

# External Evaluation Report of Doctoral Domain in Geography

## I. Introduction

This report concerns to periodical External Evaluation of the Institution Organising Doctoral Study Programs (IOSUD), in the doctoral study domain of Geography at the University of Craiova (UCV). The evaluation period occurred between 5-9.07.2021.

The assessment will determine whether the accreditation of the doctoral area in geography is maintained, taking into account the following levels:

- the activity of doctoral supervisors and doctoral students;
- the research outcomes in relation to the defended doctoral theses in public meetings and respective CNATDCU validation;
- Evaluation of doctoral field in Geography, with reference to the criteria and performance indicators (A., B, C.);
- the activity of Doctoral School of Sciences-University of Craiova;
- the activity of University of Craiova as the Institution Organizing Doctoral Study Programs in domain Geography.

The PhD in Geography is part of the Doctoral School of Sciences, together with the Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics domains.

The Evaluation Panel for doctoral studies in fundamental domain of Geography is constituted by:

- Coordinator Prof.univ.dr. Vasile EFROS, Universitatea Ștefan cel Mare din Suceava;
- International expert prof. Francisco Da Silva Costa, University of Minho, Portugal;
- PhD student Simion Alina-Mihaela, Universitatea din București.

The regulation of the doctoral school includes criteria, procedures and mandatory standards for the items specified in Art. 17(5) of the Code of doctoral programmes, approved by Government Decision no. 681/2011, with the subsequent amendments and completions.

The University of Craiova has in its structure ten doctoral schools. The Doctoral School of Sciences was established in 1967 by regrouping the doctoral fields of Chemistry, Physics, Informatics and Mathematics in accordance with the stipulations of the National Education Law no. 1/2011 and as an effect of Government Decision no. 681/2011 regarding the Code of doctoral studies. On January 15, 2016 by Order M.E.N.C.S no. 3003/2016, the doctoral field Geography is approved, which, together with the other four component fields of the former Doctoral School of Exact Sciences is structured in the Doctoral School of Sciences, further affiliated to IOSUD – University of Craiova.

The doctoral field of Geography is operating within the Doctoral School of Sciences, and is the last accredited, in 2016.. Currently the doctoral field of Geography have a body of 4 Doctoral supervisors. During the assessed period the doctoral field of Geography counted 19 students. Two of them completed their studies and were awarded the PhD title and another 14 theses are in progress.



## II. Methods used

At first, the consultation and analysis of the documentation in electronic format sent by IOSUD was carried out, namely:

- The periodic self-evaluation report for maintenance of accreditation of the doctoral field of geography;
- the attached documents;
- The list of the domains, criteria, standards, performance indicators;
- The list of critical performance indicators.

Missing documents referred by the periodic self-evaluation report were requested to Professor Sorin Daniel Micu, Director of the Doctoral School of Science and Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu, Field Coordinator in Geography: annexes 12, 14, 18 and 23 (annexes 1, 2, 3 and 4).

We also carry out the consultation of websites and collection of information:

- The website of University of Craiova: <https://www.ucv.ro/en/>
- The website of the Doctoral School of Sciences: <http://stiinte.ucv.ro/doctorat/>
- The website of the Library of of University of Craiova: <http://biblio.central.ucv.ro/>

In a second moment, occurred, in hybrid mode, the evaluation period between 5-9.07.2021. A preliminary meeting was held on July 2, aims to present the members of the panel and discuss the main methodological aspects related to the evaluation of doctoral studies.

In the following days, online meeting/discussions were held (annex 5):

1. The commission of expert evaluators with the heads of the fields of doctoral studies. July 5th, 2021.
2. Experts with directors/responsible of research centers/laboratories. July 5th, 2021.
3. The expert evaluators committee with teaching staff. July 5th, 2021.
4. Expert with representatives of PhD students. July 6th, 2021.
5. The evaluation committee with representatives of employers. July 6th, 2021.
6. The expert evaluators committee with members of the Board of Doctoral School of Sciences. July 8th, 2021.

During and after the evaluation period, correspondence (by email) was exchanged to clarify doubts and gather additional information with:

- Prof. Univ. Dr. Sorin Micu, Director of the Doctoral School of Sciences, about 2016 and 2019 evaluation reports. June 28th.
- Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu, Field coordinator of Geography, about annexes 12, 14, 18 and 23. June 28th.
- Professor Vasile Efros, Coordinator of the evaluator panel in Doctoral study in Geography and Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu about organization, functioning and management of the doctorat in Geography. July 6th. (annex 6)
- Simion Alina-Mihaela, PhD student representative in the expert evaluators committee about the doctorate in Geography. July 6th. (annex 7)
- Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu and Professor Vasile Efros about ARACIS's performance indicators. July, 7th. (annex 8)
- Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu with a list of questions for the UCV doctoral student representative. July, 7th. (annex 9)
- Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu and Professor Vasile Efros about ARACIS's performance indicators. July, 12th. (annex 10)



All emails were properly answered.

On July 12th we held a meeting by whatsapp with Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu to review the status of the PhD evaluation process in Geography.

### **III. Analysis of ARACIS's performance indicators**

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

The UCV has implemented the mechanisms of efficient functioning as provided in the relevant law on the organisation of Doctoral School of Sciences. The specific regulations are in place and they are applied at the level of IOSUD and of the Doctoral School of Sciences. The doctoral field of Geography have institutional, administrative, management structures and financial resources secured by Doctoral School of Sciences. The Doctoral School of Sciences is run by a Council where the Doctorate in Geography was represented by:

- Professor Mirela Mazilu;
- Doctoral Student Sorin Alexandru Dobrescu;
- Doctoral Student Robert-Marius Malmare;

Dénes Lóczy, PhD, Professor of Geography at University of Pécs, is part of the Honorary members of the Council of the Doctoral School of Sciences.

The regulation of the doctoral school includes criteria, procedures and mandatory standards for the items specified in Art. 17(5) of the Code of doctoral programmes.

The university provides an online platform with reserved access for the record of doctoral students and their academic achievements, Dedicated software is made available to develop academic research and assess possible scientific plagiarism practices and .

IOSUD ensures that the financial resources and that the income from doctoral programmes is supplemented by additional funding to that provided by the Government.

The Doctoral School of Sciences have a modern research infrastructure with diverse and complex laboratories and equipment.

Students of the programme in the field of Geography have access to all the Libraries of the UCV.

Human resources - teaching staff, employees and technicians - ensure the functioning of the PhD in Geography. Within the Geography Field , four doctoral supervisors work, que assecurred the scientific activities of 19 students in the last five years.

#### **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.*

The regulations are in place and they are applied at the level of IOSUD and of the Doctoral School of Sciences , namely: specific regulations, the methodology for conducting the competition for the position of director of the Council of Doctoral Studies, methodologies for organising and conducting doctoral program, the existence of mechanisms for the recognition of the position of doctoral supervisor, functional



management structures, internal procedures for analysis and approval of proposals on the topic of doctoral study program.

**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.*

Several documents were analyzed, highlighting:

- Institutional regulation for the organization and functioning of the IOSUD-UCV doctoral and post-doctoral studies programs (Rectory of UCV, 2020)
- Regulation for the organization of the process for obtaining the habilitation certificate (UCV, 2017).
- The internal regulations of the Doctoral School (2017).
- Functional management structures IOSUD / CSUD / Council of the Doctoral School.
- Doctoral School Board Meetings: Voting on position descriptions, curriculum and study extensions, election process (2016)
- Regulation regarding the organization and conduct of the competition for admission to university undergraduate, master and doctoral studies, for the university (year 2019-2020).
- The contract for doctoral studies.
- Methodology on the recognition of doctoral degrees obtained in foreign countries 2018.

The verification of the documents presented on this indicator demonstrates the conditions of the IOSUD and Doctoral School of Sciences for the regular functioning of the Doctorate in Geography.

However, the Doctoral School of Sciences must meet the conditions in order to:

- Make all documents available on the website of the Doctoral School of Sciences in order to promote values of transparency and ethics.
- Enable bilingual (English/Romanian) edition of main content.

***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 Art. 4 and 5, Art. 12-16, Art. 43, Art. 35, Art. 38, Art. 39, Art. 29 of the Regulations of the Doctoral School of Sciences guarantee compliance with the Performance Indicator A.1.1.2.



***The indicator is fulfilled.***

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

To assess the logistical resources needed to carry out the mission of the doctoral studies in Geography, we analyzed the Student Registration Information System and the software to check the similarity index of doctoral theses.

***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 University of Craiova's Student Registration Information System contains and processes the data of students from all educational cycles, including the Doctorate and is available at: <https://cis01.central.ucv.ro/evstud/>

The UCV must study the possibility of making the system available in English in order to serve foreign students.

***The indicator is fulfilled.***

***Performance Indicator A.1.2.2. The existence and use of an appropriate software program and evidence of its use to verify the percentage of similarity in all doctoral theses.***

The presentation of the program [www.sistemantiplagiat.ro](http://www.sistemantiplagiat.ro) and evidence of its use was held in 2018. The software program purchased by the UCV was applied in two doctoral thesis in Geography to verify the percentage of similarities in all theses of the same domain.

***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.*

We identify financial resources and funding and their application by the IOSUD. The expenditure and financial statement made in the last 5 years by the Doctoral School of Sciences reveals a low investment.

***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.***

In the last 5 years, a research grant address relevant themes for the domain in Geography has been implemented. It will be important to increase the number of scholarships for the coming years through projects and services.

***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%.*

The Field coordinator, Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu, confirmed grants in progress and research work of doctoral students. Based on the collection of information from the teaching staff and representatives of PhD students in Geography, we can conclude that:

- The lack of public funds provided by the Ministry of Education causes a small number of scholarships and also the lack of funded research projects.
- The explanation provided in the documents regarding the lack of funded research projects is that in recent years, the number of national projects has been lower and the latest grants obtained in 2016 do not have the possibility to introduce new members,
- The number of scholarships is distributed at the University level by the ministry, subsequently being distributed in the Doctoral fields. In recent years, the number of nationally funded research projects has been lower.

As a consequence, there is no student out of the seven ones enrolled who has benefited from funding for a period of at least 6 months.

It is advisable for the Doctoral School of Sciences to study news strategies to increase the number of scholarships and thus attract more students to PhD program. The supervisors should promoting the students involvement in research projects and diversify financial sources in order to increase the number of PhD grants.

***The indicator is fulfilled.***

***Performance Indicator \*A.1.3.3.*** *At least 10% of the total amount of doctoral grants obtained by the university through institutional contracts and of tuition fees collected from the doctoral students enrolled in the paid tuition system is used to reimburse professional training expenses of doctoral students (attending conferences, summer schools, training, programs abroad, publication of specialty papers or other specific forms of dissemination etc.).*

The value of 10% of the total amount of doctoral grants obtained by the university through of tuition fees collected from the doctoral students enrolled is not used to reimburse professional training expenses of doctoral students. There are no budget nor funds from UCV and the Doctoral School of Sciences for the participation of doctoral students in national/international scientific events.

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

*Recommendations:*

The university, through your annual budget, institutional contracts and of tuition fees collected to the students, should reimburse a porcentage to the participation of PhD students in national/international scientific events and another research activities.

## **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.*

IOSUD / The doctoral schools have a research infrastructure that supports the development of the related activities. Within the Geography field, the university study programme benefits from the facilities of the Department of Geography, included in the assets of the UCV:

- a lecture hall;
- 10 teaching laboratories;



- 2 research laboratories;
- 2 office rooms.

Students of the programme in the field of Geography have access to all the Libraries and the benefits from online access of the UCV.

**Performance Indicator A.2.1.1.** *The venues and the material equipment available to the doctoral school enable the research activities in the evaluated domain to be carried out, in line with the assumed mission and objectives (computers, specific software, equipment, laboratory equipment, library, access to international databases etc.). The research infrastructure and the provision of research services are presented to the public through a specific platform. The research infrastructure described above, which was purchased and developed within the past 5 years will be presented distinctly.*

IOSUD / The Doctoral School of Sciences allow for the conduct of research activities in the Geography field, in accordance with the mission and objectives assumed (PCs, dedicated software, equipment, laboratory equipment, library, access to international databases, etc.). The research infrastructure and the offer of research services provision are available via a platform. We have identified the following research infrastructure acquired and developed over the past 5 years.

- 1) Education and research spaces where the students have a high number of books, volumes and collections of periodicals in the field of Geography.
- 2) Laboratory spaces equipped with modern technology that allow work essentially related to physical geography.
- 3) Software corresponding to the Geography studies subjects in the curriculum and their user license.
- 4) Online access to scientific databases.
- 5) Research infrastructure provided by the Research Center in Innovative and Regional Tourism: <https://eeris.eu/ERIF-2000-000L-2302>

The Doctoral School of Sciences should publicize the standards for access and use of laboratories and their responsible (teachers and technicians).

Allow access to the publications of supervisors and doctoral students on a common digital platform (through a repository to be created by UCV).

***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.*

The Doctorate School of Sciences emerged at the University of Craiova in accordance with the provisions of the National Education Law no. 1/2011 and as an effect of G.D. no. 681/2011 regarding the Code of University Doctoral Studies. As of 15/01/2016, Dispatch no. 3003/2016, which approves the doctoral area in Geography, where four doctoral supervisors currently work. The subjects of the advanced training program included in the study plan of the PhD in Geography are taught by professors who supervise doctoral theses. Advisers have publications indexed by the Web of Science or ERIH in impact journals and other achievements of relevant significance to the domain of Geography. Advisers are still active in their scientific field, but not all are qualified according to the minimum standards required by the CNATDCU.



**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.*

There is a lack of a one qualified supervisor and possessed of the Habilitation Certificate with the minimum CNATDCU standards to meet this performance indicator.

**The indicator is partially satisfied.**

*Recommendations:*

One of the PhD supervisors is close to meeting the minimum criteria and standards according to the CNATDCU what it will be important to to fulfill the minimum standards under the CNATDCU, in the short term.

The Department of Geography should Increase collaboration with researchers from other national/international universities in order to the increase the publication of articles in indexed journals.

The Doctoral School of Sciences must make an effort to invite/appeal to the participation of co-supervisors from another national/international universities in the way to ensure the quality of guidance in the different areas of specialization of geography.

**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.*

Two doctoral advisors have a full-time employment contract for an indefinite period with the IOSUD. However, the UCV should consider increasing the numbers of full professors in order to gain stability in the teaching staff and assure the continuity of the doctoral project in Geography.

**The indicator is fulfilled.**

**Performance Indicator A.3.1.3.** *The study subjects in the education program based on advanced higher education studies pertaining to the doctoral domain are taught by teaching staff or researchers who are doctoral thesis advisors / certified doctoral thesis advisors, professors / CS I or lecturer / CS II, with proved expertise in the field of the study subjects they teach, or other specialists in the field who meet the standards established by the institution in relation with the aforementioned teaching and research functions, as provided by the law.*

The three subjects in the education program of the Geography PhD curriculum are supported by teachers who have the position of doctoral supervisor/ habilitation/professor.

**The indicator is fulfilled.**

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

None of the doctoral supervisors coordinates more than 8 doctoral students at the same time.

**The indicator is fulfilled.**

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





We analyse the publications in indexed journals and international level contributions of the supervisors in order to understand the progress in scientific research-development-innovation and international visibility. We also consulted the list of research projects that supervisors were involved in as coordinator/investigator and awards received.. Hereby we try to infer if the supervisors are scientifically active by the CNATDCU minimum standards, required and mandatory to obtain the habilitation certificate.

**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.*

From various attachments, namely the curricula, it was possible to assess the scientific and research portfolios of the four supervisors.

We found that supervisors perform the tasks of editors and reviewers of journals specialized in the field of Geography and are affiliated to international scientific bodies and organizations.

Based on the supervisors' lists of publications, we identified the articles Web of Science or ERIH and indexed publications in journals with impact factor in the last five years.

It's importante consider to reinforce scientific capacity like strategy to increase visibility and attract new PhD students.

***The indicator is fulfilled.***

**Performance Indicator \*A.3.2.2.** *At least 50% of the doctoral thesis advisors in a specific doctoral study domain continue to be active in their scientific field, and acquire at least 25% of the score requested by the minimal CNATDCU standards in force at the time of the evaluation, which are required and mandatory for acquiring their enabling certificate, based on their scientific results within the past five years.*

The consulting of the curricula, research Contracts and other documents available in the annexes allows us to assess whether the minimum CNATDCU standards for the last 5 years are met by the Doctoral supervisors. 50%-70% of the minimum CNATDCU standards are met by the doctoral supervisors (two of them, partially fulfilling them).

***The indicator is fulfilled.***

## **Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

We analyze the entire admission process, namely the organization of the different phases and the interview. We assess the quality of this process in terms of the ability to attract candidates, We tried to infer from the consequences of the doctoral student dropout rate on the course functioning.

We examine the specialization curriculum in the area of doctoral geography, the content of the doctoral programs and the training program, the training program based on advanced academic studies.

We have consulted the annexes on ethics in research and intellectual property,



We have identified the different counseling/guidance strategies for students used by functional advisory committees.

We consulted the lists of scientific research activities and participation in international events carried out by doctoral students,

We tried to understand if the involvement of evaluators in the defense committees of doctoral theses is significant.

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

Based on the statistical elements presented in the report, we analyzed the capacity to attract students, with regard to their institutional origin and the profile of candidates in their academic, research and professional performance components. We also interpreted the data presented on doctoral students' resignation / dropout.

*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.*

Based on statistical situation of doctoral candidates for the doctorate in Geography in the last five years, we conclude to:

- 18 candidates were admitted, nine of which came from other institutions, and 7 places were budgeted.
- The ratio between the number of master's graduates from other higher education institutions who applied for the doctoral admission exam and the number of vacancies financed by the State budget in the area of doctoral studies in Geography is 1.28%.
- The ratio between the number of candidates and the number of vacancies financed by the State budget for competition in the area of PhD in Geography is 2.57.

It will be prudent for the Doctoral School of Sciences and the Department of Geography to determine strategies for attracting students from the Master's Degree in Geography at UCV as well as from foreign institutions.

***The indicator is fulfilled.***

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

**Performance Indicator \*B.1.2.1.** *Admission to doctoral study programs is based on selection criteria including: previous academic, research and professional performance, their interest for scientific or arts/sports research, publications in the domain and a proposal for a research subject. Interviewing the candidate is compulsory, as part of the admission procedure.*



Admission to doctoral studies is based on the regulations contained in the Institutional Regulation for the organization and operation of doctoral and postdoctoral studies of IOSUD-UCV.

Annually, the Regulation for conducting the admission in cycle III - doctoral university studies is drafted by IOSUD-UCV. It establishes the reassessment and grading in the admission procedures, evaluation criteria and standards.

According to the Regulations of the Doctoral School of Sciences, the admission contest consists of an oral examination in which the research project of the candidate is presented.

**The indicator is fulfilled.**

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

The drop-out rate of doctoral students is 16,7% and, not exceed 30%. From the stage of the admission procedure, the school continue should to identify scientific risk factors and possibly present some alternative solutions: Development of an effective mentoring system at the level of doctoral university studies, Creating more direct links between the doctoral and master's programs of the University and elements of continuity, Integration of doctoral students in the activity of presentation and promotion of master's and doctoral programs, Organizing social events and considering volunteer actions to support doctoral students in difficult situations.

**The indicator is fulfilled.**

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

The training program is based on advanced academic studies and includes topics relevant to geography and standards of scientific research ethics and intellectual property. IOSUD is responsible for creating mechanisms to ensure that the training program based on advanced academic studies achieves student learning outcomes.

Doctoral students should benefit from the guidance of functional advisory committees on their academic path.

The relationship between the number of doctoral students and the number of number of teaching staff is an important criterion to guarantee quality in the supervision of academic work.

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

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

The curriculum of Geography include a training program based on advanced academic studies for the first semester.:

1. Complex methods of spatio-temporal modelling - delivered by Prof. Sorin Cheval, PhD
2. Analysis of geographical phenomena of risk holder discipline Prof. Sandu Boengiu, PhD
3. Advanced Research Methodology in Geography

These disciplines study in-depth research methodology and/or statistical data processing. It will be important for the professors responsible for these subjects to update the bibliography used with international references from the last decade



**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.*

A subject dedicated to ethics in scientific research and intellectual property is taught in the first semester delivered by a IOSUD full-time professor).

**The indicator is fulfilled.**

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

The curricular description of the academic training program based on advanced university studies demonstrates that each discipline is centered on and aims at learning outcomes, specifying the competencies, skills and attitudes that students should acquire.

**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.*

There is a correspondence system in place by email between the doctoral supervisors, the school and the UCV and the doctoral students that allows the communication of information related to schedule, fees, tutorials, etc. . The communication with the students is permanent facilitating the achievement of the individual plan. Another online platforms, such as: Zoom, Google classroom, WhatsApp are, also, used.

**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.*

Based on the data provided we calculate the ratio between the number of Doctoral students and the number of teachers providing guidance is 3: 1.

**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.*

Each doctoral supervisor is involved in the supervision of their own doctoral students, involving them in scientific research activities, conferences, publication of relevant papers in journals and proceedings, participation in workshops, scientific sessions, etc.

One important performance indicator is the ratio between the number of presentations delivered by the doctoral students and the number of the doctoral students who successfully completed the doctoral programme during the evaluated period.



**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.*

We select 5 relevant papers / contributions what analysed and rated in a scale from 1 to 5, according to the original contribution to the development of the studies in Geography. 3 papers contain significant original contributions.

**The indicator is fulfilled.**

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

Based on the analise of the student activity lists, we conclude that the ratio between the number of presentations and the number of students who completed their doctoral studies in the evaluated period is 8. To achieve this value we used the number of manifestations of students who have completed the 3 years of doctoral studies.

**The indicator is fulfilled.**

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

This performance indicator lets you know if significant number of external reviewers in the doctoral theses defence committees.

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

**The indicator is not applicable.**

**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.*

**The indicator is not applicable.**

## **Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT**



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

In this domain, analisamos the internal quality assurance system based on the institutional framework and internal quality assurance policies.

We attend to the description of the process of evaluation and internal quality assurance in accordance with a procedure developed and applied at the IOSUD level and we identify the evaluated criteria mandatory and if the student feedback mechanisms are implemented.

*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 Doctoral School of Sciences prove the steady development of the process of evaluation and internal quality assurance in accordance with the procedures developed and applied at the IOSUD level. We verified this condition with regard to the scientific work of Doctoral advisors, the infrastructure and logistics the procedures, the scientific activity of doctoral students, the training program and the social and academic services.

A self-assessment of the doctoral fields was performed Every three years.

In order to increase the quality of the research activity at the level of the doctoral programs, the Doctoral School of Sciences should pondered e intensify the the following actions:

- increasing the number of doctoral students by recruiting master students of the Department of Geography with outstanding performance;
- attract master students / doctoral students with special performances in research ,offering them financial ;
- the development, together with the companies, of study topics with direct applicability in production;
- encouraging researchers to work in prestigious professional and scientific bodies.

***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.*



The Doctoral School of Sciences provides methodologies to assess student satisfaction with the functioning of the doctorate and the scientific needs of the doctoral students. There is a counseling center that meets the problems faced by PhD students.

There is a questionnaire on student satisfaction and the exchange of ideas is favored which allows the implementation of student feedback mechanisms aiming at the continuous improvement of academic services.

The Doctoral School of Sciences must reflect on the employability rates and the continuity of students in scientific research careers.

***The indicator is fulfilled.***

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

In this criterion, we analyze the information transparency policy and the regulations for accessibility to learning resources and scientific research laboratories.

*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.*

There is a website of the Doctoral school of Sciences, providing useful information for doctoral supervisors and doctoral students and the admission conditions for the doctorate of Geography.

The IOSUD publishes, in compliance with the general regulations on data protection, information such as: internal regulations and standards about the Doctoral programme; the doctoral studies contract; the academic and scientific profile of the Doctoral advisors; the informations of doctoral students activities and doctoral theses summaries.

The Doctoral School in Sciences site is not in english. This makes it quite unattractive for foreign students who want to study geography in UCV. It should be an effort to allow all information to be published in bilingual format.

Also the Department of Public Relations and Academic Image which is responsible with the relationship with the press and the management of social media should an effort to promote the PhD in english.



**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.*

Doctoral students enjoy access to the academic data platform specific to the field of Geography:  
<http://stiinte.ucv.ro/doctordat/>

**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.*

Doctoral students have access to the system to verify the degree of similarity based on the anti-plagiarism software provided by UCV available at: [www.sistemantiplagiat.ro](http://www.sistemantiplagiat.ro)

**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.*

The doctoral students have access to 10 research laboratories, the libraries of UCV and the databases specialized in scientific literature in Geography, an essential support in the drafting and development of theses.

**The indicator is fulfilled.**

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

In this criterion we evaluate the strategies to increase the degree of internationalisation of doctoral programmes, the involvement of doctoral student, the participating in international conferences and workshops. We consult the joint doctoral programmes and the mobility agreements. The degree of internationalization of the activities is also considered within the doctoral program.

*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.*

Based on the activities of doctoral students, it was proven that they completed a training course abroad or other forms of mobility, such as participation in scientific conferences and international workshops.





One of the priorities of the Doctoral School in Sciences is the promoting of the information about the study plan and admission conditions for the doctoral course. To this end, a brochure was made available and its dissemination during the participation of doctoral students in the Open Days of the Faculty of Sciences or the Doctoral School of Sciences..

The field of Geography has developed by the doctoral supervisors 10 Erasmus Mobility partnerships with foreign universities.

As it is a young doctoral course and currently aimed at national students, it is important to motivate and support supervisors and doctoral students to take improvement courses in English.

It is also important to continue to motivate doctoral students to develop national / international mobility programs and to participate in doctoral workshops with other courses that have affinities. Scientific capacity shows are also a good modality to demonstrate the importance of student mobility.

There is a videoconference system that allows virtual participation in thesis defense committees and thus increase the number of participation in doctoral juries.

**The indicator is fulfilled.**

**Performance Indicator C.3.1.2.** *In the evaluated doctoral study domain, support is granted, including financial support, to the organization of doctoral studies in international co-tutelage or invitation of leading experts to deliver courses/lectures for doctoral students.*

Due to lack of financial support, this performance indicator is not available.

**The indicator is not available.**

**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.).*

No foreign professors were included in the thesis defense committees due to factors outside the School.

The Doctorate in Geography organized Tourism Fairs published on social networks and webpages created for this purpose.

**The indicator is partially fulfilled.**

*Recommendations:*

The justifications pointed out to explain the lack of integration of international experts in advisory committees or thesis defense committees can be overcome through virtual meetings using the UCV videoconference system.

This equipment can also be used for lectures and webinars.

## IV. SWOT Analysis

<b><u>Strengths:</u></b>	<b><u>Weaknesses:</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The strong institutional capacity.</li> <li>- The offer of several specialized laboratories</li> <li>- The strategies implemented in the internal quality assurance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The lack of information in English on the school's website.</li> <li>- Difficulties in obtaining own financial resources.</li> <li>- The weak international mobility of supervisors and PhD students.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The academic qualities of the internal supervisors.</li> <li>- The high demands of the PhD candidate selection process.</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Opportunities:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good dynamics between faculty members and PhD students.</li> <li>- The excellent relationship with municipal/regional/national institutions.</li> <li>- EU funds that can be used for mobility, ERASMUS+ programs and other emerging programmes.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Threats:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social and health risk factors that limit mobility.</li> <li>- Low external financing;</li> </ul>

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

No.	Type of indicator (*, C)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
1	*A.	1.3.3	<b>Not fulfilled</b>	The university, through yours fees collected to the students, should reimburse a percentage to the participation of PhD students in national/international scientific events and another research activities..
2	A	3.1.1.	<b>Partially satisfied</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One of the PhD supervisors is close to meeting the minimum criteria and standards according to the CNATDCU in the short term.</li> <li>- The Department of Geography should increase collaboration with researchers from other national/international universities in order to increase the publication of articles in indexed journals.</li> <li>- The Doctoral School of Sciences must make an effort to invite/appeal to the participation of co-supervisors from another national/international universities in the way to ensure the quality of guidance in the different areas of specialization of geography.</li> </ul>
3	*B	3.2.1	<b>Not applicable</b>	
4	*B	3.2.2.	<b>Not applicable</b>	
5	C	C.3.1.2.	<b>Not available</b>	
6	C	3.1.3.	<b>Partially satisfied</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The justifications pointed out to explain the lack of integration of international experts in advisory committees or thesis defense committees can be overcome through virtual meetings using the UCV videoconference system.</li> <li>- This equipment can also be used for lectures and webinars.</li> </ul>



## VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

### *Justification:*

- The leaders of the UCV and the Doctoral School in Sciences consider that the study programme in Geography is well framed in the development strategy of the Institution.
- The PhD programme in Geography is valued by local and regional public institutions.
- The teaching staff consists of PhDs, with a stable link to the UCV and integrated in research units.
- The Doctoral School in Sciences has a good system of evaluation and quality assurance.
- The students expressed satisfaction with the PhD programme and high appreciation for the teachers and thesis supervisors.
- Non-teaching staff are qualified and are committed to the educational project of the doctorate in Geography
- The UCV library has good working conditions for the students.
- Students have access to laboratories, computer rooms and software suitable for their needs.
- There is a good relationship and closeness between students, students and teachers and teachers and administrative and technical staff.
- The Phd programme recruits a high number of students from other national universities.

### *Improvement recommendations:*

We summarize the recommendations and conclusions we established from the analysis of performance indicators:

- Encourage the teaching staff to publish more frequently, especially in international peer reviewed scientific journals.
- Increase the participation of supervisors in research projects, both national and international with competitive funding.
- Promote the marketing of the study programme in order to attract more students.
- Encourage students to publish their research outcomes in peer-reviewed scientific journals.
- Encourage teaching staff and student mobility (mobility out).
- Institutionalize the practice of organizing a doctoral workshop. This will provide a good opportunity for the students presenting their work and getting feedback from teachers and their pairs.

### *Fiinal recommendation:*

July 15, 2021

*(Francisco da Silva Costa, International expert)*



## **VII. Annexes**

Annex 1 - Annex 12 cited in the periodic self-evaluation report.

Annex 2 - Annex 14 cited in the periodic self-evaluation report.

Annex 3 - Annex 18 cited in the periodic self-evaluation report.

Annex 4 - Annex 23 cited in the periodic self-evaluation report.

Annex 5 - The detailed schedule of the evaluation visit.

Annex 6 – Document sent in July 6th to Professor Vasile Efros, Coordinator of the evaluator panel in Doctoral study in Geography and Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu about organization, functioning and management of the doctorat in Geography.

Annex 7 – Document in July 6th sent to Simion Alina-Mihaela, PhD student representatite in the expert evaluators committee about the doctorate in Geography.

Annex 8 – Document in July 7th sent to Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu and Professor Vasile Efros about ARACIS's performance indicators.

Annex 9 – Document in July 7th sent to Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu with a list of questions for the UCV doctoral student representative.

Annex 10 – Document in July 12th sent to Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu and Professor Vasile Efros about ARACIS's performance indicators.