

The External Evaluation Report of a Doctoral Study Domain

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I. Introduction¹

In this chapter, the following shall be summarized:

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

This evaluation was performed as a regular Periodical External Evaluation of the Institution Organising Doctoral Study Programs (IOSUD), respectively of the doctoral study domains (DD) of Medicine, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, Philology, History, Engineering and Management and Informatics at Universitatea de Medicina, Farmacie, Stiinte si Tehnologie „George Emil Palade” din Targu Mures (UMFST).

This evaluation visit was performed in a hybrid form, mostly online, with an on-site visit of the Panel Coordinators, and was conducted during the period of September 6th-10th 2021. In the Dental Medicine domain, the Experts Committee worked as follows: Evaluation Director Prof. Ioan Ianos (Universitatea din București), Coordinator of the IOSUD Committee Prof. Laurentiu Mogoanță (Universitatea de Medicina si Farmacie din Craiova), Coordinator of the domain, Prof. Meda-Lavinia Negruțiu (Universitatea de Medicina si Farmacie “Victor Babes” din Timisoara), domain’s International Expert Prof. Rui Amaral Mendes (Case Western Reserve University), and domain’s PhD Student Lucian-Emanoil Onisor (Universitatea “Dunarea de Jos” din Galati).

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

The PhD programme in Dental Medicine is offered by the Doctoral School of Medicine and Pharmacy (SDMF), which has been operating for 55 years, following the Decree no 800 and the Order of the Minister of Education, in 1965, that granted the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy of Targu Mureș the right to award the scientific title of Doctor of Medicine by appointing 7 doctoral advisors.

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



Within the Doctoral School of Medicine and Pharmacy, 7 out of the 78 PhD coordinators are responsible for the PhD in Dental Medicine and meet the minimum CNATDCU standards.

The PhD programme in Dental Medicine currently has 17 doctoral students, who work under the supervision of these 7 PhD Coordinators.

II. Methods used

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

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

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

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

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

Overall, the UMFST Targu Mures and the persons in charge of the Doctoral Programme in Dental Medicine (DPDM) provided all the required and requested information, enabling the process to be as transparent as possible.

Moreover, I found the Internal Evaluation Report (IER) to be quite comprehensive and objective.

Although I've not had the opportunity to visit the facilities and assess the available infrastructures on site, the coordinator of the Dental Medicine domain within the IOSUD Committee, Prof. Meda-Lavinia Negruțiu, made sure that an on site visit was secured.

III. Analysis of ARACIS's performance indicators

Domain A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendations:

*The indicator is **fulfilled**.*

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

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

Recommendations:

*The indicator is **fulfilled**.*



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

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

The IT system described in the Internal Evaluation Report enables the collection, processing, and analysis of the data and information relevant to keep track of the doctoral students academic path and achievements.

It is a bimodal system, managed by the IOSUD staff and incorporates:

a) the computer system of the University, University Management System (UMS), through which IOSUD manages the records of doctoral students and their academic Career;

b) the record of doctoral students available at national level, through the Unique Matriculation Register (RMU), a platform managed by the Ministry of Education and Research.

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.

According to the Internal Evaluation Report, the IOUDS of UMFST TARGU MURES uses the software sistemantiplagiat.ro, approved by the Ministry of Education, which allows the electronic comparison of documents to detect possible similarities. This system seems to serve the current needs of the DPDM regarding the monitorisation of plagiarism.

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

In addition to the software, I must highlight the existence of a comprehensive approach regarding scientific fraud has been described in the IER, supported by the Anti-Plagiarism Regulation of the "George Emil Palade" University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science and Technology of Târgu Mureș.

Recommendations:

*The indicator is **fulfilled**.*

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

Performance Indicator A.1.3.1. Existence of at least one research or institutional / human resources development grant under implementation at the time of submission of the internal evaluation file, per doctoral study domain under evaluation, or existence of at least 2 research or institutional development / human resources grant for the doctoral study domain, obtained by doctoral thesis advisors operating in the evaluated domain within the past 5 years. The grants address relevant themes for the respective domain and, as a rule, are engaging doctoral students.

According to the IER, during the period under evaluation, 4 successful research grants have been carried out by 3 of the current supervisors. These grants were awarded following either a national or international competition, with private or external partners. Moreover, one of the criteria filled by these projects was the mandatory inclusion of doctoral students in the research team.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

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

According to the IER, “in the University, the internal, individual and collective grant competition is held every year, in which doctoral students participate, thus benefiting, for at least 6 months, from other funding sources”.

However, evidence showed that only 3 out of 17 doctoral students (17,64%) have, in fact, benefited from such financial support in the last 5 years.

Efforts are required to enhance the access of the current students to these research or institutional research grants.

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

Recommendations:

The indicator is **not fulfilled**.

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

37,70% 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 finance the doctoral students’ training expenses.

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

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

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.



and objectives (computers, specific software, equipment, laboratory equipment, library, access to international databases etc.). The research infrastructure and the provision of research services are presented to the public through a specific platform. The research infrastructure described above, which was purchased and developed within the past 5 years will be presented distinctly.

The infrastructures provided by the DPDM includes proper educational spaces, namely amphitheatres, classrooms, laboratories and dental units, which suits the DPDM's needs in terms of clinical research.

Moreover, it is worth highlighting the existence of the Centre for Advanced Medical and Pharmaceutical Research (CCAMF), which was concluded in 2017, and was reported to encompass 10 laboratories properly equipped to carry out research in the areas of immunology, chromatography and mass spectrophotometry, cytological, molecular biology, genetics/genomics and advanced functional explorations, cell bank, DNA and plasma analyses.

It's used by the Doctoral student of the DPDM needs to be strongly supported and stimulated.

Finally, one should also underline the efforts made to set up the new simultion centre of the Faculty of Dental Medicine.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Criterion A.3. Quality of Human Resources

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

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

Within the Doctoral School of Dental Medicine, 5 out of the 7 PhD coordinators (71,44%) appear to meet the minimum CNATDCU standards.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

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

Within the Doctoral School of Dental Medicine, all of the PhD coordinators hold a tenured position within the DSDM.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Performance Indicator A.3.1.3. The study subjects in the education program based on advanced higher education studies pertaining to the doctoral domain are taught by teaching staff or researchers who are doctoral thesis advisors / certified doctoral thesis advisors, professors / CS I or lecturer / CS II, with proved

expertise in the field of the study subjects they teach, or other specialists in the field who meet the standards established by the institution in relation with the aforementioned teaching and research functions, as provided by the law.

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

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

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

Only 1 out of the 7 (14,28%) PhD supervisors is currently supervising more than 8 but no more than 12, doctoral students.

Although the criteria is met, such practice should be dismissed in order to achieve proper mentoring and maximise the scientific outputs of the doctoral students.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

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

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

Despite evidence being portrayed in the Internal Evaluation Report that 6 out of 7 (85.71%) doctoral supervisors advisors have a minimum of 5 publications, significantly relevant to the domain and indexed Web of Science, with international visibility, the annexes and the information provided regarding the scientific outcomes published by the PhD supervisors in the last 5 years clearly show a predominance of Romanian journals, mainly the “Revista de Chimie”.

This needs to be addressed in the near future, in order to enhance the internationalisation of the scientific outputs of both the supervisors and doctoral students enrolled in the DPDM.

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.



Recommendations:

The indicator is **partially 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.

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

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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

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

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

Although the ratios reported in the IER show that 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" remained above 1,2, I failed to see evidence regarding the 0,2 threshold expected in terms of 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".

This last criteria is quite importnt, because it reflects the DPDM's external reputation and its capacity to actively recruit students outside of the Internal pool of candidates. This accounts for the DPDM's commitment to suppress and contain certain practices leading to academic endogamy and inbreeding.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **partilly fulfilled**.

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

Performance Indicator *B.1.2.1. Admission to doctoral study programs is based on selection criteria including: previous academic, research and professional performance, their interest for scientific or



arts/sports research, publications in the domain and a proposal for a research subject. Interviewing the candidate is compulsory, as part of the admission procedure.

Selection criteria are clearly and thoroughly established and are transparent. For admission criteria PhD candidates need to document their prior academic track. A written exam and an interview with the candidate are also part of the mandatory procedure.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

Regarding the doctoral domain of Dental Medicine, at the time of the evaluation only 1 of the candidates had been expelled from the programme. Thus, the dropout rate of PhD is below the threshold set for this criteria.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.2. The content of doctoral programs

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

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

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

At the time of the evaluation, the training programme includes the following disciplines: "Biostatistical basics in medical research" and "Clinical research methodology".

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

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.



Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

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

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

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

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

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

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

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

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

The ratio between the number of doctoral students and the number of professors/researchers who provide supervision is 0.89

Recommendations:

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.

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.

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.

According to the IER, since 2018, the standards set out by IOSUD have conditioned the completion of doctoral studies to the “publication as first author of at least two scientific articles, containing results from the content of the thesis, of which at least one article is published in an ISI magazine (Clarivate Analytics) and at least one article to be published in journals indexed by the PubMed database; at least one article must be of the Original Research type”.

In the observed period, doctoral students in the doctoral domain of Dental Medicine have produced scientific outputs deemed relevant to their research topics.

Nonetheless, the number of papers published in ISI journals and the international visibility of their work is below the desirable threshold for a Doctoral programme: only 3 doctoral students (one recently graduated) have published papers in an ISI journal and only 1 has published 2 papers in ISI journals.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **partilly fulfilled**.

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

During the period of the evaluation, we found a total of 9 scientific outputs that meet these criteria, resulting in a ratio slightly above 1.

Nonetheless, out of the 8 students who completed their doctoral studies, only 1 has made any sort of presentations in abroad events, which means that 87,5% of the students present no relevant scientific output that meet these criteria.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **partially fulfilled**.

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

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

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

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

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

This criterion was not analysed

Recommendations:

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

Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendations:

*The indicator is **fulfilled**.*

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

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

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

Recommendations:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

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

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

Through the library and other internal digital platforms (ANELIS +, etc.) the DPDM provides students with the classical research resources.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **fulfilled**.

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

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

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



Recommendations: Assure that all supervisors use antiplagiarism verification.
The indicator is **fulfilled**.

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

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

Recommendations:
The indicator is **fulfilled**.

Criterion C.3. Internationalization

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

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

According to the IER, "UMPhST G. E. Palade Tg. Mureş encourages and supports international programs such as Erasmus +, Leonardo da Vinci, CEEPUS, RECIF, etc.". Nonetheless, there appears to be no current and systematic enrollment of either students or academic staff in any of the mobility agreement leading to training courses abroad.

The new Cochrane Romania, recently approved as an Affiliate Centre, should be regarded as an opportunity for the future.

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

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

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

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

Recommendations:
The indicator is **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.).

The Internal Evaluation Report refers several measures set forward by IOSUD, which are meant to show “IOSUD's commitment for international collaboration”.

Despite these measures, there was no consistent evidence of the involvement of international experts in these committees, particularly in relation to the domain of Dental Medicine.

Recommendations:

The indicator is **not fulfilled**.

IV. SWOT Analysis

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|--|--|
| <p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong, innovative and transparent leadership within the school - Dedicated staff - The staff appears highly engaged with research in their areas of expertise - Modern facilities, with an admirable Centre for Advanced Medical-Pharmaceutical Research (CCAMF) - Energetic and supportive student body, appreciative of the support from the school | <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lack of proper internationalisation of the publications (too much focused on Romanian journals) - The low H index of the supervisors - The narrow diversity of the field of expertise of the supervisors - The lack of a representatives from all the scientific domain, namely Dental Medicine, in the CSD - Few signs of translation and knowledge transfer |
| <p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The integration of the Doctoral Programme in a Doctoral School that combines Medicine, Dental Medicine and Pharmacy (not to be wasted) - the new Cochrane Romania centre - The possibility to engage in Interprofessional Education-led lines of research | <p><u>Threats:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The workload posed upon doctoral students due to the legal obligation to secure 6 hours of teaching activities |

V. Overview of judgments awarded and of the recommendations



VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

Overall, I find that the Doctoral Programme of Dental Medicine is very well structured and has all the required infrastructures, as well as the human resources and the institutional backup required to set up a very good doctoral programme.

Nonetheless, the weaknesses mentioned in the SWOT analysis need to be addressed urgently, particularly in 2 areas:

- *Increase the scientific outputs and enhance their international outlook*
- *Set up an institutional strategy to enhance the internationalisation of the doctoral programme*

In doing so, the DPDM should maximise the integration of the Doctoral Programme in a broader Doctoral School that combines Medicine and Dental Medicine and foster interprofessional and collaborative approaches both in terms of education, as well as research.

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

External Evaluator

Prof. Rui Amaral Mendes, PhD

VII. Annexes