

Nr.6303/13.11.2023

The External Evaluation Report of Doctoral Study Domain in Geography

Contents

I. Introduction

II. Methods used

III. Analysis of performance indicators

IV. SWOT Analysis

V. Overview of judgments awarded and of the recommendations

VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

VII. Annexes

I. Introduction¹

This report addresses the External Evaluation of the Institution Organizing Doctoral Study Programs (IOSUD) in the doctoral study domain of Geography at the University of Craiova (UCV). The evaluation period occurred between October 25 and October 27, 2023.

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

- the activity of doctoral supervisors and doctoral students;
- research outcomes in relation to the defended doctoral theses in public meetings and respective CNATDCU validation;
- evaluation of the doctoral field in Geography with reference to the criteria and performance indicators (A, B, C);
- the activity of the Doctoral School of Sciences at the University of Craiova;
- the activity of the University of Craiova as the Institution Organizing Doctoral Study Programs in the domain of Geography;
- the Ph.D. program in Geography is part of the Doctoral School of Sciences, along with the Chemistry, Physics, and Mathematics domains.

The Evaluation Panel for doctoral studies in the domain of Geography consists of:

1. Coordinator Prof. Univ. Dr. Liliana Dumitrache, Universitatea din București.
2. International expert Prof. Dariia Kholiavchuk, Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, Ukraine.
3. Ph.D. student Sorin Furdui, Universitatea din Oradea.

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

The University of Craiova has ten doctoral schools. The Doctoral School of Sciences was established in 1967 by regrouping the doctoral fields of Chemistry, Physics, Informatics, and Mathematics in accordance with the stipulations of the National Education Law no. 1/2011 and as a result of

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



Government Decision no. 681/2011 regarding the Code of Doctoral Studies. On January 15, 2016, by Order M.E.N.C.S no. 3003/2016, the doctoral field Geography was approved. It is structured within the Doctoral School of Sciences, further affiliated with IOSUD at the University of Craiova.

The doctoral field of Geography has been operating within the Doctoral School of Sciences since 2016 and is the most recently accredited program. Currently, the doctoral field of Geography has a body of three Doctoral supervisors. During the assessed period, the doctoral field of Geography had 23 students. Five of them completed their studies and were awarded the Ph.D. title while three of them in the last two years and one is planned for November 2023.

II. Methods used

At first, the consultation and analysis of the documentation in electronic format sent by IOSUD were carried out, including the following:

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

Updated documents referred to in the periodic self-evaluation report were requested from Professor Sorin Daniel Micu, Director of the Doctoral School of Science, and Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu, Field Coordinator in Geography, specifically annexes 12 and 61 (supplementary annexes 1, 2).

We also conducted consultations on various websites and gathered information from the following sources:

- The website of the University of Craiova: <https://www.ucv.ro/en/>
- The website of the Doctoral School of Sciences: <http://stiinte.ucv.ro/doctorat/>
- The website of the Library of the University of Craiova: <http://biblio.central.ucv.ro/>
- The website of the Research Hub of Applied Sciences (INCESA): <http://www.incesa.ro>
- The online platform on student records <https://cis01.central.ucv.ro/>

The physical visit took place between October 25 and October 27, 2023. A preliminary meeting was held on October 25th to introduce the panel members and discuss the main methodological aspects related to the evaluation of doctoral studies.

In the following days, a series of meetings and discussions were held at the University of Craiova (annex 3):

1. Panel evaluators' meeting with representatives of the institution and the Council for Academic Doctoral Studies (CSUD) on October 25th, 2023.
2. Panel evaluators' meeting with the academic staff corresponding to the doctoral study domain on October 25th, 2023.
3. Panel evaluators' meeting with graduates corresponding to the doctoral study domain on October 25th, 2023.
4. Panel evaluators' meeting with the doctoral students corresponding to the doctoral study domain on October 26th, 2023.
5. Panel evaluators' meeting with graduates corresponding to the doctoral study domain on October 26th, 2023.
6. Panel evaluators' meeting with the members of the Ethics Commission on October 26th, 2023.



7. Panel evaluators' meeting with the Commission for Quality Evaluation and Assurance (CEAC) members and the Quality Assurance Department on October 26th, 2023.
8. Panel evaluators' meeting with Doctoral School Council (CSD) members on October 26th, 2023.
9. Panel evaluators' meeting with the Directors/persons in charge of the research centers/laboratories within the doctoral study domain on October 26th, 2023.
10. Final meeting with the representatives of the institution and the Council for Academic Doctoral Studies (CSUD) on October 27th, 2023.

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

- Professor Liliana Dumitrache and Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu about numerical and nominal situation with graduates of the doctorate in Geography on October 26th (annex 4).
- Professor Liliana Dumitrache and Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu about scholarship regulations on October 26th (annex 5).
- Professor Liliana Dumitrache and Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu about financial support document for students with disabilities on October 26th (annex 6)
- Professor Liliana Dumitrache and Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu about updated documents regarding doctoral student activity sent on October 26th (annex 7).
- Assoc. Prof. Dariia Kholiavchuk and Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu about financially supported (for training activities) students on October 27th (annex 8).
- Assoc. Prof. Dariia Kholiavchuk and Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu about updated information regarding meeting CNATDCU standards by supervisors sent on October 27th (annex 2).

During the visit, all the claimed buildings and spaces involved in the studies were visited, including:

- Classrooms and lecture halls.
- Ten laboratories.
- The institution's library.
- The Research Center in Innovative and Regional Tourism.
- Career Counseling and Guidance Center
- Offices of the Doctoral School and Department of Geography
- The student canteen.
- Reading rooms intended for students;
- Student dormitories;
- Sports base.

III. Analysis of ARACIS's performance indicators

Domain A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

The UCV has implemented the mechanisms for efficient functioning as provided in the relevant law on the organization of the Doctoral School of Sciences. Specific regulations are in place and are applied at the levels of IOSUD and the Doctoral School of Sciences. The doctoral field of Geography has institutional, administrative, management structures, and financial resources secured by the Doctoral School of Sciences. The Doctoral School of Sciences is overseen by a Council, where the Doctorate in Geography is represented by:

PhD Student Ionuț Adrian Drăguleasa (Geography).



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

The university provides an online platform (*evstud*) with semi-restricted access for recording doctoral students and their academic achievements. The software is also made available to support academic research and to assess possible instances of scientific plagiarism. IOSUD ensures that the financial resources, as well as the income from doctoral programs, are supplemented by additional funding beyond that provided by the Government.

The Doctoral School of Sciences has a modern research infrastructure with diverse and complex laboratories along with well-equipped facilities.

Students in the Geography program have access to all the libraries at UCV.

Human resources, including teaching staff, employees, and technicians, ensure the smooth operation of the Ph.D. program in Geography. Within the Geography field, three doctoral supervisors are actively involved, overseeing the scientific activities of 23 students in the evaluated period.

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

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

The regulations are in place and they are applied at the level of IOSUD and of the Doctoral School of Sciences, namely: specific regulations, the methodology for conducting the competition for the position of director of the Council of Doctoral Studies, methodologies for organising and conducting doctoral program, the existence of mechanisms for the recognition of the position of doctoral supervisor, functional management structures, internal procedures for analysis and approval of proposals on the topic of doctoral study program.

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

- (a) the internal regulations of the Doctoral School;*
- (b) the Methodology for conducting elections for the position of director of the Council of doctoral school (CSD), as well as elections by the students of their representative in CSD and the evidence of their conduct;*
- (c) the Methodologies for organizing and conducting doctoral studies (for the admission of doctoral students, for the completion of doctoral studies);*
- (d) the existence of mechanisms for recognizing the status of a Doctoral advisor and the equivalence of the doctoral degree obtained abroad;*
- (e) functional management structures (Council of the doctoral school), giving as well proof of the regularity of meetings;*
- (f) the contract for doctoral studies;*
- (g) internal procedures for the analysis and approval of proposals regarding the training for doctoral study programs based on advanced academic studies.*

Several documents were analyzed, and the following highlights were identified:



Institutional regulation for the organization and functioning of the IOSUD-UCV doctoral and post-doctoral studies programs (Rectory of UCV, 2020).

Regulation for the organization of the process for obtaining the habilitation certificate (UCV, 2017).

The internal regulations of the Doctoral School (2017).

Functional management structures within IOSUD / CSUD / Council of the Doctoral School.

Doctoral School Board Meetings: Voting on position descriptions, curriculum, and study extensions, as well as the election process (2016).

Regulation regarding the organization and conduct of the competition for admission to university undergraduate, master, and doctoral studies for the university (academic year 2019-2020).

The contract for doctoral studies.

Methodology on the recognition of doctoral degrees obtained in foreign countries (2018).

The verification of the documents presented and requested (supplementary annex 5) on this indicator demonstrates the conditions of the IOSUD and Doctoral School of Sciences for their regular operation. functioning of the Doctorate in Geography.

Recommendations:

The Doctoral School of Sciences is recommended to:

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

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

Recommendations:

It is recommended to provide English version of main content

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

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

Recommendations:



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

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

The presentation of the program "www.sistemantiplagiat.ro" and evidence of its use took place in 2018. The software program purchased by UCV was applied to all doctoral theses in Geography to verify the percentage of similarities in all the theses within the same domain.

During the meeting with the Ethics Commission, the precise procedure for addressing plagiarism issues using the program was explained. Former and current Ph.D. students confirmed its usage.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

We identified financial resources and funding, as well as their utilization by the IOSUD. The Rector confirmed that the expenditures and financial statements made by the Doctoral School of Sciences in the last 5 years had a tendency toward increased investment.

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

In the last 5 years, two research and development grants obtained by the doctoral supervisors, Prof. Mazilu and Prof. Boengiu, have been identified and confirmed during the meeting. These grants concern relevant topics in the field of Geography and involve doctoral students.

Recommendations:

It will be important to increase the number of grants in the coming years while applying for international and transboundary projects.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *A.1.3.2. *The percentage of doctoral students active at the time of the evaluation, who for at least six months receive additional funding sources besides government funding, through scholarships awarded by individual persons or by legal entities, or who are financially supported through research or institutional / human resources development grants is not less than 20%.*

The Field coordinator, Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu, and PhD students confirmed attempts to secure funding for research work. Based on the information collected from the teaching staff and representatives of PhD students in Geography and according to supplementary Annex 8, we can conclude



that in the last years 50 % of students have achieved extra funding for participating in conferences or publications .

During the visit, it was found that the University has a Center of Research that offers consultations for attracting projects and research opportunities. There is also potential in utilizing Erasmus mobilities, for which there are more than a dozen partners.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the Doctoral School of Sciences explore new strategies to increase the number of scholarships, Erasmus for example, and, in turn, attract more students to the PhD program. Supervisors should promote student involvement in research projects and diversify financial sources to increase the number of PhD grants.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

Representatives of the Doctoral School and the Director of the Research Centre confirmed that there is a budget in the research fund of the UCV for the participation of doctoral students in national/international scientific events. The active students, Ionuț Adrian Drăguleasa and George Tănase confirmed that the fee for publishing the WoS article and participation in the conference were covered from the research funds of the University

Recommendations:

It is recommended to better inform students about the possibilities to reimburse professional training expenses

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.

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

- a lecture hall;
- 10 research and teaching laboratories;
- 2 office rooms.

During the evaluation period the laboratories and work spaces have been equipped and modernized from funds from contracts for research obtained by doctoral supervisors.

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



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.*

The material base of the Doctoral School of Sciences contributes to conducting research in the field of Geography in line with the assumed mission and objectives. This includes PCs, dedicated software, equipment, laboratory facilities, a library, and access to international databases, among other resources. The research infrastructure and the availability of research services are as follows. We have identified the following research infrastructure acquired and developed over the past 5 years:

- Educational and research spaces where students have access to an appropriate number of books, atlases, and periodical literature in the field of Geography.
- Laboratory areas equipped with modern technology that support work primarily related to physical geography.
- Software tailored to Geography studies and aligned with the courses in the curriculum, along with their corresponding user licenses.
- Online access to scientific databases.
- Research infrastructure provided by the Research Center in Innovative and Regional Tourism

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion A.3. Quality of Human Resources

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

The Doctorate School of Sciences was established at the University of Craiova in accordance with the provisions of National Education Law no. 1/2011 and as a result of G.D. no. 681/2011 regarding the Code of University Doctoral Studies. Since January 15, 2016, as per Dispatch no. 3003/2016, the doctoral area in Geography was approved, and it currently has three doctoral supervisors. The subjects of the advanced training program included in the study plan of the PhD in Geography are taught by professors who also supervise doctoral theses. These advisors have publications indexed by the Web of Science or ERIH in impactful journals, as well as other significant achievements in the field of Geography. Furthermore, the advisors remain active in their scientific endeavors.

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.*

At the time of evaluation, all three supervisors have met the minimum standards of the National Council for Attestation of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU) in force at the time of the evaluation visit carried out to meet this performance indicator.

Recommendations:



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

The Doctoral School of Sciences is advised to invite and appeal to the participation of co-supervisors from other national and international universities to ensure the quality of guidance in various areas of geography specialization and to encourage local professors to qualify for becoming supervisors.

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.

Two doctoral advisors have full-time employment contracts for an indefinite period with the IOSUD. The Director of the Doctoral School of Sciences, Dr. Sorin Micu, suggested that there is potential for appointing two new professors as potential supervisors in Geography at UCV.

Recommendation

UCV should consider increasing the number of full professors to ensure stability in the teaching staff and to guarantee the continuity of the doctoral project in Geography.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

Four subjects in the education program of the Geography PhD curriculum are supported by teachers who have the position of doctoral supervisor/ habilitation/professor or the specialists in the field of Ethics:

1. Complex methods of spatio-temporal modelling (Prof. Boengiu Sandu)
2. Analysis of geographical risk phenomena (Prof. Boengiu Sandu),
3. Research methodology in the field of Geography (Prof. Mazilu Mirela),
4. Ethics and academic integrity (Prof. Danisor Dan Claudiu)

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 programs² does not exceed 20%.

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

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

We analyzed the publications in indexed journals and international-level contributions of the supervisors to understand the progress in scientific research, development, innovation, and international visibility. We also consulted the list of research projects in which supervisors were involved as



coordinators or investigators, as well as any awards they have received. Through these actions, we aimed to determine if the supervisors meet the scientifically active criteria set by CNATDCU, which are required and mandatory to obtain the habilitation certificate..

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

From various annexes (Annexes 61, 62, 63), and supplementary annex (annex 1), required during the visit it was possible to assess the scientific and research portfolios of the three supervisors. The supervisors are editors and reviewers for journals specialized in the field of Geography, and they are affiliated with international scientific bodies and organizations. Based on the supervisors' lists of publications, we identified articles in Web of Science or ERIH and indexed publications in journals with impact factors in the last five years.

Recommendation:

It is important to consider reinforcing scientific capacity as a strategy to increase visibility and attract new PhD students.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

The examination of the curricula, research contracts, and other documents available in the annexes enables us to determine whether the minimum CNATDCU standards for the last 5 years have been met by the Doctoral supervisors. All of the doctoral supervisors fully meet the standards.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

We analyzed the entire admission process, including the organization of its various phases and the interview. We assessed the quality of this process in terms of its ability to attract candidates and attempted to infer the consequences of the doctoral student dropout rate on the course's functioning.

We examined the specialization curriculum in the field of doctoral Geography, the content of the doctoral programs, the training program, and the advanced academic studies-based training program.



We also consulted the annexes on ethics in research and intellectual property. Additionally, we identified the various counseling and guidance strategies used by functional advisory committees for students.

We consulted the lists of scientific research activities and the participation of doctoral students in international events to better understand the extent of evaluator involvement in the defense committees of doctoral theses

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

Based on the statistical data presented in the report, we have analyzed the institution's capacity to attract students, considering their institutional origin and the profile of candidates in terms of their academic, research, and professional performance components. We have also interpreted the data provided on doctoral students' resignations and dropouts.

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.

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

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

In the last five years there were 7 budgeted places and 20 candidates. Ten candidates came from other institutions. The ratio is 1.43%.

The ratio between the number of candidates and the number of vacancies financed by the State budget for the competition in the field of PhD in Geography is 2.57

Recommendations:

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

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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



Admission to doctoral studies is governed by the regulations outlined in the Institutional Regulation for the organization and operation of doctoral and postdoctoral studies at IOSUD-UCV.

Annually, the regulation for conducting the admission to cycle III - doctoral university studies is formulated by IOSUD-UCV. This regulation establishes the reassessment and grading criteria for the admission procedures.

As per the Regulations of the Doctoral School of Sciences, the admission contest comprises an oral examination during which the candidate presents their research project

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 admission³ does not exceed 30%.

The dropout rate of doctoral students does not exceed 30%. Starting from the admission procedure stage, the school should continue to identify scientific risk factors and possibly present some alternative solutions:

- 1) development of an effective mentoring system at the level of doctoral university studies.
- 2) Creating more direct links between the doctoral and master's programs of the University to establish elements of continuity and integrate doctoral students into the activities related to the promotion of master's and doctoral programs.
- 3) Organizing social events and considering volunteer actions to support doctoral students facing difficult situations..

Recommendations:

Given the biggest expelling rate in the fourth academic year, enforcing an effective mentoring system for doctoral students in their fourth year, at the stage of thesis defense, is advisable.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.2. The content of doctoral programs

The training program is grounded in advanced academic studies and covers topics relevant to Geography, as well as standards of scientific research Ethics and intellectual property. IOSUD is tasked with establishing mechanisms to ensure that the training program, rooted in advanced academic studies, effectively accomplishes student learning outcomes.

Doctoral students receive guidance from functional advisory committees throughout their academic journey.

The relationship between the number of doctoral students and the number of teaching staff is a crucial criterion for ensuring quality in academic supervision.

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

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



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

1. Complex methods of spatio-temporal modelling (Prof. Boengiu Sandu)
2. Analysis of geographical risk phenomena (Prof. Boengiu Sandu),
3. Research methodology in the field of Geography (Prof. Mazilu Mirela).

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

Ethics and academic integrity (Prof. Danisor Dan Claudiu)

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 activities⁴.*

The curricular description of the academic training program, based on advanced university studies, demonstrates that each discipline is focused on achieving specific learning outcomes, outlining the competencies, skills, and attitudes that students are expected to acquire.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

There is an email correspondence system in place between the doctoral supervisors, the school, the UCV, and the doctoral students. This system enables the communication of information related to schedules, fees, tutorials, and counselling. Communication with the students is ongoing, facilitating the achievement of their individual plans.

Representatives of Ethical commission and Commission for Quality Evaluation and Assurance confirmed gathering and addressing requests and feedbacks from doctoral students in the written form and during the meetings.

Additionally, other online platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, and WhatsApp are also utilized for faster communication.

Recommendations:

It is recommended to promote students' active participation in the Council to better deliver their needs and requests.

The indicator is fulfilled.



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

Based on the data provided the ratio between the number of Doctoral students and the number of teachers providing guidance does not exceed 3: 1.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

Each doctoral supervisor is actively engaged in the supervision of their own doctoral students, which includes involving them in scientific research activities, conferences, publishing relevant papers in journals and proceedings, and participating in workshops, scientific sessions, and more.

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

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

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

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

Based on the analysis of the student activity lists, we conclude that the ratio between the number of presentations and the number of students who completed their doctoral studies in the evaluated period is 8. To determine this value, we considered the number of presentations made by students who successfully completed the 3-year doctoral program

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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



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

The indicator is not applicable.

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

The indicator is not applicable.

Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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

We delved into the description of the evaluation process and internal quality assurance in accordance with a procedure developed and applied at the IOSUD level.

We identified the mandatory evaluation criteria and assess whether student feedback mechanisms are implemented

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

- (a) the scientific work of Doctoral advisors;*
- (b) the infrastructure and logistics necessary to carry out the research activity;*
- (c) the procedures and subsequent rules based on which doctoral studies are organized;*
- d) the scientific activity of doctoral students;*
- e) the training program based on advanced academic studies of doctoral students;*
- f) social and academic services (including for participation at different events, publishing papers etc.) and counselling made available to doctoral students.*

The Doctoral School of Sciences demonstrates the consistent development of the evaluation and internal quality assurance process, aligning with procedures established and implemented at the IOSUD level. We have verified this condition concerning the scientific work of doctoral advisors, infrastructure and logistics procedures, doctoral students' scientific activity, training programs, and social and academic services while exploring the documents offered and during the meeting with the representatives of Commission for Quality Evaluation and Assurance.

A self-assessment of the doctoral fields is conducted every three years.



The indicator is fulfilled.

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

The Doctoral School of Sciences offers methodologies to assess student satisfaction with the functioning of the doctorate and the scientific needs of doctoral students. A counseling center is in place to address the challenges faced by PhD students. A satisfaction questionnaire is available, and the exchange of ideas is encouraged, facilitating the implementation of student feedback mechanisms for the continuous improvement of academic services.

The Doctoral School of Sciences also collects the information from alumni on the employability rates and the continuity of students in scientific research careers, quality of doctoral studies with the help of the university association of alumni. The Doctoral School of Sciences also cooperates with stakeholders in order to gather and analyse information about their alumni as employees.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

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

- (a) the Doctoral School regulation;
- (b) the admission regulation;
- (c) the doctoral studies contract;
- (d) the study completion regulation including the procedure for the public presentation of the thesis;
- (e) the content of training program based on advanced academic studies;
- (f) the academic and scientific profile, thematic areas/research themes of the Doctoral advisors within the domain, as well as their institutional contact data;
- (g) the list of doctoral students within the domain with necessary information (year of registration; advisor);
- (h) information on the standards for developing the doctoral thesis;
- (i) links to the doctoral theses' summaries to be publicly presented and the date, time, place where they will be presented; this information will be communicated at least twenty days before the presentation.

The Doctoral School of Sciences has a website providing valuable information for doctoral supervisors and students, including admission conditions for the Doctorate in Geography. The IOSUD, in accordance with general regulations on data protection, publishes information such as internal regulations



and standards about the Doctoral program, the doctoral studies contract, the academic and scientific profile of doctoral advisors, and details of doctoral students' activities and thesis summaries.

However, it's worth noting that the Doctoral School of Sciences site is not in English, making it less appealing for foreign students interested in studying geography at UCV.

Recommendations:

Efforts should be made to ensure that all information is published in a bilingual format. Additionally, the Department of Public Relations and Academic Image, responsible for press relations and social media management, should strive to promote the Ph.D. program in English

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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

During the meeting, doctoral students confirmed access to full-text multidisciplinary databases such as Science Direct Freedom Collection, SpringerLink Journals, and Oxford Journals. Additionally, they have access to full-text multidisciplinary databases Web of Science and Scopus.

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

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

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.

Doctoral students have access to 10 research laboratories, the libraries of UCV, and specialized databases in scientific literature in Geography, providing essential support for the drafting and development of their theses.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion C.3. Internationalization

In this criterion, we evaluated strategies aimed at increasing the degree of internationalization in doctoral programs, including the involvement of doctoral students and their participation in international conferences and workshops. We also examined joint doctoral programs and mobility agreements. The degree of internationalization of activities within the doctoral program is also taken into consideration

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

Performance Indicator *C.3.1.1. IOSUD, for every evaluated domain, has concluded mobility agreements with universities abroad, with research institutes, with companies working in the field of study,



aimed at the mobility of doctoral students and academic staff (e.g., ERASMUS agreements for the doctoral studies). At least 35% of the doctoral students have completed a training course abroad or other mobility forms such as attending international scientific conferences. IOSUD drafts and applies policies and measures aiming at increasing the number of doctoral students participating at mobility periods abroad, up to at least 20%, which is the target at the level of the European Higher Education Area.

Based on the activities of doctoral students and provided documents (supplementary annex 7), it has been demonstrated that they have completed training courses abroad or engaged in other forms of mobility, such as participating in scientific conferences and international workshops. In the field of Geography, doctoral supervisors have established 10 Erasmus Mobility partnerships with foreign universities.

A key priority of the Doctoral School in Sciences is to promote information about the study plan and admission conditions for the doctoral course. To achieve this, a brochure has been made available, with dissemination occurring during the participation of doctoral students in the Open Days of the Faculty of Sciences or the Doctoral School of Sciences.

Recommendations

Given that it is a young doctoral course currently focused on national students, it is important to motivate and support supervisors and doctoral students to take improvement courses in English. Additionally, it is advisable to continue motivating doctoral students to engage in national/international mobility programs and participate in doctoral workshops with other courses that share affinities. Scientific capacity shows a valuable modality to demonstrate the importance of student mobility

The indicator is fulfilled.

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

During the evaluation period, the Council of the Doctoral School involved four experts of first international rank, contributing to the internationalization of doctoral studies. Among them, one specialized in the field of Geography.

- Prof. Dénes Lóczy, PhD – Professor of Geography – University of Pécs, Faculty of Sciences – Institute of Geography – Department of Physical and Environmental Geography, Pécs.

Recommendation

To promote virtual meetings with international experts using the UCV videoconference system. This equipment can also be used for lectures and webinars.

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.).*

No foreign professors have been included in the thesis defense committees so far due to external factors and Covid pandemics but are suggested for next defences.

Foreign professors are encouraged to participate in the Council of the Doctoral School of Sciences. There were four external international members in the Council in the evaluated period including the one for the Geography field.



Additionally, the Doctorate in Geography organized Tourism Fairs published on social networks and webpages created for this purpose to promote the activity of doctoral students and supervisors in the field internationally.

Recommendation

To apply virtual involvement of foreign experts using the UCV videoconference system.

The indicator is fulfilled.

IV. SWOT Analysis

<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The strong institutional capacity. - Positive dynamics in the renovation of specialized laboratories. - The strategies implemented in the field of internal quality assurance. - The academic qualities of supervisors. - The high requirements for the Ph.D. candidate selection process. - The high-quality library. 	<p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lack of information in English on the school's website. - Insufficient international mobility of Ph.D. students. - Low activity of Ph.D. students in the internal quality assurance process of the Doctoral Program. - A reduced number of budget/fee places. - Insufficient promotion in foreign languages in the Doctoral School
<p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive dynamics in the involvement of faculty members and the number of Ph.D. students. - Established relations with municipal/regional/national institutions. - EU funds that can be used for mobility, ERASMUS+ programs, and other emerging programs. - Favorable economic environment in the vicinity of the University of Craiova, interested in the promotion/employment of Ph.D. students. - Fulfillment of the eligibility conditions by other researchers from the Department of Geography of the University of Craiova. - The attractiveness of study programs specific to the field of Geography with practical applicability and an important outlet on the labor market. 	<p><u>Threats:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Withdrawal of doctoral students from doctoral studies and their inconsistency in research activity and involvement in the activities of the Doctoral School. - The general economic environment in certain fields is uninterested in hiring doctoral students, often citing a lack of experience as a demotivating factor. - Limited student recruitment pool for the Doctoral School. - Social factors that constrain international mobility.

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	<p>To make all documents available on the website of the Doctoral School of Sciences in order to promote values of transparency and ethics.</p> <p>To enable bilingual (English/Romanian) edition of main content</p>
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	To provide English version of main content
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	To explore the resources of making the system available in English in order to serve foreign students.
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	

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
5.	IP	<p>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.</p>	Fulfilled	<p>To increase the number of grants in the coming years while applying for international and transboundary projects</p>
6.	PI *	<p>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%.</p>	Fulfilled	<p>To explore new strategies to increase the number of scholarships, Erasmus in particular</p>
7.	PI *	<p>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.).</p>	Fulfilled	<p>To better inform students about the possibilities to reimburse professional training expenses</p>
8.	CPI	<p>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</p>	Fulfilled	

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		purchased and developed within the past 5 years will be presented distinctly		
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	<p>To increase collaboration with researchers from other national and international universities to enhance the publication of articles in indexed journals.</p> <p>To invite and appeal to the participation of co-supervisors from other national and international universities to ensure the quality of guidance in various areas of geography specialization and to encourage local professors to qualify for becoming supervisors</p>
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	To increase the number of full professors to ensure stability in the teaching staff and to guarantee the continuity of the doctoral school in Geography
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%.	Fulfilled	
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	Fulfilled	To consider reinforcing scientific capacity as a strategy to increase visibility and attract new PhD students

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		<p>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.</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>	Fulfilled	<p>To develop strategies for attracting students from the Master's Degree in Geography at UCV, as well as from foreign institutions</p>

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	To enforce an effective mentoring system for doctoral students in their fourth year, at the stage of thesis defense
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	To promote students' active participation in the Council to better deliver their needs and requests.
22.	CPI	B.2.1.5. For a doctoral study domain, the ratio between the number of doctoral students and the number of teaching	Fulfilled	

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		staff/researchers 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.	Not applicable	
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.	Not applicable	
27.	PI	C.1.1.1. The Doctoral school in the respective university study domain shall demonstrate the	Fulfilled	

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		<p>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:</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); 	Fulfilled	<p>To provide all information that is published in a bilingual format</p> <p>For the Department of Public Relations and Academic Image to promote the Ph.D. program in English</p>

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		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.		
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.	Fulfilled	<p>To motivate and support supervisors and doctoral students to take improvement courses in English.</p> <p>To encourage doctoral students to engage in national/international mobility programs and participate in doctoral workshops with other courses that share affinities.</p>
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	To promote virtual meetings with international experts using the UCV videoconference system including lectures and webinars



No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
35.	PI	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.).	Fulfilled	To apply virtual involvement of foreign experts using the UCV videoconference system.



VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

- The UCV leadership and the Doctoral School in Sciences acknowledge that the study program in Geography aligns well with the institution's development strategy.
- The Ph.D. program in Geography is recognized by local and regional public institutions.
- The teaching staff, comprised of Ph.D. holders, maintains a stable connection with the UCV and is integrated into research units.
- The Doctoral School in Sciences has implemented a comprehensive system of evaluation and quality assurance.
- Student satisfaction with the Ph.D. program is evident, with high appreciation expressed for teachers and thesis supervisors.
- The non-teaching staff is qualified and committed to the educational goals of the doctorate in Geography.
- The UCV library provides favorable working conditions for students.
- Students enjoy access to laboratories, computer rooms, online research resources, and software tailored to their needs.
- Effective relationships and communication are observed between students, supervisors, teachers, and administrative and technical staff.
- The Ph.D. program attracts a significant number of students from other national universities.

Recommendations:

- Encourage the teaching staff to enhance their publication frequency, particularly in international peer-reviewed scientific journals.
- Increase the involvement of supervisors in research projects, both at the national and international levels, securing competitive funding.
- Initiate marketing efforts for the study program to attract a higher number of students.
- Foster international mobility for both teaching staff and students (outbound mobility).
- Institutionalize the practice of organizing doctoral workshops, offering students a valuable opportunity to present their work and receive feedback from both faculty and peers.
- Promote the internationalization of the Doctoral Program by providing bilingual content on the official website and actively engaging international experts, courses, and trainings from partner universities.



VII. Annexes

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

Annex 2 - Annex 61 cited in the periodic self-evaluation report.

Annex 3 - The detailed schedule of the evaluation visit.

Annex 4 – Document sent on October 26th to Professor Liliana Dumitrache from Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu about numerical and nominal situation with graduates of the doctorate in Geography.

Annex 5– Document sent on October 26th to Professor Liliana Dumitrache from Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu about scholarship regulations.

Annex 6 - Document sent on October 26th to Professor Liliana Dumitrache from Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu about financial support document for students with disabilities

Annex 7 – Updated documents regarding doctoral student activity sent on October 26th to Professor Liliana Dumitrache from Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu.

Annex 8 – Documents regarding financially supported (for training activities) students sent on October 27th to Assoc. Prof. Dariia Kholiavchuk from Professor Mirela Elena Mazilu