

The External Evaluation Report of a Doctoral Study Domain

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I. Introduction

This external evaluation report is drafted in the framework of the Doctoral School of Economics and Business Administration at the **West University of Timișoara**, periodic evaluation for the maintenance of accreditation of the doctoral field of Economics. The evaluation period is years 2016-2020. The evaluation visit for this program was during 11-15 October, 2021 and the Experts Committee was comprised by Coordinator Prof. dr. Mihaela LUTAS from Universitatea Babeș Bolyai din Cluj Napoca, International expert Prof. univ. Eglatina HYSA from Epoka University, Albania, and PhD student Mecu Andra Nicoleta from Academia de Studii Economice din București.

The West University of Timișoara is an Institution authorized to Organize Doctoral Studies (IOSUD - UVT) and operates under the National Education Law (1/2001) and GD 681/2011 - Code of Doctoral Studies. The Doctoral School of Economics and Business Administration (SDEAA) was established based on the Order of the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research no. 4843 / 01.08.2006.

The IOSUD-UVT, doctoral school in Economics and Business Administration has a clear mission and vision. It aims to provide advanced doctoral training meant to generate relevant international research skills. Currently, SDEAA counts 41 Ph.D. advisors (out of which 27 are tenured within IOSUD-UVT, 9 are associated staff (retired) and 5 are tenured professors from other higher education institutions in Romania) and offers doctoral study programs in the fundamental field "**Economics and Business Administration**", for the specific fields of: "**Accounting**"; "**Economics**"; "**Finance**"; "**Management**" and "**Marketing**".

In the last 5 years of analysis, 138 doctoral theses were defended and validated by a doctoral degree. Of these, **21 belong to the field of Economics**. Additionally, this program counts **6 Ph.D. advisors**, of whom 5 are tenured UVT staff, and 1 is an associate teacher (retired). As per data provided, the number of enrolled Ph.D. students, it has generally exceeded the number of budget-funded places.



The curriculum of ECONOMICS doctoral study domain, includes disciplines offered in the 1st semester of the doctoral studies program, to address the Ph.D. students' needs to acquire advanced competences in research methodology (both quantitative and qualitative research) and data analysis, but also in terms of research ethics and scientific authorship. As such, during this semester 8 disciplines are being offered:

- 1) Academic Ethics and Integrity;
- 2) Economic Methodology;
- 3) Conceptual Developments and Paradigmatic Changes in Business;
- 4) Academic Writing;
- 5) Research Methods;
- 6) Macroeconomic Modeling;
- 7) Space Economy;
- 8) Scientometrics and Evaluation of Scientific Research.

All Ph.D. students benefit from free access to the research infrastructure of the West University of Timisoara, the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration as well as that of the **East-European Center for Research in Economics and Business (ECREB)** - the research center of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration.

The internal quality assurance system regarding doctoral studies complies with the University's internal regulations, which are aligned with the National Education Law 1 I 2011, GEO No. 75 of 2005 on the quality assurance of education, namely GD 681 Code of Ph.D. studies, with subsequent amendments, in force at the time of writing the regulations. Internal quality assurance is done by the collaboration between SDEAA' s leadership (Doctoral School Director, Doctoral School Council) and the existing UVT bodies in charge of quality management (<https://dmc.uvt.ro0>).

The institution is including Ph.D. students and stakeholders in evaluating the quality assurance, by involving them in the implementation of a questionnaire regarding Ph.D. students' degree of satisfaction with the activity carried out within the SDEAA. (Annex SDEAA_Chestionar).

II. Methods used

This external evaluation report is drafted based on the evaluation visit for this doctoral program in Economics was during 11-15 October, 2021. All the Experts Committee members had the opportunity to join the meetings online and the group Coordinator Prof. dr. Mihaela LUTAS from Universitatea Babeș Bolyai din Cluj Napoca, could join the institution by consulting during a site-visit at the premises of the West University of Timișoara.



Specifically, the methods and tools used in the external evaluation process, before and during the evaluation visit, include the following activities:

- The analysis of the internal evaluation report of the doctoral study domain under review and its respective annexes;
- The analysis of documents made available by the IOSUD, in physical format, during the evaluation visit;
- 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, spaces and capacities (by Coordinator of the External Evaluation Experts);
- Meeting/discussions with doctoral students in the doctoral study domain under review;
- Meeting/Discussions with the graduates of the doctoral study domain under review;
- Meeting/Discussions with employers of the graduates in the doctoral study domain under review;
- Meeting/Discussions with the school officials of the Doctoral School(s) in which the doctoral study domain under review is operating;
- Meeting/Discussions with the doctoral advisors in the doctoral study domain under review;
- Meeting/discussions with the representatives of the various structures of the IOSUD/Doctoral School(s) in which the doctoral study domain under review is operating:
 - The Council of the Doctoral School, the Board of Directors, the Quality Assessment and Assurance Commission, the Quality Assurance Department, the Ethics Commission (including with the student representatives of these structures).

Additionally, the Experts Committee members asked to the university some additional documents that helped to clarify and ensured a correct evaluation of each criteria.

Lastly, the PhD student participating as external evaluation team member, student Mecu Andra Nicoleta from Academia de Studii Economice din București, delivered a questionnaire to the actual students of the PhD program in order to find out more about their opinion and experience during their studies.

III. Analysis of ARACIS's performance indicators

The doctoral programme in the field of Economics at the West University of Timișoara is an accredited programme. This external evaluation report is drafted in the framework of the Doctoral School of Economics at the West University of Timișoara, periodic evaluation for the maintenance of accreditation of the doctoral field of Economics. Each evaluation criteria stipulated by ARACIS have been analysed from the self-evaluation group preparing the Self-Evaluation Report, and in this external report the External Experts Committee will evaluate the respective criteria. The three main Domains to be evaluated are A. Institutional Capacity; B. Education Effectiveness; and, C. Quality Management.

Domain A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY



In this Domain, the External Experts Committee will investigate (1) The administrative, managerial institutional structures and the financial resources; (2) Research infrastructure; (3) Quality and human resources. Each of these criteria is based on some specific standards to be fulfilled by the institution.

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

This criterion is to analyse the existing of the administrative and managerial structures in the institutional level that are in support of the doctoral studies in the field of Economics. Additionally, this criterion considers the financial resources available to maintain the above mentioned programme.

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.

Performance Indicator A.1.1.1. *The existence of specific regulations and their application at the level of the IOSUO body and the doctoral school, respectively, considering the past five years as period of reference*

- *The internal regulations of the administrative structures (The Institutional Regulations regarding the organization and implementation of doctoral studies, the regulations of each doctoral school);*
 - *The Methodology regarding the voting process at the level of CSUO, of each doctoral school, and proof of its occurrence;*
 - *The methodology regarding the competition for occupying the position as director of CSUO and proof of the competition process;*
 - *Methodologies regarding organizing and conducting doctoral studies (the admission of students into doctoral programmes, the completion of the programmes);*
 - *The existence of mechanisms for acknowledging the title of doctoral advisor and the validation of doctoral titles obtained abroad;*
 - *Functional management structures [IOSUO/CSUO/The Council of the Doctoral School (the regularity with which the meetings are held)];*
 - *The doctoral thesis agreement;*
 - *Internal procedures regarding the analysis and approval of proposals for topics and themes to be included in the doctoral programmes;*
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- The normative framework regarding the organization and operation of doctoral studies programs by the West University of Timisoara established by the Institutional Regulation Regarding the Organization of Doctoral Studies, approved by the Senate's Decision no. 73/29.01.2019. All the stakeholders can find the online version of this regulation posted on the website of the West University of Timișoara at the following link: <https://www.uvt.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Regulamantul-institutional-privind-organizarea-si-desfasurarea-studiilor-universitare-de-doctorat-in-cadrul-IOSUD-editia-.pdf> Based on this regulation, the current version of the Regulation of the Doctoral School of Economics and Business

Administration (SDEAA), in force since 02.03.2017. The details are found in the Annex SDEAA_Regulament, in which it regulates the organization, attributions and activity of the SDEAA Council, as well as the attributions of the director of the SDEA.

- The process of electing all management, administrative and advisory bodies within the West University of Timișoara for the term 2020-2024 was carried out in accordance with the Regulation comprising the Methodology on the election of management bodies and functions of UVT for the term 2020-2024. All information related to the election process (methodology, candidates, results) are posted on the university's website as well: <https://oldsite.uvt.ro/ro/alegeri-2020-2024/>. Whereas, the election of students in the CSUD leadership and in the doctoral school councils is regulated by the Regulation for the election of student representatives at the UVT. See the details in Annex JOSUD_studenti alegere.
The regulations regarding the organization and process of doctoral studies are publicly available at <https://doctorat.uvt.ro/?cat=37>. Each academic year, CSUD discusses the framework governing the admission process of future Ph.D. students and recommends specific methodologies (see the details at <https://doctorat.uvt.ro/?cat=43>). These methodologies are in accordance with the national methodologies of the Ministry of National Education, and appropriate for national and foreign candidates. Admission to doctoral studies in IOSUD-UVT is carried out in conditions of transparency, with the dissemination of useful information for enrollment, including available places and their type (full-time / part-time; budget-funded with scholarship / budget-funded without scholarship / self-funding), as well as their distribution among the existing doctoral schools and fields of doctoral studies (see the details at <http://doctorat.uvt.ro/?p=8818>).
IOSUD-UVT also has clear procedures also for the completion of the doctoral studies, such as information on the stages of the process for the defense of the Ph.D. thesis as well as on the conditions for this process. (see the details at <http://doctorat.uvt.ro/?p=9462> and <http://doctorat.uvt.ro/?p=9493>).
Additionally, SDEAA has its own Methodology regarding the organization and process of admission to doctoral studies for the current academic year, which is submitted each year to the approval of the General Assembly of SDEAA members. (Annex SDEAA _ Metodologie _ admitere).
- Starting with 2017, in implementing national regulations, IOSUD-UVT established through internal methodologies and procedures the recognition of the quality of Ph.D. advisor, based on certifications obtained in foreign universities, as well as the recognition of doctoral degrees obtained abroad. The respective methodology is available online at <http://doctorat.uvt.ro/?p=4183>.
- The SDEAA Council meets regularly once a month and whenever it is necessary to solve operational problems. According to its attributions, the SDEAA Council, among other things: a) approves the requests regarding the number and structure of the places for each admission session; b) approves the curriculum and the syllabi; c) approves the analytical report following the analysis and validation of the affiliation applications; d) approves the situations regarding interruptions, extensions or the expulsion of Ph.D. students who do not fulfill their contractual obligations; e) analyzes the various requests of the Ph.D. advisors and of the Ph.D. students; f) approves the amendments to the SDEAA

regulation, the admission regulation, the scholarship regulation and other specific regulations, etc. In order to discuss the strategic development directions, all SDEAA members meet at least once a year and are consulted by SDEAA Council on the strategies and policies to be followed in the current period (as an example, the Calendar of SDEAA Council meetings is presented, as well as that of SDEAA's General Assemblies between September 2020 and April 2021 - Annex SDEAA_Calendar_Consdiu).

- The relations between the Ph.D. student, the Ph.D. advisor and IOSUD-UVT are established and set out in the Doctoral Contract (see the details at <http://doctorat.uvt.ro/?=3285>). This document sets out the rights and obligations of each of the parties, and charts the Ph.D. student's evolution in the years of study.

Additionally, with the signing of the Doctoral Contract, the Ph.D. students complete, together and in agreement with the Ph.D. advisor, a Research Plan (see the details at <http://doctorat.uvt.ro/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Planul-studiilor-doctorale3.pdf>).

- Together and in agreement with the Ph.D. advisor, Ph.D. students devise a Study Plan which details their complete academic program (the disciplines from the advanced study program, the topics and schedule for the defense of the progress reports, the projects in which the Ph.D. student is involved, etc.) (Annex_IOSUD Formulare). On the same time, based on discussions with the Ph.D. student and following the analysis of his research topic, the Ph.D. advisor establishes the doctoral advisory committee. The study plans proposed by the Ph.D. advisors together with the Ph.D. students are analyzed by the SDEAA Council and signed off on by the SDEAA Director.

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 aspects specified in Art. 17 (5) of Government Decision no.681/2011 are also specified in the Regulations of the Doctoral School of Economics and Business Administration) includes all mandatory provisions related to criteria, procedures and standards concerning the issues specified:

- *According to the Code of doctoral studies (GD 681.2011), art. 171, the regulations of the doctoral schools within IOSUD- UVT include procedures, adapted to each field of doctoral university studies. The acceptance of new members to become affiliated with the doctoral schools is validated by the Councils of these doctoral schools, based on opportunity analyses, and taking into account the fulfillment of the scientific and professional integrity criteria. Also, the Doctoral School Councils*

discuss and validate the competencies that Ph.D. students are to acquire by following the training program of advanced university studies, establish the structure of disciplines offered by the curriculum and the number of credits for each discipline. At the same time, they manage the situations in which, based on the discussions with their respective advisors and in order to prepare their research topics, Ph.D. students choose to follow other courses than those offered by the doctoral schools in which they enrolled, including courses that are part of the curriculum of master's degrees within UVT.

- *Doctoral schools follow the Romanian legislation in force as well as the Institutional Regulation on the Organization and Process of Doctoral Studies (available at <http://doctorat.uvt.ro/?p=790>). Doctoral schools follow the Romanian legislation in force as well as the Institutional Regulation on the organization and process of doctoral studies to resolve any situations of incompatibility or even conflict between the Ph.D. advisor and the Ph.D. student, using mediation between the two or, where needed, to replace the Ph.D. advisor. At the same time, the procedures regarding the prevention of intellectual fraud, including plagiarism, and issues related to the Ph.D. students' attendance follow these general procedures.*
- *As specified in Art. 2. of the Regulation of the Doctoral School of Economics and Business Administration (in force since 02.03.2017) (Annex SDEAA_Regulament), it is elaborated under: "Art. 2. based on the provisions of the National Education Law No. 1 / 2011, of GD 681 / 3.08.2011 regarding the approval of the Code of doctoral studies and of the Institutional Regulation for the organization and process of doctoral programs within IOSUD-UVT".*
- *The current version includes provisions regarding: a) the acceptance of new members (Ph.D. advisors) (Art. 4); b) the mechanisms by which decisions are taken regarding the opportunity, structure and content of the training program of advanced university studies (Art. 5, paragraph 8, letter f and Art. 11 paragraphs 1 and 2); c) the procedures for replacing the Ph.D. advisor of a certain Ph.D. student and the procedures for mediating conflicts (Art. 6, paragraph 4, paragraph 5 and paragraph 6, Art. 7 and, Art. 9); d) the conditions under which the doctoral program may be interrupted (Art. 11, paragraph 8, paragraph 9 and paragraph 10) e) the strategies to prevent fraud in scientific research, including plagiarism (Art. 14); f) ensuring access to research resources (Art. 11, paragraph 4, paragraph 5 and paragraph 6); g) the required attendance levels for Ph.D. students (Art. 11, paragraph 7).*

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

This standard ensures the existence of a good system which maintains all the necessary data and details of the doctoral student academic background.

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 informatic system of IOSUD - West University of Timisoara, ACADEMIS, allows keeping track of the doctoral students and their academic background. This system is an Integrated Information System for ERP Management (Enterprise Resources Planning), a solution for streamlining university management by computerizing all processes, flows and procedures and includes the following main components: (a) University Management System (UMS) - The schooling management component; (b) SAP - Economic-Financial Component.

The UMS component is a solution for managing schooling processes in a university (bachelor' s, master's and doctorate), which allows the efficient administration of all activities related to academic-didactic organization, admission, examinations, scholarships, accommodation, transport statements, issuance of documents for studies, specific managerial analyses – Integrated computer system for resource management (ACADEMIS). Additionally, Ph.D. students have access to the platform <https://elearning.e-uvt.ro/> - e-learning platform - doctoral studies.

Recommendations:

The indicator is 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.*

The IOSUD-WUT has shown ongoing concern for ensuring the necessary resources to check the similarity percentage for all the works elaborated by students, including PhD theses, which is in accordance with the provisions of Annex 1, Art. 4, pc. b) to Order 3897 I 16.05.2017 for amending the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the National Council for Validation of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates. IOSUD-WUT uses as a support tool for learning academic writing and for verifying the degree of similarity to the online iThenticate software (available at <http://www.ithenticate.com>) through which all Ph.D. theses are analyzed, according to internal procedures, before being defended in front of the guiding commission, and before the public defense, respectively.

This ensures the access of the teaching staff from the West University of Timișoara, including PhD advisor, to the application, and grants PhD students the opportunity to use an informatics program to verify the similarity percentage in PhD theses.

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.*



This standard ensures the availability of financial resources and other internal and external opportunities arising for the doctoral students. This is important to enhance capacities of research and to extend the outcome in a larger target group.

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.*

- *During the period 2014-2018, 3 PhD students from the domain of "Economics" and some others from other backgrounds, benefited from 2 grants (for a period of about 18 months) aiming the development of an integrated network for the doctoral and postdoctoral research system in the field of economic sciences: "Performance and excellence in doctoral and postdoctoral research in the field of economic sciences in Romania" (Contract no. POSDRU / 159/I. 5/S/134197 and Contract no. POSDRU I 159/1.5/S/142115. This project was co-financed from the European Social Fund through the Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007-2013 - <http://performanta.ase.ro/>; <http://www.excelenta.ase.ro>.*
- *During the same period, some other Ph.D. students of Management, Accounting and Marketing have benefited from access to the project Competitive researchers at European level in the field of humanities and socio-economic sciences. Multiregional Research Network (CCPE) - POSDRU/159/I. 5/S/140863 (16 months).*
- *Lastly, during 24.05.2019 to 23.05.2021, the West University of Timisoara is a partner with UAIC and ASE (project applicant) in the project "Development of entrepreneurial skills for doctoral and postdoctoral students in the field of economic sciences", SMIS code 125015, call POCU/380/6/13/ - "Support for Ph.D. students and postdoctoral researchers". In this project, a number of 10 Ph.D. students and 5 postdoctoral students are financially supported.*

While there was some lack of information on the university's website, the institution provided us some additional clarification documents that we could confirm the corresponding evidences. Thus, Annex EE2 shows the involvement of students and staff in different projects.

Recommendations:

The indicator is 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%.

*According to the self-evaluation report, and confirming also from the organized meetings, between 24.05.2019 until 23.05.2021, the West University of Timisoara is a partner with UAIC and ASE (project applicant) within the project "Development of entrepreneurial skills for doctoral and postdoctoral students in economics", SMIS code 125015, POCU call/380/6/13/ - "Support for Ph.D. students and postdoctoral researchers". In this project, a number of 10 Ph.D. students and 5 postdoctoral students are financially supported for a period of 18 months. The level of funding is 861 lei/month (400 euros * 4.6525 lei/euro) for Ph.D. students, respectively 2791.50 lei/month (600 euros * 4.6525 lei/euro) for postdoctoral researchers.*

Financial support is also provided for the publication of articles or for participation in international conferences organized in the EU Member States (other than Romania), and by facilitating access to international Bloomberg and Reuters databases. At the level of Ph.D. students in Economics, we found just one student being supported financially in the exchange mobility Erasmus + with the university of Universitatea Auvergne Clermond, France, for one semester.

As for the evaluated domain, 5 of the 12 PhD students have undergone through doctoral training in the field of ECONOMICS within the Doctoral School of Economics and Business Administration benefit (or benefitted), for a period of at least six months, from sources of funding other than government funding, through scholarships granted by natural or legal persons, or are financially supported by research or institutional development/ human resources grants, which represents a share above the lower limit of 20% provided by standards.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled

Performance Indicator *A.1.3.3.1 *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.).*

¹The 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 West University of Timisoara is adopting the “Methodology for accessing by Ph.D. students of institutional resources for professional training” (Annex IOSUD _Metodologie_sustinere_financiara), according to which are being detailed the following related issues:

- "Art. 7. The Ph.D. student who carries out his / her activity exclusively in IOSUD-WUT or in national joint supervision can benefit annually, during the preparation period of 3 years, from financial support for the development of training activities in the amount of 10% of the value of an annual doctoral grant”;
- "Art. 8. The Ph.D. student who carries out his / her activity under international joint supervision or for obtaining a European doctorate can benefit annually, during the 3-year training period, from financial support for carrying out training activities in the amount of 20% of the value of an annual doctoral grant”;
- "Art. 9. The financial support specified in Articles 7 and 8 shall cover: internships for documentation / research / creation / sports performance participation in training programs / seasonal schools / events / professional manifestations / specific to Ph.D. students publishing in open access mode an article/chapter / other reviewed document that is authored or co-authored by the student consumables, software, equipment or access to electronic/physical resources that are not present in IOSUD-UVT”.

As stated in the self-evaluation report, at the level of the economic-financial department of the West University of Timisoara, there is no analytical breakdown of the amounts allocated for the mobility of Ph.D. students on funding sources because the legislative provisions do not require such a measure.

During the evaluation visit and working for the current report, have been asked and received a number of evidence regarding the financing doctoral students (supplementary annex no.4, in the ARACIS Cloud). In the same time, on the site: <https://www.uvt.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Anexa-7.-Metodologie-accesare-resurse-institutionale-doctoranzi.pdf> is published the methodology to access the financial resources by each student, which proves that all and any of the doctoral students has the possibility of accessing funds for their specific scientific activities within the doctoral school

Recommendations:

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 electronic resources provided by CULT (Central University Library Timisoara) are available at: <http://www.bcut.ro/Infonnatii-generale-s31-ro.htm> . They can be accessed from the networks of the WUT, including its dormitories and the library networks (wireless in the building B of the library) and include, among others: the ROLiNeST Portal; ANELIS PLUS; Web of Science; CEEOL; Ebsco; Oxford Journals; ScienceDirect; SCOPUS; Sage; SpringerLink e-journals; Ulrichs; Wiley Journals, etc. In addition, Internet access is provided to the Electronic Catalog (OPAC) of the CUL "Eugen Todoran", which contains 334,656 bibliographic units, and represents over 90% of the usual collection of documents (<http://aleph.bcut.ro/F?RN=204446683>). ANELIS also provides free access to all essential databases (e.g. Ebsco Academic Search Premier and Proquest Central, ScienceDirect, Scopus, SpringerLink e-journals and Thomson ISI Web of Science), including ISI journals, books and chapters of books, books, doctoral papers (<https://intranet.uvt.ro/>, <https://portal.anelisplus.ro>).

The Ph.D. students within SDEAA have, under the conditions of the internal regulations and based on the student card, access to the research infrastructure of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (computers, software, library, access to international databases). For first-year Ph.D. students, the courses occur in a room equipped with computers (25) and Internet access.

Besides the facilities the Ph.D. students have within SDEAA, they have access also in the available resources of the East-European Center for Research in Economics and Business (ECREB) in its capacity as a research center of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. Also, within ECREB, there are software licenses (STATA licensing (perpetual licensing) with suppo1i for 2 COREs, IBM SPSS Statistic Standard licensing, database access), and the procedures for purchasing SPSS licenses have started.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion A.3. Quality of Human Resources

This criterion is devoted to the doctoral thesis advisors and the teaching staff for the doctoral school. It mainly deals with their expertise in the field of the study subjects they teach, their expertise on the thesis topics, and their capacities to support this programme.

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



According to this standard, the institution has to ensure sufficient qualified staff supporting the program in teaching and research activities. Their specialization has to be in line with the domain of the programme.

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.*

For the academic year 2020-2021, there are 6 doctoral thesis advisors who carry out doctoral supervision activities in the field of ECONOMICS, within the IOSUD-WUT. Out of six, four of them meet the CNATDCU minimum standards in force at the time of this evaluation report, necessary and mandatory for obtaining the habilitation certificate in the field of ECONOMICS. Only two of the academics involved in the doctoral field of Economics is an associate doctoral thesis advisor, who does not fulfil the minimum standards of the National Council for Attestation of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates.

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.*

Three PhD supervisors out of six affiliated scientific supervisors at the time of the self- evaluation report in the field of Economics are being full-time employed within IOSUD- The West University of Timisoara (maintaining the required percentage of 50%). One of the professors is a holder of Polytechnic University of Timisoara, and other two are UVT associate teachers (retirees) (see the details at: Anexa SDEAA_Adeverinte).

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.*

The supervisors of PhD students are experts in the field, and they show a good track of their academic performance. The teaching activities pertaining to the subjects included in the curriculum are carried out



by faculty or researchers experienced in the area of study; most of them are professors or associate professors or they are certified doctoral thesis advisors. The experience in the field of the Ph.D. advisors in charge of the disciplines offered to first-year Ph.D. students is proven by their teaching and scientific activity (Annex SDEAA Plan de invatamant).

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 programs² does not exceed 20%.*

None of the PhD supervisors has more than 8 PhD students at the same time. In here we include those in extension and also in interruption. In this case this indicator does not exceed 20% (0%). (Please refer also to the details given in Annex SDEAA_Situatie_studenti_coordonator).

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

Besides the proper academic profile of the doctoral students' supervisors, they have to ensure an international integrity with networking and scientific research output.

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.*

²3 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.



From 6 PhD supervisors in Economics, five of them have more than 5 papers indexed in Web of Science impact factor journals. All Ph.D. advisors in the field published 86 such articles (an average per field of 14.33 articles / Ph.D. advisor). In addition, it should be noted that the average score of the field for citations in ISI journals with positive AIS, calculated according to Order 6129/20.12.2016 is 5.21. (refer to: Anexa SDEAA_Situatie_Standard; Anew SDEAA_A..3.1.1).

In the meantime, all PhD supervisors have other relevant achievements - books or book chapters published in international publishing houses, Web of Science indexed papers, papers presented at international scientific conferences. Additionally, all these professors are having international recognition, such as inclusion in the editorial board members or reviewers in the indexed journals and conferences. (refer to: Annex SDEAA_CV scientific).

Recommendations:

The indicator is 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.*

From six PhD supervisors in the field of Economics, five of them have achieved the scores required by the CNATDCU, which means that more than 25% (in this case 83.33%) of the score required by the CNATDCU minimum standards in force at the time of evaluation, necessary and mandatory for being awarded the habilitation certificate, based on the scientific achievements. This is verified from the Annex SDEAA_situafie _ standard, and Annex SDEAA_A.3.1.1.) provided on the self-evaluation report.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

This domain is composed of three main pillars, (1) The number, quality and diversity of candidates enrolled for the admission contest; (2) The content of doctoral programs; and (3) The results of doctoral Studies and procedures for their evaluation. Each of these pillars is supported by standards and criteria to be fulfilled.

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



This criterion is related to the program capacities and attractiveness to enroll a considerable number of students, that present a good quality and demonstrate a good academic, research and professional performance.

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.

Through this standard we look at the institutional/program capacities to attract students in order to increase the competitiveness and ensure a good quality by selecting the applicants.

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.*

The number of places budgeted annually for admission, allocated to IOSUD-UVT by the Ministry of National Education, fluctuated in the range of 80-95. Special grants for Ph.D. students in the category Romanians from everywhere were added to these places every year. Along with these doctoral grants, UVT also recruited self-financed students (Romanian students who pay the fee, respectively foreign students who pay on their own in a foreign currency). Starting with 2017, UVT allocates a number of places financed from the budget to Roma candidates.

For all the IOSUD-UVT, the ratio between the number of students and those budgeted is found to be 2.26. For the domain of PhD in Economics, the ratio between the candidates and the budget places between 2016-2021 (cumulative one) is found to be 1.26, which exceeds the requirement of at least 1.2.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

This standard is related to the quality of the enrolled doctoral students and their capacities to follow up with the research thesis.



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.

The admission contest to the doctoral study programs within the IOSUD-UVT, including the ECONOMICS domain, takes into account criteria related to the academic, research and professional performance of the candidates, their interest in scientific research, publications in the field, etc. At the same time, candidates have to suggest a research topic and carry out a research project based on a unitary structure at the doctoral school level (refer to: Annex SDEAA_Metodologie_admitere).

According to Art. 17, - Candidates may choose to elaborate and present the scientific research project in Romanian or in a language of international circulation. - The online entrance exam is held through the platform: <https://meet.google.com/>. Logistical support will be provided by the IT & C / Digitalization Data Analysis Service. In order to create the Google Meet event, the SDEAA sends to the Doctoral Studies Office the preliminary planning (day / hour) of the interview for each constituted committee. - The Doctoral Studies Office creates on the platform <https://meet.google.com/> the online session for the entrance exam according to the planning submitted by SDEAA. The chair of the admission committee will ensure the transmission of the admission documents and the final results to the Doctoral Studies Office in both electronic and physical form.

According to Art. 18. - The assessment of the candidates for the entrance exam will be made based on the criteria and indicators included in the evaluation grid of the candidates for the admission exam in the doctoral field of Economics (Annex 3). - The share of each assessment criterion in the total score is as follows: 50% for C.I. Evaluation of the research project; 50% for C. II. Evaluation of the professional training activity and of the previous scientific activity of the candidate".

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 admission³ does not exceed 30%.

Analyzing the number of doctoral students enrolled in the first year and the number of those who are still enrolled in the third year, we see that the expelling rate does not exceed 30%. Out of the 20 Ph.D. students enrolled in the field cumulatively in the period between the academic years 2015/2016 and 2019/2020, 5 were expelled or withdrew. In this context, the average of the four annual expelling rates is 25%, being lower than the upper limit of 30% provided by the above standard. (refer to: Annex SDEAA_Re-trasi_pe_domenii).

³3 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.



Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.2. The content of doctoral programs

This criterion is devoted to the academic program offered to the students, including scientific research training, in-depth research, scientific methodology applied that supports the doctoral thesis, etc.

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 curriculum of ECONOMICS doctoral study domain, includes disciplines offered in the 1st semester of the doctoral studies program, to address the Ph.D. students' needs to acquire advanced competences in research methodology (both quantitative and qualitative research) and data analysis, but also in terms of research ethics and scientific authorship. As such, during this semester 8 disciplines are being offered:

- 1) Academic Ethics and Integrity;
- 2) Economic Methodology;
- 3) Conceptual Developments and Paradigmatic Changes in Business;
- 4) Academic Writing;
- 5) Research Methods;
- 6) Macroeconomic Modeling;
- 7) Space Economy;
- 8) Scientometrics and Evaluation of Scientific Research.

There are, thus, 6 subjects (numbers 2,3,5,6,7) which, through thematic, conceptual and applicative content, and activity carried out with the Ph.D. students, aim at both research issues and statistical and econometric modeling methods in accordance with current international standards existing in the field. (refer to: Anexe SDEAA_Plan de invatamant; Anexe SDEAA_Fise_disciplina).

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.*



There is a subject dedicated to the aspects regarding ethics in research activity and the compliance with the standards, norms, principles and roles valid at international level as well as a subject related to Scientometrics. (refer to: Anexe SDEAA_Plan de invatamant; Anexe SDEAA_Fise_disciplina).

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 activities⁴.*

The institution has mechanisms in place to ensure that the training programme are based on advanced university studies, related to the field of Economics. This is evident from each syllabus provided as in the self-evaluation report which specifically refer to knowledge, skills, competences acquired by doctoral students after completing the training programme.

Course syllabuses feature the structure of the courses/seminars and the competences doctoral candidates will acquire upon completion (refer to: Annex SDEAA_Grila 1, and Annex SDEAA_Grila 2).

Recommendations:

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.*

As specified in the SDEAA Regulation (Art. 15, paragraph 1), during the doctoral study program, the Ph.D. student has the right "a) to benefit from the support, guidance and coordination of the Ph.D. advisor, as well as the doctoral advisory committee; b) to take part in the seminars or work meetings of the research-development staff within IOSUD-UVT, when relevant topics for doctoral studies are under discussion" (Annex SDEAA_Regulament). SDEAA:

a) gives Ph.D. students access to the contact addresses of the members of the doctoral advisory committees; b) follows the registration by these members of all the observations formulated on the occasion of the presentation of the progress reports within the minutes of the presentation; c) facilitates the formal and informal meetings between the Ph.D. students and the members of the doctoral advisory committees and decides, at the proposal of the Ph.D. advisors, their replacement in case they, for objective reasons, no longer have the capacity to carry out their advisory activity together with Ph.D.

⁴Or 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.



advisors; d) facilitates contacts between Ph.D. students and research staff within the East-European Center for Research in Economics and Business (ECREB) as a research center of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration and offers in partnership with it specific training events for the scientific research activity specific to Ph.D. students.

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.

SDEAA applies the provisions of the JOSUD -UVT Institutional Regulation regarding the organization and progress of the doctoral university studies, which specify:

"Art. 2.29. (1) During the doctorate, the Ph.D. student will be supported by a doctoral advisory committee, made up of 3 other members who may be part of the research team of the Ph.D. advisor, other persons affiliated with the doctoral school or teachers and researchers not affiliated to it.

(2) The members of the doctoral advisory committee will be selected by the Ph.D. advisor following the consultation with the Ph.D. student".

Within the field, at the date of the present report, the coordination of the 15 current Ph.D. students is ensured by Ph.D. advisors together with other teachers, who are associate professors or lecturers.

As such, in total, 15 teachers provide guidance within the doctoral advisory committees. The mentioned ratio is **1:1** (refer to: Annex SDEAA _ Comisii_indrumare_ 2020 _ 2021).

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

This criterion analysis the procedures to measure the output of the research activities of the PhD students. This is at the same time quantitative and qualitative measure of the output of the scientific work for this domain.

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.

A minimum of one article or other relevant contribution for each PhD students who obtained their PhD degree in the period 2015-2020 is made available to the evaluation committee for the evaluated field. at Annex SDEAA_B.3.1.1. provides a clear picture of the quality of the papers and the topics, which contain significant original contributions in the respective domain. The PhD students in the field of ECONOMICS have constantly sought to capitalize on their research results by publishing articles, studies, books, book chapters and participating in national and international scientific events.

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 their doctoral studies these students are trying to participate in at least one international conference, abroad Romania. The report of the number of relevant scientific papers authored and communicated during the doctoral studies program at various national or international scientific events by Ph.D. students who have obtained the Ph.D. in the last 5 years in the field, list prepared based on available information, can be found at Annex SDEAA_B.3.1.2. According to this report, the mentioned ratio is $40/21=1.90$.

Recommendations:

The indicator is 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.

The list of evaluators from a higher education institution, other than the IOSUD assessed, is presented at Annex SDEAA_Comisii _ sustinere. According to the centralized report, out of the 12 external evaluators used in the field, an external referent was in more than 2 commissions in one year (Prof. Daniela Luminita



Constantin, PhD, Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies; 3 commissions in 2017). However, as self-evaluation group we decided to consider this an exception and to evaluate this criterion as a fulfilled one.

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.*

As it results from the Annex SDEAA_Comisii_sustinere, within the field, by reference to the situation registered in the last 5 years, for any external evaluator this ratio has not been reached or exceeded.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The third domain of this report is devoted to quality management that is related with the institutional procedures and mechanisms to ensure a good quality of the program. This is composed by three main criterions, (1) Existence and periodic implementation of the internal quality assurance system; (2) Transparency of information and accessibility of learning resources; and (3) Internationalization aspect of the institution and programme.

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

This criterion looks for procedures of timely and periodically implementations of the internal quality assurance and how these internal audits impact to the programme enhancement.

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.

In order to ensure the quality of the activities carried out within the doctoral schools, IOSUD-UVT organized, periodically, internal evaluations of the doctoral schools. The internal evaluation reports considered the evolution of the logistic infrastructure necessary for the research activity, the scientific activity of the Ph.D. advisors, respectively the evolution of procedures for carrying out the activities within the doctoral schools.

The self-evaluation report made available internal evaluation reports that have been carried from 2016 at the link: <http://doctorat.uvt.ro/?p=2656>, as well as internal evaluation reports of the doctoral schools and of the fields of doctoral studies, based on OMEN no. 5403/1.11.2018 (<http://doctorat.uvt.ro/?p=7572>, <http://doctorat.uvt.ro/?p=7718>, <http://doctorat.uvt.ro/?p=7604>).

In line with these reports, the institution organizes a series of internal audit and control procedures.

a. the scientific activity of the Ph.D. advisors

The scientific activity is monitored regularly every two years. To facilitate this reporting, a digitization process of the individual assessment sheets of the CNATDCU criteria and of Annex 5 was initiated based on an online URAP system (<http://urap.uvt.ro>).

b. the infrastructure and logistics necessary to carry out the research activity

Besides the facilities of library, the Ph.D. students have within SDEAA, they have access also in the available resources of the East-European Center for Research in Economics and Business (ECEB) in its capacity as a research center of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. Also, within ECEB, there are software licenses (STATA licensing (perpetual licensing) with support for 2 COREs, IBM SPSS Statistic Standard licensing, database access), and the procedures for purchasing SPSS licenses have started. Thus, the Ph.D. students work in laboratories and research centers whose infrastructure and logistics are managed at the level of the faculties

c. the regulations and procedures of implementing the doctoral studies

All the regulations and procedures are published online at <https://doctorat.uvt.ro/?cat=37>. The CSUD discusses annually the frameworks of the admissions to doctoral studies, proposing customized admission methodologies (publicly available at <https://doctorat.uvt.ro/?cat=43>). Based on the general admission methodologies, discussed in CSUD, approved by the Board of Directors of UVT and approved



by the University Senate, doctoral schools devise their own specific admission methodologies, depending on the particularities of the doctoral field.

Admission to doctoral studies at UVT is carried out in terms of transparency, with the dissemination of useful information for enrollment. Thus, the available places as well as the distribution of places on doctoral schools and fields are announced on the website.

Additionally, one example of the methodology for defending Ph.D. theses is available at <http://doctorat.uvt.ro/?p=9462>. The last procedure for defending Ph.D. theses in the online version available at <http://doctorat.uvt.ro/?p=9493>.

d. the scientific activity of Ph.D. students

The scientific activity and artistic creation of Ph.D. students is carefully supervised by the Ph.D. advisors and by the guidance committees. The publication list of each Ph.D. student accompanies the Ph.D. thesis submitted for analysis.

The Department of Scientific Research and Artistic Creation of UVT maintains a record of publications with UVT affiliation, which is updated periodically. IOSUD carried out an analysis in March 2021 regarding the scientific production of Ph.D. students in the period 2016-2021, which showed that the 456 Ph.D. graduates have 264 registrations in Web of Science (Core).

e. the training program based on advanced university studies of Ph.D. students.

When signing the Study Agreement, the Ph.D. students establish, together with the Ph.D. thesis coordinator and in agreement with him/her, a Research Plan (publicly available at <http://doctorat.uvt.ro/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Plan-doctoral-studies3.pdt>), where the themes and periods for the progress reports are specified, as well as the training program based on advanced university studies, the scientific research projects of the Ph.D. students, the mobilizations, etc.

f. the social and academic support services (including attending various events, publishing articles, etc.) and counseling services provided to Ph.D. students.

The UVT social service manages the accommodation process of Ph.D. students in dormitories and ensures the maintenance of accommodation spaces. The Center for Counseling and Career Orientation (<http://www.ccoc.uvt.ro>) of UVT offers students orientation and vocational counseling services, as well as psychological counseling.

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.

According to the self-evaluation report, SDEAA is currently implementing a questionnaire regarding the degree of satisfaction of Ph.D. students in relation to the activity carried out within the doctoral studies program (Annex SDEAA_Chestionar). This questionnaire aims, among others at: a) the collaboration with the Ph.D. thesis coordinator and the guidance committee; b) the organization of the courses provided in the first year; c) the motivations of the Ph.D. students for choosing the doctoral studies program; d) suggestions for improving the activity; e) the utility perceived by Ph.D. students in supporting their professional career and in relation to the labor market.

While this is a good incentive, we recommend the institution to draw an action plan in order to enhance the issues and concerns coming up from this questionnaire.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

This criterion involves the transparency of the information and accessibility of learning resources that the institution and the specific program has to follow.

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.



The IOSUD publishes on the website of the organizing institution, in compliance with the general regulations on data protection, all the below mentioned information such as:(a) the Doctoral School regulation;(b) the admission regulation;(c) the study completion; (d) the content of training program based on advanced academic studies;(e) the academic and scientific profile, thematic areas/research themes of the Doctoral advisors within the domain, as well as their institutional contact data; (f) information on the standards for developing the doctoral thesis;(e) links to the doctoral theses' summaries to be publicly presented and the date, time, place where they will be presented. All the screenshots related to the above-mentioned issues are available in the self-evaluation report.

Recommendations:

The indicator is 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.

UVT offers doctoral students the opportunity to access the following databases: : ScienceDirect Freedom Collection Journals ACCES, Springe/ink journals, Thomson Web of Knowledge, American Institute of Physics Journals, American Physical Society Journals, Oxford Journals, IEEE I IEL, SCOPUS, Sage Journals HSS, Wiley Journals, American Chemical Society, Cambridge Journals, Institute of Physics Journals, MatSciNet, EBSCO Academic Search Complete, EBSCO Business Source Complete , EBSCO Art Full text, NATURE, ScienceDirect NATIONAL ARCHIVE, Springer Archive, Wiley Archive, Institute of Physics Journals Archive, ScienceDirect Current Archive 2016.

Additionally, UVT is part of the Anelis+ consortium, which brings together the main higher education institutions and research institutes in Romania, interested in access to the top scientific bibliography.

Recommendations:

The indicator is 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.

Each doctoral student, subsequent to the approval of the doctoral advisor, has access to the two electronic systems of plagiarism checking: Ithenticate program. This plagiarism software is recognized by the CNATDCU, used to analyze the degree of similarity of the doctoral students' works in relation to other existing scientific creations. Additionally, each doctoral student has access, upon request and with the agreement of the supervisor, to the electronic system for checking the degree of similarity with other existing scientific works.



Recommendations:

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.*

All doctoral students have access to the laboratories for undertaking research activities, other academic facilities, the research centers or the third-party research infrastructure, according to the specificity of the field(s) included in the doctoral school, subsequent to a request, approved by the doctoral advisor and in keeping with the availability of the research infrastructure. This is one of the rights of the doctoral student, as they are formulated in The Institutional Regulation for the organization and functioning of doctoral studies.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion C.3. Internationalization

This criterion analysis includes the strategies toward the internationalization, the available agreements for mobility, projects, networks and so on.

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.*

The list of partners of universities abroad, both in Europe and in the partner countries is founded at <https://ri.uvt.ro/programul-de-mobilitati-erasmus/>. Bilateral agreements also allow for mobility; the list of international partners is available at <https://ri.uvt.ro/acorduri-de-colaborare-cu-parteneri-internationalia/>



At the level of Ph.D. students in Economics, we found just one student being supported financially in the exchange mobility Erasmus + with the university of Universitatea Auvergne Clermond, France, for one semester (Annex EE3). Thus, in total 1 of the 12 PhD students have undergone through doctoral training in the field of ECONOMICS benefit (or benefitted), for a period of at least six months, from sources of funding other than government funding, through scholarships granted by natural or legal persons, or are financially supported by research or institutional development/ human resources grants, which represents a share of 8.33% of the total number of PhD students in this field, lower the lower limit of 20% provided by standards.

In accordance to the self-evaluation report, in the third part of it, called Strategies and procedures implemented at the level of the doctoral domain, others than the ones provided by the Ministry of Education Decision , annex 2, no.3200 from the 7th of February 2020, there is evidence of the provisions regarding the adoption of measures and actions aiming to increase the international mobility of students, including the creation of a Ph.D programme to be delivered entirely in English.

Recommendations:

The indicator is 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.*

There are no international joint PhD programmes during 2016-2020. However, there is one co-tutelage with foreign professor in the university of Universitatea Auvergne Clermond, France (see the details in Annex EE4.).

In the self-evaluation report are reported 16 academicians who have delivered courses or lectures, including doctoral students in the ECONOMICS domain within the Doctoral School of Economics and Business Administration.

Recommendations:

The indicator is 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 West University of Timisoara demonstrated to have a good track of active participations in foreign education fairs that are organized to advertise its offer for international studies. This is proven from the self-evaluation report which provided an extended list of such activities.



Also, having partnerships with several stakeholders, our university attracts foreign students from North African countries or the Arabian Peninsula.

Without this being generalized, however, within the analyzed period, several researchers and professors from foreign universities were included in the activity of doctoral schools. Thus, a number of researchers or professors from foreign universities have joined our doctoral schools as Ph.D. advisors; also, researchers or professors from institutes and universities abroad were part of several doctoral advisory committees or the Ph.D. thesis committees.

In accordance to the self-evaluation report, in the third part of it, called Strategies and procedures implemented at the level of the doctoral domain, others than the ones provided by the Ministry of Education Decision , annex 2, no.3200 from the 7th of February 2020, there is evidence of the provisions regarding the adoption of measures and actions aiming to increase the number of doctoral thesis in co-tutela and the international mobility of students and staff, along with attracting specialists from abroad within the supervising commissions and the public defenses thesis commissions.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

IV. SWOT Analysis

<u>Strengths:</u>	<u>Weaknesses:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The PhD supervisors are showing good track of their expertise and they have a considerable visibility even internationally. - The involved staff in the study field of Economics was enthusiastic and they showed a lot of concern to the students' progress and willingness to support them in any stage of their studies. - The organization of many scientific events and the involvement of staff and students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doctoral School Council lacks a better inclusion of its members, including student representative. - The allocation of the academic staff in tasks such as thesis supervisions, thesis defense juries, etc., are not balanced. - Some information are not valid on the websites. The English version of the website is missing, which is a barrier to attract foreign students and staff. - Institution has to ensure a better strategy of promotion and attraction of foreign students.

<u>Opportunities:</u>	<u>Threats:</u>
<p>- Due to the existence of a research center, such as the East- European Center for Research in Economics and Business (ECREB), the doctoral programme in Economics can implement a new strategy of internationalization that will help the PhD students with external funding for their research and results dissemination</p> <p>- Additionally, the program has all the infrastructure capacities to extend collaborations with other universities abroad Romania, that will help in inclusion of international co-advisership, jury members, and common academic activities.</p> <p>- The West University of Timisoara has all the opportunities to find our more funding opportunities for the research activities and support of PhD student to extend the professional network and being exposed internationally.</p>	<p>- The lack of a clear strategy for internationalization and acquiring external funds.</p> <p>- There are many challenges that staff and students may face while applying for different projects.</p> <p>- The challenges due to high competition among universities to attract more foreign and experienced staff to join this programme.</p>

V. Overview of judgments awarded and of the recommendations

No.	Type of indicator (*, C)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
1		A.1.1.1.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
2		A.1.1.2	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
3		A.1.2.1.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
4		A.1.2.2.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
5		A.1.3.1.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
6	*	A.1.3.2.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
7	*	A.1.3.3.	<i>The indicator is partially fulfilled.</i>	<i>The institution/programme has to ensure a better support of doctoral students enrolled in the paid tuition system to be used to reimburse professional training expenses of doctoral students such as, conference participations, summer schools, training, programs abroad, publication of specialty papers, etc.</i>
8	C	A.2.1.1.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A

9	C	A.3.1.1.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
10	*	A.3.1.2.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
11		A.3.1.3.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
12	*	A.3.1.4.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
13	C	A.3.2.1.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
14	*	A.3.2.2.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
15	*	B.1.1.1	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
16	*	B.1.2.1	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
17		B.1.2.2	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
18		B.2.1.1.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
19		B.2.1.2.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
20		B.2.1.3.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
21		B.2.1.4.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
22	C	B.2.1.5.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
23	C	B.3.1.1.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
24	*	B.3.1.2.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
25	*	B.3.2.1.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
26	*	B.3.2.2.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
27		C.1.1.1.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
28	*	C.1.1.2.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
29	C	C.2.1.1.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
30		C.2.2.1.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
31		C.2.2.2.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
32		C.2.2.3.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
33	*	C.3.1.1.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
34		C.3.1.2.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A
35		C.3.1.3.	<i>The indicator is fulfilled.</i>	N/A

VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

Drafted in the framework of the Doctoral School of Economics at the West University of Timisoara, this external evaluation report is a periodic evaluation for the maintenance of accreditation of the doctoral field of Economics. The **Doctoral School in the domain of Economics** has the full legal bases and it is conferred by the Ministry of Education and by the National Council for Attesting Titles, Diplomas and Certificates.

The Doctoral field of Economics counts 21 PhD candidates in the *ECONOMICS* doctoral domain and the 6 advisors. This is a good number of students for a PhD programme. The institution together with the programme administration bodies are using the proper procedures to support the ongoing process of the doctorate field of study in Economics.

In the framework of the periodical accreditation, the institution provided us with a detailed Self-evaluation report which included respective information and attached documentation in support each criteria requested by the accreditation agency. Additionally, during this evaluation process, the *Experts' Panel had the opportunity to have online meetings with stakeholders and different supportive bodies of the programme. The details of the meeting are attached as in Annex EE.1.. Furthermore, the lead expert of the external evaluation group had the opportunity to visit the institution.*

Out of 35 indicators to be fulfilled, there is only 1 indicator that has been identified as partially fulfilled, which is classified in the category with “”. Specifically:*

- *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", indicators *A.1.3.3;*

As general recommendations, we recommend the following:

1. The Institution/Programme has to ensure a better strategy of promotion and attraction of foreign students. Additionally, it is advised they include the English version of the website, which helps increase the visibility of the program and make possible the attraction of foreign students and staff.
2. The Doctoral School of Economics at the West University of Timisoara has to involve more members, specifically one more academic staff and one student representative.
3. Website should be improved by offering more information. Additionally, the institution should include the English version of the website, which will serve to attract foreign students and staff.
4. *The institution and/or the doctorate programme in the field of Economics has to establish a Strategy related to Acquisition of External Funding. As such, the respective staff of the programme can have clear targets to apply for project and they can increase the applications. They need to find out the national and international opportunities for funding. The projects should be target to the focus of the research topics the PhD students will deal/are dealing with.*
5. *The institution and/or the doctorate programme in the field of Economics has to establish a Strategy related to Internationalization. This will help in attracting foreign professors, foreign students, finding more networking opportunities, enhancing the publication opportunities, increasing the mobility and students' exchange cases, finding more opportunities for co-tutelage of PhD dissertations, etc. Additionally, this strategy supports the involvement of international experts in guidance committees or doctoral committees.*



VII. Annexes

The following types of documents are attached:

- *The detailed schedule of the evaluation visit – **Annex EE.1.***
- *There are some other supporting and clarifying documents that were requested as additional evidence – **Annex EE.2, Annex EE.3. Annex EE.4..***