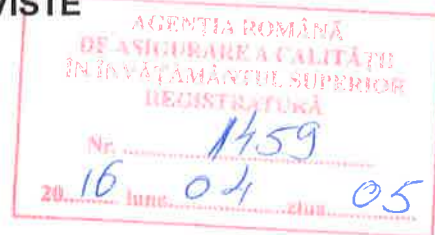


# EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S REPORT FOR ARACIS OF VALAHIA UNIVERSITY OF TARGOVISTE

Targoviste, 2016



## Introduction

I was appointed as a Foreign External Evaluator for the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) and was consequently invited to join the evaluation team for the institutional accreditation process of "Valahia" University of Targoviste (VUT). The audit took place between Wednesday 9 March and Friday 11 March 2016.

The evaluation team consisted of the following members, in addition to myself:

Assoc. Prof. dr. Octavian Madalin BUNOIU (West University of Timisoara) – Mission Director

Prof. univ. dr. Neculai Eugen SEGHEDEIN (Gheorghe Asachi Technical University) – Coordinator of the Experts Evaluator Team

Prof. univ. dr. Marius Gabriel PETRESCU (Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiesti) – Advisory Commission Expert

Prof. univ. dr. Dinu AIRINEI (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi) – Institutional Commission Expert

Prof. univ. dr. Ilie ROTARIU („Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu) – Program Expert

Prof. univ. dr. Cristiana Teodora ROMAN (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi) – Program Expert

Prof. univ. dr. Cristian TALANGA (University of Bucharest) – Program Expert

Prof. univ. dr. Steliana TOMA (Technical University of Civil Engineering of Bucharest) – Program Expert

Prof. univ. dr. Vasile DUMITRESCU (Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiesti) – Program Expert

Prof. univ. dr. Constantin VERTAN (Politehnica University of Bucharest) – Program Expert

Prof. univ. dr. Carmen Laura CIMPEANU (University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine) – Program Expert

Prof. univ. dr. Gabriela Elena BAHRIM (“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati)

Marilena DOBRE – Technical Secretary

George ALBINA-DUMITRU (Constanta Maritime University) – Student Evaluator (ANOSR)

Vitalie RUSU (“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati) – Student Evaluator (UNSR)

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The evaluation process began on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March at 9 a.m. in the International Conference Centre (Building K, 39 Mr. Alexandrescu Street) with the welcoming speech of Assoc. Prof. dr. Calin D. Oros the Rector of VUT. He also introduced the management of the university. Then Assoc. Prof. dr. Octavian Madalin Bunoiu presented the introductory statements of the mission and he asked the members of the evaluation team to introduce themselves. This was followed by a tour of the university to see the infrastructure of VUT. It took a lot of time as VUT has not got a unified campus so at the moment the faculties are operating in different building in the city.

Between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. the group of experts was working on different aspects of the evaluation. In my role as Foreign Expert, I was responsible for establishing an overview of the whole university and was allowed to move freely, talking to members of staff and students of the university.

At 5 p.m. we had an appointment with a group of about 40 graduates' employers of VUT. At 6 p.m. we had another meeting with 100 graduate students. At 7 p.m. there was one hour appointment with undergraduate students of VUT.

The first day ended with a meeting of the evaluators.

The team continued the evaluation process on Thursday the 10<sup>th</sup> of March starting at 9 a.m. and lasted until 7.30 p.m.

The evaluation process was finished on Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> of March at 1 p.m. when the team of experts prepared the final report. The evaluation process was conducted in open and collegial manner. The colleagues of VUT let me have all the materials I asked for during the evaluation process.

### General Statements

VUT operates according to the laws that govern the Romanian higher education system. The University of Targoviste was created as a higher education state-run institution in 1992. VUT is the only university in Targoviste City, Dambovita County, situated in the South Muntenia Region. There are 2 state-run universities (University Pitesti and University of Ploiesti) besides VUT in the South Muntenia Region. VUT is

the only state-run university in the region with a territorial branch in the south of the region, namely in Alexandria Municipality.

The present structure of VUT includes ten faculties, the Teacher Training Department, the Department for Distance Learning and Continuing Education, the Department for Studies in Foreign Languages and the Doctoral Schools.

VUT is part of the European Higher Education Area and the implementation of the Bologna Process was introduced in the academic year 2005-2006.

VUT offers 33 accredited Bachelor Degree programmes of studies, 9 Bachelor Degree programmes of studies with provisional authorization, 34 accredited Master Degree programmes of studies. The university is recognized as an institution with the right to organize doctoral studies (6 areas of doctoral research) in two Doctoral Schools (Doctoral School of Economics and Humanities, Doctoral School of Engineering Sciences). Study programmes in foreign languages are missing at VUT at the moment although they have a strategy of internationalization.

The numbers of enrolled students at VUT were 7310 in October 2015.

I did not have the possibility to visit every campus of VUT in Targoviste and I also did not have the chance to go to Alexandria.

### Managerial Structure

The leadership of the university is organised in accordance with its legal obligations, which are stated in the university's charter and the structure can be followed very clearly in the organogram of VUT.

The academic leadership structures in VUT are:

- The Senate and the Administrative Board at the level of the university;
- The Faculty's Council;
- The Department's Council.

The academic leadership functions in VUT are the following:

- Rector, Vice-Rectors at the university level;
- Dean, Vice-Deans at the faculty level;
- Department Director at the level of the departments.

The Senate is the highest management level of the academic activities. The Senate of VUT consisting of teaching and research staff and the representatives of the students. All academic structures are represented in the Senate. The Senate is the main decision making body of VUT and supervises the activity of the rector.

The effective leadership of VUT is assured by the Administrative Council; consist of Rector, Pro-Rectors, Deans, General Administrative Director and a students' representatives. The Administrative Council applies the strategic decisions of the VUT Senate.

VUT has a coherent, integrated, transparent management system, based on an efficient and effective administration.

### Teaching Staff

In the current academic year there are 424 teaching positions at VUT from which 293 are filled and 139 (47,44%) of them are professors and associate professors. The number of full professors is few (under 10%) at some faculties: Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Political Sciences, Letters and Communication. At the level of all the teaching personnel carrying out activities at VUT doctors in science represent 95.90% (281 /293) and PhD students 4.10% (12/293).

The proportion of students to the number of teaching staff is sufficient (7310/293 ~ 24,94%) although it would be worth improving the ratios.

**Comment:** The quality of human resources and the scientific potential at VUT is on a good level. The university might encourage the experienced lectures to become associate professors and the experienced associate professors to become professors in order to maintain the academic quality.

## Facilities

VUT has not got a unified campus. The different faculties are situated rather far from each other in the city. I had the possibility to visit quite a number of them (Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Orthodox Theology and Educational Science, Faculty of Political Sciences, Letters and Communication) and I also went to the new campus of VUT (13 Sinaia Alley), which covers an area of over 9,600 m<sup>2</sup> and is the first investment inaugurated after the 1989 Romanian Revolution in a new university campus. At the moment "Building A" is completed, where the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Electronics and Information Technology, the Faculty of Environmental Engineering and Food Science and the Faculty of Materials Engineering and Mechanics can be found. "Building B" is under construction and there is a lot to do to "Building C". The most modern students' hostels and the Multidisciplinary Scientific and Technology Research Institute (ICSTM) are also situated at the same territory.

The educational and research spaces fulfil every requirement of the European standards of this campus. High-tech systems in research can be found at ICSTM.

The University Library is organized in 8 locations. Each library has a programme (Softlink Liberty 3) of bibliographic description with OPAC online. The equipment of the libraries is at very different level. The number of manuals, treaties, chrestomathies, anthologies, and other bibliographic references covers the requirements of the programmes of studies. The university's reading rooms assure a sufficient number of places for students (816/7310 ~ 11.16 %).

To assure a decent social life for their students, VUT has arranged or modernized accommodation areas and the Students' Club. At the same time, VUT has its own small church, its own medical services for students, for the teaching and non-teaching employees and a service of university police. The facilities of the sport activities are limited.

**Comment:** There is enough place for didactic and research activities. Facilities are well used and most of the educational spaces, that I have seen, fulfil every requirement of the European standards. It can be seen that VUT invested in its

physical infrastructure a lot in the past few years. It is important to continue this procedure and renovate the old buildings.

### Students

VUT has 7310 enrolled students in this academic year (2015/2016). Unfortunately I could not find any figures, details about the component of the students although currently all types of study programs (undergraduate, master and PhD) are available for the candidates at VUT.

At the meeting with **representatives of the employers**, they seemed very pleased with those students who graduated from VUT. There were representatives both of the private and public sector e.g. Banks, Companies, Governmental Organizations, Museums, and Municipalities etc. The cooperation is operating very well between VUT and the employers. Several internships were established for the students.

At the appointment with the **former students** they seemed pleased with the members of the academic staff and the university. They met very well prepared professors during their studies. Most of them were involved also in research. It was mentioned that the practical education is at a good level too. It was emphasised that the infrastructure improved a lot in the last decade. VUT has good reputation in the region.

During the discussion with the **undergraduate students** they seemed fairly pleased with the university, the circumstances and the infrastructure. They liked the dormitories very much. It was mentioned that the practices were very useful in the different programmes but they needed more. They also pointed out that not only the members of the academic staff are very helpful but also administrative employees.

As it turned out the students self-governance is very weak at VUT. The election of the students' representatives are not organised very well. The participation of the students in the election process is under 10%.

VUT is not so very active in Erasmus Mobility programme although currently they have 56 Erasmus Agreements with 18 different countries. There were 39 outgoing and 5 incoming students in this academic year (2015-2016). The number of the students participating in Erasmus Program could be more for the size of the university and the number of agreements.

**Comment:** It is recommended to extend the students international activity of VUT and enter into more European Higher Education Programmes (e. g. CEEPUS etc.) They also should increase the number of students taking part in mobility activities, especially doing a traineeship abroad.

### Research

Scientific research at the university is structured into research centres in the framework of Multidisciplinary Science and Technology Research Institute of Valahia University of Targoviste. There are 15 research centres at VUT. Research activity within the university is coordinated by a vice-rector for Scientific Research and Creation.

Scientific research is continuously monitored and evaluated annually. For this purpose, there were created appropriate grids and software applications. The results of the scientific activities are valorised by means of publications in dedicated journals or publishing houses agreed by CNCS. VUT also publishes its own scientific periodicals. Research is materialised also in: textbooks for didactic purposes, books and monographs, scientific articles published in specialized reviews, accredited by national and international authorities, patents etc.

The students are involved in scientific activity mainly through the framework of the master and doctoral programmes.

The ambition of VUT in research activity is quite clear: the continuous improvement of the performance of research at the university, and increasing the visibility of VUT in the European Research Space.

**Comment:** By creating the Research and Development Institute the conditions for an increase in the quality of scientific research have been created by providing a high-level infrastructure. It is worth strengthening much more the research cooperation with more international partners.

### Quality Management

In VUT strategy the quality assurance policy is in central place. VUT pay a special attention to the quality assurance.

The internal audit of the quality management system is realized by internal auditors, under the coordination of the Quality Evaluation and Assurance Office, based on the annual audit programme. The external audit of the quality management system has been achieved, based on contract, by AEROQ Bucharest, by means of experts recognized nationally and internationally.

The Education Quality Assurance Commission functions at VUT as a central committee of quality assurance and controls the activity of the executive leadership in quality evaluation and assurance. At the level of each faculty there are commissions for quality evaluation and commissions for quality assurance. These commissions role is monitoring the implementation of the quality criteria for the study programs within faculties.

The organization of the quality assurance system in VUT is described in the "Quality Assurance Code" and in the "Quality Textbook", approved by the University Senate.

**Comment:** In my opinion the structure and the procedures of quality assurance at VUT are well organized. There is also *internal and external control of quality assurance*.

I am happy to declare my full and complete confidence in the quality assurance processes at VUT, as well as the quality of its programs and researches.



## Conclusion

I was very much satisfied what I have experienced; seen, read and heard at the university. (I propose a "High confidence rating".)

I hope that some of the comments which I made will help the university Management in the process of continual improvement.

I emphasize the following:

- To implement the internationalization's strategy of VUT as soon as possible and establish study programmes in foreign languages (English, French) at all level (BA, MA and PhD).
- I strongly suggest developing international links and collaborations to support international research activities and encourage students and academic staff taking part in exchange and mobility programmes.
- To continue to invest in the physical infrastructure and human resource, as and when funds allow.
- To strengthen participation of the student's representatives in the decision-making processes at VUT.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to the President, the Rector and all the VUT staff for the pleasant atmosphere and the support during my stay in Targoviste. Also much gratitude to my colleagues of the evaluation team for the professional, open and gentle way in which the audit was conducted.

Last but not least I would like to express my special thanks to ARACIS for giving me the opportunity to participate in this evaluation process in Romania.

Pécs, 28-13-2016



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