



**External Evaluation Report of the doctoral study domain  
“theology” of the “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu**

conducted by the International Expert, Prof. Vantsos Miltiadis,  
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

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## I. Introduction

This External Evaluation Report concerns the Doctoral study domain “Theology” of the “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu. It is part of the work of the External Evaluation Committee for the Doctoral Study Domain “Theology”, which consist of the following three members: 1) Stan Nicolae-Răzvan, Coordinator (University of Craiova), 2) Vantsos Miltiadis, International Expert (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece) and 3) Qaramah Mihail Khalid, PhD student (University "1 Decembrie 1918" of Alba Iulia). This report is conducted by Prof. Vantsos Miltiadis, International Expert of the Committee. The evaluation period was between 19 – 23 July 2021. Due to the pandemic COVID-19, it was considered difficult or even impossible that the evaluation takes place during a site visit of the University of Sibiu, therefore the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) decided that it occurs online, which is fully understandable. Even if we missed the physical presence and personal contact and had only online meetings, the Evaluation Committee was received warmly by the Administration of the University and by all people of the Domain “Theology” and was supported in its work.

The Interdisciplinary Doctoral School of the “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu offers currently 15 doctoral programmes in the following scientific fields: Computers and information technology, Cybernetics and statistics, Law, Economics, Philology, Finances, Industrial Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Engineering and Management, History, Management, Mathematics, Medicine, Theatre and Performing Arts, and Theology. It employs 105 active doctoral advisors and for the academic year 2020-2021 are enrolled 498 doctoral students. During the assessed period (between 2015 and 2020) the General Council of CNATCDU awarded at the Interdisciplinary Doctoral School of the “Lucian Blaga” University a total of 220 doctoral degrees, which are listed at the following page: <https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/ordine/>.

The evaluated Domain “Theology” is integrated into the Interdisciplinary Doctoral School of “Lucian Blaga” University. It was founded in 1984 and was the second school of Orthodox Theology in Romania which conducted doctoral programs in Orthodox Theology. The doctoral advisors who are currently affiliated with the doctoral program in Theology are 15, while the doctoral students for the academic year 2019-2020 are 77 (according to Table 1 and Table 3 of the Internal Evaluation Report). During the assessed period (between 2015 and 2020) were granted 45 Doctor’s degrees in Theology (according to Table 4 of the same Report).

## II. Methods used

The members of the Evaluation Committee were provided in advance with the Internal Evaluation Report for the Domain within the Interdisciplinary Doctoral School in English and with many documents in electronic format as well, however almost all of them in Romanian. The Internal Evaluation Report provided all the necessary information about the Interdisciplinary Doctoral School, the Domain “Theology”, the Internal Quality Assurance System, the performance criteria, standards and indicators for the doctoral studies, the strategies and procedures of implementation in the doctoral field and a list of appendices. On 12 July 2021 a preliminary online meeting was organized by ARACIS for the preparation and harmonization of the evaluation steps, in which the procedure of evaluation was presented and analysed



in detail. During the evaluation period (19 – 23 July 2021) all evaluators had online meetings with representatives of the Institution and of the Council for Academic Doctoral Studies, with the members of the Ethics Commission, with the members of ARACIS, additional meetings to identify specific issues that need to be clarified during the on-site visit, meetings to discuss the conclusions and a final meeting with representatives of the institution to discuss the conclusions of the evaluation process and the main recommendations.

This evaluation report is based in the Internal Evaluation Report, the provided documents and the numerous online meetings. Apart from the aforementioned, there were meetings with the Doctoral Coordinator of the domain “Theology”, with the academic staff of the same domain, with the doctoral students, with the graduates, and with the employers of the graduates in the doctoral study domain under review. The Coordinator of the Committee for the Evaluation of the Domain “Theology”, Prof. Stan Nicolae-Răzvan, visited on 22 July 2021 the University of Sibiu and was able to form an opinion regarding the buildings included in the institution's property, its venue and equipment. Our committee was received warmly during the online meetings, and all people related to the domain were willing to answer our questions and give clarifications. Many meetings were lengthy, as the committee was provided with extended time for the necessary dialogue. We posed, among others, some relatively difficult questions concerning the eventual weaknesses of the doctoral studies, and we asked for suggestions based on people's own experiences. We were given honest answers, and we are thankful to all people of the domain “Theology”, namely the doctoral coordinator, doctoral advisors, doctoral students and graduates, for their spirit of cooperation during our online meetings. Most of the discussions were held in Romanian, but there was always an english translation, which was excellent, thus there weren't any communication problems. On the other hand, almost all of the provided documents were in Romanian, that's why the international expert approaches the indicators mainly according to the Internal Evaluation Report and the discussions during the online meetings. In general, the evaluation procedure was well organised and the schedule was kept.

The External Evaluation Committee for the Doctoral Study Domain “Theology” has received and reviewed the following files / documents:

- Opis-Teologie-cert.pdf
- REID Teologie RO cert.pdf
- REID Teologie EN cert.pdf
- Anexa A.1.1.1.01. Regulament de org si desf a stuiilor univ de doctorat\_iunie2020\_Senat-cert.pdf
- Anexa A.1.1.1.02. HCA\_08\_03.03.2021 privind organizarea si desfasurarea alegerilor CSUD și CSD-cert.pdf
- Anexa A.1.1.1.03. Metodologie\_concurs\_director\_CSUD\_IOSUD\_ULBS-cert.pdf
- Anexa A.1.1.1.04. Regulament\_Admitere-IOSUD\_2021-cert.pdf
- Anexa A.1.1.1.05. PO\_Admitere-online\_iunie2020\_Senat-cert.pdf
- Anexa A.1.1.1.06. PO\_Evaluarea-si-sustinerea-tezelor-de-doctorat\_iunie2020\_Senat-1-cert.pdf
- Anexa A.1.1.1.10. Contract de studii-cert.pdf
- Anexa A.3.1.1. Teologie Grad indeplinire standarde abilitare-cert.pdf
- Anexa A1.1.1.09. PO\_Org-si-desf-procesului-de-obtinere-a-atestatului-de-abilitare\_iunie2002\_senat-cert.pdf



- Anexa B.2.1.1. Teologie Program de pregatire bazat pe studii univesitare avansate-cert.pdf
- Anexa B.2.1.3. Teologie Fisele disciplinelor-cert.pdf
- Anexa B.2.1.4. Teologie Google Classroom indrumare doctoranzi-cert.pdf
- Anexa B.2.1.5. Teologie Comisii de indrumare-cert.pdf
- Anexa B.3.1.1. Teologie contributii + Presentari conferinte doctori-cert.pdf
- Anexa B.3.2.1. Teologie Referenti externi-cert.pdf
- Anexa C.3.1.1. ERASMUS Agreements concluded for the doctorat study cycle-cert.pdf
- Anexele A.3.1.1. Teologie Conducatori de doctorat cu activitate de predare-cert.pdf
- Anexele A.3.2.1a-e Teologie Conducatori de doctorat + Lista de lucrati-cert.pdf
- Anexele A.3.2.1a-e Teologie CV-uri Conducatori de doctorat-cert.pdf

Additionally, on 27 July 2021 the External Evaluation Committee for the Doctoral Study Domain "Theology" has received and reviewed the following folders and files:

- 1\_1\_Raport de Similitudine-Gantolea.pdf
- 1\_2\_RaportComplet\_Coste Anin Alexandru.pdf
- 1\_3\_RaportComplet\_Luchian\_Mihaela.pdf
- 1\_4\_RaportComplet\_Tesu\_Cristinel.pdf
- 1\_5\_raport-similitudine-DOCT-Zamfir.pdf
- 1\_FLORIN PAVEL\_ Ethics, objectivity and value distortion in social and medic.pdf
- 2\_Drd.-Mihail-MOTRICALA~The-importance-of-the-canonization-of-the-New-Russian-martyrs-and-confessors.pdf
- 2\_opis-doctorand-ULBS.pdf
- 3\_Anexa B.2.1.5. RAPORT doctoranzi indrumatori in comisii 3 la 1.pdf
- 3\_Crisan\_Ionut\_Satisfaktionslehre.pdf
- 4\_Anexa B.3.2.1. Teologie Referenti externi.pdf
- 4\_FROELICH\_ Articol\_RES\_3\_2018.pdf
- 5\_DOVEZI CONTACT CU DRD IN TIMPUL PANDEMIEI.PDF
- 5\_FILIP\_DUMITRITA\_Making Mission from the Model of Christ 2018.pdf
- Acorduri ERASMUS semnate (folder)
- Anexa A.1.3.2 IOSUD sj domenii.pdf
- Anexa A.1.3.3. Cheltuieli de formare doctoranzi.pdf
- Anexa C.3.1.1. IOSUD sj domenii.pdf
- Anexa C.3.1.2. IOSUD sj domenii.pdf
- Anexa C.3.1.3. IOSUD sj domenii.pdf
- Articole Teologie (folder)
- Buget SDI-ULBS.pdf
- EN\_Anexa 1.2.3.1 Analiza SWOT IOSUD ULBS.docx.pdf
- EN\_Anexa A.1.1.1.04. Regulament\_Admitere-IOSUD\_2021\_pages\_3\_to\_9.docx.pdf
- EN\_Anexa A.1.1.1.06. PO\_Evaluarea-si-sustinerea-tezelor-de-doctorat\_iunie2020\_Senat-1\_from 1 to 6\_including Procedura.docx.pdf



- EN\_partial\_Anexa A.1.1.1.01. Regulament de org si desf a studiilor univ de doctorat\_junie2020-Senat.pdf
- P.V. Teologie.PDF
- Tabel cu articolele stiintifice ale studentilor.pdf

### 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.*

*\*general description of the standard analysis.*

**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;*

The doctoral studies in "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu are organised and conducted in accordance with the national regulations and they are presented in the Annex A.1.1.1.01 (Regulamentul de organizare și desfășurare a studiilor universitare de doctorat în ULBS). The meetings with all interested parties confirmed that the Doctoral School respects and implements these regulations.

*(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;*

The CSUD director is appointed following a public competition organised by IOSUD– ULBS according to the Methodology on conducting the competition for the position of CSUD Director (Anexa A.1.1.1.03 Metodologiei de desfășurare a concursului pentru funcția de director al CSUD) available at [https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/wp-content/uploads/Metodologie\\_concurs\\_director\\_CSUD\\_IOSUD\\_ULBS-.pdf](https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/wp-content/uploads/Metodologie_concurs_director_CSUD_IOSUD_ULBS-.pdf). The doctoral students have chosen their representative in the Council, who was present in the online meeting of the evaluation committee with the members of the Doctoral Schools Council.

*c) the Methodologies for organizing and conducting doctoral studies (for the admission of doctoral students, for the completion of doctoral studies);*

The regulations regarding the admission into a doctoral studies program are integrated in the University's Admission Regulation (Anexa A.1.1.1.04 Regulament admitere 2020), which is available at <https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/wp-content/uploads/Anexa12-Regulament-ADMITERE-Doctorat-ULBS-2020-2021.pdf>). The respective regulations for the completion of the doctoral studies can be found in the



following link: (Anexa A.1.1.1.06 PO Evaluarea și susținerea tezelor de doctorat available at [https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/wp-content/uploads/4\\_PO\\_Evaluarea-si-sustinerea-tezelor-de-doctorat\\_iunie2020\\_Senat-1.pdf](https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/wp-content/uploads/4_PO_Evaluarea-si-sustinerea-tezelor-de-doctorat_iunie2020_Senat-1.pdf)) and in Annex A.1.1.1.04. (Regulament\_Admitere-IOSUD\_2021-\_pages\_3\_to\_9.docx.pdf) as well.

*d) the existence of mechanisms for recognizing the status of a Doctoral advisor and the equivalence of the doctoral degree obtained abroad;*

“Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu has high standards of acknowledging the status of a Doctoral Advisor, since it presupposes habilitation as the certification of a person’s capacity to supervise doctoral theses. Moreover, it is definitely positive that the status of doctoral advisor is examined and confirmed regularly. The procedure is described here: (Anexa A.1.1.1.07 PO privind recunoașterea calității de conducător de doctorat), available at <http://calitate.ulbsibiu.ro/pag/PCUe/Abilitare/Abilitare.php>. The respective regulations for acknowledging the equivalence of the doctoral degree obtained abroad are described here: (Anexa A.1.1.1.08 PO privind echivalarea doctoratului), available at <http://calitate.-ulbsibiu.ro/pag/PCUe/Doctor/Doctor.php>.

*e) functional management structures (Council of the doctoral school), giving as well proof of the regularity of meetings;*

The Evaluation Committee was informed that the current Council of the Doctoral School was recently formed, but I am unaware of the regularity of its meetings.

*f) the contract for doctoral studies;*

The contract for doctoral studies describes the rights and obligations of both, doctoral students and doctoral advisors and it is signed individually for each doctoral student. It is, in my view, a good way to ensure the knowledge of the regulations and to foster responsibility.

*g) internal procedures for the analysis and approval of proposals regarding the training for doctoral study programs based on advanced academic studies.*

IOSUD possesses internal analysis and approval procedures regarding proposals on the topics and courses of the doctoral programmes. During the meetings it was confirmed that doctoral coordinators of domains and the respective doctoral advisors discuss and cooperate in this area.

*Recommendations:* It is recommended that the way doctoral students choose their representative for the Council of doctoral school be clarified. Additionally, that the regularity of meetings of the Council of the Doctoral School be clarified or defined.

**The indicator is partially 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 regulations of the doctoral school provide criteria and procedures concerning the admission of new doctoral advisors, the decision-making process regarding the structure and content of the doctoral program, the circumstances in which it can be discontinued, the prevention of fraud in scientific research and the doctoral students' attendance obligations. These regulations are presented in Annex A.1.1.1.01 (Regulament de org si desf a stuilor univ de doctorat\_iunie2020\_Senat-cert.pdf). Based on the discussions, I don't have any reasons to doubt the doctoral school's adherence to the regulations.

**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.*

- *description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

- *analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

The University has implemented a digital system for the registration of all enrolled students, which also allows the office for doctoral studies to keep track of the doctoral students. The system is accessible by the doctoral students as well, by giving their usernames and passwords, so that they are aware of the registered data. The relevant page is: <https://ums.ulbsibiu.ro/ums/do/secure/inregistrare-user>.

**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.*

- *description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

- *analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

The University has acquired and uses as plagiarism detection tools two software programs, named sistemeantiplagiat.ro (<https://sistemantiplagiat.ro/clienti/educatie/>) and check for plagiarism (<https://www.checkforplagiarism.net/>). We were informed that no doctoral thesis has been invalidated by CNATDCU during the assessed period (between 2015 and 2020), moreover CNATDCU has not revoked





any decision regarding the bestowal of a doctoral degree at OSUD-ULBS during the same period. It is evident that the software used and in general the fight against plagiarism is taken seriously and is effective.

**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.*

*- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

According to the Internal Evaluation Report, the institutional development funds for the assessed period concern the fields 5 and 6 (philology and economics) for the years 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, through which a series of courses and workshops with the participation of doctoral students and doctoral advisors were held. Additionally, institutional development was granted the field 4 (economics) for the years 2018, 2019 and 2020 for supporting the activities conducted by the student entrepreneurial societies (SAS), as well as the field 5 (philology) for improvement in the quality of teaching. However, it seems that the field of theology has not been benefited by the institutional development funds for the assessed period.

*Recommendations:* It would be desirable that institutional development funds include further scientific fields, if not all.

**The indicator is partially 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%.*

*- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*



In the Internal Evaluation Report is stated that the university obtained funds for doctoral scholarships also by other sources, apart from governmental funding, which are listed in the following document: [https://senat.ulbsibiu.ro/wp-content/uploads/250221/10\\_PO-ULBS-PCDI-302-RRC\\_Senat\\_feb2021.pdf](https://senat.ulbsibiu.ro/wp-content/uploads/250221/10_PO-ULBS-PCDI-302-RRC_Senat_feb2021.pdf). According to Annex A.1.3.2 (IOSUD sj domenii.pdf), the total number of beneficiary students is 114 out of 498, that means a percentage of 22,89. The same is true also for doctoral students in the domain “theology”, since 18 out of 79, that means 22,78%, have benefited by these additional funding sources.

*Recommendation:* It is recommended that criteria and the procedure be formulated according to which the doctoral students are chosen for financial support. Additionally, that the scholarship competition results be presented on the homepage of the university.

**The indicator is fulfilled.**

Performance Indicator \*A.1.3.3. 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.)*.

- *description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution’s documents and the evaluation visit itself*

- *analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution’s documents and the evaluation visit itself*

According to the Annex A.1.3.3. (Cheltuieli de formare doctoranzi), the University of Sibiu allocates 10,28% of the total amount of doctoral grants obtained through institutional contracts and tuition fees collected from the doctoral students enrolled in the paid tuition system for the doctoral students’ professional training, such as conference attendance, mobilities abroad, publishing papers in peer-reviewed journals, etc. The respective percentage for doctoral students of the domain “theology” is 10,71%. Moreover, during the online meetings with the doctoral students and graduates many of them confirmed that they were financially supported in their academic activities.

**The indicator is 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.

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

The venues and the material equipment available to the doctoral school's activities and the two research centers of the domain "theology" have been visited by the Coordinator of our Evaluation Committee for the Domain "Theology", Prof. Stan Nicolae-Răzvan, who shared with us his positive impression. The research infrastructure is available to the public through the following internet pages: <http://bcu.ulbsibiu.ro>, <https://cercetare.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/infrastructura-de-cercetare/centre-de-cercetare/lista-centre-de-cercetare/> and <https://eeris.eu/ERIO-2000-000X-0039> (this page concerns the research infrastructure associated with the centers for economic research). According to the Internal Evaluation Report, the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu has invested for the last 12 months approximately 1.000.000 Euros in its research infrastructure. Moreover, the University informs that has also received a 4.200.000 Euros donation from the Hasso Plattner Institute for the support of research and the development of research infrastructure.

**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.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

With the domain "theology" are currently affiliated 15 doctoral advisors. All of them fulfill the minimum criteria set by the National Council for Attestation of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU), as it is certified in the Annex A.3.1.1. (Teologie Grad indeplinire standarde abilitare) and presented in the Table A.3.1.1 of the Internal Evaluation Report. While all doctoral advisors meet the criteria, the vast majority of them have accomplished scores that exceed even the double of the required performance, a fact that makes in our view this indicator one of the major advantages of the



domain “theology”. Additionally, the discussion with the doctoral advisors during our meeting confirmed the high quality of the teaching staff. On our request, many doctoral advisors expressed their views on how the doctoral studies could be improved, making insightful comments.

*Recommendation:* It is recommended that the quality of the doctoral advisors be advertised as an advantage of the domain “theology” in order to attract doctoral students from other disciplines and Universities.

**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.*

*- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution’s documents and the evaluation visit itself*

*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution’s documents and the evaluation visit itself*

Fifteen doctoral advisors are currently supervising theses in the domain “Theology”. All of them are tenured at IOSUD, as it is confirmed by the Table A.3.1.2. in the Internal Evaluation Report.

**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.*

*- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution’s documents and the evaluation visit itself*

*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution’s documents and the evaluation visit itself*

The courses of the doctoral study program in domain “Theology” are taught by doctoral advisors within the Interdisciplinary Doctoral School, who meet the national minimum standards in force, as it is certified in the Annex A.3.1.1. (Teologie Grad indeplinire standarde abilitare). All of them teach subjects related to their specialisation. These courses are the following:

- 1) Academic Ethics and Integrity, taught by Prof. Dr. Silvia Florea
- 2) Research Methodologies in field of Humanities, taught by Prof. Dr. Ioan Albu and Fr. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Habil Daniel Buda
- 3) Modern and Contemporary Orthodox Theology: evolution, personalities, interpretations. Classic Languages, taught by Archdeacon Prof. Dr. Ioan I. Ică jr. and Prof. Dr. Habil. Sebastian Moldovan



- 4) The Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Period: historical, doctrinal and liturgical questions (Optional Course I: Historical and Practical Disciplines), taught by Prof. Dr. Ciprian Streza, Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Chifăr and Prof. Dr. Vasile Grăjdian
- 5) The Church and its Mission according to the New Testament and in the contemporary times (Optional Course II: Biblical and Systematic Disciplines), taught by Fr. Prof. Dr. Aurel Pavel, Prof. Dr. Habil. Sebastian Moldovan and Lect. Dr. Habil. Ciprian- Iulian Toroczkai.

*Recommendation:* I appreciate the fact that two professors who are not affiliated with the domain “theology” are included to the teaching staff, because this gives the doctoral students in theology new perspectives and methodological approaches, which are valuable for their studies. My recommendation would be to foster the advantages of an Interdisciplinary School even more, by involving in the obligatory courses that concern Academic Ethics and Methodology professors from other sciences too, by giving for example some lectures in the courses and explaining their points of view.

**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 programs does not exceed 20%.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution’s documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution’s documents and the evaluation visit itself

As indicated in the Table A.3.1.4, out of fifteen doctoral advisors in the domain “Theology” only one doctoral advisor currently supervises slightly more than 8 doctoral students, that is 9, which is of course under the limit of 12. Even if one counts the number of doctoral students who benefit of the extended period of doctoral study, the number of doctoral advisors who supervise more than 8 but less than 12 doctoral students becomes 2, which it is still under the desirable 20%.

**The indicator is 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.*

*- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

On the IOSUD website (<https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/domenii-si-conducatori/>) as well as in Annex A.3.2.1a-e (Teologie CV-uri Conducatori de doctorat-cert.pdf) is provided information about all doctoral advisors, including their CVs and research activities. It is evident that much more than 50% of them is engaged in various significant academic activities, such as participating in conferences, in professional associations, in research centers and in doctoral and habilitation commissions, not only on national but also on an international level. Moreover, the publications of all doctoral advisors presented in the folder Articole Teologie (among the additionally provided documents) are numerous, far beyond the required number, while a lot of them in international highly estimated scientific journals. Many of these publications are cited in significant numbers, as manifested in citation databases and web search engines of scholarly literature, such as Scopus, Web of Sciences and Google Scholar. In my view, the quality of the doctoral advisors is a significant advantage of the domain "theology".

**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.*

*- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

As mentioned in the previous indicator, it is evident that much more than 50% of the doctoral advisors in domain "theology" is engaged in various significant academic activities in their scientific field on national and international level. The Table A.3.2.2 presented in the Internal Evaluation Report confirms that all 15 doctoral advisors fulfill the requested score by CNATDCU standards. In fact, in almost all cases the accomplished scores are significantly over the mandatory 25% of the CNATDCU national minimum standards.

**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.*

*- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

According to Table B.1.1.1 of the Internal Evaluation Report, for the assessed period 86 Master's graduates applied for admission to the doctoral program of the domain "theology". 23 of them were graduates from other Universities, while the number of seats funded by the state budget for the same period were 25, therefore the ratio between them is 0,92. That means that the criterion of a ratio of at least 0,2 is fulfilled. The same is true concerning the ratio between the total number of graduates who applied for admission to the doctoral program of the domain "theology" (that is 86) and the number of seats funded by the state budget (that is 25), as it results in a ratio of 3,4 which is above the required 1,2.

**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.*

*- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

The admission to doctoral studies programs includes an examination of language proficiency in English, French or German and an interview with the admission commission, in which the candidates



present their doctoral research projects. The criteria for evaluating the projects, the competition topics for the language proficiency tests and in general the regulation for the whole admission procedure are described in Annex 1.1.1.04 (Anexa Regulament\_Admitere-IOSUD\_2021-cert.pdf). The minimum grade point average that a candidate must obtain in order to be declared admitted to doctoral studies is 7,00. For the domain "Theology" there is an additional examination in Dogmatic Theology. Moreover, I was informed that by decision of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church no candidate with an average degree lower than 8,50 in undergraduate and postgraduate studies can be enrolled in a doctoral studies program. The admission procedure is in my view very demanding and reinforces the competition, which can result in selecting highly qualified candidates.

*Recommendation:* It should be taken into consideration that the additional examination in Dogmatic Theology may discourage graduates in other sciences from applying into doctoral studies in a theological field in which an interdisciplinary approach could be highly appreciated. In my view, it is an advantage for the domain to be able to attract graduates in other sciences for its doctoral studies and an enhancement for the domain "theology" to host interdisciplinary approaches.

**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 admission does not exceed 30%.*

- *description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

- *analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

According to the Table B.1.2.1 of the Internal Evaluation Report, the expulsion rate of doctoral students for the assessed period within three years from admission averages 2.53% (2 out of 79), which is impressively good. All doctoral students and graduates we discussed with during the meetings emphasized that the doctoral advisors of the domain are very supportive and help them to overcome all kinds of difficulties. It therefore seems that this is the main reason for this achievement.

**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.*

- *description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*





*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

The offered study program in theology comprises five courses, from which three are obligatory and two elective. The obligatory courses are: 1) Academic Ethics and Integrity, 2) Research Methodologies in field of Humanities and 3) Modern and Contemporary Orthodox Theology: evolution, personalities, and interpretations. Classic Languages. Apart from these courses, the doctoral student may choose according to his field of research one of the two following courses: 1) The Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Period: historical, doctrinal and liturgical questions (Optional Course I: Historical and Practical Disciplines) and 2) The Church and its Mission according to the New Testament and in the contemporary times (Optional Course II: Biblical and Systematic Disciplines). According to the Internal Evaluation Report, the courses are presented in Annex B.2.1.1. (Teologie Program de pregatire bazat pe studii univesitare avansate-cert.prf), though only in their titles, teaching hours and received credits. However, in Annex B.2.1.3 (Teologie Fisele disciplinelor-cert.pdf) are presented the syllabi of the courses too, describing the content, the intended learning outcomes, the student assessment, the proposed bibliography, etc.

*Recommendation:* It is recommended that the syllabi of the courses are also presented in English so that their content becomes comprehensible for Erasmus students or in general for those who don't understand Romanian well.

**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.*

*- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

Among the three obligatory courses that were mentioned in the previous indicator is the course "Academic Ethics and Integrity", which is dedicated to academic and research ethics.

*Recommendation:* It is recommended that the syllabus of this course is also presented in English, as explained in the previous indicator.

**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 activities<sup>1</sup>.

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

The syllabi of all courses, obligatory and elective, are presented in Annex B.2.1.3 (Teologie Fisele disciplinelor-cert.pdf) and they include the learning outcomes that doctoral students should acquire after completing each course. On our questions to the doctoral students about the attendance of these courses as a part of their studies, they observed that they gained important knowledge and skills and that they found them helpful to their studies.

*Recommendation:* It is recommended that the syllabus of this course is also presented in English, as explained in the previous two indicators.

**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.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

Each doctoral student is supervised and counseled by a Doctoral Advisory Committee, that consists of their doctoral advisor and three other members. The doctoral advisors claimed during our meeting that doctoral students are continuously provided with supervision and feedback by all means (telephone, email, google meet and personal meeting). The doctoral students and graduates confirmed this, by saying that doctoral advisors take care personally of their progress and are very supportive of their studies in all aspects. The very low expulsion rate in the domain "theology" is undoubtedly related to the appropriate counseling and guidance that doctoral students receive.

**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.*

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<sup>1</sup> 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.



- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

According to Tables 1 and 3 of the Internal Evaluation Report, the doctoral students for the academic year 2019-2020 are 77, which is slightly over the ration 3:1, since the number faculty members who provide doctoral guidance in the domain "Theology" are 25. However, in all other 4 years of the evaluated period the number of the doctoral students is significantly lower and fluctuates between 56 and 62, with the result that the average is clearly under 3:1.

*Recommendation:* The ratio between the number of doctoral students and the advisors ensures that the latter is not overloaded and has time and all necessary presuppositions to provide doctoral students with the appropriate guidance. The increased ratio of the last year may depend on the higher number of doctoral students who extended their studies due to the problems caused by the pandemic, but the domain should pay attention to prevent an increasing tendency in the upcoming years.

**The indicator is 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.*

*\*general description of the standard analysis.*

**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.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

According to the internal Evaluation Report, all 45 doctoral candidates who obtained a Doctor's degree in Theology in the past five years published at least one paper in scientific journals. In Annex B.3.1.1. (Teologie Listă lucrări + Articole) are listed the names of all 45 the doctoral students and advisors, the dates they defended their theses, the titles of the articles (one article of each doctoral student) and their full references. Moreover, the committee is provided with five published articles of doctoral students to evaluate on the original contribution to the development of the field, which are:

- 1) G.S. Corman – M. Cernușcă Mițariu – M. Mițariu – F. A. Pavel – L. Ștef – S. Morar, "Ethics, objectivity and value distortion in social and medical services" (evaluated with the grade 2).

- 2) M. Motrică, "The importance of the canonization of the New Russian martyrs and confessors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOD) and its role in restoring Canonical Communion with the Russian Orthodox Church" (evaluated with the grade 4).
- 3) I. V. Crișan, "Die Satisfaktionslehre Anselms von Canterbury in der Theologie von Vater Dumitru Stăniloae" (evaluated with the grade 5).
- 4) H. B. Fröhlich, "Konfessionsverbindende Ehen und Anerkennung der Taufe. Eine Fallstudie aus den orthodoxen Kirchenbüchern in Schäßburg" (evaluated with the grade 5).
- 5) F. Dimitrița, "The Mission through Iconography in Maramureș: The Preservation of Orthodox Faith an National Identity (1740-1873)" (evaluated with the grade 5).

**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.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

The Internal Evaluation Report refers to Annex B.3.1.2. (Teologie Listă lucrări), where it is affirmed that all 45 doctoral candidates who obtained a Doctor's degree in Theology in the past five years published at least one paper in scientific journals, while some of them published an impressive number of articles including contributions in ISI and/or REIH ranked journals and attended doctoral conferences which took place in Romania or abroad. However, this annex was not among the provided documents, therefore the latter claim can not be confirmed. Nevertheless, the indicator can be considered as fulfilled, because according to Annex B.3.1.1, as it is mentioned in the previous indicator, all 45 doctoral candidates fulfill the required minimum of one publication.

*Recommendation:* It is recommended that all publications made by the doctoral students are publicly presented.

**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.*



- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself
- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

According to the Table B.3.2.1. (Teologie referenți externi) of the Internal Evaluation Report, this limitation is generally respected, however there are five cases in which one specialist from a higher education institution participated more than two times a year for theses coordinated by the same doctoral thesis advisor.

*Recommendation:* The still ongoing pandemic has forced universities and professors to find new ways of teaching and supporting the students by using a variety of electronic devices and applications. These technological tools could be more widely used also with regard to the participation of a higher number of specialists in the guidance committees, even from universities located far away from Sibiu.

**The indicator is partially 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.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself
- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

The number of doctoral theses in theology assigned to a specialist affiliated with another higher education institution for the assessed period is 9. The total number of theses in the same period are 45, therefore the ratio is 0,2.

**The indicator is 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.*

*- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

According to the Internal Evaluation Report, the University of Sibiu implements a number of regulations and procedures enabling the internal quality assurance and assessment, namely:

[Regulation for the Organization of the Admission Exam to Doctoral Studies for the academic year 2021-2022](#)

[Operational Procedure for Online Admission to Doctoral Studies](#)

[LBUS Regulation regarding the Organization of Doctoral Studies](#)

[Operational Procedure for the Online Organization of Examination Activities in the Context of the Interdisciplinary Doctoral School affiliated to the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu](#)

[Operational Procedure for the Assessment and Defence of Doctoral Thesis](#)

[Operational Procedure for the Organization of the Process to Awarding the Habilitation Title](#)

[Procedure of Automatic Recognition by LBUS of the title of doctoral advisor awarded by other accredited higher education institutions abroad](#)

Procedure of automatic recognition of academic titles obtained in accredited higher education institutions abroad

[Procedure for Rewarding Research Results](#)

[Methodology for the approval of external mobility grants awarded from LBUS and Hasso Plattner funds](#)

All regulations except one (Procedure of automatic recognition of academic titles obtained in accredited higher education institutions abroad) are linked with the respective documents in Romanian. Based on the discussions, I don't have any reasons to doubt the implementation of these regulations by the doctoral school.

**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.*

*- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

According to the Internal Evaluation Report, the University of Sibiu has designed a questionnaire to collect feedback from doctoral students. Regarding the academic year 2019-2020 this questionnaire was disseminated via Google Forms to 278 students enrolled in the doctoral training programme. From the 183 responses received, about 80% were content or very satisfied (on a scale from 1 to 5) with the overall doctoral program. This outcome is in accordance with the opinions that doctoral students expressed during our meeting. They were very satisfied with the study program and the support of their doctoral advisors. As they were asked, what could be in their view improved, they mentioned mainly two points: the duration of their studies, as they find the three year limitation too short, and the need to have broader access to electronic bibliographic databases. Regarding the first point, they observed that they often feel very stressed to be consistent with their obligations, but they added that extensions were provided. Regarding the second point, the doctoral students emphasized that during the pandemic the access to libraries was limited and the lack of adequate electronic sources, especially in humanities, made their work difficult.

*Recommendations:* It is recommended that the questionnaire is uploaded at the homepage of the university, so that it is accessible and can be filled in by the doctoral students any time. Moreover, it would be useful to gather and present the doctoral students a series of open access internet sources, which can be helpful in their research. Finally, is recommended that the electronic bibliographic databases, especially in scientific fields where the respective need is significant, be enriched.

**The indicator is 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.*

*\*general description of the standard analysis.*

**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.
  - description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself
  - analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

According to the Internal Evaluation Report, all relevant information for doctoral students, potential candidates and doctoral holders, and doctoral advisors are available online in the following links:

- <https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/>
- <https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/admitere/>
- <https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/legislatie/>
- <https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/domenii-si-conducatori/>
- <https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/cursuri/>
- <https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/ordine/>
- <https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/taxe/>
- <https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/teze/teze-2021/>

All these links are active and provide all the necessary information concerning the doctoral studies. The most important are presented also in English. Additionally, a plethora of forms regarding the admission to the doctoral studies, the training program based on academic studies, the scientific research program and the final defense of the theses are available online and downloadable in Romanian and in many cases in English as well.

**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.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself
- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself





According to the Internal Evaluation Report, all doctoral students have free access by using their institutional email accounts to online platforms related to all relevant academic sources and data (through AnelisPlus), including access to the University Library and to electronic bibliographic databases (<http://bcu.ulbsibiu.ro/bazededate.html>).

**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.*

- *description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

- *analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

The University uses two software programs as plagiarism detection tools, namely sistemeantiplagiat.ro (<https://sistemantiplagiat.ro/clienti/educatie/>) and check for plagiarism (<https://www.checkforplagiarism.net/>). Doctoral students can access these softwares free of charge. As already noted, the fight against plagiarism is taken by the University seriously and is effective.

**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.*

- *description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

- *analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

Doctoral students have access to the University's laboratories or other facilities for undertaking research activities. Especially in the field of Theology there are two accredited research centers, namely the Center for Theological Research (<https://www.cctsibiu.com/>) and the Center for Ecumenical Research (<http://ecum.ro/>). During the online meetings with the directors of the research centers and with the doctoral students both parties confirmed that doctoral students are particularly active in the centers. It should be noted and it is praiseworthy that doctoral students contribute to the organization of conferences, workshops and symposiums, and often participate in them presenting their papers.

*Recommendation:* It is recommended that the two research centers in the field of Theology collaborate with other research centers of the University in interdisciplinary research activities, which include the participation of the doctoral students.

**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.*

*- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

In Annex C.3.1.1. (ERASMUS Agreements concluded for the doctorat study cycle-cert.pdf) are presented the Erasmus partnerships of the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu with other european universities, which are undoubtedly important in quantity and quality. However, in this annex aren't any lists or any other evidence provided, that certifies that at least 35% of the doctoral students have completed a training course abroad or other mobility forms, such as attending international scientific conferences. In the absence of evidence and on our request the evaluation committee was provided with an additional annex (C.3.1.1. IOSUD sj domenii.pdf), in which is stated that 68,48% of the doctoral students have completed a training course abroad or other mobility forms. The respective percentage for doctoral students of the domain theology is 67,19%. During the discussion with the doctoral students and the postgraduates was confirmed that they are encouraged and supported to participate in exchange programs with universities abroad and to attend international scientific conferences.

*Recommendation:* Regarding the domain "theology" is recommended that the number of Erasmus agreements and the respective mobility of the doctoral students be increased. It would be useful to record and review this on a regular basis.

***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.*

*- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

*- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*



Similarly to the previous indicator, the committee is aware that experts and scholars from other universities are invited to deliver lectures and speeches addressed primarily to doctoral candidates, but there aren't any lists or any other evidence provided that removes any uncertainty regarding the fulfillment of this indicator. In the homepage of the university are some activities announced, but presumably not all activities. However, this indicator could be considered fulfilled, since it is not defined in terms of concrete numbers.

*Recommendations:* The presence of experts and scholars from other universities for giving lectures enhance the doctoral studies and contributes significantly to its internationalization, that's why is highly recommended that it is presented and advertised by all means. Additionally, it is recommended that foreign professors be included in the co-tutelage and / or in the offer of regular courses.

**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.).*

- *description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

- *analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

According to the Internal Evaluation Report, the internationalization of activities carried out during the doctoral studies is supported by IOSUD by means of:

- LBUS affiliation to the EUA Council for Doctoral Education (<https://eua-cde.org/membership.html>)

- LBUS affiliation to Pride Network – the Association for Professionals in Doctoral Education (<https://pride-network.eu/our-members/>)

- Participation to international education fairs, as in NAFTA 2019, in Washington (<https://www.ulbsibiu.ro/news/universitatea-lucian-blaga-din-sibiu-prezenta-la-targul-educational-nafsa-2019-washington/>)

- Eugen Ionesco doctoral scholarships

Moreover, according to Annex C.3.1.3. (IOSUD și domenii.pdf), in IOSUD-ULBS are affiliated 6 doctoral advisors from abroad, while during the assessed period 21 foreign doctoral students were enrolled in its doctoral studies programs, coming from the following countries: Austria, China, USA, Germany, Jordan, Cambodia, Republic Moldova and Iran. However, there isn't any information related specifically to the domain "theology".

**The indicator is fulfilled.**

#### IV. SWOT Analysis

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Strengths:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The implementation by the Interdisciplinary Doctoral School of the regulations according to which doctoral studies are organised and conducted (A.1.1.1.a. and A.1.1.2.)</li> <li>- The effectiveness in the fight against plagiarism, which is testified by the fact that no doctoral thesis has been invalidated by CNATDCU during the assessed period (A.1.2.2.)</li> <li>- The high quality of the doctoral advisors of the domain “theology”, as the vast majority achieve performances far beyond the required standards of CNATDCU (A.3.1.1. and A.3.2.1.)</li> <li>- The minimal expulsion rate of doctoral students in domain “theology” which is only 2.53% (B.1.2.2.)</li> <li>- The provided counseling and guidance to the doctoral students by both doctoral advisors and guidance commissions (B.2.1.4.)</li> <li>- The overall level of satisfaction of doctoral students with their doctoral studies (C.1.1.2.)</li> <li>- The high quality of the two research centers in the field of theology and the provided opportunities to the doctoral students for participation in their activities (C.2.2.3.).</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Weaknesses:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The lack of documentation of some activities of the Interdisciplinary Doctoral School, especially in English</li> <li>- The lack of description of the criteria and of the procedure according to which doctoral students are chosen to be financially supported through research or institutional development grants (A.1.3.2.)</li> <li>- The lack of an English version of the syllabi of the courses that are offered in the doctoral study program in theology (B.2.1.1. and B.2.1.2.)</li> <li>- Deficient electronic bibliographic databases in the field of Humanities (C.1.1.2.)</li> <li>- The relatively low number of Erasmus agreements in theology and the respective mobility of doctoral students (C.3.1.1.)</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Opportunities:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The fact that doctoral studies take place within an Interdisciplinary Doctoral School gives a lot of opportunities to foster interdisciplinarity in teaching and research.</li> <li>- A lot of opportunities also exist in terms of internationalization of doctoral studies by increasing the numbers of Erasmus partnerships in the field of theology and the mobility of the teaching staff and doctoral students or by including foreign professors in the co-tutelage.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Threats:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The globalisation in higher education increases the competition among doctoral studies offered by european universities and can be seen as an opportunity but also as a threat, especially for universities and countries, which are not based in languages widely spoken in Europe. In this environment investing in the quality of the studies and its internationalization can be seen as a proper strategy for avoiding potential decreasing interest in doctoral studies or the phenomenon of brain drain.</li> </ul>

## V. Overview of judgments awarded and of the recommendations

No.	Type of indicator (*, C)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
1	C	A.1.1.1.	partially fulfilled	It is recommended that the way doctoral students choose their representative for the Council of doctoral school be clarified. Additionally, that the regularity of meetings of the Council of the Doctoral School be clarified or defined.
2	C	A.1.1.2.	fulfilled	
3		A.1.2.1.	fulfilled	
4		A.1.2.2.	fulfilled	
5	C	A.1.3.1.	partially fulfilled	It would be desirable that institutional development funds include further scientific fields, if not all.
6	*	A.1.3.2	fulfilled	It is recommended that criteria and the procedure be formulated according to which the doctoral students are chosen for financial support. Additionally, that the scholarship competition results be presented on the homepage of the university.
7	*	A.1.3.3.	fulfilled	
8	C	A.2.1.1.	fulfilled	
9	C	A.3.1.1.		It is recommended that the quality of the doctoral advisors be advertised as an advantage of the domain "theology" in order to attract doctoral students from other disciplines and Universities.
10	*C	A.3.1.2.	fulfilled	
11		A.3.1.3.	fulfilled	I appreciate the fact that two professors who are not affiliated with the domain "theology" are included to the teaching staff, because this gives the doctoral students in theology new perspectives and methodological approaches, which are valuable for their studies. My recommendation would be to foster the advantages of an Interdisciplinary School even more, by involving in the obligatory courses that concern Academic Ethics and Methodology professors from other sciences too, by giving for example some lectures in the courses and explaining their points of view.
12	*	A.3.1.4	fulfilled	
13		A.3.2.1.	fulfilled	
14	*	A.3.2.2.	fulfilled	

15	*C	<b>B.1.1.1</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	
16	*C	<b>B.1.2.1.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	
17	C	<b>B.2.1.1.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	It is recommended that the syllabi of the courses are also presented in English, so that their content becomes comprehensible for Erasmus students or in general for those who don't understand Romanian well.
18		<b>B.2.1.2.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	It is recommended that the syllabus of this course is also presented in English, as explained in the previous indicator.
19		<b>B.2.1.3.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	It is recommended that the syllabus of this course is also presented in English, as explained in the previous two indicators.
20		<b>B.2.1.4.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	
21		<b>B.2.1.5.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	The ratio between the number of doctoral students and the advisors ensures that the latter is not overloaded and has time and all necessary presuppositions to provide doctoral students with the appropriate guidance. The increased ratio of the last year may depend on the higher number of doctoral students who extended their studies due to the problems caused by the pandemic, but the domain should pay attention to prevent an increasing tendency in the upcoming years.
22	C	<b>B.3.1.1.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	
23	*	<b>B.3.1.2.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	It is recommended that all publications made by the doctoral students are publicly presented.
24	*C	<b>B.3.2.1.</b>	<b>partially fulfilled</b>	The still ongoing pandemic has forced universities and professors to find new ways of teaching and supporting the students by using a variety of electronic devices and applications. These technological tools could be more widely used also in regard of the participation of a higher number of specialists in the guidance committees, even from universities located far away from Sibiu.
25	*	<b>B.3.2.2.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	
26	C	<b>C.1.1.1.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	
27	*	<b>C.1.1.2.</b>		It is recommended that the questionnaire is uploaded at the homepage of the university, so that it is accessible and can be filled in by the doctoral students any time. Moreover, it would be useful to gather and present the doctoral students a series of open access internet sources, which can be helpful in their research. Finally, is recommended that the electronic

				bibliographic databases, especially in scientific fields where the respective need is significant, be enriched.
<b>28</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C.2.1.1.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	
<b>29</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C.2.2.1.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	
<b>30</b>		<b>C.2.2.2.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	
<b>31</b>		<b>C.2.2.3.</b>		It is recommended that the questionnaire is uploaded at the homepage of the university, so that it is accessible and can be filled in by the doctoral students any time. Moreover, it would be useful to gather and present the doctoral students a series of open access internet sources, which can be helpful in their research. Finally, is recommended that the electronic bibliographic databases, especially in scientific fields where the respective need is significant, be enriched.
<b>32</b>	<b>*C</b>	<b>C.3.1.1.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	Regarding the domain “theology” is recommended that the number of Erasmus agreements and the respective mobility of the doctoral students be increased. It would be useful to record and review this on a regular basis.
<b>33</b>		<b>C.3.1.2.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	The presence of experts and scholars from other universities for giving lectures enhance the doctoral studies and contributes significantly to its internationalization, that’s why is highly recommended that it is presented and advertised by all means. Additionally, it is recommended that foreign professors be included in the co-tutelage and / or in the offer of regular courses.
<b>34</b>		<b>C.3.1.3.</b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	

## VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

The domain “Theology” integrated into the Interdisciplinary Doctoral School of “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu offers doctoral studies of high quality aimed to educate and train Doctors in Theology, who are capable of both conducting scientific research and possessing a rich professional experience in the service of the Church and of the society. This is feasible due to the high quality of the doctoral advisors affiliated in the mentioned domain and the well structured and organized study program. In my view, doctoral students are highly engaged, though their studies are demanding and pressing, because they are given opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a range of contexts and because they receive active and ongoing support from the academic staff at all of their obligations. This creates a very positive atmosphere within the domain, reflected in the high level of student satisfaction, which is testified by the questionnaire applied to doctoral students and confirmed during our meetings with students and graduates. I would also include to the advantages of the doctoral studies in theology the two research centers, namely the Center for Theological Research and the Center for Ecumenical Research, in which



the doctoral students are particularly active, and the established collaboration with the local Church, which is one of the main employers of graduates. Having a high number of doctoral advisors and all the aforementioned advantages, I believe that the domain “theology” would function even better, if it would be organised as an independent doctoral school.

Moreover, as general recommendations can be mentioned these which refer to improving the fields of interdisciplinarity and internationalization. The domain “theology” could foster interdisciplinarity by including professors of other humanities and social sciences in teaching and research. A collaboration of the two research centers in the field of Theology with other research centers of the University in interdisciplinary activities would also offer doctoral students new perspectives and challenges to understand and present theological approaches in a dialog with other sciences and the society. Furthermore, in order to pursue and promote internationalization is recommended that the number of Erasmus agreements and the respective mobility of the doctoral students be increased. In this direction could also lead the presence of experts and scholars from other universities for giving lectures.

In conclusion, the domain “theology” - doctoral advisors, teaching staff and administration – makes an excellent work to provide doctoral students with knowledge and skills which are necessary both for research and for practical insertion of that knowledge in the life of the Church and in society in general. I strongly believe that its quality, commitment and the will for improvement is promising for the future of the domain.

## **VII. Annexes**

- The detailed schedule of the evaluation visit.
- The documents that the External Evaluation Committee for the Doctoral Study Domain “Theology” received and reviewed are listed under section II. Methods used (pages 4-6 of the report).