

The External Evaluation Report of a Doctoral Study Domain

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I. Introduction¹

In this chapter, the following shall be summarized:

- the context in which this external evaluation report was drafted (**the type of evaluation, the period of the evaluation visit, the composition of the Experts Committee** etc.);
- details about the doctoral school(s) of which the doctoral domain under review is part (number of doctoral advisors, number of students, institutional context, short history etc.);
- details about the doctoral study domain under review (number of students, institutional context, short history etc.).

This evaluation was performed as a regular Periodical External Evaluation of the Institution Organising Doctoral Study Programs (IOSUD), respectively of the doctoral study domains (DD) of Law, Medicine and Dental Medicine at Universitatea Titu Maiorescu Bucuresti (UTMB).

This evaluation visit was performed in a hybrid form, mostly online, with an on-site visit of the Panel Coordinators, and was conducted during the period of September 20th-24th 2021. In the Dental Medicine domain, the Experts Committee worked as follows: Evaluation Director Prof. Gheorghe Grigoras (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi), Coordinator of the IOSUD Committee Prof. Daniela Dănciulescu (University of Craiova), Coordinator of the domain, Prof. Aureliana Caraiane (“Ovidius” University of Constanta), domain’s International Expert Prof. Rui Amaral Mendes (Case Western Reserve University), and domain’s PhD Student Carina Sonia Neagu (“Victor Babes” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Timisoara).

The domain’s evaluation was carried out as part of the broader assessment of the university’s IOSUD.

The Doctoral School of Dental Medicine was first established by the Minister of Education and Research Order n^o. 4632/2004 and is currently an institution with full paid tuition which enables Doctoral students to obtain the title of doctor in the field of Dental Medicine.

The regulations of Doctoral School of Dental Medicine were established under the National Education Law no. 1/2011 (with subsequent amendments and completions), Romanian Government Decision n^o 681/2011 on the approval of the Code of doctoral studies (with subsequent amendments and completions), the Charter of Titu Maiorescu

¹ Each time when applicable the information shall be presented gender-wise.



University and the Institutional Regulation for the Organization and Development of doctoral programs within the IOUDS.

Within the Doctoral School of Dental Medicine, 4 out of the 5 PhD coordinators appear to meet the minimum CNATDCU standards.

The Doctoral School of Dental Medicine currently has 42 doctoral students work under the supervision of the 5 PhD Coordinators, although a decision from the Senate has set that the number of doctoral students assigned to each PhD coordinator would be limited to 12.

II. Methods used

This chapter will contain the methods and tools used in the external evaluation process, before and during the evaluation visit, including at least:

- The analysis of the internal evaluation report of the doctoral study domain under review and its Annexes;
- The analysis of documents made available by the IOSUD, in physical format, during the evaluation visit (if such documents have been requested);
- The analysis of documents, data and information available on the IOSUD/Doctoral School(s) website, in electronic format;
- Visiting the buildings included in the institution's property, comprising (indicative and non-exhaustive list, which shall be changed according to the context):

As mentioned, the visit was conduct in a hybrid format. As an International Expert assigned to the Dental Medicine domain I had the opportunity to participate in several meetings conducted online using Zoom, for which proper translation was provided:

- ***Online meeting with representatives of the Institution and of the Council for Academic Doctoral Studies (CSUD)***
- ***Online meeting with the contact person for the doctoral study domain under review and the team who drafted the internal evaluation report***
- ***Online meeting with the Academic staff corresponding to the doctoral study domain***
- ***Online meeting with PhD students***
- ***Online meeting with the members of the Ethics Commission***
- ***Online meeting with graduates for the respective doctoral study domain***
- ***Online meeting with the Commission for Quality Evaluation and Assurance (CEAC) members / Quality Assurance Department***
- ***Online meeting with the Directors/Persons in charge of the Research Centers/Laboratories within the doctoral study domain***
- ***Online meeting with Doctoral Schools***
- ***Online meeting with employers of Doctoral graduates in the domain***

I was also provided with an English version of the Internal Evaluation Report of the doctoral domain. Moreover, English versions of the annexes were also delivered during or after the visit upon request.

Overall, the UTMB and the persons in charge of the Doctoral School of Dental Medicine provided all the required and requested information, enabling the process to be as transparent as possible.

Nonetheless, I'm afraid the International Evaluation Report (IER) was written in a rather poor and less comprehensive manner. Thus, caution must be exerted in the future to



ensure that the IER follows addresses all the topics in a clear and fact-based manner, rather than by means of subjective and void sentences that add little, in any, information (e.g. “The objectives of the DSDM are related to the monitoring and evidence of the research activity for the optimal capitalization and the coherent evaluation of the scientific research activity.” or “The educational and research program of DSDM aims to intensify the competition between Doctoral Schools with the same profile, diversify study opportunities for dentists and their access to research in Dental Medicine, respectively major qualitative changes in higher education for European integration of Romania”).

Although I’ve not had the opportunity to visit the facilities and assess the available infrastructures on site, the Coordinator of the IOSUD Committee Prof. Daniela Dănciulescu, made sure that pictures of the relevant facilities (research centre, laboratories, etc.) were made available to me and the other colleagues.

III. Analysis of ARACIS’s performance indicators

Domain A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Criterion A.1. The administrative, managerial institutional structures and the financial resources

Standard A.1.1. The institution organizing doctoral studies (IOSUD) has implemented the effective functioning mechanisms provided for in the specific legislation on the organization of doctoral studies.

Overall, the teaching, research and governance activities within the IOSUD comply with the relevant national legislation and internal regulations approved by the University’s Senate.

Performance Indicator A.1.1.1. *The existence of specific regulations and their application at the level of the Doctoral School of the respective university doctoral study domain:*

- (a) the internal regulations of the Doctoral School;*
- (b) the Methodology for conducting elections for the position of director of the Council of doctoral school (CSD), as well as elections by the students of their representative in CSD and the evidence of their conduct;*
- c) the Methodologies for organizing and conducting doctoral studies (for the admission of doctoral students, for the completion of doctoral studies);*
- d) the existence of mechanisms for recognizing the status of a Doctoral advisor and the equivalence of the doctoral degree obtained abroad;*
- e) functional management structures (Council of the doctoral school), giving as well proof of the regularity of meetings;*
- f) the contract for doctoral studies;*
- g) internal procedures for the analysis and approval of proposals regarding the training for doctoral study programs based on advanced academic studies.*

The Doctoral School of Dental Medicine provide all the necessary documents that show that the aspects mentioned in a), b) c), d), e), f) and g) are indeed covered by proper and adequate internal regulations and processes.

Recommendations:

*The indicator is **fulfilled**.*



Performance Indicator A.1.1.2. *The doctoral school' Regulation includes mandatory criteria, procedures and standards binding on the aspects specified in Article 17, paragraph (5) of the Government Decision No. 681/2011 on the approval of the Code of Doctoral Studies with subsequent amendments and additions.*

The regulation of the Doctoral School of Dental Medicine includes all mandatory criteria, procedures, and standards for the aspects specified in art.17, par. 5 of GD no. 681/2011, with its subsequent amendments and completions.

Recommendations:

*The indicator is **fulfilled**.*

Standard A.1.2. The IOSUD has the logistical resources necessary to carry out the doctoral studies' mission.

Performance Indicator A.1.2.1. *The existence and effectiveness of an appropriate IT system to keep track of doctoral students and their academic background.*

The IT system described in the Internal Evaluation Report enables the collection, processing, and analysis of the data and information relevant to keep track of the doctoral students academic path and achievements. From an educational perspective, the system relies mainly on Microsoft Teams and its different tools, and it is handled by the academic staff in a rather simplistic and straightforward manner. Although the potential of the software appear to serve the current needs of the students, the system needs to be enhanced to allow a more comprehensive analysis of the students academic achievements and how they impact the DSDM.

Recommendations:

*The indicator is **partially fulfilled**.*

Performance Indicator A.1.2.2. *The existence and use of an appropriate software program and evidence of its use to verify the percentage of similarity in all doctoral theses.*

According to the Internal Evaluation Report, the IOUDS of UTMB has acquired the software sistemantiplagiat.ro, approved by MEN, which allows the electronic comparison of documents to detect possible similarities. This system seems to serve the current needs of the DSDM regarding the monitorisation of plagiarism.

Nonetheless, during the meetings with the academic staff I had the opportunity of raising awareness regarding the need of setting an arbitrational commission to address potential problems and accusations resulting from the use of anti-plagiarism software, and it eventual inability to differentiate between cases of plagiarism, self-plagiarism and proper and acceptable paraphrasing.

Recommendations:

*The indicator is **fulfilled**.*

Standard A.1.3. The IOSUD makes sure that financial resources are used optimally, and the revenues obtained from doctoral studies are supplemented through additional funding besides governmental funding.

Performance Indicator A.1.3.1. *Existence of at least one research or institutional / human resources development grant under implementation at the time of submission of the internal evaluation file, per doctoral study domain under evaluation, or existence of at least 2 research or institutional development / human resources grant for the doctoral study domain, obtained by doctoral thesis advisors operating in*



the evaluated domain within the past 5 years. The grants address relevant themes for the respective domain and, as a rule, are engaging doctoral students.

The Doctoral School of Dental Medicine is an institution with full paid tuition and no sort of government or public funding.

The DSDM does not carry out research or institutional development grants in the field of doctoral studies, nor does it have research or institutional development / human resources grants in the field of Dental Medicine.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **not fulfilled**.

Performance Indicator *A.1.3.2. The percentage of doctoral students active at the time of the evaluation, who for at least six months receive additional funding sources besides government funding, through scholarships awarded by individual persons or by legal entities, or who are financially supported through research or institutional / human resources development grants is not less than 20%.

11 out of the 42 Doctoral students also hold a teaching position, thus enabling them to get some resources to support their doctoral projects. Despite being portrayed as part of the DSDM's efforts to provide financial support to its students, one must underline that this sort of measures do not qualify as "additional funding source", considering that they are but the proper and deserved payment for the teaching activities conducted by the Doctoral students within the School of Dental Medicine.

The DSDM needs to increase its capacity of attracting financial resources and investment to cover, and boost, their R&D initiatives and to properly support their Doctoral students.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **not fulfilled**.

Performance Indicator *A.1.3.3.² At least 10% of the total amount of doctoral grants obtained by the university through institutional contracts and of tuition fees collected from the doctoral students enrolled in the paid tuition system is used to reimburse professional training expenses of doctoral students (attending conferences, summer schools, training, programs abroad, publication of specialty papers or other specific forms of dissemination etc.).

Doctoral students participating in conferences organized by UTMB are exempt from fees. Moreover, doctoral students seeking to publish in open access journals get financial support to cover the journals' Author Publication Charges (APCs).

Although the minimum legal requirements appear to be fulfilled, not all the Doctoral students have benefited from the measures set in place by the DSDM. Overall, the DSDM needs to increase its capacity of attracting financial resources and investment to cover, and boost, their R&D initiatives.

Further international collaboration and the enrolment in international networks of researchers is highly advisable.

Recommendations: Put additional efforts to reach the minimum of 10%

² The indicators marked with an asterisk (*) hold a special status, referring exclusively to the evaluation of doctoral studies domains, as per Article 12 from the annex No.1 of the Order of the minister of education No. 3651/12.04.2021 approving the Methodology for evaluating university doctoral studies and the system of criteria, standards and performance indicators used in the evaluation. In case they are not met, the Agency extends a period of maximum 3 years to IOSUD to correct the respective deficiencies.



The indicator is **partially fulfilled**.

Criterion A.2. Research infrastructure

Standard A.2.1. The IOSUD has a modern research infrastructure to support the conduct of doctoral studies' specific activities.

Performance Indicator A.2.1.1. The venues and the material equipment available to the doctoral school enable the research activities in the evaluated domain to be carried out, in line with the assumed mission and objectives (computers, specific software, equipment, laboratory equipment, library, access to international databases etc.). The research infrastructure and the provision of research services are presented to the public through a specific platform. The research infrastructure described above, which was purchased and developed within the past 5 years will be presented distinctly.

The infrastructures provided by the DSDM includes proper educational spaces, namely amphitheatres, classrooms, laboratories and dental units within the Titu Maiorescu Private Clinical Center for Dental Care, which suits the DSDM's needs in terms of clinical research.

Moreover, it is worth highlighting the existence of the Nicolae Cajal Medical Research Institute, which offers modern research possibilities in terms of advanced fundamental/paraclinical research. It's used by the Doctoral student of the DSDM should be strongly supported and stimulated.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Criterion A.3. Quality of Human Resources

Standard A.3.1. At the level of each domain there are sufficient qualified staff to ensure the conduct of doctoral study program.

Performance Indicator A.3.1.1. Minimum three doctoral thesis advisors within that doctoral domain, and at least 50% of them (but no less than three) meet the minimum standards of the National Council for Attestation of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU) in force at the time when the evaluation is carried out, which standards are required and mandatory for obtaining the enabling certification.

Within the Doctoral School of Dental Medicine, 4 out of the 5 PhD coordinators (80%) appear to meet the minimum CNATDCU standards.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Performance Indicator *A.3.1.2. At least 50% of all doctoral advisors have a full-time employment contract for an indefinite period with the IOSUD.

Within the Doctoral School of Dental Medicine, 4 out of the 5 PhD coordinators (80%) hold a tenured position within the DSDM.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.



Performance Indicator A.3.1.3. *The study subjects in the education program based on advanced higher education studies pertaining to the doctoral domain are taught by teaching staff or researchers who are doctoral thesis advisors / certified doctoral thesis advisors, professors / CS I or lecturer / CS II, with proved expertise in the field of the study subjects they teach, or other specialists in the field who meet the standards established by the institution in relation with the aforementioned teaching and research functions, as provided by the law.*

At the moment of the present evaluation, the staff engaged as PhD supervisors or professors for the doctoral domain of Dental Medicine are academicians with proven expertise in the field of the study subjects they teach.

Recommendations:

*The indicator is **fulfilled**.*

Performance Indicator *A.3.1.4. *The percentage of doctoral thesis advisors who concomitantly coordinate more than 8 doctoral students, but no more than 12, who are themselves studying in doctoral programs³ does not exceed 20%.*

With a total of 42 Doctoral students and only 5 PhD supervisors, the Doctoral School of Dental Medicine clearly fails to meet this standard. Despite the efforts made to create supervising teams assigned to each student, the fact remains that there is a major mismatch between the academic staff and the number of students.

Recommendations:

*The indicator is **not fulfilled**.*

Standard A.3.2. *The Doctoral advisors within the domain are carrying out a scientific activity visible at international level.*

Performance Indicator A.3.2.1. *At least 50% of the doctoral thesis advisors in the evaluated domain have at least 5 Web of Science - or ERIH-indexed publications in magazines of impact, or other achievements of relevant significance for that domain, including international-level contributions that indicate progress in scientific research - development - innovation for the evaluated domain. The aforementioned doctoral thesis advisors enjoy international awareness within the past five years, consisting of: membership on scientific boards of international publications and conferences; membership on boards of international professional associations; guests in conferences or expert groups working abroad, or membership on doctoral defense commissions at universities abroad or co-leading with universities abroad. For Arts and Sports and Physical Education Sciences, doctoral thesis advisors shall prove their international visibility within the past five years by their membership on the boards of professional associations, membership in organizing committees of arts events and international competitions, membership on juries or umpire teams in artistic events or international competitions.*

Despite claiming in the Internal Evaluation Report that “the international visibility of PhD supervisors is also highlighted by their participation as members of scientific committees of international publications and conferences”, the evidence of such an international awareness within the past five years has not been shown.

³ 3 years for the doctoral university studies with the duration stipulated at Article 159, paragraph (3), respectively 4 years for the doctoral university studies with the duration stipulated at Article 174, paragraph (3) of the Law of national education No.1/2011 with subsequent amendments and additions, with additional extension periods approved as per Article 39, paragraph (3) of the Code of doctoral studies approved by the GD No. 681/2011 with subsequent amendments and additions.



Despite stating in the Internal Evaluation Report that “80% of PhD coordinators in the field of Dental Medicine have more than 10 articles published in ISI Thompson indexed journals”, only one (20%) of the PhD supervisors showed evidence of this being true when the time frame was narrowed to the last 5 years.

In fact, only 4 out of the 5 PhD supervisors have published more than 5 papers in ISI journals in the last 5 years.

More importantly, the annexes and the information provided regarding the scientific outcomes published by the PhD supervisors in the last 5 years clearly show a predominance of Romanian journals, mainly the “Revista de Chimie”.

Recommendations:

*The indicator is **not fulfilled**.*

Performance Indicator *A.3.2.2. At least 50% of the doctoral thesis advisors in a specific doctoral study domain continue to be active in their scientific field, and acquire at least 25% of the score requested by the minimal CNATDCU standards in force at the time of the evaluation, which are required and mandatory for acquiring their enabling certificate, based on their scientific results within the past five years.

Almost all of the PhD supervisors of the doctoral domain of Dental Medicine carry out an active research activity, thus meeting the minimum scores required according to the CNATDCU standards. Evidence of this activity has been shown.

Recommendations:

*The indicator is **fulfilled**.*

Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Criterion B.1. The number, quality and diversity of candidates enrolled for the admission contest

Standard B.1.1. The institution organizing doctoral studies has the capacity to attract candidates from outside the higher education institution or a number of candidates exceeding the number of seats available.

Performance Indicator *B.1.1.1. The ratio between the number of graduates of masters' programs of other higher education institutions, national or foreign, who have enrolled for the doctoral admission contest within the past five years and the number of seats funded by the state budget, put out through contest within the doctoral domain is at least 0.2 or the ratio between the number of candidates within the past five years and the number of seats funded by the state budget put out through contest within the doctoral studies domain is at least 1,2.

Whitin the Doctoral School of Dental Medicine, a very large cohort of students - 24 out of the 49 (43,5%) that have been admitted - have been recruited outside of UTMB. This is quite positive and needs to be highlighted, because it reflects the DSDM's reputation in some specific topics/areas of research.

More importantly, such a trend regarding the active recruitment of students outside of the Internal pool of candidates accounts for the DSDM's commitment to suppress and contain certain practices leading to academic endogamy and inbreeding. I find this to be highly commendable.

Recommendations:

*The indicator is **fulfilled**.*

Standard B.1.2 Candidates admitted to doctoral studies demonstrate academic, research and professional performance.



Performance Indicator *B.1.2.1. Admission to doctoral study programs is based on selection criteria including: previous academic, research and professional performance, their interest for scientific or arts/sports research, publications in the domain and a proposal for a research subject. Interviewing the candidate is compulsory, as part of the admission procedure.

Selection criteria are established for each academic year and are transparent and clear. For admission criteria PhD candidates need to collect all relevant documents. An interview with the candidate is a mandatory procedure.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Performance Indicator B.1.2.2. The expelling rate, including renouncement / dropping out of doctoral students 3, respectively 4, years after admission⁴ does not exceed 30%.

Regarding the doctoral domain of Dental Medicine, at the time of the evaluation 8 out of the 49 (16,5%) admitted candidates had been expelled from the programme. Thus, the dropout rate of PhD is below the threshold set for this criteria. More importantly, the numbers of drop outs appear to be decreasing in the last academical years.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Criterion B.2. The content of doctoral programs

Standard B.2.1. The training program based on advanced university studies is appropriate to improve doctoral students' research skills and to strengthen ethical behavior in science.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.1. The training program based on advanced academic studies includes at least 3 disciplines relevant to the scientific research training of doctoral students; at least one of these disciplines is intended to study in-depth the research methodology and/or the statistical data processing.

The training program established by the Council covers all the topics relevant and necessary to ensure that the doctoral students are given a good and solid background in terms of using the proper research tools to secure sound research methodologies and data processing.

At the time of the evaluation, the training programme includes the following disciplines: "Scientific research methodology", "Methodology for documentation and scientific writing in the medical field", "Techniques and methods used in in-depth medical research", "Project management of scientific research" and "Biostatistics and medical informatics".

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.2. At least one discipline is dedicated to Ethics and Intellectual Property in scientific research or there are well-defined topics on these subjects within a discipline taught in the doctoral program.

⁴ 3 years for the doctoral university studies with the duration stipulated at Article 159, paragraph (3), respectively 4 years for the doctoral university studies with the duration stipulated at Article 174, paragraph (3) of the Law of national education No. 1/2011 with subsequent amendments and additions.



There is a discipline named "Ethics and academic integrity" which is included in the learning plan of the DSDM.

Moreover, there seems to be a general and transversal concern with ethics and academic integrity throughout the curricula of the Doctoral school of Dental Medicine.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.3. *The IOSUD has mechanisms to ensure that the academic training program based on advanced university studies addresses „the learning outcomes“, specifying the knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy that doctoral students should acquire after completing each discipline or through the research activities⁵.*

Learning outcomes have been defined and specify the knowledge, skills, responsibility, and autonomy that the doctoral students are expected to acquire after completion of the Doctoral course.

Recommendations: Check out the level of proposed learning outcomes and align it with the European level for the Doctoral Study.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.4. *All along the duration of the doctoral training, doctoral students in the domain receive counselling/guidance from functional guidance commissions, which is reflected in written guidance and feedback or regular meeting.*

Throughout the doctoral training period, PhD students receive suitable counselling and guidance from either their PhD supervisors or the respective Guidance Committee to which they have been assigned. Each Guidance Committee has 4 members: the supervisor and 3 additional professors. Students appear comfortable and satisfied with the feedback and accessibility of their guidances committes and the communication channels provided.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.5. *For a doctoral study domain, the ratio between the number of doctoral students and the number of teaching staff/researchers providing doctoral guidance must not exceed 3:1.*

There is a "mismatch" between the list mentioned in Annex 51 and the one that appears in Annex 47.

More importantly, one needs to consider that the ratio should be calculated between the number of doctoral students and the total number of teachers.

In fact, looking at the data provided, I must state that the Doctoral School of Dental Medicine is, at present, either understaffed to support the students enrolled in the DSDM or has enrolled too many students given the available academic staff.

Be that as it may, the current ratio does not meet the criteria and does not secure the expected and desirable standards of research expected in a Doctoral programme.

More academic staff is urgently required.

⁵ Or by what the graduate should know, understand and to be able to do, according to the provisions of the Methodology of 17 March 2017 regarding inscription and registration of higher education qualifications in the National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education (RNCIS) approved by the Order No.3475/2017 with subsequent amendments and additions.



Recommendations:
The indicator is **not fulfilled**.

Criterion B.3. The results of doctoral studies and procedures for their evaluation.

Standard B.3.1. Doctoral students capitalize on the research through presentations at scientific conferences, scientific publications, technological transfer, patents, products and service orders.

Performance Indicator B.3.1.1. For the evaluated domain, the evaluation commission will be provided with at least one paper or some other relevant contribution per doctoral student who has obtained a doctor's title within the past 5 years. From this list, the members of the evaluation commission shall randomly select 5 such papers / relevant contributions per doctoral study domain for review. At least 3 selected papers must contain significant original contributions in the respective domain.

In the observed period, doctoral students in the doctoral domain of Dental Medicine have produced scientific outputs deemed relevant to their research topics. Nonetheless, the number of papers published in ISI journals and the international visibility of their work is below the desirable threshold for a Doctoral programme: only 2 out of the 7 doctoral students who have finished their doctoral programmes have published more than 1 paper in an ISI journal. None of these papers were published in an international journal.

Recommendations:
The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Performance Indicator *B.3.1.2. The ratio between the number of presentations of doctoral students who completed their doctoral studies within the evaluated period (past 5 years), including posters, exhibitions made at prestigious international events (organized in the country or abroad) and the number of doctoral students who have completed their doctoral studies within the evaluated period (past 5 years) is at least 1.

During the period of the evaluation, we found a total of 13 scientific outputs that meet these criteria, resulting in a ratio slightly above 1. Nonetheless, out of the 8 students who completed their doctoral studies, only 5 have made any sort of presentations in international events (see Annex 55), which means that 37,5% of the students present no relevant scientific output that meet these criteria.

Recommendations:
The indicator is **partially fulfilled**.

Standard B.3.2. The Doctoral School engages a significant number of external scientific specialists in the commissions for public defense of doctoral theses in the analyzed domain.

Performance Indicator *B.3.2.1. The number of doctoral theses allocated to one specialist coming from a higher education institution, other than the evaluated IOSUD should not exceed two (2) in a year for the theses coordinated by the same doctoral thesis advisor.

During the period of the evaluation, several external scientific reviewers were engaged in the theses defended in the domain of Dental Medicine (Annex 57). The number of doctoral theses assigned to an external reviewer, coordinated by the same PhD supervisor did not exceed the maximal number of 2.



Recommendations:
The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Performance Indicator *B.3.2.2. *The ratio between the doctoral theses allocated to one scientific specialist coming from a higher education institution, other than the institution where the defense on the doctoral thesis is organized, and the number of doctoral theses presented in the same doctoral study domain in the doctoral school should not exceed 0.3, considering the past five years. Only those doctoral study domains in which minimum ten doctoral theses have been presented within the past five years should be analyzed.*

Overall, the ratio between the doctoral theses allocated to one scientific specialist coming from a higher education institution, other than the institution where the defense on the doctoral thesis is organized, and the number of doctoral theses presented in the same doctoral study domain in the doctoral school varied between 0.1 and 0.3. Only one exceeded the 0,3 ratio (Annex 57).

Recommendations:
The indicator is **partially fulfilled**.

Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Criterion C.1. Existence and periodic implementation of the internal quality assurance system

Standard C.1.1. There are an institutional framework and procedures in place and relevant internal quality assurance policies, applied for monitoring the internal quality assurance.

Performance Indicator C.1.1.1. *The Doctoral school in the respective university study domain shall demonstrate the continuous development of the evaluation process and its internal quality assurance following a procedure developed and applied at the level of the IOSUD, the following assessed criteria being mandatory:*

- (a) the scientific work of Doctoral advisors;*
- (b) the infrastructure and logistics necessary to carry out the research activity;*
- (c) the procedures and subsequent rules based on which doctoral studies are organized;*
- d) the scientific activity of doctoral students;*
- e) the training program based on advanced academic studies of doctoral students;*
- f) social and academic services (including for participation at different events, publishing papers etc.) and counselling made available to doctoral students.*

**The internal evaluation and monitoring procedures and regulations set up for assessing and monitoring the evolution of the doctoral school are developed and applied regularly.
All those procedures and regulations are applied to the Doctoral Study domain of Dental Medicine.**

Recommendations:
The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Performance Indicator *C.1.1.2. *Mechanisms are implemented during the stage of the doctoral study program to enable feedback from doctoral students allowing to identify their needs, as well as their overall level of satisfaction with the doctoral study program in order to ensure continuous improvement of the academic and administrative processes. Following the analysis of the results, there is evidence that an action plan was drafted and implemented.*



Feedback aiming to monitor the degree of satisfaction of doctoral students is done by completing a questionnaire. However, I failed to see that such procedure secured the anonymity of the students replies. This should be guaranteed in order to make the process sound and insightful.

Moreover, although the students claim to be satisfied with the informal feedback provided by the professors, it appears to be missing a formal and consistent process that enables a proper analysis of the obtained results and the subsequent elaboration and implementation of a plan of measures.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **partially fulfilled**.

Criterion C.2. Transparency of information and accessibility of learning resources

Standard C.2.1. Information of interest to doctoral students, future candidates and public interest information is available for electronic format consultation.

Performance Indicator C.2.1.1. The IOSUD publishes on the website of the organizing institution, in compliance with the general regulations on data protection, information such as:

- (a) the Doctoral School regulation;
- (b) the admission regulation;
- (c) the doctoral studies contract;
- (d) the study completion regulation including the procedure for the public presentation of the thesis;
- (e) the content of training program based on advanced academic studies;
- (f) the academic and scientific profile, thematic areas/research themes of the Doctoral advisors within the domain, as well as their institutional contact data;
- (g) the list of doctoral students within the domain with necessary information (year of registration; advisor);
- (h) information on the standards for developing the doctoral thesis;
- (i) links to the doctoral theses' summaries to be publicly presented and the date, time, place where they will be presented; this information will be communicated at least twenty days before the presentation.

All methodologies and regulations for the organization and conduct of admission competitions are public, along with the other information of the public interest.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled/partially fulfilled/not fulfilled**.

Standard C.2.2. The IOSUD/The Doctoral School provides doctoral students with access to the resources needed for conducting doctoral studies.

Performance Indicator C.2.2.1. All doctoral students have free access to one platform providing academic databases relevant to the doctoral studies domain of their thesis.

Through the library and other internal digital platforms (ANELIS + and e-NFORMATION), the DSDM provides students with the classical research resources.

However, the list of scientific journals made available to the students (Annex 69) relies heavily on open access journals, thus narrowing students' access to state of the art research within their topics of research.

The list of journal available needs to be urgently expanded to incorporate all the major journals relevant to the domains of Dental Medicine and Medicine.



Recommendations:

The indicator is **partially fulfilled**.

Performance Indicator C.2.2.2. Each doctoral student shall have access, upon request, to an electronic system for verifying the degree of similarity with other existing scientific or artistic works.

According to the Internal Evaluation Report, the IOUDS of UTMB has acquired the software sistemantiplagiat.ro, approved by MEN, which allows the electronic comparison of documents to detect possible similarities. This system seems to serve the current needs of the DSDM regarding the monitorisation of plagiarism.

Nonetheless, during the meetings with the academic staff I had the opportunity of raising awareness regarding the need of setting an arbitrational commission to address potential problems and accusations resulting from the use of anti-plagiarism software, and its eventual inability to differentiate between cases of plagiarism, self-plagiarism and proper and acceptable paraphrasing.

Recommendations: Assure that all supervisors use antiplagiarism verification.

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Performance Indicator C.2.2.3. All doctoral students have access to scientific research laboratories or other facilities depending on the specific domain/domains within the Doctoral School, according to internal order procedures.

Permanent access to the halls and laboratories of the DSDM is ensured.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Criterion C.3. Internationalization

Standard C.3.1. There is a strategy in place and it is applied to enhance the internationalization of doctoral studies.

Performance Indicator *C.3.1.1. IOSUD, for every evaluated domain, has concluded mobility agreements with universities abroad, with research institutes, with companies working in the field of study, aimed at the mobility of doctoral students and academic staff (e.g., ERASMUS agreements for the doctoral studies). At least 35% of the doctoral students have completed a training course abroad or other mobility forms such as attending international scientific conferences. IOSUD drafts and applies policies and measures aiming at increasing the number of doctoral students participating at mobility periods abroad, up to at least 20%, which is the target at the level of the European Higher Education Area.

Despite some evidence of students attending international conferences and a mobility projected carried out between 2010 and 2013 (thus, out of the scope of the current evaluation), there appears to be no current and systematic enrollment of either students or academic staff in any of the mobility agreement leading to training courses abroad.

Recommendations: More longer international mobility for Ph.D. students and staff.

The indicator is **not fulfilled**.



Performance Indicator C.3.1.2. In the evaluated doctoral study domain, support is granted, including financial support, to the organization of doctoral studies in international co-tutelage or invitation of leading experts to deliver courses/lectures for doctoral students.

During the period of the evaluation, efforts have been made to invite leading international experts to deliver courses/lectures for the doctoral students.

However, these were pretty much scattered in time and failed to show a consistent and coherent approach, likely to positively impact the Doctoral programme.

A proper internationalisation strategy is advisable, in order to secure enduring and impacting outcomes that may benefit the doctoral students.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **not fulfilled**.

Performance Indicator C.3.1.3. The internationalization of activities carried out during the doctoral studies is supported by IOSUD through concrete measures (e.g., by participating in educational fairs to attract international doctoral students; by including international experts in guidance committees or doctoral committees etc.).

The Internal Evaluation Report mentions that “Doctoral schools, including the Doctoral School of Dental Medicine, are encouraged to include such representatives in the guidance committees”. Despite this statement, there was no evidence of the involvement of international experts in these committees.

Moreover, although the Internal Evaluation Report also mentions that “IOUDS Titu Maiorescu University encourages PhD students, including PhD students in Dental Medicine, to participate in training and documentation internships at partner universities abroad”, no evidence was shown of their enrollment in any such internships, namely before the COVID-19 pandemia.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **not fulfilled**.

IV. SWOT Analysis

<u>Strengths:</u>	<u>Weaknesses:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dedicated staff and supporting students - The staff appears highly engaged with research in their areas of expertise - Programme recruits almost 50% of their students among those who did not attend the University previously - Energetic and supportive student body, appreciative of the commitment of the teaching and non-teaching staff - The scientific potential of the available international contact points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The mismatch between the number of doctors students and the overall number of PhD supervisors and additional teaching staff - The scientific outputs of the teaching staff enrolled in the doctoral programme needs to be enhanced - The low H index of the supervisors - The narrow diversity of the field of expertise of the supervisors - The lack of proper internationalisation of the scientific outputs - The lack of a consistent policy and institutional strategy within the DSDM to enhance the internationalisation of the students and of the academic staff

	- <i>No signs of translation and knowledge transfer</i>
<p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The integration of the Doctoral Programme in a Doctoral School that combines Medicine and Dental Medicine (not to be wasted)</i> - <i>The relation with the Polytechnic University</i> - <i>The research possibilities offered by the Nicolae Cajal Medical Research Institute</i> 	<p><u>Threats:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The workload posed upon doctoral students due to the legal obligation to secure 6 hours of teaching activities</i> - <i>The narrow access to public funding</i>

V. Overview of judgments awarded and of the recommendations

No.	Type of indicator (*, C)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
1.		A.3.1.4.	<i>Not fulfilled</i>	<i>The share of doctoral supervisors who coordinate more than 8 doctoral students at the same time must exceed 20%. No supervisor can coordinate more than 12 students.</i>
2.		B.2.1.5	<i>Not fulfilled</i>	<i>For a field of doctoral studies, the ratio between the number of doctoral students and the total number of teachers / researchers providing guidance should not exceed 3:1</i>
3.		B.3.1.2.	<i>Not fulfilled</i>	<i>All doctoral students should have at least one international presentation. That is the spirit of this criteria.</i>
4.		C.3.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	<i>A proper institutional strategy is required to secure international mobility for PhD students and staff.</i>



VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

the future.

Overall, I find that the Doctoral School of Dental Medicine has the infrastructures and the institutional potential to set up a good doctoral programme.

Nonetheless, the weaknesses mentioned in the SWOT analysis need to be addressed urgently, particularly in 3 areas:

- *Match the academic staff to the needs set by the current enrollment of doctoral students;*
- *Increase the scientific outputs and enhance their international outlook*
- *Set up an institutional strategy to enhance the internationalisation of the doctoral programme*

In doing so, the DSDM should maximise the integration of the Doctoral Programme in a broader Doctoral School that combines Medicine and Dental Medicine and foster interprofessional and collaborative approaches both in terms of education, as well as research. The relation with the Polytechnic University should also be supported and expanded.

The translation of scientific outputs is something that needs to be addressed in the future, a process that might benefit from the scientific potential of the available international contact points.

External Evaluator

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VII. Annexes