

The External Evaluation Report of a Doctoral Study Domain

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I. Introduction¹

In this chapter, the following shall be summarized:

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

II. Methods used

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

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

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



- the student residences;
- the student cafeteria;
- sports ground etc.;
- 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 University Senate, 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);
 - the Career Counselling and Guidance Center;
 - student organizations;
 - secretariats;
 - various departments/administrative offices (Social/Student residences-Cafeterias etc.);
- Application of questionnaires to doctoral students or academic staff in the doctoral study domain under review.

III. Analysis of ARACIS's performance indicators

Domain A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

**general description of domain analysis.*

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

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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;

(b) the Methodology for conducting elections for the position of director of the Council of doctoral school (CSD), as well as elections by the students of their representative in CSD and the evidence of their conduct;

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

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



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

f) the contract for doctoral studies;

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

- 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 submitted electronic copies of the abovementioned documents including: the Regulations for organization of doctoral studies of law, methodology and minutes for election of Director of the Council for doctoral studies, copy of the contract for doctoral studies and other relevant procedural documents (minutes). The documents have been submitted in official language (Romanian) and generally demonstrate existence of relevant procedures for efficient fulfillment. Any concrete details on specifics should be addressed by native speakers – members of the domain committee.

The Management structure is appropriate and included 8 member Council of Doctoral Studies (including 1 student), 4-member Council of Interdisciplinary Doctoral School and 5 - member Committee. The participation of external members in the Committee brings an added value to the structure.

Election of students and participation in the sessions as well as the formal meetings of the Council was raised as a challenge during the interviews.

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.*

- 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 provided convincing arguments and supporting documents on the existence of indicated standards in Art. 17, p. 5, including procedures for selection of candidates, analysis and approval of thesis, acceptance of new doctoral supervisors and revoking the affiliation of a doctoral supervisor, decision making structure of the doctoral program, fraud prevention etc.

The documents have been submitted in official language (Romanian) and generally demonstrate existence of relevant procedures for efficient fulfillment. Any concrete details on specifics should be addressed by native speakers – members of the domain committee.

Recommendations:



The indicator is fulfilled.

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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 provided convincing arguments that an appropriate IT system is in place to keep track of doctoral students. UMS – University Management System has been developed and is operational for students of first, second and third cycle of 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.

- 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 existence and use of an appropriate software program has been well substantiated. The University has provided adequate evidence on the utilization of two systems for plagiarism check (www.sistemantiplagiat.ro) and (www.checkforplagiarism.net). On request for additional clarification, the University has submitted information that there were not any examples of plagiarism of doctoral theses. Moreover, evidence on the operability of the system has been provided by the University.

Recommendations: N/A

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.

**general description of the standard analysis.*



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

The University has elaborated implementation of several projects from institutional development funds aimed at several segments including: series of courses and workshops with participation of doctoral students, support of the activities conducted by the student entrepreneurial societies (SAS) and improvement in the quality of teaching, including the adherence to the academic deontology and ethical code of conduct. Request for clarification on several aspects of these projects (duration, results, involvement of PhD students) has been sent. However, no additional clarifications on the issue have been received.

Recommendations: The Doctoral school should develop a plan for research projects development. The project should be realistic and focused on involvement of doctoral students. Potential involvement of national or foreign partners would bring an added value. In comparative perspective, for regional universities it is always advisable to establish contacts/cooperation with local/regional stakeholders including civil society organizations or local authority.

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

The percentage of doctoral students active at the time of evaluation who for at least six months have received additional funding is low – around 11%. At the time of evaluation around 90 students have been involved in the PhD program in, as indicated by the University and 10 students obtained full scholarships for a period from 3-4 years. The University also indicated other opportunities for funding of students, however no concrete on utilisation of these funds has been presented.

No information on Erasmus+ mobilities has been elaborated.

Relevant representatives of the School during the interviews sessions have indicated the lack of interest among doctoral students for mobilities. Additionally, it became evident that the majority of doctoral students have been employed at the time of enrollment. The School should re-address this issue and eventually explore the issue through provision of scholarships to unemployed students who could engage fulltime in doctoral studies.

Recommendations: The School should establish a tool for monitoring of the fulfillment of the performance indicator. Additionally, at the beginning of the doctoral students, the School should present a comprehensive information on the opportunities for scholarships including Erasmus+ scholarship for the students. This information could also be created at university level. Given the fact that the majority of doctoral students have been employed at the time of enrollment, the School should re-address this issue and eventually explore the issue through provision of scholarships to unemployed students who could engage fulltime in doctoral studies.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

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

- 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 provided information on the utilization of the funds obtained through institutional contracts and tuition fees for purchase of books for doctoral students dominantly in the period 2015-2018.

However, no concrete information regarding the reimbursement professional training expenses of doctoral students (attending conferences, summer schools, training, programs abroad, publication of specialty papers or other specific forms of dissemination etc.). As a result of that, this performance indicator has not been adequately elaborated.

Recommendations: The School should establish a tool for monitoring of the fulfillment of the performance indicator. Additionally, the opportunities for funding of professional training programs should be indicated at the beginning of studies and the doctoral students could plan the activities in advance.

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



The indicator is partially fulfilled.

Criterion A.2. Research infrastructure

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

On additional request for clarification, the University has provided relevant information on the venues and the material equipment available to the doctoral school of law including detailed information of library logistics and resources as well as management system.

The access to relevant international journals databases (10) is appropriate for the domain and for the purpose of doctoral students' research.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion A.3. Quality of Human Resources

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

The University has submitted adequate information on the fulfillment of performance indicator A.3.1.1. A total of 5 full-time doctoral supervisors from the University of Sibiu have been involved in the doctoral program. As indicated in the application, all supervisors meet the CNATDCU minimum standards in force. Calculation of the minimum standards has been incorporated in the self-evaluation report. The team of doctoral supervisors is gender – balanced.

Recommendations:N/A

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

The performance indicators A3.1.2. has also been completely fulfilled. The University has provided information that all 5 doctoral advisors are tenured at the university.

Recommendations N/A

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 University has provided valid information that the study subjects are taught by teaching staff with proved expertise in the relevant field including



A list of all advisors and their concrete field of expertise has been attached in separate annex accompanied by CV of doctoral advisors.

Recommendations: The School could explore the opportunities for involvement of a more diversified teaching staff including international experts for certain aspects of the courses indicated. The involvement of international professors will strengthen the internationalization of the University, open the prospects for international cooperation including development of research project/s and improve foreign language skills of doctoral students.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

- 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 documentation submitted by the University, only one of the five doctoral advisors currently supervises more than eight doctoral candidates, but no more than 12. Furthermore, only one of the doctoral advisors currently supervises more than eight doctoral candidates, which amounts to 20% of doctoral advisors (1 advisor out of total of 5).

Consequently, this performance indicator has been completely fulfilled.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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*

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



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

The University has provided additional information on the fulfillment of performance indicator A.3.2.1 after a clarification request has been submitted. The supporting documentation on the fulfillment of this criteria has included: detailed information regarding their international visibility including participation in relevant and competent international bodies and participation at programs/events organized as well as list of publications/articles, H-index for one professor. The elaboration has been well substantiated.

Recommendations: N/A

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 it was indicated in the documentation submitted by the University, all 5 doctoral supervisors continue to be scientifically active, obtaining at least 25% of the score required by the CNATDCU minimum standards in force at the moment of carrying out the evaluation. The University of Sibiu has submitted a calculation of the achieved score and the requirements are evidently met.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

*general description of domain analysis.



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

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

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 8 (40/5). This criterium has been met.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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 University has aligned its admissions criteria with performance indicator B.1.2.1. In that sense, the University has submitted a separate official document in which the general and specific criteria for admission to the Doctoral school have been elaborated.



Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

- 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 provided detailed informaton regarding the drop out rate of doctoral students per academic domain and per academic year. On the basis of the documentation submitted by the University the drop-out rate in the last 5 years is 3.57%.

The rate does not exceed 30%.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.2. The content of doctoral programs

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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 University has submitted the curriculum of study as well as the syllabi of courses. The selection of the courses is appropriate is adequate and includes courses that are specific and probably have not been taught at BA or MA level. Also, the curriculum has included relevant courses for development of research skills, academic integrity and ethics of doctoral students.

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

The compulsory readings for the courses (The Influence of ECHR on National Law, and Fundamental Institutions in Civil Law and Civil Procedure Law) have been well thought through and include both Romanian and relevant international readings. The diverse readings for the courses brings an evident added value to the doctoral program and strengthens the knowledge and skills of the students. The evaluation of student knowledge has well explained and is adequate.

The syllabus for the course Research methodologies has not been submitted.

Recommendations: N/A

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

The curriculum has included the course "Academic Integrity and Ethics" as required by law. However, the syllabus of the course should be updated with additional recent readings.

Recommendations: The syllabus of the course should be updated with additional more recent and diverse readings.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

- 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 provided narrative information on the concept of "learning outcomes" with particular emphasis on the learning outcomes for concrete courses in the program. which is adequate and harmonized with the practices of the European area of higher education.

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



On the other hand, the School should also indicate the general “learning outcomes” of the doctoral program in law.

Recommendations: The School should define the main expected general learning outcomes and align them with the overall doctoral study program.

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

The University has submitted relevant information regarding the organization of counselling/guidance from functional guidance commissions including doctoral schedules and meetings. In that direction, the university has submitted documentation on organized individual sessions with students.

However, more should have been said in respect to the content of these meetings, the results in terms of impact on doctoral students’ career. Additionally, this element should also have been included in the evaluation questionnaire.

Recommendations: The Doctoral school should focus on development on mechanism to monitor the quality and relevance of the counselling.guidance sessions for doctoral students including its inclusion in the evaluation questionnaire.

The indicator is partially 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.

- 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 information submitted by the University, the ratio between the number of doctoral students and the number of teaching staff/researchers providing doctoral guidance is 1,55. There are 28 doctoral students and 18 teaching staff.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.



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

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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

The University has submitted a list of publications of graduates and current doctoral students. Having in mind the fact that these publications are dominantly in Romanian language, the issue will be addressed by the national expert.

However, in the capacity of evaluator, I have requested several articles mainly published in English language for review. The review demonstrated that the submitted articles fulfill standards for this type of contributions and bring added value in the scientific discourse.

Recommendations: Apart from the importance for publishing and making presentations at national conferences, a more substantive involvement of doctoral students at academic/scientific events abroad would have brought an added value to the School.

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 University has submitted a list of presentation/published academic work of doctoral students with a ratio of 1.22. However, after review of the submitted documents, it became evident that there have



articles that have not been published in the last 5 year. After the calculation, the number of published papers in the last 5 years is 14 resulting in ratio 0,64%. As a result of that, the performance indicator is partially fulfilled.

Recommendations: The Doctoral School and the University should more actively promote participation of doctoral students on conferences and other academic events abroad. Additionally, the University should develop a plan for complete fulfillment of the indicator.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

The University has provided information that the number of doctoral theses in law that are supervised by the same doctoral advisor and allotted to the same external referent from a different higher education institution per year is two, with only two exceptions.

On request for clarification, the University did not provide additional information for clarification/justification of the situation except for the position that the indicator B.3.2.1. has been just recently introduced by ARACIS.

Recommendations: The School should closely monitor the involvement of the external advisors in the activities of the doctoral school in accordance to the standards set by ARACIS.

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 University has provided information that the ratio of doctoral theses in Law allotted to an external referent from a different higher education institution to doctoral theses defended in the past five years does not exceed 0.3, with two exceptions (0.45 and 0.37 respectively).

On request for clarification, the University did not provide additional information for clarification/justification of the situation except for the position that indicator B.3.2.2. has been just recently introduced by ARACIS.

Recommendations: The School should closely monitor the involvement of the external advisors in the activities of the doctoral school including the set ratio in accordance to the standards set by ARACIS.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

**general description of domain analysis.*

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

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

The University has adopted several important documents that provide the necessary framework for development of evaluation process and internal quality assurance. In that direction, the Quality Assurance Code and the annual internal procedure for the evaluation of doctoral schools have been submitted and are in general adequate. The continuity of evaluation and internal quality assurance procedures has supported with copies of minutes for adoption of annual evaluation reports.

Recommendations: N/A

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

The main mechanism for obtaining feedback from doctoral students represents the online evaluation questionnaire which is regularly conducted.

According to the information received by LBUS has designed a questionnaire to collect feedback from all students, including doctoral students regarding the overall doctoral programme. As regards the academic year 2019-2020 such a questionnaire was disseminated via Google Forms to 278 students enrolled in the doctoral training programme. In the end, 183 responses from doctoral students were validated.

In the capacity of international evaluator, I have requested additional information on the composition of the questionnaire and the utilization of the results. No clarification has been received.

Recommendations: The School should maintain an operational system of evaluation and quality assurance. The content of the questionnaire should be regularly addressed and findings from the evaluation should be taken into account in the work of the School.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

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

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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

The University has provided a document with links to the abovementioned categories. All foreseen categories are included and the stated links are operational.

Recommendations: N/A

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.

*general description of the standard analysis.

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

The University has provided doctoral students of law with access to relevant databases for their field of work. A list of available library databases has been submitted and is appropriate. The university manages the AnelisPlus platform.

Recommendations: N/A

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 has submitted information that each doctoral student has access to an electronic system for verifying the degree of similarity with other existing scientific or artistic works.

Recommendations: N/A

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

The University has submitted information that all doctoral students have access to scientific research laboratories or other facilities depending on the specific domain/domains within the Doctoral School.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion C.3. Internationalization

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

The Doctoral School of law has submitted a list of 163 agreements with universities in France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, Portugal etc. A total of 8 agreements have been signed in the field of law have been indicated and this is adequate for the needs of the students of doctoral school.

The University has indicated that all doctoral students are required to attend international conferences prior to the defence of their doctoral thesis, this criterion is 100% accomplished. However, on request for additional clarification, the university has submitted proof of mobility of only 1 student at a leading institution for study of legal history. As a result of that, the performance indicator has been partially fulfilled.

Recommendations: The issue of internationalization represents a clear challenge for the university. Several steps could be carried out in order to boost internationalization including: utilization of personal network of contacts to encourage mobility of doctoral students during their studies, organize international events, attract Romanian diaspora working at HEIs abroad to participate in committee for defense of theses, encourage and promote student participation at conferences abroad, apply for international funding and grants with existing and new partners, increase the number of international cooperation agreements for mobility in the field of law etc.

The indicator is partially 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

The Doctoral School of law demonstrated its commitment to internationalization and development of links with key international experts. On additional request for clarification, the Doctoral school of law has submitted a list of invited lecturers. A total of 6 lectures have been organized in the last 5 years mainly in the period 2018-2019. These parameters create an evident room for improvement in the future.

No information on the organization of doctoral studies in international co-tutelage has been presented.

Recommendations: The School should promote the international co-tutelage to doctoral students, establish the involvement of international professors in the doctoral studies program and encourage organization of lectures and other academic events with key – experts in the field. The international engagement in this segment remains limited.

The indicator is partially 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

The University has submitted a extensive information on several aspects of the internationalization agenda including that affiliation to EUA Council for Doctoral Education, participation at international fair in Washington, US, participation of external professors (4) in committees for public defense of doctoral theses etc. Additionally, the opportunities for scholarships have been indicated including the Eugen Ionesco doctoral scholarships. However, no concrete information in terms of number of students on the utilization of the scholarship program has been presented.

Recommendations: The School should develop a plan for improvement of its internationalization with realistic indicators for attractinng international doctoral students and boosting involvement of foreign professors in its work. Also the University should set up a record system of international students and international scholarship recipients.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

IV. SWOT Analysis

<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <p>(1) developed procedures for organization of doctoral studies; (2) developed research infrastructure and facilities for doctoral studies of law (3) generally transparent institution and (4) institution committed to change.</p>	<p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <p>(1) internationalization of the university; (2) lack of interest of doctoral students for writing publications and particiapation at conferences and (3) need for strengthening capacities of unit in charge of preparation of self-assessment report</p>
<p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <p>(1) existing agreements for international cooperation; (2) utilization of personal contacts and networks for boosting internationalization (3) focus on cooperation with universities in the region; (4) focus on applications for international funding and potentials for cooperation with civil society organizations and/or local authorities for funding purposes.</p>	<p><u>Threats:</u></p> <p>-</p> <p>(1) low number of doctoral supervisors at the institution; (2) lack of research projects; (3) lack of motivation of teaching staff; (4) operational challenges in the quality assurance process; (5) low number of Erasmus+ mobility agreements.</p>

Overview of judgments awarded and of the recommendations

No.	Type of indicator (*, C)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
1.	A	1.1.1.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
2.	A	1.1.2.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
3.	A	1.2.1.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
4.	A	1.2.2.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
5.	A	1.3.1.	<i>Partially fulfilled</i>	The Doctoral school should develop a plan for research projects development. The project should be realistic and focused on involvement of doctoral students. Potential involvement of national or foreign partners would bring an added value. In comparative perspective, for regional universities it is always advisable to establish contacts/cooperation with local/regional stakeholders including civil society organizations or local authority.
6.	A	1.3.2.	<i>Partially fulfilled</i>	The School should establish a tool for monitoring of the fulfilment of the performance indicator. Additionally, at the beginning of the doctoral studies, the School should present a comprehensive information on the opportunities for scholarships including Erasmus+ scholarship for the students. This information could also be created at university level. Given the fact that the majority of doctoral students have been employed at the time of enrollment, the School should re-address this issue and eventually explore the issue through provision of scholarships to unemployed students who could engage fulltime in doctoral studies.
7.	A	1.3.3.	<i>Partially fulfilled</i>	The School should establish a tool for monitoring of the fulfilment of the performance indicator. Additionally, the opportunities for funding of professional training programs should be indicated at the beginning of studies and the doctoral students could plan the activities in advance.
8.	A	2.1.1.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
9.	A	3.1.1.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
10.	A	3.1.2.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
11.	A	3.1.3.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	The School could explore the opportunities for involvement of a more diversified teaching staff including international experts for certain aspects of the courses indicated. The involvement of international professors will strengthen the internationalization of the University, open the prospects for international cooperation including development of research project/s and improve foreign language skills of doctoral students.
12.	A	3.1.4.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
13.	A	3.2.1.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
14.	A	3.2.2.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
15.	B	1.1.1.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
16.	B	1.2.1.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
17.	B	1.2.2.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
18.	B	2.1.1.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	
19.	B	2.1.2.	<i>Fulfilled</i>	

20.	B	2.1.3.	Fulfilled	The School should define the main expected general learning outcomes and align them with the overall doctoral study program.
21.	B	2.1.4.	Partially fulfilled	The Doctoral school should focus on development on mechanism to monitor the quality and relevance of the counselling.guidance sessions for doctoral students including its inclusion in the evaluation questionnaire.
22.	B	3.1.1.	Fulfilled	Apart from the importance for publishing and making presentations at national conferences, a more substantive involvement of doctoral students at academic/scientific events abroad would have brought an added value to the School.
23.	B	3.1.2.	Partially fulfilled	The Doctoral School and the University should more actively promote participation of doctoral students on conferences and other academic events abroad. Additionally, the University should develop a plan for complete fulfillment of the indicator.
24.	B	3.2.1.	Partially fulfilled	The School should closely monitor the involvement of the external advisors in the activities of the doctoral school in accordance to the standards set by ARACIS.
25.	B	3.2.2.	Partially fulfilled	The School should closely monitor the involvement of the external advisors in the activities of the doctoral school including the set ratio in accordance to the standards set by ARACIS.
26.	C	1.1.1.	Fulfilled	
27.	C	1.1.2.	Partially fulfilled	The School should maintain an operational system of evaluation and quality assurance. The content of the questionnaire should be regularly addressed and findings from the evaluation should be taken into account in the work of the School.
28.	C	2.1.1.	Fulfilled	
29.	C	2.2.1.	Fulfilled	
30.	C	2.2.2.	Fulfilled	
31.	C	2.2.3.	Fulfilled	
32.	C	3.1.1.	Partially fulfilled	The issue of internationalization represents a clear challenge for the university. Several steps could be carried out in order to boost internationalization including: utilization of personal network of contacts to encourage mobility of doctoral students during their studies, organize international events, attract Romanian diaspora working at HEIs abroad to participate in committee for defense of theses, encourage and promote student participation at conferences abroad, apply for international funding and grants with existing and new partners, increase the number of international cooperation agreements for mobility in the field of law etc.
33.	C	3.1.2.	Partially fulfilled	The School should promote the international co-tutelage to doctoral students, establish the involvement of international professors in the doctoral studies program and encourage organization of lectures and other academic events with key – experts in the field. The international engagement in this segment remains limited.
34.	C	3.1.3.	Partially fulfilled	The School should develop a plan for improvement of its internationalization with realistic indicators for attracting international doctoral students and boosting involvement of foreign professors in its work. Also the University should set up a record system of international students and international scholarship recipients.



The recommendations contained in the report shall be resumed in the indicators' analysis. Other general recommendations may be made that do not fit within a particular indicator.

VERY IMPORTANT!!! – Each identified weakness must be correlated with at least one recommendation to improve the situation!

VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

Several important issues raised during the evaluation are resumed and some general conclusions are drawn on the quality of the education provided within the doctoral study domain under review; the Experts' Panel also presents general assessments about the institution. Other general recommendation may also be presented, which cannot be related to a specific indicator and have not been presented at point V.

A decision is proposed, together with the reasons for granting it (if the Experts' Panel members do not reach a consensus, each of them can propose and argue his/her own decision).

The School should strengthen the capacities of the unit in charge of the preparation of the self-evaluation report. In comparison to other Romanian universities, a lot of information was missing and was not adequately substantiated. More efforts should be made to improve this segment.

The Doctoral school should develop a plan for research projects development. The project should be realistic and focused on involvement of doctoral students. Potential involvement of national or foreign partners would bring an added value. In comparative perspective, for regional universities it is always advisable to establish contacts/cooperation with local/regional stakeholders including civil society organizations or local authority.

Additionally, at the beginning of the doctoral studies, the School should present comprehensive information on the opportunities for scholarships including Erasmus+ scholarship for the students. This information could also be created at university level. Given the fact that the majority of doctoral students have been employed at the time of enrollment, the School should re-address this issue and eventually explore the issue through provision of scholarships to unemployed students who could engage fulltime in doctoral studies.

The School could explore the opportunities for involvement of a more diversified teaching staff including international experts for certain aspects of the courses indicated. The involvement of international professors will strengthen the internationalization of the University, open the prospects for international cooperation including development of research project/s and improve foreign language skills of doctoral students.

The Doctoral school should focus on development of mechanism to monitor the quality and relevance of the counselling/guidance sessions for doctoral students including its inclusion in the evaluation questionnaire.



Apart from the importance of publishing and making presentations at national conferences, a more substantive involvement of doctoral students at academic/scientific events abroad would have brought an added value to the School.

The Doctoral School and the University should more actively promote participation of doctoral students on conferences and other academic events abroad. Additionally, the University should develop a plan for complete fulfillment of the indicator.

The School should closely monitor the involvement of the external advisors in the activities of the doctoral school in accordance with the standards set by ARACIS.

The School should maintain an operational system of evaluation and quality assurance. The content of the questionnaire should be regularly addressed and findings from the evaluation should be taken into account in the work of the School.

The issue of internationalization represents a clear challenge for the university. Several steps could be carried out in order to boost internationalization including: utilization of personal network of contacts to encourage mobility of doctoral students during their studies, organize international events, attract Romanian diaspora working at HEIs abroad to participate in committee for defense of thesis, encourage and promote student participation at conferences abroad, apply for international funding and grants with existing and new partners, increase the number of international cooperation agreements for mobility in the field of law etc. Moreover, the number of Erasmus+ mobility in the field of law should be increased.

The School should promote the international co-tutelage to doctoral students, establish the involvement of international professors in the doctoral studies program and encourage organization of lectures and other academic events with key – experts in the field. The international engagement in this segment remains limited.

The School should develop a plan for improvement of its internationalization with realistic indicators for attracting international doctoral students and boosting involvement of foreign professors in its work. Also, the University should set up a record system of international students and international scholarship recipients.

VII. Annexes