



Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca

The External Evaluation Report of a Doctoral Study Domain Educational Sciences

November 2021

I. Introduction

I was invited by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) to join the evaluation team for the doctoral studies of Educational Sciences domain at the Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca (BBU).

The UAI started to provide doctoral studies in the field of Educational Sciences since 2001, currently, there are two doctoral schools nurturing the domain (Education, Reflection and Development, and Didactics, Tradition, Development, Innovation).

I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Simona Lache, the director of the mission, and to Prof Luminita Parv, the technical secretary of the mission for their very helpful support before and during the evaluation visit. Also, I benefited from a highly collegial and professional approach of the colleagues in evaluation team, namely Prof. Lucian Ciolan, who took very well over the role of the evaluation team leader, and Ms Valeria Maria Paraschiva, who acted very well as the student expert.

On the basis of the sources of information I receive before and during the site visit, I herewith submit my report on the doctoral domain Educational Sciences at the BBU as I have perceived it. I am aware that this is a limited view by an external evaluator, and a much deeper insight would be needed to really catch the essence of some of the evaluated issues. My evaluation, as well as my recommendations for possible consideration, should be understood as a collegial attempt to provide the BBU and ARACIS with opinions with the aim to contribute to possible improvements at the BBU as well as the quality assurance of the higher education of Romania as such.

II. Methods used

Prior to the site visit I had studied the English version of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) of the BBU and some other relevant documents. During the visit, which was carried out online due to pandemic restrictions on 2 to 5 November 2021, I had a good opportunity to enhance the information I had received about doctoral studies of Educational Sciences at the BBU.



The site visit started with a preliminary online meeting of experts, who are members of the evaluation team. At this meeting, preparation and harmonization of evaluation stages in the blended format was discussed. Then the online meeting with the BBU's leading representatives followed. During the whole period of evaluation, I had a chance to participate at a number of group meetings with representatives of the BBU, domain Educational Sciences, directors of doctoral schools, employers, PhD students, graduates, and other persons. All this helped me to complete the picture. I had a chance to discuss the information received with the colleagues from the evaluation team and clarify possible unclarities.

III. Analysis of ARACIS's performance indicators

Domain A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

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

The doctoral schools nurturing the domain Educational Sciences are based on the organisation of studies which seem to be in line with existing legislation, and moreover, besides to it, each doctoral school has its own specific rules. These rules and regulations relate to all main parts of the doctoral studies throughout their whole duration, and they are approved by relevant BBU's bodies and published on the website. Each doctoral school is run by the Council of Doctoral School (consisting of PhD supervisors, PhD students, and some other relevant representatives).

As for financial resources, the budget seems to be largely centralised at the BBU with some allocations delegated to the faculties. According to the SAR, the financial activity of the university is favourable for doctoral studies of Educational Sciences and their realisation.

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.

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 approval of proposals regarding the training for doctoral study programs based on advanced academic studies.

The BBU, the doctoral domain Educational Sciences has developed and has in use a complex set of regulations, methodologies and procedures to ensure doctoral programs within the doctoral schools can be fully realised, in accordance with the legislation. This also includes methodologies for conducting elections, incl. those of students to the bodies relevant to the doctoral schools. The same relates to admission procedures, recognition of the supervisors' status, procedures for the analysis and approvals of proposals about doctoral study programs, and more.

Doctoral studies have their own organizing structure at the BBU, in which the Council and Doctoral School has an important role. The doctoral schools constitute the main structure within which doctoral studies are conducted.

The financial management seems to be in line with current legislation and financial situation appears to be in a solid condition.

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.*

It appears the regulations related to the doctoral domain Educational Sciences at the BBU include mandatory criteria, procedures and standards relevant for these studies.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

The institution has sufficient logistical resources necessary to fulfill the mission of the doctoral studies of Educational Sciences.

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

The IT system supporting the doctoral studies seems to be sufficiently effective and in place, the AcademicInfo is an internal platform of UBB serving administration of the doctoral studies and other relevant functions. Some other e-plaforms seem to be used for the support of doctoral students and their studies at the BBU, too.

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 licence for antiplagiarism software are annually purchased since 2016 and used in the doctoral studies, too. The use is quite strongly tied to the supervisors, not PhD students, it seems.

Recommendation:

- *Consider a possibility of more flexible use of the antiplagiarism software by the doctoral students.*

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.*

It seems, financial resources are in principal used optimally in the context of doctoral studies of Educational Sciences at BBU. It is vastly about internal funding, competition-free.

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.*

PhD supervisors have been involved in some research projects funded by the grants in the evaluated period. This can be said, however, more external funding for research would be beneficial and this could also open more possibilities for the doctoral students to get involved in the research co-operation with the senior academics.

Recommendation:

- *Consider possibilities to get more funding (from external, but maybe also internal sources) for the basic/fundamental research of senior academics in order to have a firm base to which doctoral research projects may be linked.*

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%.*



Although some students can benefit from additional funding, it would be desirable to make the effort and involve more students into externally granted projects (those gained from external competitions).

Recommendation

- *Make sure there are sufficient research possibilities funded by external bodies and opened to a sufficient number of PhD students, too.*

The indicator is partially 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.).*

It appears there are about 10% of the grants used for professional development of students.

Recommendation:

- *Make sure the total amount of doctoral grants obtained by the BBU through institutional grants /tuition fees which is used to reimburse professional training expenses of doctoral students within the domain Educational Sciences is sufficiently high.*

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

Criterion A.2. Research infrastructure

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

The IOSUD has a solid research infrastructure to support the conduct of the doctoral studies in the Educational Sciences domain at the BBU. This includes IT hardware and software, library, access to international databases, study and research facilities, and more.

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.*

Those involved in the doctoral studies of Educational Sciences seem to have access to research infrastructure of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the BBU. This includes, among other facilities, laboratory spaces, relevant e-databases, active computers and other IT equipment, wireless connection, and more.



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.

Overall, the staff involved in the PhD domain Educational Sciences at the BBU can be considered as well qualified for this task.

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.

According to the information available, there are six out of eleven 8 supervisors involved in PhD program Educational Sciences fulfilling the requirement. The need to aim higher seems to be evident here and would be beneficial for the domain. "

Recommendation:

- *Make sure personnel policy within the doctoral domain Educational Sciences at the BBU aims at higher number of supervisors persuasively fulfilling the requirements by having quality publications and citations in relevant international journals and other media.*

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.

A sufficient proportion of PhD advisors within the Educational Sciences domain have full-time contract with the IOSUD-BBU.

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 study subjects within the domain Educational Sciences at the BBU are taught by the BBU's experienced professionals.

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 programs¹ does not exceed 20%.*

Most supervisors work with an acceptable number of students (supervise their research projects). There are two supervisors who supervise more than 12 doctoral students which seems to be over the limit. In general, a number of supervised dissertations per supervisor differs across the supervisor body and is usually considerably high. Moreover, there is no system of training of supervisors in the skills of supervision.

Recommendation:

- *Reduce the number of supervised students per supervisor in critical cases.*
- *Consider the possibility to introduce formalized training for supervisors to make sure their supervision skills development can actually take place.*

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

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

PhD supervisors involved in the domain Educational Sciences at the BBU seem to have sufficient and internationally visible scientific activity, although there is a room for improvement.

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

¹ 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.



It appears, this indicator is fulfilled, but one can see the potential for improvement, as for international visibility of academic work of those involved here.

Recommendation:

- *Make sure there is a realistic plan to increase international visibility of the work of supervisors involved in the domain Educational Sciences at the BBU.*

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.*

It appears, more than half of the supervisors is active in the scientific field, as requested, and they meet the requested score by the minimal CNATDCU standards.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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

The quality and diversity of candidates enrolled for the admission seems to be satisfactory. Admission procedures are well thought over and effectively put in practice.

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.*

As it appears, in the period 2015-2020 the ratio between the number of graduates who entered the competition for admission to the doctoral studies of Educational Sciences at the BBU and the number of places funded from the state budget is satisfactory, comparing the requirements.

The indicator is fulfilled.



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

The data available indicate the candidates admitted to doctoral studies of Educational Sciences at the BBU demonstrate sufficiently their 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.*

There are clear admission rules and procedures at the BBU, which concerns the doctoral domain of Educational Sciences as well. These rules and procedures emphasise relevant selection criteria such as previous academic, research and professional performance, the applicant's interest in research, publication profile in the field and the proposal for a future research project. The evaluation of research project is sufficiently taken into a consideration in this procedure.

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 two years after the admission does not exceed 30% in any of student cohorts within the domain.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.2. The content of doctoral programs

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

The training programmes in PhD studies is based on the adequate development of the doctoral students' research skills and ethical behaviour in science. The curriculum has both mandatory, and optional courses. Among the mandatory ones, research methodology, didactics, ethics and academic integrity play the lead. The programmes seem to be well thought over.

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.*



As indicated above, the curriculum contains sufficient number of subjects relevant to the students' training and it is designed to meet the needs of the students to develop advanced competences in educational research.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

There is the subject on ethics and academic integrity among the mandatory subjects within curriculum of the domain Educational Sciences at the BBU.

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*

There seems to be a mechanism that makes academic training to specify learning outcomes which the students obtain after each discipline or research activity. This is linked with the student feedback in case of the doctoral studies of Educational Sciences.

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.*

The system of guidance commissions seems to be in place and available to the students I consider this a very good practice.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

The ratio does not seem to exceed 3:1, it is 2,85:1.

The indicator is fulfilled.



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

The results of doctoral studies seem to be satisfactory, and procedures of their evaluation, in principle, too.

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

Doctoral students of Educational Sciences seem to have a chance to capitalize on the research via presentations at conferences and scientific publications. They are mainly of a domestic nature (university- and national levels), though. The question is, however, whether their research gets supported, too, not only the publication of research results. This seems to vary across the domain.

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.*

Students are producing the papers/articles as requested and it appears they are of a required quality.

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.*

There are presentations of PhD students who have completed their studies of Educational Sciences during the evaluated period, and the ratio seems to be favourable.

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.

There seems to be some external experts in the commissions for the public defense of PhD dissertations in the program under the evaluation and their involvement seems to be positive for the program.

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 number in focus does not exceed two in most case (in 89%), here is a room for improvement.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

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

In case of the doctoral domain Educational Sciences, the ratio meets the requirement.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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

The doctoral programme in focus is a part of the BBU's system of quality assurance. This system seems to be set up well, having its effective impact on the programme.

The Commission for Quality Assurance is the central body of this arrangement, the Quality Assurance Code and the set of quality-related documents seem to play an important role as for the implementation. At the level of the Faculty, the Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance is established and interlinked with the central Commission and with the very programme under the evaluation.

Based on the methodology approved by the university, the BBU annually conducts an internal evaluation of the activities of the doctoral schools, student satisfaction evaluation, and peer-to-peer evaluations, among the others.

The policies are designed accordingly with the focus on all the main processes; they emphasize assurance of quality, with some regard to the enhancement of quality, too.

A procedure of analysis of topics of the PhD study programmes including self-evaluation activities is regularly carried out at the doctoral programme level. There is an internal mechanism that covers the initiation, approval, monitoring and evaluation of PhD study programmes.

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 in the domain Educational Sciences at the BBU applies the procedures ensuring continuous development of the evaluation process and its internal quality assurance. These procedures seem to relate effectively to all the above mentioned criteria.

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.*

Mechanisms of getting student feedback and working with it seem to be in place – they are addressing the very doctoral program as well as academic and administrative services.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

It seems the necessary information for the doctoral students, those interested in the studies (future candidates as well as broader public) are available in the e-format.

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.

The webpage related to the program under the evaluation seems to be offering the necessary information, as enlisted above.

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.

The doctoral schools which nurture the domain Educational Sciences at the BBU, seem to be providing the doctoral students with access to the resources that they need to conduct their studies and research.

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.

The BBU is providing its students with access to international e-databases which are relevant sources of the data for the doctoral students of Educational Sciences, too. The SAR contains the list of these databases.

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 can use such software (Turnitin) with the agreement of their supervisors.

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.



As for the infrastructure, the students seem to have the necessary conditions for learning, including the access to an international database and other study resources. Student scholarships for research are also available in some extent and some students reported they were benefiting from it.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion C.3. Internationalization

There is a significant body of foreign students of doctoral domain Educational Sciences at BBU. From the available documents, but also from interviews with various stakeholders of the programme, it may be concluded that there is a potential for the development within the programme in terms of the effective interconnection of both groups of students within the programme.

PhD students of Educational Sciences have the opportunity to benefit from mobility arrangements, but they make use of this in a limited way. The mobility traffic seems to be rather limited and one-way oriented. There are not many outgoing students and practically no incoming students who could integrate into PhD studies at the Educational Science domain for a semester or two. Also, it would be beneficial to have more frequent participation of guest speakers/visiting professors in the PhD programme, too. The joint/double degree studies also have a not-so-far-used potential for the development.

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.

As mentioned above, the doctoral schools and their students of Educational Sciences can benefit from some agreements, but student and as well staff mobility is low (not only in pandemic times).

Recommendations:

- *Consider possibilities to encourage PhD students to use opportunities for longer study stays at relevant foreign institutions, also by developing extra scholarship scheme for those involved.*
- *Consider possibilities to attract incoming international mobility students more effectively so that they get involved in the Educational Sciences doctoral schools' activities.*

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.*

Within the domain, some international visiting experts are participating and doctoral students can benefit from this.

The indicator is 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.).*

There is some support to the above mentioned activities, although there is a room for improvement.

Recommendation:

- *Consider possibilities to open to students more the framework of joint/double degree.*

The indicator is fulfilled.

IV. SWOT Analysis

<p><u>Strengths:</u> Regionally and nationally established doctoral programmes. Experienced staff.</p>	<p><u>Weaknesses:</u> Weaker links between junior and senior fundamental research. Lacking training of supervisors. Internationalisation of the programmes, despite to a significant number of foreign students enrolled.</p>
<p><u>Opportunities:</u> Further development of the program in the region and beyond.</p>	<p><u>Threats:</u> Fragmentation of the doctoral research. Risks of supersevision process (both for PhD students, and for supervisors) Isolation of the programmes from relevant international academic community.</p>

V. Overview of judgments awarded and of the recommendations

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
1.	PI	<p>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:</p> <p>a) the internal regulations of the Doctoral School;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>c) the Methodologies for organizing and conducting doctoral studies (for the admission of doctoral students, for the completion of doctoral studies);</p> <p>d) the existence of mechanisms for recognizing the status of a Doctoral advisor and the equivalence of the doctoral degree obtained abroad;</p> <p>e) functional management structures (Council of the doctoral school), giving as well proof of the regularity of meetings;</p> <p>f) the contract for doctoral studies;</p> <p>g) internal procedures for the analysis and approval of proposals regarding the training for doctoral study programs based on advanced academic studies.</p>	Fulfilled	
2.	PI	<p>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.</p>	Fulfilled	
3.	PI	<p>A.1.2.1. The existence and effectiveness of an appropriate IT system to keep track of doctoral students and their academic background.</p>	Fulfilled	
4.	PI	<p>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.</p>	Fulfilled	
5.	IP	<p>A.1.3.1. Existence of at least one research or institutional / human resources development</p>	Fulfilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider possibilities to get more funding (from external, but maybe also internal sources) for

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		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.		the basic/fundamental research of senior academics in order to have a firm base to which doctoral research projects may be linked.
6.	PI *	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%.	Partially fulfilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure there are sufficient research possibilities funded by external bodies and opened to a sufficient number of PhD students, too.
7.	PI *	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.).	Partially fulfilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure the total amount of doctoral grants obtained by the BBU through insitutional grants /tuition fees which is used to reimburse professional training expenses of doctoral students within the domain Educational Sciences is sufficiently high.
8.	CPI	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	Fulfilled	

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
9.	CPI	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.	Fulfilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure personnel policy within the doctoral domain Educational Sciences at the BBU aims at higher number of supervisors persuasively fulfilling the requirements by having quality publications and citations in relevant international journals and other media.
10.	PI *	A.3.1.2. At least 50% of all doctoral advisors have a full-time employment contract for an indefinite period with the IOSUD.	Fulfilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure there is a realistic plan to increase international visibility of the work of supervisors involved in the domain Educational Sciences at the BBU.
11.	PI	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.	Fulfilled	
12.	PI *	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%.	Partially Fulfilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the number of supervised students per supervisor in critical cases. Consider the possibility to introduce formalized training for supervisors to make sure their supervision skills development can actually take place.
13.	CPI	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	Fulfilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure there is a realistic plan to increase international visibility of the work of supervisors involved in the domain Educational Sciences at the BBU.

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		<p>contributions that indicate progress in scientific research - development - innovation for the evaluated domain. The aforementioned doctoral thesis advisors enjoy international awareness within the past five years, consisting of: membership on scientific boards of international publications and conferences; membership on boards of international professional associations; guests in conferences or expert groups working abroad, or membership on doctoral defense commissions at universities abroad or co-leading with universities abroad. For Arts and Sports and Physical Education Sciences, doctoral thesis advisors shall prove their international visibility within the past five years by their membership on the boards of professional associations, membership in organizing committees of arts events and international competitions, membership on juries or umpire teams in artistic events or international competitions.</p>		
14.	PI *	<p>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</p>	Fulfilled	
15.	PI *	<p>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.</p>	Partially fulfilled	

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
16.	PI *	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.	Fulfilled	
17.	PI	B.1.2.2. The expelling rate, including renouncement / dropping out of doctoral students 3, respectively 4, years after admission does not exceed 30%.	Fulfilled	
18.	PI	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.	Fulfilled	
19.	PI	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.	Fulfilled	
20.	PI	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.	Fulfilled	
21.	PI	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.	Fulfilled	
22.	CPI	B.2.1.5. For a doctoral study domain, the ratio between the number of doctoral students and the number of teaching staff/researchers	Fulfilled	

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		providing doctoral guidance must not exceed 3:1.		
23.	CPI	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	Fulfilled	
24.	PI *	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.	Fulfilled	
25.	PI *	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.	Partially Fulfilled	
26.	PI *	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.	Partially fulfilled	
27.	PI	C.1.1.1. The Doctoral school in the respective university study domain shall demonstrate the continuous development of the evaluation	Fulfilled	

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		<p>process and its internal quality assurance following a procedure developed and applied at the level of the IOSUD, the following assessed criteria being mandatory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 		
28.	PI *	<p>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.</p>	Fulfilled	
29.	CPI	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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; 	Fulfilled	

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		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.		
30.	PI	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.	Fulfilled	
31.	PI	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.	Fulfilled	
32.	PI	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.	Fulfilled	
33.	PI *	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.	Partially fulfilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider possibilities to encourage PhD students to use opportunities for longer study stays at relevant foreign institutions. • Consider possibilities to attract incoming international mobility students more effectively so that they get involved in the Educational Sciences doctoral programme/doctoral school activities.
34.	PI	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.	Fulfilled	
35.	PI	C.3.1.3. The internationalization of activities carried out during the doctoral studies is supported by IOSUD through concrete	Fulfilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider possibilities to open to students more the framework of joint/double degree.



No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		measures (e.g., by participating in educational fairs to attract international doctoral students; by including international experts in guidance committees or doctoral committees etc.).		

VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

The doctoral domain Educational Sciences under the evaluation is well established regionally and nationally and it seems to have a potential for further development.

VII. Annexes

The detailed schedule is attached as a separate document.