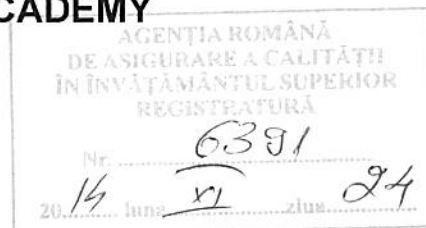


**EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S REPORT  
FOR ARACIS OF  
"MIRCEA CEL BĂTRÂN" NAVAL ACADEMY  
2014**



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 evaluation process of "MIRCEA CEL BĂTRÂN" NAVAL ACADEMY (MBNA). I have participated in quite a number of accreditation procedures but it was the first time that I evaluated a university which was under the supervision of the Ministry of Defence. The audit took place between Wednesday 22 October and Friday 24 October 2014.

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

Prof. univ. dr. Puiu Lucian Georgescu – Mission Director  
Prof. univ. dr. Nicolae Seghedin – Coordinator of the Experts Evaluator Team  
Prof. univ. dr. Dinu Airinei – Advisory Commission Expert  
Prof. univ. dr. Adriana Giurgiu – Institutional Commission Expert  
Prof. univ. dr. Mihai Florin – Program Expert (Electromecanica - IFR)  
Prof. univ. dr. Elena Helerea – Program Expert (Electromecanica - IFR)  
Prof. univ. dr. Alecu Aurel – Program Expert (Electromecanica navala - IF)  
Prof. univ. dr. Leonard Domnisoru – Program Expert (Navigatie si transport maritime si fluvial - IF)  
Oana Sarbu – Technical Secretary  
Alexandru Valentin Ciurea – Student Evaluator (ANOSR)  
Sebastian Stefaniga – Student Evaluator (UNSR)

The evaluation process began on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October at 8.30 a.m. in the Senate Room with the introductory statements of Prof. univ. dr. Nicolae SEGHEDIN and the evaluation team was also introduced. Next Rear Admiral (LH) Professor

Engineer Vergil CHIȚAC the Rector welcomed the evaluation team and also presented the management of MBNA.

From 9 a.m. the evaluation team discussed the most important aspects that should be considered during the audit. This was followed by a tour at the university to see the infrastructure of the institution and the tour lasted until 2 p.m. as we visited besides the campus, the harbour of Constanta where we visited one of the training ships ("Mircea") of MBNA.

Between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. the group of experts was working on different aspects of the evaluation. In my role as Foreign Expert Evaluator, I was responsible for establishing an overview of the whole academy 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 50 former students of MBNA and at 6 p.m. there was a one hour meeting with a group of 100 undergraduate students.

The team continued the evaluation process on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October starting at 8.30 a.m. and ending at 7 p.m. In the morning I visited the Library of MBNA, then the dormitories, the mess hall and the student health service. I also had the possibility to visit an English specialized language lesson for the first year students.

In the afternoon I had the possibility to talk to the vice-dean who was responsible for international affairs about the international links of MBNA. At 6 p.m. we had a one hour long meeting with a group of about 18 graduates' employers.

The evaluation process was finished on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October when the team of experts prepared the final report. The evaluation process was conducted in open and collegial manner.

### General Statements

The "Mircea cel Bătrân" Naval Academy in Constanta is a public higher education institution, under the supervision of the Ministry of Defence, accredited, with legal personality which functions on the basis of the Romanian Constitution, National

Education Law no.1/2011 and all the legal provisions concerning the military as well as the civilian higher education. MBNA is an important representative of the Romanian naval education, its tradition extending over 140 years.

In 2003 the MNBA implemented the Quality Management System, in compliance with ISO 9001/2001 and in 2014 the MBNA was awarded the Quality Management System recertification in compliance with ISO 9001/2008. In 2009 the institution was evaluated by ARACIS. As a result of the evaluation the institution was awarded the "High Degree of Confidence" qualification and all study programmes, both undergraduate and master degree programmes were accredited.

MBNA education and research structure was reorganised recently as follows:

- a) reorganisation of faculties on study fields;
- b) reorganisation of departments on specialties in order to reduce their number and enhance their contribution to the education and research requirements.

The two faculties are the Marine Engineering Faculty (consists of two departments: Marine Engineering and Naval Weapons; Electrical Engineering and Naval Electronics) and the Navigation and Naval Management Faculty (Navigation and Naval Transport; Engineering and Naval and Port Management). The two faculties offer 12 academic accredited study programmes of which 9 are BA study programmes and 3 are MA degree studies. The new organisation also includes the supporting structures: the Rectorate and administration, the training ships Division, the Simulation Training Centre, the Seamanship and Nautical Sports Centre in Palazu Mare and the Lifelong Learning Centre.

The university has 2.035 enrolled students, out of which: 1.783 undergraduate students (1.100 full-time and 683 part-time); 252 master's degree students.

### 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 MBNA. In terms of structure, the university is led by

a Rector, who is supported by four Vice-Rectors. In 2012 elections were held for the position of Rector of the university, as well as for all collective management structures: the University Senate, the Faculty Councils and the Departments boards. The election mechanisms follow the principles of academic democracy.

The MBNA management, through the quality management system, has been monitoring their ongoing performance and proposed measures for further development. Student representatives are elected in accordance with the provisions of the Regulation for Student Professional Activity and the University Charter, so representatives of the students are members of the faculty councils, the Senate and the Senate committees.

The MBNA is operationally managed by the Managing Board. The MBNA Board consists of the Rector, Vice-rectors, Deans, a chief operating officer, and a student representative. The Board is headed by the Rector, and it ensures the operational management of the Academy. The board applies the strategic decisions of the University Senate and exercise specific powers conferred by the regulations in force.

The Senate represents the academic community and is the highest decision-making and deliberation body of the institution. The standing committees of the Senate are: the Commission for Management and Monitoring of the quality of processes, the Teaching Commission, the Commission for Scientific Research and International Relations, Committee on Budget and Finance, Student Services Commission.

The Senate decisions are available on the MBNA website and communication with members of the academic community is conducted by Intranet and Internet communication systems.

The university is divided into 2 faculties, which are further subdivided into departments and centres. The MBNA administrative structure is headed by a managing director and is organized into sections.

**Comment:** Although MBNA has a coherent, integrated, transparent leadership system, based on an efficient and effective administration but the organizational structure of the university is quite large for its size compared it to the number of students and teachers.

## Teaching Staff

The teaching staff consists of 66 teachers according to job positions (including 8 professors, 13 associate professors, 26 lecturers, 9 assistant lectures, 10 military instructors of whom 4 advanced instructors and 6 senior instructor. Most of the academic staff members at MBNA are PhD holders (85.8%).

The structure of the teaching staff seems to be balanced; the university might persuade the experienced lectures to become associate professors and the experienced associate professors to become professors in order to maintain the academic quality. The ratio of teaching staff to students is too high (1/29,5) if we compare with OECD and European average level.

**Comment:** The quality of human resources and the scientific potential at MBNA is on a good level. The transparencies of the personal records are clear. The ratio of teaching staff to students should be decreased.

## Facilities

MBNA has got a unified campus and two secondary locations for the summer practice: the training site, for seamanship and water sports on Mamaia Lake and the School Ship Squadron located in the port of Constanta. I experienced that the condition of the buildings on campus are on a very different level, quite a number of them need to be renewed. There are also differences among the equipment of the buildings.

Not all the educational spaces fulfil every requirement of the European standards. Meanwhile high-tech simulating systems can be found at MBNA which needed very strong software and IT backgrounds, there are also PCs which are out of date as they are operated by Windows XP software. (The support and updates for Windows XP has expired!)

MBNA also has two canteens and five dormitories (4 military and 1 civilian), with a total of 448 beds. The student hostels needed restoration and re-equipment.

MBNA has spaces for social, cultural and sport activities for students. A swimming pool can also be found within the campus. MBNA has health service for the students. The equipment and specialized personnel ensure the health of students.

At the end of 2013 the library of MBNA had 276.065 volumes including 92.011 book titles, 10 titles of journals, both national and foreign, and three databases. The library updates its documents in all fields in order to achieve the performance indicators set by international standards. In parallel with the development of the library publications, the material infrastructure should be improved too.

MBNA ensures the printing of the lecture notes, textbooks and of the necessary documents for the implementation of the curricula by its own publishing house.

**Comment:** There is enough place for didactic and research activities. Facilities are well used and most of the educational spaces, what I have seen, fulfil the requirements of the European standards. It can be seen that MBNA invested in its physical infrastructure as much as the budget has allowed in the last few years. It is important to continue this procedure and renovate and re-equip the old buildings.

### Students

Two types of study programs (BA/BSc, MA/MSc) are available for the candidates at MBNA. There is no decrease in the number of students if we compare the data to the last academic years. It is a great success nowadays as the regressive tendency is very common in most of the higher education institutes because of the demographic problems and economic crises.

MBNA offers flexible and modern part-time education forms.

During the discussion with the *former students* they seemed pleased with the members of the academic staff and the university. They gained competitive knowledge at MBNA, so they could cope with different situations as a member of an international team. It was mentioned that the practical education should be strengthened.

At the appointment with the *students*, I found them very open minded. They seem to be very loyal to their university and found most of the curricula and the academic staff very good. They found the Erasmus Mobility Program very useful but there were sometimes problems with the recognition of the subjects which were taken abroad.

MBNA is very active in Erasmus Mobility programme and international cooperation (Bulgaria, Norway, Poland, Spain and Turkey). The number of the students participating in Erasmus Program is high for the size of the university.

**Comment:** The number of students who take part in Erasmus Mobility Programme at MBNA is over the average rate of participating students in Erasmus Mobility Programme at other higher education institutes in Romania. It would be worth increasing the number of partner institutions in order to increase the destinations which can be chosen by the students.

At the meeting with *employers*, they seemed to be very satisfied with those students who graduated from MBNA although they mentioned the lack of students' practical knowledge. Most of the employers were representatives of different fields from industry.

## Research

Research activity within the university is coordinated by a vice-rector, monitored and supported by a specific structure at the university. The vice-rector is the chairman of the Scientific Council. The Scientific Council is responsible to the senate and the academic community for its whole activity. At the faculty level the scientific research activity is administratively coordinated by the vice-dean, who is responsible for the scientific research.

The two faculties Research Centres are organised by the faculties and departments (laboratories). The research activity in the centres is coordinated by a research centre director. During 2009-2013 there were two research centres acknowledged by CNCSIS.



Research activity at MBNA is transparent. Scientific research is continuously monitored and evaluated annually.

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. There has been an increase in the number of patent applications.

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

**Comment:** I would encourage the university to develop its collaborative links to the business sector. It is necessary that MBNA should intensify the efforts to activate the available unexploited potential of the national and international business sector and increase the number of research agreements.

### Quality Management

MBNA pays a special attention to quality assurance. MBNA has structures, strategies, policies and procedures for quality assurance of the teaching and research processes. MBNA implemented a quality management system starting with the 2003-2004 academic year. The system included the basic principles of the quality management as stated by the ISO 9001: 2000. At present, the MBNA quality management system includes the ISO 9001:2008 standard principles

The Evaluation and Quality Assurance Commission and the Education and Quality Assurance Bureau coordinate, guide and control the activities regarding the quality management.

At the MBNA level there is a regulation regarding the Evaluation and Quality Assurance Commission which includes the structure, responsibilities and functioning within the quality management system, domains and criteria of evaluation and



quality assurance. At the level of faculties there is a vice-dean in charge with the quality assurance and for the study programmes there are Study Programme Quality Evaluation Commissions.

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


### Conclusion

I was very much satisfied with what I have experienced; seen, read and heard at the university. I am happy to declare my full and complete confidence in the quality assurance processes at MBNA, as well as the quality of its programs. I hope that some of the comments which I made will help the university Management in the process of continual improvement.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to the Rector, Vice Rectors, Deans and all the University staff for the pleasant atmosphere and the support during my stay in Constanta. Also much gratitude to my colleagues from the evaluation team for the professional, open and gentle way in which the audit was conducted.

At least but not last special thanks to ARACIS for giving me the opportunity to participate in this evaluation process in Romania.

Pécs, 08-11-2014



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