

# The External Evaluation Report of a Doctoral Study Domain - Babeş-Bolyai University

## The Doctoral Study Domain of INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EUROPEAN STUDIES

14 November 2021

### Contents

#### I. Introduction

The External Evaluation Report of a Doctoral Study Domain of **International Relations and European Studies** at **Babeş-Bolyai University** was prepared with the outcomes from three different sources. First, the online evaluation meetings from 2 November to 5 November 2021 are main sources. Online meetings with academics in the department, PhD students & graduates, ARACIS experts and other shareholders provided a good insight to me as an external evaluator.

Second, the documents in the ARACIS cloud and delivered by the doctoral school are used for this evaluation. The internal evaluation of the doctoral domain in English is a useful one.

Third, the web pages of the university, faculty & doctoral school, and department are visited. The web page of the doctoral school of **European Paradigm** (<http://pages.ubbcluj.ro/scoaladoctorala/>) is not accessible. The web page of the doctoral school of **International Relations and Security Studies** (<http://hiphi.ubbcluj.ro/doctorat/RISS.html>) is accessible, but it is only in Romanian.

#### II. Methods used

During the evaluation of the doctoral study domain, there are three different tools. First are the online meetings with ARACIS experts, school officials and professors of **Babeş-Bolyai University**, doctoral schools of **European Paradigm** and **International Relations and Security Studies**, and the PhD students and graduates. Second was the documents provided by ARACIS cloud and director of the doctoral school- **European Paradigm**. Third is the evaluation of websites of the university, the faculty & school, department, and centers.

Because of the online meetings due to the pandemic, there was no chance to visit physical structures of the campuses for external evaluators. Therefore, this report does not include the evaluations of the physical capacities of classrooms, library, research centers, lecture halls, career center, student residences, cafeteria, sports ground etc.

There were online meetings with doctoral students and graduates in political science. There were also online meetings with school officials and professors for the doctoral field of **International Relations and European Studies**.

The report mainly focuses on the quality of education in the doctoral field of **International Relations and European Studies**.

#### III. Analysis of performance indicators

##### Domain A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Babeş-Bolyai University (UBB) was founded in 1959 as a public university and has developed as one of the largest universities in Romania.

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

UBB's main sources come from government money.

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

The European Paradigm Doctoral School operates based on an operating regulation. Titular doctoral supervisors and research or affiliated university teachers, ensure the training of doctoral students enrolled in these schools and ensure collaborative relationships with specialists, full-time or affiliated to other doctoral schools of **Babeş-Bolyai University**, or other institutions in the country and abroad.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

The IT system provided by the documents and the website are good enough to keep track of doctoral students and their academic background.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

### **Performance Indicator A.1.2.2.**

The existence and use of an appropriate software program provided by the documents and the website is good enough to keep track of doctoral students and their academic background.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

### **Standard A.1.3.**

The online visits and the presented documents mostly in Romanian have given little chance for an external evaluator to analyze properly the criteria on using financial resources in efficiency.

### **Performance Indicator A.1.3.1.**

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator. More than 10% of the total amount of doctoral grants are used for doctoral students' academic activities and training.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

#### **Criterion A.2. Research infrastructure**

The doctoral domain of European Paradigm at UBB has a strong research infrastructure.

##### **Performance Indicator A.2.1.1.**

PhD students of the European Paradigm Doctoral School have at their disposal several sources of documentation, such as the Central University Library, the Library of the Faculty of European Studies. To all this is added the Region-Donation Library of the European Commission, a valuable fund of documents 1986-2001, useful for students and researchers.

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

The doctoral supervisors ensure the career guidance of the doctoral students and offer didactic consultations, tutoring and recovery programs for those with learning difficulties, being at their disposal according to the consultation schedule.

##### **Performance Indicator A.3.1.1.**

All the criteria in force regarding the number of doctoral students that can be coordinated by a doctoral supervisor were respected, and from the academic year 2021-2022 will be respected by all doctoral supervisors of SDPE the new criterion introduced in 2021. According to the situation presented, in 2 of the 5 years, the percentage was below 20%.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

At the level of the European Paradigm Doctoral School, of the 8 doctoral supervisors, only 2 are not holders with an undefined employment contract (one being an associate, and the other being a retired, with doctoral students during the grace period, from 2018), which means that a percentage of 75% of the doctoral supervisors are holders of IOSUD, with a contract for an indefinite period.

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

##### **Performance Indicator A.3.1.3.**

8 faculties in the doctoral domain of European Paradigm have a good record of publications and academic assessments. The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

The share of doctoral supervisors in the RISE field who simultaneously coordinate more than 8 doctoral students, but not more than 12, during their doctoral studies, does not exceed 20%. Being a criterion introduced in 2021, we present the situation for the last 5 years, specifying that in each year subject to evaluation, the criteria in force regarding the number of doctoral students that can be coordinated by a doctoral supervisor has been met. The situation is as follows:

2016- 15,38% (fulfilled),

2017- 16,67% (fulfilled),

2018- 50% (unfulfilled),

2019- 25% (unfulfilled),

2020- 44,44% (unfulfilled).

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

**Recommendations:** The doctoral field of **International Relations and European Studies** should not get any PhD student for an academic year. Alternatively, the doctoral school of **European Paradigm** should recruit two more professors.

**The indicator is partially fulfilled.**

#### **Performance Indicator A.3.2.1.**

All doctoral supervisors in the IRES field, from the two faculties, have at least 5 publications indexed accordingly for the RISE field. The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

Following the analysis of the evaluation sheets of the CNATDCU criteria, it can be observed that more than 50% of the doctoral supervisors assigned to IRES field continue to be scientifically active, obtaining over 25% of the score requested by the minimum CNATDCU standards, based on the evaluation from the last 5 years. In fact, over half of the PhD supervisors in the RISE field were authorized in the last 10 years, which strengthens their recent scientific activity. The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

### **Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

UBB has usually attract qualitative and diverse students to its programs including doctoral ones.

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

Doctoral domain of **European Paradigm** attracts qualitative and diverse students.

**Standard B.1.1.**

There are generally high demands to the **International Relations and European Studies** PhD program.

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

Regarding the ability to attract doctoral students from outside educational institution, the two doctoral schools related to RISE field have a calculated ratio between the number of master's degree graduates of other higher education institutions in the country or abroad, who entered the competition for admission to doctoral studies in the last 5 years and the number of places financed from the state budget put up for competition within the RISE field that is higher than 0.2 for all years.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

**Standard B.1.2.**

Admission to the doctorate within the RISE field is made respecting the regulations in force imposed by IOSUD.

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

The admission examination, as set out in the admission rules, consists of at least two tests: a written test, based on a topic announced in advance by the leader, and an interview in which the candidate's scientific concerns, as well as his / her research skills are analyzed, based on a CV and a list of publications.

These are relevant in order to determine the academic performance of the candidate prior to doctoral admission. The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

**Performance Indicator B.1.2.2.**

The increased performance of candidates admitted to doctoral studies is also demonstrated by the low expulsion rate of doctoral students - below 30%. The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

**Criterion B.2. The content of doctoral programs****Standard B.2.1.**

The training program is appropriate to improve doctoral students' research skills and to strengthen ethical behavior in science.

**Performance Indicator B.2.1.1.**

Each professor has the obligation to review the syllabuses of the courses they teach at the beginning of each semester. They must display the topics and bibliography of the courses as well as the requirements for the final exam. In the last four years, particularly due to the requirements of the Bologna reform, the curricula and subject sheets have been radically revised.

Students have access to a wide range of courses as it is shown in the curricula of the last 5 years. Each doctoral coordinator teaches at least one subject of interest for the RISE field, of which at least one subject is intended for the in-depth study of the research methodology

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

**Performance Indicator B.2.1.2.**

In this field there is a discipline dedicated to the study of ethics in scientific research. It is the "Advanced Research Theories and Methods. Ethics and integrity" which includes theoretical and practical approaches to research methodology and ethics. The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

**Performance Indicator B.2.1.3.**

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

**Performance Indicator B.2.1.4.**

From the beginning of the first year of doctoral studies, the doctoral student is assigned to a guiding commission composed of members of faculties and doctoral schools with experience in the RISE field and having specialized studies in the doctoral field of the student. The members of these doctoral commissions participate in regular meetings with the doctoral student and communicate issues relevant to the student's research. The guidance commissions for the doctoral students of the two doctoral schools are accessible.

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

**Performance Indicator B.2.1.5.**

The ratio between the number of PhD students in the RISE field and the total number of professors providing guidance is not more than 3:1.

for SDPE a number of 52 drd. are advised by a number of 19 mentors

for SD RISS a number of 26 drd. are advised by a number of 13 mentors.

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

#### **Standard B.3.1.**

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

#### **Performance Indicator B.3.1.1.**

The research is capitalized by RISE students with their involvement in various activities, conferences, workshops, and lectures. According to their contracts, the doctoral students are required to include a list of publications before submitting the graduation file, as a result of the research activity within the doctoral school.

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

The PhD students of International Relations and European Studies has an active participation to the national and international conferences. The findings from the assessed institution's documents and the online evaluation visits have indicated that the doctoral program meets the standards of this indicator.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

#### **Standard B.3.2.**

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

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

Regarding the criterion introduced in 2021, a referent in the public support commissions can be present at most twice in an academic year, there are two situations that do not meet the criterion looking back to 2016. At the time of presentations, all the legislative criteria in force at that date were met. From now on, the criterion introduced in 2021 will be met by all PhD supervisors in the IRES field.

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

The average ratio between the number of doctoral theses assigned to a certain external reviewer and the number of doctoral theses presented in the RISE field, by reference to the last 5 years was 0.04 / reviewer in the case of the reviewer who participated in the highest number of doctoral theses (4). In the case of the majority, the ratio did not exceed 0.02 / reviewer.

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

## **Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

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

#### **Standard C.1.1.**

Looking at the RISE doctoral field in UBB, the institutional framework exists and policies as well as procedures are applied for the internal quality assurance.

#### **Performance Indicator C.1.1.1.**

The constant development of the process of evaluation and internal quality assurance is done in accordance with a procedure developed and applied at IOSUD level, through internal regulations contained in the guide for Quality Assurance at Babeş-Bolyai University which is implemented by the Quality Assessment and Assurance Commission in UBB.

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

During the doctoral studies, evaluation mechanisms are implemented to identify the needs, as well as the general level of student satisfaction with the doctoral studies program, in order to continuously improve academic and administrative processes in accordance with the Quality Assurance procedures in Babeş-Bolyai University. The report on student satisfaction in UBB, made once every 2 years, also includes doctoral students.

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

#### **Standard C.2.1**

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

#### **Performance Indicator C.2.1.1.**

In order to ensure the accessibility and transparency of information, as well as to ensure easy access to any kind of information of interest to candidates and doctoral students, doctoral schools in the RISE field provide, online, all the necessary information.

They can be accessed both directly on the ISD website, at: <https://doctorat.ubbcluj.ro> in Romanian, English, German and Hungarian. The SD website is at: <https://sites.euro.ubbcluj.ro/paradigmaeuropeana/> și <http://hiphi.ubbcluj.ro/doctorat/RISS.html>

However, the web page of the doctoral school of **European Paradigm** (<http://pages.ubbcluj.ro/scoaladoctorala/>) is not accessible.



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

**The indicator is partially fulfilled.**

#### **Standard C.2.2.**

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

##### **Performance Indicator C.2.2.1.**

At the level of IOSUD and SD in the field of RISE, doctoral students are provided with access to the resources necessary to carry out doctoral studies. They benefit, through the institutional e-mail address, from a wide range of research databases, such as Web of Science, ANELIS, ResearchGate, Academia and others. By connecting to the University's WI-FI network, they can access even more databases on the Web of Science and other profile sites.

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

PhD students can benefit, upon request, from checking the degree of similarity of the doctoral thesis or articles for publication in the TURNITIN program. Students must send a request to the SD secretariat, together with the paper they wish to analyze.

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

All doctoral students have access to scientific research laboratories, based on a prior appointment and a supporting document certifying their status as a doctoral student.

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

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

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

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

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

At the level of IOSUD and the RISE field, there is an active strategy to increase the degree of internationalization of doctoral studies. Thus, within the RISE field, the internationalization process is carried out according to the Internationalization Strategy of the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca 2021-2024.

The doctoral schools sign, through UBB and the Center for International Cooperation, mobility agreements with universities abroad, with research institutes, as well as ERASMUS type agreements. The percentage of doctoral students who participated in such mobilities, from the RISE field, is below 35%. But this is understandable situation under the conditions of the pandemic.

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

**The indicator is partially fulfilled.**

**Performance Indicator C.3.1.2.**

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

**Performance Indicator C.3.1.3.**

Internationalization is intensively supported at the level of the RISE field, being one of the most important pillars of the field. The doctoral defenses are made in partnerships with international reviewers, both for Romanian and foreign doctoral students, doctoral studies in co-supervision are encouraged, although in the last 5 years, there have been no such cases. International conferences, posted on the websites of doctoral schools and ISD, as well as international lectures organized by SD in which our PhD students participate (according to the lists of their publications) are evidence of the internationalization of RISE.

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

**The indicator is fully fulfilled.**

**IV. SWOT Analysis**

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A high quality of PhD education.</li> <li>✓ A high quality of academic staff.</li> <li>✓ A high quality of student profile.</li> <li>✓ Various mobility opportunities for the students under Erasmus and others.</li> <li>✓ Good record of participation to national and international conferences.</li> <li>✓ Good record of publications for PhD students in national and international academic journals.</li> <li>✓ Various research funds and grants for PhD students.</li> <li>✓ PhD graduates have got better jobs and administrative and financial promotion after getting PhD degree.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weakness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increasing number of PhD students.</li> <li>✓ Two different close PhD programs at UBB under the names of “International Relations and European Studies” and “International Relations and Security”.</li> <li>✓ Lack of active web page of the doctoral school of European Paradigm.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Getting more internationally reputed</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Outnumbered PhD students in coming</li> </ul>

PhD program.	years, if the current problem cannot be addressed properly.
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#### V. Overview of judgments awarded and of the recommendations

No.	Type of indicator	Performance Indicator	Judgement	Recommendations
1	A	A.3.1.4	The share of doctoral supervisors within the RISE field must not exceed 20%. The ratio is at 44,44% in 2020.	The doctoral field of RISE should not get any PhD student for an academic year. Alternatively, the department should recruit two more professors.
2	C	C.3.1.1.	Good level of internationalization	The doctoral domain should attract more international students if the department are promoted more abroad.

#### VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

The doctoral school of European Paradigm and its PhD program “International Relations and European Studies” at UBB has a well-established academic structure. There is a high quality of PhD education in International Relations thanks to high quality of academic staff in the department. The academic staff of the doctoral field have a good record of academic publications and close involvement with various academic institutions. The supervising system in the doctoral domain works well. The department provides good mobility opportunities to its PhD students through Erasmus and other bilateral cooperation. Grants and research funds are good enough for PhD students to conduct their research and to develop academic skills. The PhD students have a good record of academic publications. The PhD students also participate actively in national and international conferences.

I have two main recommendations:

First, it is quite confusing that there are two different doctoral programs under the names of “**International Relations and European Studies**” and “**International Relations and Security**”. Many external visitors of the university and its web page likely assume that these two doctoral programs are the same. The doctoral field of “International Relations and European Studies” at European Paradigm should be re-named as “**European Studies and World Affairs**”. So, it is not confused with the doctoral school of “International Relations and Security”.

Second, developing an interactive web page in English is a must to be an active member of the international academic and think tank community. The doctoral school should publish op-eds, policy briefs, and reports apart from academic articles. The school should organize conferences with other think tanks, national and international organizations apart from only academic activities. The school should have their own social media accounts and make regular sharing to increase awareness of their existence and products.

## **VII. Annexes**

**1.**The timetable of the evaluation visit - IOSUD / doctoral study domains at Babeş-Bolyai University from 2.11.2021 to 5.11.2021.

**Prof.Dr. Selçuk Çolakođlu**

External Evaluator

Turkish Center for Asia Pacific Studies, Turkey

Beijing Normal University-Hong Kong Baptist University United International College, China