



**External Evaluation Report of the Doctoral Study Domain
in
Public Administration
at the
National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA)**

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I. Introduction

The evaluation of the doctoral study domain in "Public Administration" (PA) at the National University of Political Studies and Public (SNSPA) was conducted from 12 to 16 July 2021 as a hybrid evaluation procedure. Most of the internal meetings of the review team and interviews with representatives of SNSPA were organised as online-meetings. The assessment of the PA domain was part of an institutional evaluation of the Institution Organising Doctoral Study Programs (IOSUD). The procedure was organised by Prof. Mihail Anton and Prof. Seghedin Eugen Neculai.

As a review team for the PA domain, Prof. univ. dr. Sevastian Cercel as a coordinator and national expert, Prof. Dr. Stefan Handke as a foreign expert and Cristian-Andrei Pătrașcu as a student reviewer were responsible for the assessment.

Founded in 2001/2002, SNSPA became the first doctoral organisation in the field of Public Administration in Romania. A core of SNSPA is the Public Administration Doctoral School, which is mainly run by three highly experienced professors in the function of PhD supervisors. At the time of the assessment, the three of PhD supervisors were coordinating 12 PhD students. The number of graduates since 2002 amounts to 103.

II. Methods used

In the course of the hybrid assessment, discussions were held with all relevant stakeholders of the SNSPA over the course of a week. Online interviews with programme managers, teachers, doctoral students, graduates and employers were conducted with simultaneous English translation.

The interviews could be thoroughly prepared by the evaluators using the self-evaluation documents provided by SNSPA. This allowed questions to be asked directly on topics that were relevant to the group in question. The meetings for the particular aspects of the PA programme were supplemented by online meetings with the management of SNSPA, the Ethics Commission and other central bodies.

Due to the hybrid review process, a visit to the higher education institution was not possible for all members of the review panel. However, the discussions with teachers and students gave a positive impression. This is particularly true for the feedback regarding the infrastructure and the accessibility of library resources.



III. Analysis of ARACIS's performance indicators

Domain A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

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

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

Performance Indicator A.1.1.1.

SNSPA states to have implemented the functioning mechanisms provided by the specific legislation regarding the organisation of doctoral studies. Specific Regulations at the level of SNSPA are attached to the IOSUD file and are published on the website of the Doctoral School. The Doctoral Program in Public Administration operates within the SNSPA Multidisciplinary Doctoral School.

The review team discussed the formal requirements with the programme managers and could not find any evidence of inadequacies.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator A.1.1.2.

SNSPA states 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. This comprises

- a) the acceptance of new doctoral supervising members, as well as Regulations regarding the way in which a PhD supervisor's status of member of the doctoral school can be withdrawn;
- b) the mechanisms through which decisions are taken regarding the opportunity, structure and content of the training program based on advanced university studies;
- c) the procedures for changing the PhD supervisor of a certain PhD student and the procedures for mediating conflicts;
- d) the conditions under which the doctoral program may be interrupted;
- e) ways to prevent fraud in scientific research, including plagiarism;
- f) ensuring access to research resources;
- g) the attendance obligations of the PhD students, according to a methodology written by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

The review team discussed the formal requirements with the programme managers and could not find any evidence of inadequacies.

The indicator is fulfilled.



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

Performance Indicator A.1.2.1.

According to the SER, the SNSPA Doctoral School has an adequate computer system for the records of PhD students and their academic career. This is an integral part of the SNSPA computer system and is built around an ORACLE 8i database. The database uses the following hardware and software: Fujitsu-Siemens Primergy TX200 server; Windows 2000 operating system; Oracle 8i DataBase Server; Oracle WebDB server; Oracle 8i clients installed in administrative and managerial departments. The beneficiaries of the database are administrative and managerial staff members, as well as students and teachers. The objectives of the database are school records (personal data of PhD students) and evidence of the academic career of PhD students.

After discussions with teachers, students and graduates, the panel considers the SNSPA's equipment to be adequate and suitable for achieving the objectives of the PA programme.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator A.1.2.2.

Besides the resources described under A 1.2.1, SNSPA states to uses a computer program, Anti-plagiarism system, approved by the Ministry of Education for verifying the similarity percentages in the PhD theses elaborated within the Public Administration field.

After discussions with teachers, students and graduates, the panel considers the SNSPA's equipment to be adequate and suitable for achieving the objectives of the PA programme.

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.

Performance Indicator A.1.3.1.

According to the SER, between April and December 2020 in the Doctoral School of SNSPA, Public Administration program, the project FDI-2020-0264 START took place, which supported research excellence in SNSPA's Public Administration Doctoral School, by developing the capacity of advanced scientific research funded by CNFIS, institutional development grant. The project, carried out with the support of the Center for Public Law and Public Administration (CDPSA) within SNSPA, aimed to support research in the field of Public Administration at SNSPA and develop the skills of young PhD and post-doctoral students in advanced research.



Details of the objectives and implementation of the funding programme are explained to the panel so that the requirements of the standard can be considered to have been met.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator A.1.3.2.

SNSPA reports about the FDI-2020-0264 START project called Supporting the research of excellence in SNSPA's Public Administration Doctoral School by developing the capacity for advanced scientific research with funding from the CNFIS (The National Council for Financing High Education), 9 PhD students, 3 post-doctoral students, 3 professors with experience in research and a scientific researcher (professor) with experience in Public Administration research were identified and co-opted in the research activity. In this project they carried out research activities due to financial support, which was made possible.

The panel saw that the SNSPA Doctoral School received additional funding sources besides government funding so that the requirements of the standard can be considered to have been met.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *A.1.3.3.¹

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

The representatives of the PA study domain affirm that there have been reimbursed all the expenses of the doctoral students concerning professional training, on their requests, which were also influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic situation. The IOSUD evaluation team discussed the formal requirements with the SNSPA management and could not find any evidence of inadequacies.

The indicator is 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.

Performance Indicator A.2.1.1.

¹ 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.



The coordinators of the Doctoral Domain in Public Administration state the Public Administration programme operates in the SNSPA Multidisciplinary Doctoral School, so that it benefits from all the existing endowments and infrastructure of the IOSUD-SNSPA.

After discussions with teachers, students and graduates, the panel considers the SNSPA's equipment to be adequate and suitable for achieving the objectives of the PA programme. 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. The venues of SNSPA were not visited by the foreign experts of the review team, but during the hybrid assessment, colleagues from Romania were visiting them and conceived them as sufficient.

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.

Performance Indicator A.3.1.1.

The doctoral domain in PA at SNSPA is mainly run by three experienced researchers, who have many years of experience in research and practice. The self-evaluation report of SNSPA points out that the Public Administration field has separated from the common Legal and Administrative Sciences field. Further, it is admitted that the scientific supervisor prof. Emil Bălan, PhD might not meet all the criteria of this standard. At the time of his habilitation qualification, the scientific supervisor met the standards of the common field of Legal and Administrative Sciences and continues to meet the standards for the field of Legal Sciences (being a member of CNATDCU - Legal Sciences Committee, until 2020). The criterion regarding the articles published in ISI journals for the field of Public Administration was introduced in the standards in 2017.

However, the discussion between panel members and the representatives of the doctoral school showed that the reputation and involvement of the professors in the scientific community is well visible and thus provides favourable conditions for the supervision of doctoral studies. The panel concludes that the SNSPA Doctoral School in Public Administration complies with the requirement to have minimum three doctoral thesis advisors within that doctoral domain.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *A.3.1.2.

According to the self-evaluation report of SNSPA, three professors are tenured at the Faculty of Public Administration.

The panel discussed the formal requirements with the programme managers and could not find any evidence of inadequacies.

The indicator is fulfilled.



Performance Indicator A.3.1.3.

The key supervisors at the doctoral school in Public Administration have a strong research and publication record as well as projects being conducted. The main focus of their activities is devoted to advanced studies in administrative law and fundamental rights and freedoms.

The standard which required that the study subjects in the education programme 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, is fulfilled.

At the same time, the legal background of the PhD supervisors leads to the fact that the PA programme is clearly dominated by legal issues. Since public administration is an interdisciplinary field, however, it should be aimed in the long run that PhD supervisors are not exclusively legal experts. By increasing the staff, social scientists or original public administration scientists should also be included in the circle of doctoral supervisors.

Recommendations: It should be aimed in the long run that PhD supervisors are not exclusively legal experts. By increasing the staff, social scientists or original public administration scientists should also be included in the circle of doctoral supervisors.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *A.3.1.4.

According to the self-evaluation report of SNSPA, the number of PhD supervisors currently coordinating more than 12 PhD students is two, representing 66% of the total number. Each of the two PhD supervisors carries out a programme of enrolment within the limits of a maximum of 12 coordinated PhD students.

The panel finds that 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%.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

Performance Indicator A.3.2.1.

In the self-report a description is provided, which shows that all three PhD supervisors in the field of Public Administration have carried out a scientific activity likely to ensure national and international visibility. These activities cover memberships in editorial boards, guest professorships abroad, memberships in scientific committees of publications, academic associations and awards being granted.



After discussions with the PhD supervisors, students and graduates, the panel considers the academic performance and international activity to be adequate and suitable for achieving the objectives of the PA programme.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *A.3.2.2.

The SNSPA report states that all PhD supervisors in the field of Public Administration are scientifically active, obtaining the score required by the CNATDCU minimum standards.

The panel discussed the formal requirements with the programme managers and could not find any evidence of inadequacies.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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

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.

It is stated that the enrollment in the competition for admission to doctoral studies in SNSPA, in a doctoral field, is not conditioned by the field in which the bachelor's or master's degree was obtained. The total cumulative duration of the bachelor's and master's degree cycle must be at least 300 ECTS, except for long-term studies. Citizens who are not part of the European Union, the European Economic Area and the Swiss Confederation (non-EU), graduates of master's degree studies or graduates with a bachelor's degree or equivalent in long-term university studies may also apply for admission to doctoral studies. (4, 5, 6 years). The recognition of the studies carried out by the students outside Romania will be carried out by the Specialized Directorate within the Ministry of Education.

The topic proposed in the individual PhD research project must fall - as a condition of eligibility - in one of the fields of PhD research in SNSPA. The fields of the PhD programme are proposed by the supervising PhD professors from SNSPA, which are endorsed by the director of the Doctoral School and approved by the University Senate of SNSPA.

After discussions with teachers, students and graduates, the panel considers the SNSPA's selection process to be adequate and suitable for achieving the objectives of the PA programme.

The indicator is fulfilled.



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

Performance Indicator *B.1.2.1.

The admission of qualified candidates is well described in the self-evaluation documents of the SNSPA. The selection of PhD students for the PA programme is made through an admission competition. The admission competition takes place in two stages: verification of the candidates' files and an interview. The admission competition is reserved for graduates of master's degree studies, but also graduates with a bachelor's degree or equivalent, issued until the year of graduation of the first class of bachelor's degree organised in accordance with the provisions of Romanian laws.

A selection interview of PhD students takes place in front of a committee composed of a president and at least two specialists, who are tenured professors at SNSPA with the degree of professor or associate professor, and a secretary of the committee, also a tenured professor at SNSPA, both in Romanian and in an international language (preferably English). The committees are approved by the Rector / University Senate of SNSPA. The hierarchy of candidates is based on the results of the interview, and the minimum admission average is 7.00.

Then panel found that the admission to the doctoral study programme in Public Administration is based on selection criteria, in particular previous academic, research and professional performance, publications in the domain and a proposal for a research subject. A compulsory interview is part of the admission procedure.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.1.2.2.

According to the standard, the expelling rate, including renouncement / dropping out of doctoral students 3, respectively 4, years after admission should not exceed 30%.

The panel discussed the formal requirements with the programme managers and could not find any evidence of inadequacies.

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 behaviour in science.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.1.

According to the standard, the training programme based on advanced university studies comprises at least three subjects that are relevant for training PhD students in scientific research, of which at least one subject is intended for in-depth study of the research methodology and / or statistical data processing. In line with the requirement, SNSPA demonstrates that the following training elements are offered for the



doctoral programme PA: "Advanced Studies in Administrative Law" and "Human rights and fundamental freedoms". Further, the self-evaluation report describes that the students of the Public Administration doctoral program had the possibility to participate in courses / lectures on topics relevant to scientific training, including seminars for familiarization with statistical programs (SPSS) used in social science research.

Then panel found that the training programme is sufficient and meets the requirements of the standards. At the same time, it is recommended that the offered courses should be more interdisciplinary or focused on a broader area of administrative science. The emphasis on legal aspects in the two disciplines offered leads to narrowing the perspective on public administration, which is no longer in line with the needs of modern public administration.

Recommendations: It is recommended to broaden the focus beyond mainly legal perspectives and to make the interdisciplinary approach of public administration more explicit.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.2.

PhD students from the Public Administration program have the opportunity to access subjects on ethics and integrity in scientific research, offered within the SNSPA Doctoral School.

The panel discussed the requirement with the programme managers and students and could not find any evidence of inadequacies.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.3.

It is mentioned in the self-evaluation report that SNSPA has created mechanisms to ensure that the training programme based on advanced university studies aims at "learning outcomes", specifying the knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy that PhD students should acquire after completing each subject or through research activities. In the first year - PhD students from all fields are offered a consistent list of specialised courses from which they can choose which courses they want to follow, in accordance with their own doctoral program and with the recommendations of the supervisor. At the beginning of the second year, students defend the thesis research project in front of a committee, as well as the stages that are to be completed, together with the methodological outline, etc. In the second and third years, the students submit three papers, that will form the basis for the elaboration of some chapters in the thesis. At the end of the third year, PhD students defend their thesis in front of the Supervision Committee and, subsequently, in front of the appointed Final Defence Committee. For each subject, a sheet is developed in a standardized format, in which the specific skills are listed for the PhD student who acquires them at the end of the course. These skills are defined in terms of learning outcomes.

After discussions with teachers, students and graduates, the panel considers the SNSPA's mechanisms to create a sufficient training programme to be adequate and suitable for achieving the objectives of the PA programme.

The indicator is fulfilled.



Performance Indicator B.2.1.4.

For the study domain of Public Administration, SNSPA describes various mechanisms of guidance and counselling for PhD students. For instance, there is a content analysis mechanism, which includes a component for verifying the individual path of PhD students, which is represented by the stage evaluations (research programs, research reports). The Research programme includes the presentation of a scientific research plan, drafted by each PhD student and presented to the supervision committee that evaluates the respective document.

The discussions with teachers, students and graduates showed that the SNSPA's mechanisms to support students and track their academic research activities are adequate and suitable for achieving the objectives of the PA programme. The positive overall impression that students and graduates leave with of the support they receive at SNSPA comes primarily from the personal relationship they have with the PhD supervisors. However, there can also be a danger in the strength of a close personal relationship. The HEI should therefore continually check whether a classic "master-student relationship" meets the requirements of a modern form of doctorate. In the mid-term, consideration should be given to strengthening the students' ties to the SNSPA as an institution and to establishing a working and trust relationship that includes other people besides the student and the supervisor.

Recommendations: The SNSPA should continuously examine whether a classic "master-student relationship" meets the requirements of a modern form of doctoral studies and whether it might be necessary to strengthen the students' ties to the SNSPA as an institution.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.5.

According to the standard 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. With the current number of 12 PhD students in the Public Administration programme and three supervisors, the ratio seems to be higher than required. However, teaching activities are carried out by other professors and lecturers at SNSPA as well.

The panel discussed the formal requirements with the programme managers and students and could not find any evidence of inadequacies.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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



Performance Indicator B.3.1.1.

The PhD students in the field of public administration according to the training program, carry out scientific research activities, which are then capitalised in the shape of articles, studies, or participation at national and international conferences through which they disseminate the obtained results. The self-evaluation report of SNSPA presents results for the doctoral domain in PA obtained in the last 5 years.

The panel discussed the requirement with the programme managers and students and could not find any evidence of inadequacies.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *B.3.1.2.

According to the standard, 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 and the number of doctoral students who have completed their doctoral studies within the evaluated period (past 5 years) is at least 1.

The provided data of SNSPA and the discussions with students and graduates show for the Public Administration programme that all students participate in the expected activities and present their work in scientific conferences.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

Performance Indicator *B.3.2.1.

The doctoral program in public administration aims to comply with the rule that the number of PhD theses assigned to a certain specialist from a higher education institution, other than the evaluated IOSUD, must not exceed two for the theses that are supervised by the same PhD supervisor, in a year.

The panel discussed the requirement with the programme managers and students and could not find any evidence of inadequacies.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *B.3.2.2.

From the situation presented in clarifications, it results that the indicator is fulfilled, taking into consideration that in the commissions for the defense of the thesis, there have been also included some of the scientific specialists that have mentored the doctoral students during their studies.

The indicator is fulfilled.



Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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

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.

IOSUD-SNSPA has developed and periodically applies a procedure for evaluation and internal monitoring of the evolution of doctoral schools. The highlighted mechanisms cover the scientific work of doctoral advisors, the infrastructure and logistics necessary to carry out the research activity, and the procedures and subsequent rules based on which doctoral studies are organised.

The discussions with teachers, students, graduates and employers showed that the SNSPA's mechanisms to improve the quality of the doctoral studies in PA are adequate and suitable.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *C.1.1.2.

During the doctoral training internship, feedback mechanisms are implemented by doctoral students to identify their needs, as well as their general level of satisfaction with the classes of the advanced studies School and the doctoral study programme.

Two longer interview rounds with current students and graduates illustrated that there is generally a very high level of satisfaction with the programmes offered by SNSPA. The participants gave the impression that the HEI is responsive to their needs and that a functioning feedback system is in place.

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.

Performance Indicator C.2.1.1.

The self-evaluation documents of SNSPA point out that the IOSUD publishes on the website information such as the Doctoral School regulation, the admission regulation, the doctoral studies contract, the study completion regulation including the procedure for the public presentation of the thesis, the content of the PA training programme, the academic and scientific profile, thematic areas/research themes of the doctoral advisors within the domain, as well as their institutional contact data, information on the standards for developing the doctoral thesis, and 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. Also a list of doctoral students within the domain with necessary information is available.

The panel discussed the requirements with the programme managers and could not find any evidence of inadequacies.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

Performance Indicator C.2.2.1.

In the self-evaluation documents, SNSPA states that the PhD students have access to a series of digital databases through the Doctoral School. The SNSPA academic community has access to full-text articles from specialised scientific journals offered on platforms.

The panel found that all doctoral students have free access to platforms providing academic databases relevant to the doctoral studies domain of their thesis.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.2.2.2.

PhD students can utilise, upon request, the anti-plagiarism software to check their PhD thesis. This is possible only once, at the end of the thesis. The on-demand verification is different from the verification performed by the Doctoral School's office for starting the public defence procedure.

The panel discussed the requirements with the programme managers and could not find any evidence of inadequacies.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.2.2.3.

According to the report of SNSPA, PhD students have access to research centres and other facilities offered by the Doctoral School, according to the Regulations for the organisation of doctoral studies. The students of the Public Administration programme carry out research activities and projects, and are supported by the Center for Public Law and Public Administration (CDPSA). CDPSA aims to organise research, development, consulting, and expertise in the fields of public law and public administration. In the 12 years of activity, the Center has carried out numerous research and dissemination projects funded by CNCSIS, ANCS, and CNFIS.; it has also supported the development of doctoral research programmes in the field of public administration for approx.30 PhD students who have completed and defended their theses. Further, with the support of the Center, 15 papers in the form of a book and more than 10 scientific events were made and published.



Based on the self-evaluation report and interviews with student, graduates, programme managers and representatives of the research centre, the panel arrived to the conclusion that all doctoral students have access to scientific research laboratories or other facilities being relevant for Public Administration.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion C.3. Internationalization

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.

With the self-evaluation report and some additional documents, the doctoral school state that, students of the Public Administration doctoral programme benefit from Erasmus agreements concluded by SNSPA with universities or research institutes abroad. Further, PhD students participate in international scientific conferences and in projects carried out by the SNSPA Doctoral School.

The discussions with teachers, students, graduates and employers showed that SNSPA's efforts for internationalisation are appreciated. The panel has no doubts that the indicator is fulfilled also regarding the PA programme.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.3.1.2.

According to the standard, support should be granted, including financial support, to the organisation of doctoral studies in international co-tutelage or invitation of leading experts to deliver courses/lectures for doctoral students. The interviews with students and graduates of the doctoral study domain in Public Administration provided information concerning the international activities at SNSPA.

The panel found that all doctoral students were able to participate in international activities and the HEI invited international experts to deliver courses or lectures in the field of public administration and law.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.3.1.3.

According to the own statement of SNSPA, the increase of the international visibility of the doctoral programme in Public Administration from SNSPA is a process that is constantly expanding and it can also be illustrated by the attraction of PhD students from other countries, such as Albania or Nigeria.

The panel found that the internationalisation of activities carried out during the doctoral studies is supported by SNSPA through concrete measures, which serve the purposes of the PA programme.

The indicator is fulfilled.

IV. Overview of judgments awarded and of the recommendations

No.	Type of indicator (*, C)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
1	A.3	A.3.1.3.	fulfilled	It should be aimed in the long run that PhD supervisors are not exclusively legal experts. By increasing the staff, social scientists or original public administration scientists should also be included in the circle of doctoral supervisors.
2	B.2.	B.2.1.1.	fulfilled	It is recommended to broaden the focus beyond mainly legal perspectives and to make the interdisciplinary approach of public administration more explicit.
3	B.2.	B.2.1.4.	fulfilled	The SNSPA should continuously examine whether a classic "master-student relationship" meets the requirements of a modern form of doctoral studies and whether it might be necessary to strengthen the students' ties to the SNSPA as an institution.

VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

Overall, the doctoral programme in administrative science at SNSPA appears to be a highly commendable programme. The objective of training the next generation of academics for research in and about public administration in Romania and beyond deserves the highest appreciation. The institutional environment at SNSPA provides a reliable framework for fruitful research achievements by students recruited through a transparent selection process.

Particularly noteworthy is the close connection of the HEI with all levels of the public service in Romania and the European Union. This is evident not only in the research topics dealt with, but also in the professional background of the doctoral students, who have in some cases already made a career in the public sector.

For the continuation of the positive work of the SNSPA and a further development of the already state-of-the-art doctoral programme, only a few optimisation options are recommended. This includes, in particular, making the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary character of administrative science more visible. Furthermore, the guidance of the doctorate should take place in a framework that is less focused on the interpersonal relationship between a single professor and a doctoral student, but rather on adapting the model of a graduate school.