language and literature (minor) at school level or to be employed by centres for language development for specific purposes as stated in the SER and highlighted by participants in the site meetings. The intended career opportunities also include translator, editor, public relations officer, etc. in an attempt to meet the labour market de-

mands at the regional and national levels. The programme takes into consideration the economic and socio-cultural context of Northern Moldova, addressing the target population in the region – bilingualism (Russian and Romanian) is a highly specific feature and all the teaching staff involved in the programme are bilinguals. Romanian courses are provided for students coming from Russian schools.

The intended learning outcomes comply with the profile of the institution and with the requirements of the appropriate level of the European and/or National Qualifications Framework. They are also consistent with the profile of the department in respect to teaching and research.

The aims of the programme are designed in a way that they contribute to enhance the employability of the students and their personal growth. The programme also enables graduates to reflect social, scientific and ethical aspects in their decisions. Through its structure and content, the programme enables graduates to continue their education within Master's programmes and doctoral studies at Bălţi State University or elsewhere. As far as the learning outcomes of the programme are concerned, they reflect both academic and labour market requirements. They are stated in terms of observable behaviour and kept distinct from competences. Nevertheless, the learning outcomes seem to be rather exhaustive in point of content and number. The number of intended learning outcomes should be reduced so as to fit for purpose (Bachelor's level) and should be described in a more transparent manner at the global level of the programme as well as at the module/course level for coherence reasons (**Finding 1**).

The competences related to the qualification are presented in detail in the SER and particularly specified in the description of every module/ course. The envisaged competences are defined too broadly and exclusively as "generic". One particular mention concerns the "prior competences" accompanying each module/course description as pre-requisites and which are, in fact, competences to be acquired during or after the completion of the module/course.

The programme is equally featured by strong interdepartmental cooperation due to the interdisciplinary nature of some subjects and the desire to map the language content to the teacher training specificities.

Programme competitiveness at the international level is another key strategic priority and international cooperation involves English-speaking universities in the UK and Germany, teaching staff participation in ERASMUS MUNDUS and TEMPUS projects and in international conferences abroad, Fulbright lecturers assigned to the programme, etc. The recognition of the acquired competences during student mobility is on the university level based on ECTS. Yet, at faculty level the student mobility schemes are not fully activated. On the faculty level, the efforts towards the practical implementation of internationalisation should be strengthened and students should be encouraged to take part in mobility options (**Finding 2**).

The entrance requirements and admission procedure (mainly based on the Baccalaureate Diploma), transition possibilities and selection processes are clearly defined. The admission policy is consistent with the institutional and programme goals and ensures that applicants have the necessary qualifications to be admitted and benefit from the services on offer; there seem to be ethical standards and adequate practice in place in this regard.

4. Curriculum

The programme is a full time education-programme that takes four years with 60 credits each semester leading to a total of 240 ECTS credit points.

The courses/modules are grouped into different competence areas:

- a fundamental component (60CP);

- a component of abilities and general skills formation (4CP);

- a component of social and humanitarian orientation (24CP);

- an orientation towards the major (49 CP);

- an orientation towards the minor (42 CP);

- a component of orientation to another field of formation or Master's Studies (25 CP);

- internships (30 CP);

- and final exam (6CP).

The study programme "Romanian Language and Literature and English Language" also includes a course in the first year of study aiming at developing the students' skills in the ICT work.

Experts' Evaluation

Seen from a general perspective, the curriculum is very well organised and suitable to ensure successful transmission of the relevant knowledge and skills to the students. The first two years of the study programme focus on the development of core competencies, including practical linguistic and pedagogical skills, cultural awareness, and basic knowledge in linguistics and literary studies, among others. During the following two years, students may specialise in particular subjects. A wide range of courses/modules including General Pedagogy, General Psychology, Educational Psychology, Methods of Teaching the target language(s), among other things, are offered for the professional training of the students.

The panel of experts identified with respect to the curriculum the following areas for improvement, which should be taken into account to better meet international standards:

The faculty should extend the amount of English practice courses and the English classes should be divided according to the level of the students' English proficiency. In addition, extra-curricular activities in English should be offered (**Finding 3**). The students complained that their ability to speak English is limited due to the fact that they learn Romanian, Russian and French in schools and that particularly the English classes in the first year of study do not support the improvement of skills properly. The panel of experts recommends including more oral activities in the English language classes. The development of pronunciation skills should be enhanced by using computer-based technology such as *Praat* (freely available scientific software package for the analysis of speech) or *Audacity* (free open source digital audio editor and recording software application) in the phonetics classes (**Finding 4**).

Regarding the methodology of teaching English as a foreign language, more recent developments, such as task-based instruction, should be implemented in the curriculum (**Finding 5**). The methodologies taught so far do not entirely reflect the state-of-the-art of current research in the field of language teaching.

It is recommended to integrate more recent aspects of linguistics in the curriculum, such as pragmatics, discourse analysis and linguistic theories of Second and Third language acquisition. Furthermore, the interrelation between linguistics theory and teaching practice should be clearly pointed out in the module descriptions (**Finding 6**). Again, the theories taught so far are not entirely up to date to the recent research results in the field of linguistics and language teaching.

Teaching methods and assessment support the exchange between theory and practical application as well as between research and teaching. Whenever appropriate, students are involved in current research activities of the individual faculty members. The assessments reflect the knowledge and skills taught in the study programme and are designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and further programme objectives. Nonetheless, the ex-

perts noticed that the students appeared very shy and inhibited. From the experts' perspective, it is highly important for future teachers to develop a strong personality. That is why the experts recommend integrating more student-centred delivery methods in the programme in a way that the students are empowered in class to be more self-confident and to develop more learner autonomy (**Finding 7**).

The individual elements of the curriculum are described in a detailed way in a student manual, which is available to the students. The module descriptions contain information on the intended learning outcomes as well as information on teaching methods, assessments, workload, and internships. The panel of experts, however, identified some aspects that should be taken into account to improve transparency: The module descriptions must be revised in order to improve overall transparency, above all to better display the correlation between learning outcomes and contents. This holds in particular for the following aspects:

The learning outcomes must be described in a transparent manner (**Finding 8a**).

The description of the "prior competences" should be revised in a way that it is stated in a clearer way which preconditions are exactly needed to enrol in a course (**Finding 8b**). Examples are the courses number F.01.O.001 "Introduction to linguistics" and U.04.O.032 "Introduction to research", where in the module description the learning outcomes of the course are stated as the preconditions.

The module descriptions must contain precise information regarding the semester in which the respective module is offered (**Finding 8c**). The translation courses, which are announced once for the fourth semester and once for the fourth year, serve as an example.

The target level for English must be clearly defined for each module, e.g. by referring to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (**Finding 8d**). The descriptions used hitherto are not comprehensible.

The faculty should apply the European model to describe competences of translation (**Finding 8e**). For stakeholders outside the university it is not possible to see the level of translation competencies reached by the students.

It must be stated in a clear way which modules form obligatorily part of the curriculum (**Finding 8f**). So far, this information is lacking.

The structure the programme allows for international student mobility and contains well defined instruments to promote international mobility (ECTS, recognition of credits from abroad, diploma supplements, learning agreements). A credit point system is used to describe the students' workload, which is calculated for all elements of the programme in a clear and transparent way. There are procedures to monitor the student workload and to adapt the curriculum or the credits if necessary.

5. Student Support

The dean, the chairpersons and teachers are responsible for completing and organising the study programme. In addition to learning and teaching activities, the SER describes that facultative extra-curricular activities are organised. The faculty also describes that they support foreigners by organising Romanian language courses.

Consultation hours regarding exams are in the responsibility of the vice-dean of the faculty. During the first two years of study, the academic groups have tutors with whom the students can dis-

cuss various aspects of the educational process. If necessary, the tutor may ask the course instructor to provide, on request, additional consultations.

At the first lesson of each course, the professor is supposed to present the course curriculum, the recommended bibliographic sources, schedule of the provided consultations and the consulting methods: mail address, Skype, and face-to-face consultations. The SER describes that the faculty has established a democratic style of working with students: each student may request advice from any academic staff member, following the approved schedule for consultations, which is available on the notification board of the chair and on the website of the faculty.

Experts' Evaluation

Students seem to be very well informed about their study programmes and the information that they receive is up-to-date. This includes information about the programme's content, assessment, quality assurance, student exchange, resitting exams, but also extra-curricular activities, social activities, employment opportunities, etc. Information is also accessible online. The university has a website, including faculty pages. The input includes all the faculty-related information (management, research, teaching activity, timetables, international cooperation, etc.).

The university runs a system of individual mentoring/tutoring and support. Students are offered counselling, both formally (regular meetings with the faculty management, the assigned tutor, teachers, library staff) and informally (Open Gates Day, by joining clubs). Before starting every academic year, the university organises activities for first year students to help them to adjust to the academic environment. Students are informed about the rules and procedures at the university, get familiar with the facilities, but they get explained the concepts of ECTS points and the Bologna Process. Bălţi State University provides accommodation, catering facilities and socio-cultural events and financial support.

Moreover, each group is assigned a tutor who is supposed to help with time management, accommodation, financial-related issues, as well as interpersonal conflicts. Students are also offered additional support in methodological centres and resource centres, where they can work individually or guided by a teacher. Additionally, every academic teacher offers individual consultation hours per week. Students can consult on any programme-related issue. The schedule of the consultations is available on the website or in the department's office. There are numerous initiatives in the faculty supported by external institutions, aiming at developing communication and interpersonal skills and language competence and skills, e.g. a Linguistic Club, a Drama Club, and a Conversational Club. Students are also encouraged to do research work.

The university offers exchange opportunities for incoming and outgoing students. International experience is also offered through distant courses (German, Spanish). The students' interest in going abroad is rather low (due to financial, recognition and cultural reasons) and Romania seems to be the most popular destination. The faculty could put more effort in encouraging students to use these formal structures and to spend a period abroad by trying to minimise the obstacles, such as financial reasons or recognition procedures (**Finding 2**, see chapter 3). There are very few students coming from abroad, but it allows for individual approach to every one of them, therefore they are well integrated into the academic community.

There are recognition procedures for credits gained at other higher education institutions in place. There is a Committee at the faculty level that is responsible for comparison and assessment based on curriculum, content of the courses, number of hours and amount of the credits.

Psychological and pedagogical internships constitute an integral part of the programme. Due to the agreement with the Municipal Department of Education, the university offers internships placements to all students of the programme.

Evaluation methods are based on the internal university regulations. General assessment regulations, i.e. methods of assessment throughout and at the end of the course and the method of calculating the final mark, are included in the course descriptions. This, along with detailed explanations, is presented at the beginning of each course by a teacher and is available in the online platform. The final mark constitutes a calculation of grades from the tests, essays, homework, mid-term/final exams. The responsibilities and structures with regard to the organisation of the exams are clearly defined. Exams are taken in oral, written or combined form. Exams are organised according to the plan that is announced to students in advance. All exams take place in the exam period. In case of a failure, resits are offered in a suitable way according to the faculty's rules. Students stated that they are satisfied with those procedures and underlined that the academic and administrative staff is flexible. There exist regulations to compensate for illness, disadvantages, absence or other mitigating circumstance on faculty level. Students also confirmed that the university staff members are very supportive in this regard.

The programme finishes with a defence of a thesis that is written under supervision of academic teachers and the assessment is performed by a specially designed panel. The students graduate after defending a thesis and passing a final, professional state exam for teachers. The exams are subject specific and the form and structure of the thesis follows the university and faculty level regulations for the final thesis.

The academic staff members use ICT tools to a large extent, including the purpose of teaching-learning assessment. The university has a dedicated IT department. Modern ITC technologies are available to the academic community (email, Skype, the MOODLE learning platform, on-line library, etc.) and free of charge.

6. Employability

The programme enables graduates to continue their studies on the master level. The graduating students can access to master's programmes in science education, in didactics of Romanian Language and Literature and English language, as well as in educational management. Likewise, in order to give graduates the opportunity to pursue a master's programme in another field, the study programme includes orientation course units from other areas. Those who do not wish to obtain a master degree can be employed in secondary schools as teachers of Romanian and English language and literature.

Following the information provided by the university, it was considered that future teachers need a psycho-pedagogical training. Consequently these course units (60 CP in Psychology and Pedagogy) embrace a quarter of the amount of the expected credit.

Experts' Evaluation

The graduates of this study programme are mainly employed as teachers of Romanian and English language and literature in non-academic institutions: primary and secondary schools or training centres for professional language skills. If the graduates want to continue their studies in order to have a higher qualification, this programme enables them to go further, following the courses of a master's programme in science education, in didactics of Romanian Language and Literature and English language, as well as in educational management. Also, the graduates are prepared to work in pre-university educational institutions, cultural and editorial units, in secretarial establishments, as well as in interpretation and translation.

The university implemented a pilot project concerning the quality of graduates from the perspective of the regional employers. The main conclusion of this study was that the employers are looking for specialists with more applicative skills. The employers suggested longer internships and more practical training which has been thoroughly discussed by the university. The study pro-

gramme provides a lot of theoretical knowledge and less practical skills in using the two languages. The teachers of this programme try to improve the curriculum in order to satisfy the employment environment needs as long as the framework plan approved at national level by the Ministry of Education allows for that. The teachers could not extend the internships since the national regulations are strict about the credit points that are given to the practical training.

Immediately after graduation, young graduates are asked to take part in a questionnaire "Undergraduate/Graduate opinion on the Quality of specialists' training at Bălţi State University". The questionnaire contains questions on what the graduates found useful from the programme and what should be changed. The departments and all teachers are informed about the results of the evaluations and they try to update the curricula according to the feedback from employers, graduates and students.

7. Resources

In the SER, the faculty describes that the programme enrolment plan offers places for approximately 50 students; about 30 students usually enrol per period.

The teaching and support staff for this study programme derive from three Chairs: the Chair of Romanian Language and Romanian Philology, the Chair of World and Romanian Literature and the Chair of English and German Philology. All teaching positions are contest based, thus every five years the staff members, who want to continue their activity at the university, have to demonstrate their qualifications by presenting evidence of their teaching and research activity for the last five years.

The university has a library and provides rooms for the teaching in the study programme under review.

Experts' Evaluation

In Moldova, the higher education institutions are financed from the State budget. Due to this fact, the Faculty of Philology has got distributed financial resources, in accordance with the general policy of the university, and the academic staff salaries are constituted of the static and variable component, depending on the evaluation score obtained. University employees, including those of the Faculty of Philology are paid extra for work done under the Regulation on Remuneration System in Bălţi State University, which regulates the conditions of academic staff salary and wage.

All staff involved in the teaching of the programme are documented including their academic and other relevant qualification as well as research activities and quantitative involvement (teaching hours) in the programme. From the experts' perspective, it is ensured that the teaching capacity is available for the period of accreditation. If positions expire during the period of accreditation the position has to be reappointed or there is a continuity plan. The part time lecturers involved in the programme are familiar with the requirements in the programme.

The study programme Romanian and English Language and Literature is managed by three Chairs: The Chair of Romanian Language and Romanian Philology, the Chair of World and Romanian Literature and the Chair of English and German Philology. In total, the Chair of Romanian Language and Romanian Philology has 25 academic staff members; twelve of them are involved in the teaching of the study programme. They hold the following academic positions: university professor, associate professors, senior university lecturers and assistant. The chair offers activities in two laboratories – the laboratory of philological studies "Eugen Coșeriu" and the laboratory of cultural studies – as well as in the centre for Academic Success, which are also available for the study programme "Romanian Language and Literature and English". The Chair of World and Romanian Literature has 21 members: 17 full and four part-time employees (associate profes-

sors, senior lectures and university lecturers). The Chair of English and German Philology has 34 members, 26 are teachers of English and eight are teachers of German. The English teachers maintain various relations with American teachers in order to share their experience to the teachers and the students of the programme.

The number of the faculty members, their academic background, and professional experiences are relevant and adequate for successful accomplishment of their respective duties and assignments at the tertiary level. All the employed staff members are thus qualified in fields related to the programme and to the subjects they teach. Their publications and research activities in progress indicate their commitment to professional development. They conduct research in two major fields (Linguistic and literary phenomena in diachronic and synchronic perspectives and Modern philology in the context of culture dialogue), participate in Erasmus Mundus projects and mobility schemes, which prove their increasing international visibility.

The instruments for staff development and staff motivation are well developed at the university and work properly. These instruments include the teacher's continuing education, familiarisation with new technologies, sharing experiences and practices via public lectures, mutual observance of classes, curriculum-based discussion, etc. Interdepartmental cooperation is also mentioned.

The university and, particularly, the faculty of this study programme has suitable material resources in order to provide good learning and living conditions for students. There are two major buildings with classrooms for lectures, seminars, consultations and laboratories equipped with computers, interactive whiteboards, projectors, and internet access.

The University has a Scientific Library with a book collection of approximately 277,700 titles in 1,013,293 copies in 42 languages; including several special collections. The library website counts about 60,000 virtual visits. The academic staff and the students are very proud of this library which is also very much appreciated by the Government, being the only institution of its kind in the country. Even if the library has a multimedia room with access to several international databases like Cambridge Journals Online, Oxford Reference, AGORA, Royal Society Journals and Archive etc., the students explained that there is, however, not enough space and computer devices for all the students' demands. That is why the university should facilitate a more user-friendly access to the international research literature (**Finding 9**).

The study programme can use diverse laboratories. A very well equipped laboratory is the laboratory for translation seminars with modern devices which is highly appreciated by the students.

8. Quality Assurance

In November 2008, the university started activities to implement a university wide quality management system that is also applied fort the study programme under review. Quality assurance procedures regarding the curriculum are discussed during chair sessions at least twice during a year of study. All the professors of the chair participate at the session.

The university describes that the teaching activities within the programme are managed and coordinated by the head of the chair. Each professor and lecturer is obliged to develop the curriculum of the discipline in accordance with the "Curriculum Framework-Structure" approved by the Senate the university. The description of the curriculum must contain at least the following components: course identifying information (discipline), integration of the course in the study programme, prior skills, skills developed within the course, aims of the course, contents, individual work activities, evaluation, and informational resources. Each curricular element is discussed and proposed for approval at the meeting of the chair, where it is reviewed by the faculty Methodical Commission and approved by the Faculty Scientific Council.

As laid down in the SER, a first graduate survey is offered directly after graduation while graduates are still on campus using an electronic and anonymous survey in the computer room of the university. Additional graduate surveys are done electronically using emails. The survey shall cover questions concerning the graduates' job profile and competencies required for the positions. The results of these surveys are discussed in the Senate meetings.

Experts' Evaluation

The meetings held during the site visit, in addition to the SER, support the experts' general impression of the adequate organisation, implementation and monitoring of the quality assurance policy and related procedures at the institution. The university has a Department for Quality Assurance which intends to develop quality culture through solution-oriented discussions at every faculty and which takes into account the formal structures and requirements of successful curricula from other tertiary institutions. A comprehensive Quality Assurance Manual has recently been revised and it reflects the institutional mission, the aims and fields for applicants, the processes and terms/definitions, as well as instruments, and it has been made available to faculties and departments.

The institutional strategy envisages assuring the quality of all programmes and the curricula are updated in the light of the feedback from various stakeholders. A range of meetings and discussions have been held at the university to secure everyone's understanding of such issues as intellectual property, professional ethics, and transparency. Every semester, the university Senate decides the criteria related to didactic skills, publications as well as promotion and applications of staff for teaching vacancies.

The stakeholders across various administrative and academic levels exhibited an understanding of the significance of quality in teaching, learning, administrative services, student support, research and learning outcomes. The student representation and involvement in various Boards and the Senate provide opportunities for feedback channels and consideration of feedback for quality enhancement at the university and programme evaluation. The Quality Department monitors the implementation of the quality policy as well as various related measures and activities on the Faculty and Department levels. Departmental Quality Assurance Boards involving teachers, and students, discuss annual action plans which are subsequently discussed on the faculty level.

The quality assurance procedures at university level also include systematic on-line surveys conducted with students that provide insights and suggestions for the improvement of the programme and various services on offer. The graduates' survey intends to elicit their responses related to their job profiles and competencies required for their respective positions. The employers' survey intends to obtain school directors' feedback on novice teachers-recent graduates' performance. A comprehensive report on survey results is prepared by the Vice-Rector for part-time education and continuous training and presented for consideration of the university Senate.

The expert panel therefore concludes that on the university level, the structures for quality assurance and mobility support exist on an elaborate level. It is clearly visible and it shows the strong strategic commitment of the university's management.

On the faculty level, on the other hand, not all of these structural instruments are applied sufficiently. First positive attempts have been noticed by the experts which should be the starting point for more development. The students mentioned as an example courses with high failure quota that were revised and the content was reduced. However, the Faculty should strengthen their efforts to implement the quality assurance measures provided by the university, apply the structures and use the evaluation results in order to improve the study programme "Romanian Language and Literature and English Language" (**Finding 10**).

9. Recommendations of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends to accredit with conditions the Bachelor programme "**Romanian Language and Literature and English Language**" with the degree "**Bachelor of Education**" offered by **Bălţi State University**, Republic of Moldova**.**

Findings:

1. The number of intended learning outcomes should be reduced so as to fit for purpose (Bachelor's level) and should be described in a more transparent manner at the global level of the programme as well as at the module/course level for coherence reasons.

2. On the faculty level, the efforts towards the practical implementation of internationalisation should be strengthened and students should be encouraged to take part in mobility options.

3. The faculty should extend the amount of English practice courses and the English classes should be divided according to the level of proficiency. In addition, extra-curricular activities in English should be offered.

4. It is recommendable to use more computer-based programmes, especially in the phonetics classes.

5. As for the methodology of teaching English, recent developments such as task-based instruction should be implemented.

6. It is recommended to integrate newer aspects of linguistics such as pragmatics, discourse analysis and theoretical aspects of Second language acquisition in the curriculum.

7. More student-centred delivery methods should be integrated in the programme in a way that the students are empowered in class to be more self-confident and to develop more learner autonomy.

8. The module descriptions must be revised in order to improve the transparency on the programme; correlations between learning outcomes and contents must be stated in a clear way:

    a. The learning outcomes must be described in a transparent manner.

    b. The description of the "prior competences" should be revised in a way that it is clearly stated what prior knowledge is necessary to enrol in a course. (Example: "Introduction to research" and "Introduction to linguistics")

    c. It must be clear in what semester a module is offered. (Example: translation courses, 4th semester vs. 4th year)

    d. The target level for English must be defined clearly, e.g. by referring to the "Common European Framework for Languages".

    e. The faculty should apply the European model to describe competences of translation.

    f. It must be clear what modules form part of the curriculum.

9. The university should facilitate a more user-friendly access to the international research literature.

10. The faculty should strengthen their efforts to implement the quality assurance measures provided by the university and to apply the structures and use the evaluation results in order to improve the programme.