

The External Evaluation Report of a Doctoral Study Domain

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I. Introduction¹

In this chapter, the following shall be summarized:

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

II. Methods used

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

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

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



- the student residences;
- the student cafeteria;
- sports ground etc.;
- Meeting/discussions with doctoral students in the doctoral study domain under review;
- Meeting/Discussions with the graduates of the doctoral study domain under review;
- Meeting/Discussions with employers of the graduates in the doctoral study domain under review;
- Meeting/Discussions with the school officials of the Doctoral School(s) in which the doctoral study domain under review is operating;
- Meeting/Discussions with the doctoral advisors in the doctoral study domain under review;
- Meeting/discussions with the representatives of the various structures of the IOSUD/Doctoral School(s) in which the doctoral study domain under review is operating:
 - The Council of the Doctoral School, the University Senate, the Board of Directors, the Quality Assessment and Assurance Commission, the Quality Assurance Department, the Ethics Commission (including with the student representatives of these structures);
 - the Career Counselling and Guidance Center;
 - student organizations;
 - secretariats;
 - various departments/administrative offices (Social/Student residences-Cafeterias etc.);
- Application of questionnaires to doctoral students or academic staff in the doctoral study domain under review.

III. Analysis of ARACIS's performance indicators

Domain A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

**general description of domain analysis.*

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

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

- (a) the internal regulations of the Doctoral School;*
- (b) the Methodology for conducting elections for the position of director of the Council of doctoral school (CSD), as well as elections by the students of their representative in CSD and the evidence of their conduct;*
- (c) the Methodologies for organizing and conducting doctoral studies (for the admission of doctoral students, for the completion of doctoral studies);*
- (d) the existence of mechanisms for recognizing the status of a Doctoral advisor and the equivalence of the doctoral degree obtained abroad;*



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

f) the contract for doctoral studies;

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

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

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

The University has submitted electronic copies of the abovementioned documents including: the Regulations of the Doctoral study of the Faculty of law and its amendment, copy of the contract for doctoral studies and other relevant documents (minutes). The documents have been submitted in official language (Romanian) and generally demonstrate existence of relevant procedures for efficient fulfillment. Any concrete details on specifics should be addressed by native speakers – members of the domain committee.

The Management structure is appropriate and composed of five members including one student. The participation of external members (national – University of Bucharest and foreign – University Université de Bourgogne in Dijon, France) brings an added value to the structure.

Recommendations:

The School should consider development and implementation of more specific criteria for the selection of candidates. Additionally, having in mind the challenges of internationalization of the University and the School of law should consider the involvement of foreign professors in the Admission committee.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendations:



More specific information is required in terms of decision making process regarding the changes of the structure and content of the doctoral program as well as update of the syllabi. The modernization of the structure and syllabi represents a key – instrument for providing up-to-date PhD education and establishment sustainable connection to the needs of the market.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

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

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

The University has provided convincing arguments that an appropriate IT system is in place to keep track of doctoral students. Student Records Information System has been developed and is operational for students of first, second and third cycle of studies.

Recommendations: There is an evident need apart from students records, to monitor their employability after graduation in order to maintain the relation between the University and the student. It seems that any update of the system with information regarding the employability of graduates with further improve the logistical resources necessary to carry out the doctoral studies' mission.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

The existence and use of an appropriate software program has been well substantiated. The University has provided adequate evidence on the utilization of the selected system for plagiarism check (www.sistemantiplagiat.ro). Additionally, the University has provided relevant documents on general presentation of plagiarism software, automatically generated similarity report as well as standardized resolution report.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.



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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

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

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

The University has implemented 2 relevant projects for the doctoral study domain including: (1) "Entrepreneurial University - higher education and training system for the Romanian labour market by awarding scholarships for doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers and implementing innovative entrepreneurial training programmes", Contract no. POCU/380/6/13/123990, a project implemented by the University of Craiova during 2019-2022 and financed by the European Social Fund and WTO and EU-Russia Cooperation: Legal and Economic Aspects (WTOEURU)", a project declared winner of the 2015 Erasmus + Jean Monnet Competition and funded by the European Commission during 01.09.2015-31.08.2018, partners: MOSCOW STATE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS UNIVERSITY (P1), UNIVERSITAET HAMBURG (P2), STICHTING HOGER BEROEPSONDERWIJN HAAGLANDEN EN RIJNSTREEK (P3), ERASMUS UNIVERSITEIT ROTTERDAM (P4), Diplomatische Akademie Wien (P5), UNIVERSITY OF CRAIOVA (P6) (project value 290,144.00 euros); period: 09.06.2016-31.08.2018 (27 months). Furthermore, the University has provided a list of professors and doctoral student who have directly benefited from the grants.

Recommendations: The established contacts through the implemented grants could be utilized for improvement of several segments for the purpose of internationalization of the University.

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%.

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

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

The percentage of doctoral students active at the time of evaluation who for at least six months have received additional funding is high – 47.06%. At the time of evaluation a total of 34 students have been involved in the PhD program in the field of law, as indicated by the University. Six doctoral students of the DSFL have benefited from extra-governmental funding programs accessed at the level of IOSUD-UCV in the last 5 years and 10 doctoral students have been financially supported through the Erasmus+ Program.

The aforementioned indicator has been supported through a list of beneficiaries for both funding schemes. However, it is evident that no Erasmus+ mobilities have been implemented in the last two academic years.

Recommendations: Having in mind the increase of the funding for Erasmus+ program, the doctoral students should be encouraged to apply for the mobilities through on-time and comprehensive information prepared by the university and diverse list of signed agreements for mobility to other relevant universities.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendations: The University should adequately elaborate the allocation of the requested funds for professional training expenses of the doctoral students.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

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



Criterion A.2. Research infrastructure

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

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

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

The University has provided extensive and relevant information on the venues and the material equipment available to the doctoral school of law including competent Office, study and seminar rooms, computer equipment (desktop computers, laptops) and detailed lists of printed books and periodicals in Romanian and foreign languages. The access to relevant international journals databases (15) is appropriate for the domain and for the purpose of doctoral students' research.

Recommendations:

Foreign books and printed periodicals are mainly available in French. Efforts should be made to include publications in other global languages including English, German etc.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion A.3. Quality of Human Resources

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

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



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

The University has submitted adequate information on the fulfillment of performance indicator A.3.1.1. A total of 13 full-time doctoral supervisors from the University of Craiova and one full-time doctoral supervisor from the University of Pitești have been involved in the doctoral program. As indicated in the application, all supervisors meet the CNATDCU minimum standards in force.

Recommendations: The University and the Doctoral School of law should also take into account the gender perspective in its operation. Additionally, having in mind the fact that there are a few supervisors with the same surname, the University should have provided relevant information on prevention of potential conflict of interests.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

The performance indicators A3.1.2. has also been completely fulfilled. The University has provided information that 13 out of 14 doctoral advisors have been employed based on concluding an indefinite employment contract.

Recommendations N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

The University has provided valid information that the study subjects are taught by teaching staff with proved expertise in the relevant field including general legal theory, commercial law, civil law criminal law etc. A list of all advisors and their concrete field of expertise has been attached in separate annex accompanied by CV of doctoral advisors.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

According to the documentation submitted by the University, in the period 2019 – 2020 the percentage of doctoral thesis advisors who concomitantly coordinated more than 8 doctoral students, but no more than 12 was 14.28% (i.e. 2 out of 14 doctoral advisors). On the other hand, there were no such cases in the period 2020 – 2021. Consequently, this performance indicator has been completely fulfilled.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

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



professional associations, membership in organizing committees of arts events and international competitions, membership on juries or umpire teams in artistic events or international competitions.

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

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

The University has provided extensive information on the fulfillment of performance indicator A.3.2.1. The supporting documentation on the fulfillment of this criteria has included: automatically generated H-index of doctoral supervisors as well as detailed information regarding their international visibility including participation in relevant and competent international bodies and participation at programs/events organized. The elaboration has been well substantiated.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

As it was indicated in the documentation submitted by the University, all 14 doctoral supervisors of the DSFL continue to be scientifically active, obtaining at least 25% of the score required by the CNATDCU minimum standards in force at the moment of carrying out the evaluation, necessary and mandatory to obtain the IOSUD – University of Craiova – Doctoral School of the Faculty of Law certificate of habilitation, based on the scientific performance in the last five years.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

**general description of domain analysis.*

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

**general description of the criterion analysis.*



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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

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

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

The University has provided a detailed information on statistics regarding the admission of candidates per academic year for both state – subsidized and non – subsidised places. According to the submitted information, In the last 5 years:

- the ratio between the state subsidised places at the admission examination and the number of candidates is 0.35 (45/127);
- the ratio between the occupied state subsidised places and non- subsidised places and the number of candidates is 0.90 (115/127) and
- the ratio between the number of Master's degree graduates of other higher education institutions in the country or abroad who have been enrolled in doctoral studies in the last 5 years and the number of state subsidised places at the admission examination within the doctoral school is 0.42.

As a result of the presented documents, it is evident that the requirements are met.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

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

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

The University has aligned its admissions criteria with performance indicator B.1.2.1. In that sense, following admissions criteria have been included: academic, research and professional performance of candidates, their interest in scientific research, publications in the field and a research topic proposal, the oral presentation of the latter before the admission committee being a mandatory part of the admission procedure. Additionally, in cases of equal average scores additional criteria are applied including previous publications in the field of law and grade average of MA and BA studies.

Recommendations: Adding a criteria for knowledge of foreign languages will further strengthen the capacities for internationalization of the University.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

The University has provided detailed informaton regarding the drop out rate of doctoral students per academic domain and per academic year. The rate does not exceed 30%.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.2. The content of doctoral programs

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

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

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

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

The University has submitted the curriculum of study as well as the syllabi of courses. Several weaknesses have been identified:

- It is unclear why the course Methodology of legal research has been replaced with the course Academic Integrity and Ethics after 2018. Methodology of legal research is adequate course for in-depth study of research methodology and/or the statistical data processing.
- In comparative perspective, it is very uncommon to include the course General legal theory as a one of three compulsory courses at PhD level. Issues that are explored in the course should already been completed at BA and MA level. More convincing arguments are required why this course is enlisted as a compulsory course are required.
- More information is needed on the reasons why both compulsory subjects are taught by the same professor.
- The compulsory readings for some of the courses include publications that are more relevant for BA and MA level. More diverse readings including recent academic papers as well as publications in foreign languages should be included.

Recommendations: Methodology of legal research should be incorporated as compulsory course in the curriculum. The future position of the course General Legal Theory as a compulsory course should be re-addressed. More diverse readings including recent academic papers as well as publications in foreign languages should be included in the syllabi.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

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

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

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

The curriculum has included the course "Academic Integrity and Ethics" as required by law. However, It seems that the obligatory readings for the course are more connected to research methods rather than ethics.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.3. The IOSUD has mechanisms to ensure that the academic training program based on advanced university studies addresses „the learning outcomes”, specifying the



knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy that doctoral students should acquire after completing each discipline or through the research activities⁵.

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

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

The University has provided some dominantly narrative information on the concept of "learning outcomes" with particular emphasis on development of critical thinking of students as well as preparation of reports. The concept of "learning outcomes" has been developed to some extent and there is an evident room for improvement. During the interview session with representatives of the University have identified this challenge and eventually, the school should work on this issue in the future.

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

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

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

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

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

The University has submitted relevant information regarding the organization of counselling/guidance from functional guidance commissions including doctoral schedules and meetings.

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

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

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

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

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



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

According to the information submitted by the University, the ratio between the number of doctoral students and the number of teaching staff/researchers providing doctoral guidance is 2. There are 17 faculty members/researchers and 34 students.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

Standard B.3.1. Doctoral students capitalize on the research through presentations at scientific conferences, scientific publications, technological transfer, patents, products and service orders.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator B.3.1.1. For the evaluated domain, the evaluation commission will be provided with at least one paper or some other relevant contribution per doctoral student who has obtained a doctor's title within the past 5 years. From this list, the members of the evaluation commission shall randomly select 5 such papers / relevant contributions per doctoral study domain for review. At least 3 selected papers must contain significant original contributions in the respective domain.

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

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

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

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

The indicator is fulfilled.

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



- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself
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The University has submitted a list of presentation/published academic work of doctoral students in the last 5 years with a ration of 1.63. A total of 62 works have been published.presented dominantly on events organized at national level.

Recommendations: The Doctoral School and the University should more actively promote participation of doctoral students on conferences and other academic events abroad.

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.

*general description of the standard analysis.

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

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

The University has provided convincing arguments regarding the involvement of external specialists in the doctoral program. In that direction, a list of 26 external specialists has been included in the documentation.All external specialists are affiliated to Romanian HEIs and are mainly involved as members of committees for defence of the doctoral theses.

Recommendations: Further efforts should be made to involve international specialists or national specialists affiliated with foreign academic institutions in the doctoral program.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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



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

The University has provided a list of scientific specialists coming from a higher education institution, other than the institution where the defense on the doctoral thesis is organized and their ratio in respect to performance indicator B.3.2.2. None of the involved specialists' ratio exceed 0.3%

On the basis of the submitted information, the performance indicator is fulfilled.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

**general description of domain analysis.*

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

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

(a) the scientific work of Doctoral advisors;

(b) the infrastructure and logistics necessary to carry out the research activity;

(c) the procedures and subsequent rules based on which doctoral studies are organized;

d) the scientific activity of doctoral students;

e) the training program based on advanced academic studies of doctoral students;

f) social and academic services (including for participation at different events, publishing papers etc.) and counselling made available to doctoral students.

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

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

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



Recommendations: N/A
The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

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

Law studies have received favorable feedback from students. However, the questionnaire is very general and has limited potential to provide concrete directions for improvement of the process.

Additionally, four doctoral students have participated in the work of the Doctoral Council in the period 2015-2021. More information on the content of their participation or concrete case/s of improvement of academic and administrative processes are required.

Recommendations: The University should re-configure the questionnaire with the sole purpose of providing more concrete information regarding the identified challenges by the doctoral students. Also, the University should take into account that the groups of students at doctoral level are small – 5 -10 students and the evaluation should be developed accordingly.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

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

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

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

**general description of the standard analysis.*

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

- (a) the Doctoral School regulation;
- (b) the admission regulation;
- (c) the doctoral studies contract;
- (d) the study completion regulation including the procedure for the public presentation of the thesis;
- (e) the content of training program based on advanced academic studies;



(f) the academic and scientific profile, thematic areas/research themes of the Doctoral advisors within the domain, as well as their institutional contact data;

(g) the list of doctoral students within the domain with necessary information (year of registration; advisor);

(h) information on the standards for developing the doctoral thesis;

(i) links to the doctoral theses' summaries to be publicly presented and the date, time, place where they will be presented; this information will be communicated at least twenty days before the presentation.

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

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

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

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

*general description of the standard analysis.

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

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

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

The University has provided doctoral students of law with access to relevant databases for their field of work. A list of available library databases for the period 2015 – 2021 has been submitted and is appropriate. Additionally, access to case law websites is provided.

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

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



Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

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

Recommendations: N/A

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion C.3. Internationalization

*general description of the criterion analysis.

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

*general description of the standard analysis.

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

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

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

The Doctoral School of law has submitted a list of 18 agreements with universities in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria etc.

More information is required in terms of the actual content of the agreements or perhaps best practices in international cooperation in doctoral studies of law. Additionally, it is unclear, to what extent, the agreements are actually operational.

The School has indicated that in the last five years 12 out of 38 doctoral students have conducted research internships abroad – ratio 31.57% which is below the expected ratio 35% foreseen in C.3.1.1.

Recommendations: The issue of internationalization represents a clear challenge for the university. Several steps could be carried out in order to boost internationalization including: utilization of personal network of contacts to encourage agreements with new universities, promote cooperation with universities in the region, attract Romanian diaspora working at HEIs abroad to participate in committee for defense of theses, encourage and promote student participation at conferences abroad, apply for international funding and grants with existing and new partners, establish cooperation with civil society organizations for purpose of research and internationalization, promote mobility to the University of Craiova etc.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

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

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

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

The Doctoral School of law has evidently been oriented to promotion of doctoral studies in international co-tutelage with several HEIs from abroad. The university has a tradition of international co-tutelage especially in the period from 2008. However in the last 5 years only 1 candidate has been a part of the program (student from the State University of Moldova).

Recommendations: The School should promote the international co-tutelage to doctoral students and re-establish the involvement of foreign professors in joint committees.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.3.1.3. *The internationalization of activities carried out during the doctoral studies is supported by IOSUD through concrete measures (e.g., by participating in educational fairs to attract international doctoral students; by including international experts in guidance committees or doctoral committees etc.).*

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

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

The University has provided information of the distribution of Eugen Ionescu scholarships with more concrete information for the period 2013-2014 and information of scholarship recipients on university level for the period 2015 – 2021 (without indications on the scientific field).

The number of international students remains low.

Additionally, the School has had a good tradition of involvement of foreign professors in Joint committees in the period 2008 – 2012 which was discontinued for unknown reasons.

No information on participation on educational fairs for international doctoral students has been presented.

Recommendations: The School should develop a plan for improvement of its internationalizations with realistic indicators for attractinng international doctoral students and boosting involvement of foreign professors in its work.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

IV. SWOT Analysis

<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <p>(1) tradition of teaching; (2) relevant teaching staff; (3) developed procedures for organization of doctoral studies; (4) developed research infrastructure and facilities for doctoral studies of law and (5) generally transparent institution.</p>	<p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <p>(1) internationalization of the university; (2) alignment of the curriculum with national legal requirements and existing comparative experiences in organization of doctoral studies of law in the European Higher Education Area and (3) improvement of the tools for evaluation and quality assurance.</p>
<p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <p>(1) existing agreements for international cooperation; (2) utilization of personal contacts and networks for boosting internationalization (3) focus on cooperation with universities in the region; (4) focus on applications for international funding and potentials for cooperation with civil society organization for funding purposes.</p>	<p><u>Threats:</u></p> <p>-</p> <p>(1) decrease of doctoral students including international students; (2) decrease in key – indicators of international cooperation; (3) lack of motivation of teaching staff and (4) potentials for conflict of interest.</p>

Overview of judgments awarded and of the recommendations

No.	Type of indicator (*, C)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
1.	A	1.1.1.	Fulfilled	The School should consider development and implementation of more specific criteria for the selection of candidates. Additionally, having in mind the challenges of internationalization of the University and the School of law should consider the involvement of foreign professors in the Admission committee.
2.	A	1.1.2.	Fulfilled	More specific information is required in terms of decision making process regarding the changes of the structure and content of

				the doctoral program as well as update of the syllabi. The modernization of the structure and syllabi represents a key – instrument for providing up-to-date PhD education and establishment sustainable connection to the needs of the market.
3.	A	1.2.1.	Fulfilled	There is an evident need apart from students records, to monitor their employability after graduation in order to maintain the relation between the University and the student. It seems that any update of the system with information regarding the employability of graduates with further improve the logistical resources necessary to carry out the doctoral studies' mission.
4.	A	1.2.2.	Fulfilled	
5.	A	1.3.1.	Fulfilled	
6.	A	1.3.2.	Fulfilled	
7.	A	1.3.3.	Partially fulfilled	The University should adequately elaborate the allocation of the requested funds for professional training expenses of the doctoral students.
8.	A	2.1.1.	Fulfilled	Foreign books and printed periodicals are mainly available in French. Efforts should be made to include publications in other global languages including English, German etc.
9.	A	3.1.1.	Fulfilled	Having in mind the fact that there are a few supervisors with the same surname, the University should have provided relevant information on prevention of potential conflict of interests.
10.	A	3.1.2.	Fulfilled	
11.	A	3.1.3.	Fulfilled	
12.	A	3.1.4.	Fulfilled	
13.	A	3.2.1.	Fulfilled	
14.	A	3.2.2.	Fulfilled	
15.	B	1.1.1.	Fulfilled	
16.	B	1.2.1.	Fulfilled	
17.	B	1.2.2.	Fulfilled	
18.	B	2.1.1.	Partially fulfilled	Methodology of legal research should be incorporated as compulsory course in the curriculum. The future position of the course General Legal Theory as a compulsory course should be readdressed. More diverse readings including recent academic papers as well as publications in foreign languages should be included in the syllabi.
19.	B	2.1.2.	Fulfilled	
20.	B	2.1.3.	Partially fulfilled	The School should define the main expected learning outcomes with general and specific descriptors and eventually, align them with the overall doctoral study program.
21.	B	2.1.4.	Partially fulfilled	The Doctoral school should focus on development on mechanism to monitor the quality and relevance of the counselling/guidance sessions for doctoral students.
22.	B	3.1.1.	Fulfilled	
23.	B	3.1.2.	Fulfilled	
24.	B	3.2.1.	Fulfilled	
25.	B	3.2.2.	Fulfilled	
26.	C	1.1.1.	Fulfilled	
27.	C	1.1.2.	Partially fulfilled	The University should re-configure the questionnaire with the sole purpose of providing more concrete information regarding the identified challenges by the doctoral students. Also, the University should take into account that the groups of students

				at doctoral level are small – 5 -10 students and the evaluation should be developed accordingly.
28.	C	2.1.1.	Fulfilled	
29.	C	2.2.1.	Fulfilled	
30.	C	2.2.2.	Fulfilled	
31.	C	2.2.3.	Fulfilled	
32.	C	3.1.1.	Partially fulfilled	The issue of internationalization represents a clear challenge for the university. Several steps could be carried out in order to boost internationalization including: utilization of personal network of contacts to encourage agreements with new universities, promote cooperation with universities in the region, attract Romanian diaspora working at HEIs abroad to participate in committee for defense of theses, encourage and promote student participation at conferences abroad, apply for international funding and grants with existing and new partners, establish cooperation with civil society organizations for purpose of research and internationalization, promote mobility to the University of Craiova etc.
33.	C	3.1.2.	Partially fulfilled	The School should promote the international co-tutelage to doctoral students and re-establish the involvement of foreign professors in joint committees.
34.	C	3.1.3.	Partially fulfilled	The School should develop a plan for improvement of its internationalizations with realistic indicators for attracting international doctoral students and boosting involvement of foreign professors in its work.

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

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

VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

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

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

*The Doctoral School of law has received a **positive evaluation**. The performance indicators have been fulfilled to a large extent with few shortcomings:*

- The School should define the main expected learning outcomes with general and specific descriptors and eventually, align them with the overall doctoral study program.*



- *The University should re-configure the questionnaire with the sole purpose of providing more concrete information regarding the identified challenges by the doctoral students.*
- *Methodology of legal research should be incorporated as compulsory course in the curriculum. The future position of the course General Legal Theory as a compulsory course should be readdressed. More diverse readings including recent academic papers as well as publications in foreign languages should be included in the syllabi.*
- *The issue of internationalization represents a clear challenge for the university. The School should develop a plan for improvement of its internationalizations with realistic indicators for attracting international doctoral students and boosting involvement of foreign professors in its work.*
- *The University should address the potential conflict of interest as indicated in the report.*

VII. Annexes

The following types of documents shall be attached:

- *The detailed schedule of the evaluation visit – MANDATORY.*
- *The survey questionnaire applied to doctoral students or academic staff in the doctoral study domain under review, the results - optional (e.g., in graphic form) and their interpretation - if applicable.*
- *Scanned documents – any document requested from the IOSUD during the evaluation visit and received, which is not found in the internal evaluation file received before the visit and referred to in the report.*
- *Pictures – if relevant issues are raised regarding the condition of the student residences, cafeterias, premises for teaching and learning activities, library etc.*
- *Screenshots/Print screens of the Doctoral School/IOSUD website proving specific claims in the report, accompanied by the date when they were accessed and saved.*
- *Any other documents relevant to the evaluation process referred to in the report.*