

## The External Evaluation Report of a Doctoral Study Domain - UAIC

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### I. Introduction

The information provided in the External Evaluation Report of the Doctoral Study Domain of Political Science at UAIC comes from three different directions. First, from the documents uploaded in the ARACIS cloud that offer insightful information about UAIC mission and objectives, research infrastructures and PhD candidates and their supervisors' activities. The certain obstacle there is that most of the documents are in Romanian. However, the internal evaluation of the doctoral domain is also provided in English.

Second, information that sustains the official documents provided by the UAIC were collected from the official website of the university, faculty and Department of Political Science. The main website of UAIC is the first step to get a general overview of the school's activities, organizational structures, and methodologies. However, technical improvements to the website are desirable to be made in order of making the information update regularly, more accessible and user-friendly.

Third, all the information collected through the sources mentioned above was supported by the actual online evaluation activities and visits from the 9<sup>th</sup> of September to the 17<sup>th</sup> of September 2021. Online meetings with the scholars and supervisors in the department, PhD students, alumni and other stakeholders provided a good insight to me as an external evaluator. All the details I need to clarify were received and discussed in depth.

### II. Methods used

For the evaluation of the doctoral study domain of Political Science, the evaluators used three different tools. First, to collect the necessary information for the elaboration of the report, the evaluators met through both on-site and online visits with Doctoral school's officials and professors of the UAIC, the officials of the Faculty of Political Science, and with PhD students and graduates. The second tool used is grounded on the analysis of the documents provided in the ARACIS cloud (e.g. internal report of the evaluation of UAIC). The third tool applied in the evaluation is based on the information provided by the official websites of the UAIC (e.g. the websites of university, faculty, department and centers).

The evaluation also covers the physical capacities of classrooms, library, research centers, lecture halls, career center, student residences, cafeteria, sports ground, etc.

The report mainly focuses on the quality of education in the doctoral domain of Political Science. The report is done based on the information, collected through online meetings with professors, officials and



students, discussions, exchange of opinions and suggestions aimed at possible ways of improving PhD Studies in domain of Political Science. It contains as the result of those research and analysis several recommendations. Their purpose is to improve the quality of some indicators, even if they are fully accomplished in the University of Iași.

### III. Analysis of performance indicators

#### **Domain A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY**

The UAIC has demonstrated in the evaluated period (5 years) a good institutional capacity and potential for a further improvement. UAIC develops an appropriate institutional framework for organizing doctoral programs of good quality.

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

The Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași is the oldest higher education institution in Romania. Since 1860, the university has been successfully carrying on a tradition of excellence and innovation in the fields of education and research. The main financial sources of UAIC come from the government budget. At the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, there are a total of 14 doctoral schools covering 27 fields.

#### **Performance Indicator A.1.1.1.**

The UAIC in general and the doctoral study domain of Political Science in particular, have a good implementation of the specific regulations and methodologies for conducting doctoral studies. The regulations and methodologies related to doctoral studies can be easily accessed on the official website of the UAIC. In general, it might be stated that the evaluated organization has reached an adequate level of maturity in terms of the existence of specific regulations and their consecutive application at the level of the doctoral schools.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. To elaborate on the specific regulations and methodologies both in Romanian and in English. The accessibility of the abovementioned documents in English can also increase the visibility of the educational possibilities offered by UAIC for international students.

*The indicator A.1.1.1 is fully fulfilled.*

#### **Performance Indicator A.1.1.2.**

The doctoral school meets mandatory criteria, procedures, and standards according to binding the Government Decision No.681/2011. The online visits of the external evaluator confirmed this.

*The indicator A.1.1.2 is fully fulfilled.*

#### **Performance Indicator A.1.2.1.**

The records of doctoral students and their academic backgrounds is realized through the eSIMS platform. The IT system can be used by two categories of users: occasional users (scholars and teachers), who have access to individual data and use the system when they need information, and "professional" users, who use the application on the daily routine, to carry out student management activities (secretariat, databases, faculty and university management, etc.). On this platform, doctoral students can create an account to check their grades and fee status.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. To develop the platform with additional functions that allow PhD students to also check classes timetable, to get online their official transcripts (signed by university officials), as well as to check the materials that professors upload for a specific class (syllabus, PowerPoint presentations and other materials). It should develop the possibility to discuss current issues of Doctoral school activity and find some right solutions for some of the problems should they occur.



*The indicator A.1.2.1 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator A.1.2.2.**

UAIC has a license for the Turnitin application. To this application have access all teachers from the University. The UAIC also offers the possibility for PhD students to use the computer program to verify the percentage of similarity in the doctoral theses. The research reports or other works of the PhD students can be subject to the verification of the similarity percentage but only with the help of their supervisors that have accounts on the platform.

**Recommendations:**

1. To offer free limited access for PhD students to the Turnitin program. Access would allow students to become familiar with the verification process, as well as testing during the doctoral program certain parts of the thesis, so that they have time to resolve any potential similarities. The access could be limited (e.g. 5 – 6 free access on the platform).

*The indicator A.1.2.2 is fully fulfilled.*

**Standard A.1.3.**

The online visits and the presented documents mostly in Romanian have given little chance for an external evaluator to analyze properly the criteria on using financial resources efficiently. It seems that that field might and should be improved.

**Performance Indicator A.1.3.1.**

The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

**Recommendations:**

1. To have on the official website of UAIC a list with all the projects within them professors and students are and were involved.
2. To look actively for National and International grants. They should be oriented towards multidisciplinary research teams work, with the considerable engagements of PhD studies in their realization.

*The indicator A.1.3.1 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator \*A.1.3.2.**

The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator. The PhD students easily get grants more than 20%.

**Recommendations:**

1. It's worthy to increase the visibility and share of information within Departments to help PhD students to have access all the time to the new information available regarding research grants and study mobility.
2. Disseminate by official mails to all the PhD students update of information on the new opportunities within the Department but also within other similar departments from partner universities.

*The indicator \*A.1.3.2 is partially fulfilled.*

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

The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator. More than 10% of the total amount of doctoral grants is used for PhD students' academic activities and training. However, the indicator could substantially be improved by increasing the visibility of all research opportunities that the University has



access to.

**Recommendations:**

1. To organize with certain regularity meetings with the PhD supervisors and their students in order to discuss what are their financial needs and how the university is able to respond to them considering the financial resources that it receives from the government per PhD student.

*The indicator \*A.1.3.3 is fulfilled.*

**Criterion A.2. Research infrastructure**

The doctoral domain of Political Science at UAIC has a good research infrastructure. The university's representatives focus permanently on the development of a modern research infrastructure that can properly support the activities specific to the Doctoral studies.

**Performance Indicator A.2.1.1.**

The UAIC Doctoral School of Political Science has spaces for students' research activities (e.g. reading rooms, classes etc.). In addition, within the research centers of the Doctoral School, PhD students can find informative materials and get required support from those who work in these centers. However, it cannot be precisely stated the existence of laboratories for simulations or the existence of experimental fields in the case of the application of experiments.

**Recommendations:**

1. To update the UAIC online library with information regarding the research spaces available to doctoral students.
2. To reconsider the existing structure of the research facilities and make established new Centers and Laboratories opened with regard to the research priorities of PhD students and their academic supervisors.

*The indicator A.2.1.1 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator A.2.1.2.**

The Doctoral School of the Faculty of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences has collaboration agreements with international research institutions (Eric Weil Institute of the Lille University, France). The UAIC has also collaboration agreements with international research networks such as OFFERS, with international institutes of culture, education and research (e.g. French Institute in Iasi), research institutions and libraries of national importance (e.g. Mihai Eminescu, Central University Library in Iasi). There are also research agreements with non-governmental organizations carrying out research activities such as Holtis Association. All these collaboration agreements aim at designing research projects in the field of social and humanities sciences, the development of scientific research, the development of projects and events between members of the institutions, as well as the joint operation of the research infrastructure. It is important to mention that the UAIC is a member of several universities networks such as Utrecht Network, EUA (European Association of Universities).

**Recommendations:**

1. To strengthen and widen the collaboration network with the existing partners by exposing PhD students and supervisors to research activities developed in collaboration with partner universities.
2. Consider closer cooperation with National and Regional Authorities in order to get contracts on Research and expertise regarding resolution of actual issues of Regional, National and International Policy and Politics.

*The indicator A.2.1.2 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator A.2.1.3.**

Regarding the possibilities of documentation, in addition to the services, offered by the Central University



Library "Mihai Eminescu", students and academic staff benefit from free access to the most important online resources of scientific documentation worldwide such as Science Direct, SCOPUS, etc. The University ensures through its resources, financial and scientific expertise the publication of 56 scientific journals, most of them allowing annual publications.

**Recommendations:**

1. To continue the investments in the renewal of research infrastructure by applying to research projects with European funding (e.g. Horizon etc.).

*The indicator A.2.1.3 is fully fulfilled.*

**Criterion A.3. Quality of Human Resources**

Within the doctoral field of Political Sciences, the members are full professors that meet the minimum standards according to the Order of the Minister of Education and Research no. 6129/2016.

**Performance Indicator A.3.1.1.**

Two out of 4 PhD supervisor within the Doctoral School of Political Science fulfill the minimum CNATDCU standards, while one PhD supervisor meets all the standards except C1, and another one meets only the standard C1.

**Recommendations:**

1. To hire in 3 years' period a new PhD supervisor that has fulfilled all the standards at a higher level.
2. To consider invitation of the leading foreign Professor as the academic Supervisor.

*The indicator A.3.1.1 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator \*A.3.1.2.**

All doctoral advisors have a full-time employment contract for an indefinite period with the UAIC. The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

*The indicator \*A.3.1.2 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator A.3.1.3.**

The doctoral domain of Political Science has a good and impressive record of publications and academic assessments. The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

*The indicator A.3.1 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator \*A.3.1.4.**

There are currently 22 PhD students in the Political Science domain. Each academic supervisor out of four has at most 10 PhD students. Hence, the maximum limit of 12 PhD students per supervisor is not exceeded. However, there is an unbalanced number of PhD students between supervisors: one supervisor has 10, while another has only two students.

**Recommendations:**

1. The doctoral domain of Political Science should balance the number of PhD students between academic supervisors.

*The indicator \*A.3.1.4 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator A.3.2.1.**

The scholars of the doctoral domain of Political Science have a good record of publications and almost all have at least two Web of Science or ERIH-indexed publications. The findings from the assessed



institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

**Recommendations:**

1. It should be a norm for Academic supervisor to write and publish one scientific article per year in a recognized international scientific journal Web of Science or SCOPUS indexed with an impact factor of at least 1.50 and a small tax publication fee (e.g. Journal of European Integration, Economics & Politics, Political Studies Review etc.).

*The indicator A.3.2.1 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator \*A.3.2.2.**

The scholars within the doctoral domain of Political Science are highly active on the National level and active on the International level in their academic field and acquire at least 25% of the score requested by the minimal CNATDCU standards. However, further progress should be made in the activity of the Professors and researchers at the international level (Both regarding Eastern and Western countries).

**Recommendations:**

1. At least one participation per year in the International Scientific Conference or Seminar. Both Professors and PhD students are to be actively encouraged to participate in those academic events by submitting their research abstracts, papers and posters.
2. Some scholars and professors within the Department are encouraged to participate in research visiting programs (e.g. Fulbright Visiting Scholar, Erasmus+, partnership agreements etc.) to expand the international network of UAIC and to contribute to the ongoing transfer of knowledge and expertise at the level of the international scientific community.

*The indicator \*A.3.2.2 is fully fulfilled.*

**Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

UAIC usually attracts qualitative and diverse students to its programs including doctoral ones.

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

The doctoral domain of Political Science attracts qualitative and diverse students.

**Standard B.1.1.**

There are generally high demands for the Political Science PhD program.

**Performance Indicator \*B.1.1.1.**

The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator. It was observed that the number of PhD candidates that have a master's degree diploma obtained also at UAIC is higher than the number of PhD candidates that come for doctoral studies from other Universities.

**Recommendations:**

1. To elaborate steps aimed at the PhD programs visibility level betterment within UAIC and intensify the process of recruitment of Program candidates from some other Universities, including foreign ones. Increase the presence of the Program in social network and media, primarily spreading info about the PhD program on LinkedIn and Facebook platforms.

*The indicator \*B.1.1.1 is fully fulfilled.*

**Standard B.1.2.**

Academic standards for PhD programs at UAIC in general and in Political Science, in particular, are high.

**Performance Indicator \*B.1.2.1.**



Admission to doctoral study programs organized by the Doctoral School is based on criteria provided by the Admission Regulations. Thus, candidates should demonstrate research skills, good academic results, interest in the proposed doctoral program, as well as a research topic proposal. However, certain skills that candidates should have depending on the chosen field are not established yet. Moreover, there was a lack of a clear methodology for making the applications of those entered in the competition evaluated.

**Recommendations:**

1. To draw up an evaluation grid containing the all-comprehensive criteria list for the selection and the necessary skills of the candidates entered in the competition.
2. To structure and formalize the admission interview. The interview should take place based on a structured interview grid that reflects the main concrete points every candidate has to satisfy in the application file.
3. To develop and implement procedures for redistribution of scholarships if some of the students enrolled with a scholarship give up their doctoral program. The redistribution procedure can be applied by making an additional act to the existing study contract upon enrollment in the doctoral program.

*The indicator \*B.1.2.1 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator B.1.2.2.**

The dropout rate of PhD students 2 years after their admission does not exceed 30%. In the last 3 years, only 3 PhD students dropped out. The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits indicate that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

**Recommendations:**

1. To decrease the number of PhD students that also have a full-time job while enrolled in a PhD program. It is recommended to financially encouraging those PhD students that are dedicated to their research programs to drop out of their job and fully concentrate on their research careers. Even if the scholarship (1.500 lei) is helpful, high-quality results cannot be achieved only with extra funding source.

*The indicator B.1.2.2 is fully fulfilled.*

**Criterion B.2. The content of doctoral programs**

**Standard B.2.1.**

The training program is appropriate to improve doctoral students' research skills and to strengthen ethical behavior in academic life. The doctoral studies at UAIC reflect the individual capacity of the doctoral student to develop the necessary research skills and competences.

**Performance Indicator B.2.1.1.**

The training program based on advanced studies for PhD students in Political Studies consists of 4 subjects that prepare PhD students to acquire the skills necessary for doctoral studies. The portfolio consists of disciplines that treat topics such as methodology of elaborating scientific papers and theory of writing and argumentation. Among the four disciplines, one treats the topics of ethics and integrity in research, a mandatory topic for doctoral studies.

**Recommendations:**

1. To integrate a discipline that aims at developing the abilities and competencies of PhD students for statistical data processing and in-depth study of the research methodology. The discipline should focus on developing not only the theoretical skills of research methodology but also the practical skills of working with data in different statistical software (e.g. SPSS, STATA etc.). More attentions to empirical data collecting and analyzing is needed. Balancing qualitative and quantitative methods training will be also an asset for the enriching the research skills of PhD students.



*The indicator B.2.1.1 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator B.2.1.2.**

The training program based on advanced studies of PhD students in Political Studies includes an independent subject dedicated to ethics in scientific research and intellectual property. The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

*The indicator B.2.1.2 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator B.2.1.3.**

The measurement of the knowledge and skills acquired by the PhD students is accomplished by giving some oral lectures to the students. They have to create a written essay and present them to their colleagues. In addition, by supporting some scientific papers in front of colleagues, the PhD student demonstrates the autonomy of supporting arguments and practical exercise in developing teaching competence.

**Recommendations:**

1. It is recommended the deeper involvement of PhD students in the Department teaching activities through which they can strengthen their scientific autonomy.
2. Teaching assistantship must be proposed to them equally also.

*The indicator B.2.1.3 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator B.2.1.4.**

Each PhD supervisor has in their research team a supervising committee composed of the PhD supervisor and other teaching staff members. The selection is based on the expertise of professors in the field of each PhD thesis and/or on research methodologies applied by the PhD student in doctoral research. The selection is also defined by the compliance of professors with the minimum CNATDCU reference criteria in force for the position of associate professor, for their field of activity (according to the specific criteria of the specialized CNATDCU committee).

The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

**Recommendations:**

1. The PhD students should take a part in choosing their supervising committee by common decision with their supervisors.

*The indicator B.2.1.4 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator B.2.1.5.**

The number of teaching staff in the Department of Political Science and European Studies is 18. Together with teaching assistants and research assistants in the Department, it is assumed that the Department has enough academic staff providing doctoral guidance that does not exceed 3:1.

*The indicator B.2.1.5 is fully fulfilled.*

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

**Standard B.3.1.**

The research is capitalized by PhD students through scientific conferences, scientific publications, technological transfer, patents, products, and service orders.

**Performance Indicator B.3.1.1.**

The PhD students meet the minimum publication criteria.



**Recommendations:**

1. To guide the PhD students towards more active participation in the International conferences, not only limiting them with the participation in National conferences. That way their research results can be validated and disseminated wider and deeper.
2. To increase the number of publications indexed in the main international database (Web of Science and Scopus) by creating a budget fund at the Doctoral School level to cover the publication fees of international scientific journals with a high impact factor.
3. Make annual evaluation of the best PhD students' publication of articles and award the best of them with certain sum of money and other way of professional recognition.

*The indicator B.3.1.1 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator \*B.3.1.2.**

The PhD students of Political science have active participation in National and International conferences.

**Recommendations:**

1. To support the active participation in international conferences through the doctoral grant that the university receives from the government per PhD student (in line with the indicator \*A.1.3.3).

*The indicator \*B.3.1.2 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator \*B.3.2.1.****Standard B.3.2.**

The doctoral school turns to a significant number of external scientific referees in the committees for public defense of PhD theses.

**Performance Indicator \*B.3.2.1.**

The doctoral domain meets the criteria that the number of PhD theses assigned to a specific referee from a higher education institution, other than the evaluated IOSUD, must not exceed two (2) for the theses that are supervised by the same PhD supervisor, in a year.

*The indicator \*B.3.2.1 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator \*B.3.2.2.**

The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

*The indicator \*B.3.2.2 is fully fulfilled.*

**Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT****Criterion C.1. Existence and periodic implementation of the internal quality assurance system****Standard C.1.1.**

There is an institutional framework and there is a procedure that is applied for monitoring internal quality assurance as well as relevant internal quality assurance policies.

**Performance Indicator C.1.1.1.**

UAIC monitors the evolution of Doctoral schools through an internal evaluation and monitoring procedure. The CSUD and directors request, usually in January, the self-evaluation report for the previous year. The self-evaluation reports include information such as the number of doctoral supervisors and fields, number of affiliations, scientific activity of doctoral graduates and doctoral students. It also mentions the results of admission, the evolution of the number of doctoral students and defended theses, the infrastructure and logistics necessary for doctoral research, procedures, norms, policies, strategies and measures underlying the organization of doctoral studies.



*The indicator C.1.1.1 is fully fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator \*C.1.1.2.**

UAIC implemented mechanisms for receiving feedback from PhD students. The feedback aims at improving the academic and administrative services offered to PhD students. The advanced university training program is evaluated first through the evaluation questionnaire. It guarantees the confidentiality of PhD students' answers. They evaluate the quality of the content, the quality of the courses or the seminars, the organization of the didactic activity, the teacher-student relationship, and the evaluation/examination procedure. The activity of supervisors is evaluated based on the Questionnaire of appreciation of the quality of the doctoral studies, elaborated together with the representatives of the PhD students. The survey evaluates the admission procedure, the access to information, the collaboration with the administrative staff and with the supervisors, the guidance activity; the process of monitoring and evaluating the activity of PhD students; the quality of resources and research conditions. The results of the two questionnaires are summarized by the representatives of the PhD students and are made available to the University officials. Following the feedback of PhD students, the Doctoral School Council develops a plan of measures to improve the services of the Doctoral School.

*The indicator \*C.1.1.2 is fully fulfilled.*

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

**Standard C.2.1**

The relevant information for PhD students, future candidates, and the information of public interest are available for consultation in electronic form.

**Performance Indicator C.2.1.1.**

The doctoral school, through IOSUD, publishes information on the website of the organizing institution in compliance with the general rules on data protection. The UAIC has ensured the transparency and visibility of information of public interest through the website dedicated to the Doctoral School that proposes a friendly interface and comprehensive content.

*The indicator C.2.1.1 is fully fulfilled.*

**Standard C.2.2.**

The PhD students within UAIC have access to a series of resources necessary to carry out the doctoral studies in favorable conditions. However, the Doctoral School must constantly follow the new trends in research resources and constantly update the portfolio it makes available to PhD students.

**Performance Indicator C.2.2.1.**

UAIC offers free access to a series of databases of scientific journals and articles. Thus, access to full-text articles from specialized scientific journals such as Science Direct, Scopus, etc., while through the Central University Library "Mihai Eminescu" from Iași, they also have access to other representative databases, such as Springer Link Journals, ProQuest Central, Science Journals, Thompson Reuters, Oxford Journals, SAGE Journals, EBSCO, Wiley Journals etc. It is important that all students have access to these databases, and they can access their accounts both from the UAIC library and remotely.

**Recommendations:**

1. To constantly update the portfolio of resources that PhD students need for the successful development of their doctoral studies. It is also recommended to collaborate with UAIC's partners to create common platforms to ensure students exchange information and materials.
2. Practical skills advancement of PhD students with searching for new data and publication, including the explore of big data should be a permanent concern of Doctoral school management.

*The indicator C.2.2.1 is fully fulfilled.*



### **Performance Indicator C.2.2.2.**

UAIC has acquired the application Turnitin - an electronic system for verifying the degree of similarity with other existing scientific or artistic creations. It is ensured the access of all the teachers from the UAIC, therefore also of the supervisors, as well as the possibility of the PhD students to use the platform, but with the consent of their supervisor.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. To offer free access to PhD students to Turnitin applications, but a limited number of free accesses (e.g. 5). Access would allow students to become familiar with the verification process, as well as to test certain parts of the paper during the doctoral studies so that they have time to resolve any problem of some potential similarities.

*The indicator C.2.2.2 is fully fulfilled.*

### **Performance Indicator C.2.2.3.**

UAIC offers PhD students the opportunity to carry out certain specific activities within its research centers. They give students access to certain research tools that are difficult to access in another way. However, the infrastructure of laboratories is limited and does not allow the application of complex research methods and does not correspond fully with the research agenda of PhD Thesis. It is also necessary to purchase licenses for advanced data analysis programs (e.g. STATA) or to install the R program on the library computers.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. To purchase licenses for advanced data analysis programs such as STATA. It is also recommended to purchase the Office 365 package that will allow PhD students to better manage their documents.

*The indicator C.2.2.3 is fully fulfilled.*

## **Criterion C.3. Internationalization**

### **Standard C.3.1.**

There is an elaborated strategy, and it is continually applied to increase the degree of internationalization of doctoral studies.

#### **Performance Indicator \*C.3.1.1.**

In the field of Political Science, there are numerous ERASMUS mobility agreements with universities abroad, and 22 mobility agreements are intended for doctoral studies only.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. To encourage PhD students to participate in at least short research mobility (e.g. 1-3 months) by sending them e-mails with all the mobility opportunities.
2. It's reasonable to include criteria of International mobility in the annual evaluation of every PhD student, so, they are to be more active in applying for them.
3. *The indicator \*C.3.1.1 is partially fulfilled.*

#### **Performance Indicator C.3.1.2.**

The organization of doctoral studies in partnership with a supervisor from an international university is fully supported by UAIC. However, PhD students do not fully take advantage of this opportunity.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. To encourage PhD students to have a second supervisor from another university by presenting them a list with all universities that are partner with UAIC and with the professors that could be their choice for the second supervisor.



2. Academic supervisors from Iasi University have to more actively propose to their PhD students this option from their personal and institutional professional network.

*The indicator C.3.1.2 is partially fulfilled.*

**Performance Indicator C.3.1.3.**

The internationalization of the activities during doctoral studies is supported by practical measures within UAIC. However, improvements in this direction should constantly be made. It is important to strengthen the collaboration agreements that UAIC has with other stakeholders in academia and research.

**Recommendations:**

1. To strengthen the collaboration with other partners' universities by inviting and sending scholars to give courses, some lectures and participate in different short research activities.

*The indicator C.3.1.3 is partially fulfilled.*

### IV. SWOT Analysis

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Free access to databases that allows PhD students to access free scientific materials and articles;</li> <li>✓ Good quality of PhD education and academic staff;</li> <li>✓ Several mobility opportunities for the students under Erasmus.</li> <li>✓ Good record of participation in National and International conferences.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weakness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Lack of licenses for software programs (e.g. STATA) required for PhD students in performing statistical analysis;</li> <li>✓ Lack of exposure of PhD students to lectures given by teachers from international universities;</li> <li>✓ Lack of the Department's social media account and activities in social media respectively;</li> <li>✓ Lack of the existence of an integrated platform (e.g. blackboard) to track academic progress, activities, facilitate communication between students - students and students - coordinators, as well as other materials related to research and academic activity;</li> <li>✓ Lack of high-quality and diverse research infrastructures;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Getting more internationally reputed PhD programs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The lack of developed research infrastructure could affect the implementation of research topics whose methodology involves the application of advanced statistical tests or experiments;</li> <li>✓ The lack of younger academic staff;</li> </ul>

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

No.	Type of indicator (*,C)	Performance Indicator	Judgement	Recommendations
1		A.1.1.1	The indicator A.1.1.1 is fully fulfilled.	To elaborate the specific regulations and methodologies both in Romanian and in English
2		A.1.1.2	The indicator	No recommendations

No.	Type of indicator (*,C)	Performance Indicator	Judgement	Recommendations
			A.1.1.2 is fully fulfilled.	
3		A.1.2.1	The indicator A.1.2.1 is fully fulfilled.	To develop the platform with additional functions that allow students to also check classes timetable, to obtain online their official transcripts (signed by university officials), as well as to check the materials that professors upload for a specific class (syllabus, PowerPoint presentations and other materials). They have also to have an opportunity to actively discuss existing problems of PhD School and propose the way of resolving them there.
4		A.1.2.2	The indicator A.1.2.2 is fully fulfilled.	To offer free limited access for PhD students to the Turnitin program. Access would allow students to become familiar with the verification process, as well as testing during the doctoral program certain parts of the thesis, so that they have time to resolve any potential similarities. The access could be limited (e.g. 5 – 6 free access on the platform).
5		A.1.3.1	The indicator A.1.3.1 is fully fulfilled.	<p>1. To have on the official website of UAIC a list with all the projects within professors are and were involved.</p> <p>2. To look for more grants in implementation/were implemented by multidisciplinary research teams.</p>
6	*	A.1.3.2	The indicator *A.1.3.2 is partially fulfilled.	1. To increase the visibility and share of information within departments to help the PhD students have access all the time to all the new information

No.	Type of indicator (*,C)	Performance Indicator	Judgement	Recommendations
				<p>available regarding research grants and programs of academic mobility.</p> <p>2. To send an official mail to all the PhD students with the new opportunities within the department but also in other similar departments from partner universities.</p>
7	*	A.1.3.3	The indicator *A.1.3.3 is fulfilled.	To have periodically meetings with the PhD supervisors and his/her PhD students in order to know what are their financial and other professional needs/demands and how the university is able to respond to them considering the money that it receives from the government per PhD student.
8		A.2.1.1	The indicator A.2.1.1 is fully fulfilled.	To update the UAIC online library with information regarding the research spaces available to PhD students.
9		A.2.1.2	The indicator A.2.1.2 is fully fulfilled.	To strengthen the collaboration with the existing partners by exposing doctoral students and teachers to research activities developed in collaboration with partner universities and other research centers.
10		A.2.1.3	The indicator A.2.1.3 is fully fulfilled.	To continue the investments in the renewal of research infrastructure by applying to research projects with European funding (e.g. Horizon).
11		A.3.1.1	The indicator A.3.1.1 is fully fulfilled.	To hire in 3 years period a new PhD supervisor that has fulfilled all the standards at a higher level.
12	*	A.3.1.2	The indicator	No recommendations

No.	Type of indicator (*,C)	Performance Indicator	Judgement	Recommendations
			*A.3.1.2 is fully fulfilled.	
13		A.3.1.3	The indicator A.3.1. is fully fulfilled.	No recommendations
14	*	A.3.1.4	The indicator *A.3.1.4 is fully fulfilled.	The doctoral domain of Political Science should balance the number of PhD students between supervisors.
15		A.3.2.1	The indicator A.3.2.1 is fully fulfilled.	One scientific article per year published in a recognized international scientific journal Web of Science and Scopus indexed with an impact factor of at least 1.50 and a small tax publication fee (e.g. Journal of European Integration, Economics & Politics, Political Studies Review) should be mandatory.
16.	*	A.3.2.2	The indicator *A.3.2.2 is fully fulfilled.	<p>1. At least one participation per year at international scientific conferences. PhD students are to be fully encouraged to participate by submitting their research abstracts, papers and posters.</p> <p>2. Some scholars and professors within the department are encouraged to participate in research visiting programs (e.g. Fulbright Visiting Scholar, Erasmus, partnership agreements etc.) to expand the international network of UAIC and to contribute to the transfer of knowledge at the level of the international scientific community.</p>
17	*	B.1.1.1	The indicator *B.1.1.1 is fully fulfilled.	To increase the level of visibility of the PhD programs within UAIC to attract candidates from

No.	Type of indicator (*,C)	Performance Indicator	Judgement	Recommendations
				other universities in social media. Increase the level of visibility primarily on LinkedIn and Facebook platforms.
18	*	B.1.2.1	The indicator *B.1.2.1 is fully fulfilled.	<p>1. To draw up an evaluation grid containing the criteria for the selection and the necessary skills of the candidates entered in the competition.</p> <p>2. To structure the admission interview and make it formalized. The interview should take place based on a structured interview grid that reflects the main concrete points that the candidate had to reach in the application file.</p> <p>3. To develop and implement procedures for redistribution of scholarships if some of the students enrolled with a scholarship give up their doctoral program. The redistribution procedure can be applied by making an additional act to the existing study contract upon enrollment in the doctoral program.</p>
19		B.1.2.2	The indicator B.1.2.2 is fully fulfilled.	To work upon diminishment of the number of PhD students that also have a job while enrolled in a PhD program. It is recommended to financially encourage those PhD students that are dedicated to their research programs to drop out of their job and fully concentrate on their research careers. Even if the scholarship (1.500 lei) is helpful, high-quality results cannot be achieved



No.	Type of indicator (*,C)	Performance Indicator	Judgement	Recommendations
				only with this funding source. Increased financing can be achieved through International and National projects.
20		B.2.1.1	The indicator B.2.1.1 is fully fulfilled.	To integrate a discipline that aims at developing the abilities and competencies of PhD students for statistical data processing and in-depth study of the research methodology. The discipline should focus on developing not only the theoretical skills of research methodology but also the practical skills of working with data in different statistical software (e.g. SPSS, STATA etc.). Balancing qualitative and quantitative methods in education and training are also a priority for the PhD program.
21		B.2.1.2	The indicator B.2.1.2 is fully fulfilled.	No recommendations
22		B.2.1.3	The indicator B.2.1.3 is fully fulfilled.	It is recommended the involvement of PhD students in teaching activities through which they can strengthen their scientific autonomy. Regular distribution of Teaching assistanceship amidst them.
23		B.2.1.4	The indicator B.2.1.4 is fully fulfilled.	The PhD students should choose their supervising committee by common decision with their supervisors.
24		B.2.1.5	The indicator B.2.1.5 is fully fulfilled.	No recommendations
25		B.3.1.1	The indicator B.3.1.1 is fully fulfilled.	1. To guide the PhD Actively encourage students towards participation in International conferences, not only limiting them with

No.	Type of indicator (*,C)	Performance Indicator	Judgement	Recommendations
				<p>the participation at national conferences, so that their research results can be validated and disseminated on a larger scale.</p> <p>2. To increase the number of publications indexed in the main international database (Web of Science and Scopus) by creating a budget fund at the Doctoral School level to cover the publication fees of international scientific journals with a high impact factor.</p>
26	*	B.3.1.2	The indicator *B.3.1.2 is fully fulfilled.	To support the participation in International conferences through the doctoral grant that the university receives from the government per PhD student (in line with the indicator *A.1.3.3).
27	*	B.3.2.1	The indicator *B.3.2.1 is fully fulfilled.	No recommendations
28	*	B.3.2.2	The indicator *B.3.2.2 is fully fulfilled.	No recommendations
30		C.1.1.1	The indicator C.1.1.1 is fully fulfilled.	No recommendations
31	*	C.1.1.2	The indicator *C.1.1.2 is fully fulfilled.	No recommendations
32		C.2.1.1	The indicator C.2.1.1 is fully fulfilled.	No recommendations
33		C.2.2.1	The indicator C.2.2.1 is fully fulfilled.	To constantly update the portfolio of resources that doctoral students need for the good development of their doctoral studies. It is also recommended to collaborate with UAIC's partners to create common platforms to ensure students exchange information and materials.

No.	Type of indicator (*,C)	Performance Indicator	Judgement	Recommendations
34		C.2.2.2	The indicator C.2.2.2 is fully fulfilled.	To offer free access to PhD students to Turnitin applications, but a limited number of free accesses (e.g. 5). Access would allow students to become better familiar with the verification process, as well as to test certain parts of the paper during the doctoral studies so that they have time to resolve any potential similarities.
35		C.2.2.3	The indicator C.2.2.3 is fully fulfilled.	To purchase licenses for advanced data analysis programs such as STATA. It is also recommended to purchase the Office 365 package that will allow PhD students to better manage their documents.
36	*	C.3.1.1	The indicator *C.3.1.1 is partially fulfilled.	To encourage PhD students to participate in at least short research mobility grants (e.g. 1-3 months) by sending them e-mails with all the mobility opportunities. Include academic mobility performance in their annual report.
37		C.3.1.2	The indicator C.3.1.2 is partially fulfilled.	To encourage PhD students to have a second supervisor from another university by presenting them a list with all universities that are partner with UAIC and with the professors that could be their choice for the second supervisor.
38		C.3.1.3	The indicator C.3.1.3 is partially fulfilled.	To strengthen the collaboration with other partners' universities and research centers by inviting and sending scholars to give courses, some lectures and participate in different short research activities.



## VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

The Political Science doctoral domain of UAIC has a well-established academic structure and staff potential. There is a good quality of PhD education in Political Science thanks to the high quality of academic staff in the Department. The academic staff of the Department has a solid record of academic publications and close involvement with various academic institutions. The supervising system in the doctoral domain works duly and with a good result. The Department provides a wide range of the academic mobility opportunities to its PhD students through Erasmus+ and some other bilateral cooperation. Grants and research funds are good enough for PhD students to conduct their research and to develop academic skills but in the future, the number of PhD students involved in these research projects should significantly increase (40% out of all PhD students within the domain). The PhD students have a good record of academic publications. They also participate actively in National and International conferences. And seminars However, more considerable progress should be made in the area of internationalization and the exposure of academic staff and PhD students to the international scientific community.

Although most indicators are considered to be fulfilled, several important improvements that need to be made at the level of the majority of the indicators were observed.

Thus, the recommendations made at the level of indicators can be concentrated around the following main recommendations:

1. It is recommended to purchase computer systems to streamline communication between PhD students, teachers and administrative staff of the Doctoral School (e.g. Blackboard);
2. It is recommended to purchase licenses to provide students with access to advanced statistical programs (e.g. STATA), as well as to develop laboratories in which students can perform certain experiments or simulations. They also need to be better trained to work with Big data etc.
3. It is recommended to develop a close collaboration with National and International partners. Such collaboration could increase the quality of PhD students' publications and access to high-impact international journals, as well as access to prestigious International conferences and summer schools;
4. It is recommended to increase the amount of financial support for those PhD students that are interested in a research/teaching career and demonstrate high research abilities and dedication on the competitive ground. The best articles and defended Thesis competition might be implemented in the University for the PhD students with some prizes for the best authors.
5. The training and practical orientation towards further professional carried of PhD School graduates should be elaborated and included in the curricula. Closer cooperation with perspective employers for PhD Diploma holders is strongly recommended also.

### **External evaluation expert ARACIS:**

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