



**Accreditation of Study Programmes
Assessment Report**

Institution: Alecu Russo State University of Bălți, Republic of Moldova

Study programme: Criminal Sciences and Criminology

Assessment committee:

Aalt Willem Heringa (Chair)	–	Professor of (Comparative) Constitutional and Administrative Law, Faculty of Law, Maastricht University, Holland
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Coordinator: Ms Tiia Bach, Assessment Coordinator, Estonian Quality Agency for Higher Education and VET, Estonia

Date of the assessment visit: 20 May 2015

Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: 6 July 2015

Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation: 22 July 2015

Assessment committee approved the final version of component assessment with 4 votes in favour and 0 votes against.

Date: 09 September 2015

I Summary of the assessment (mark with 'X'):

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
Study programme and its development		X	
Teaching and learning		X	
Teaching staff		X	
Students		X	
Resources		X	

General introduction:

Alecu Russo Balti State University is a state institution of higher education which was transformed into a university in 1992 and is a successor of the former State Pedagogical Institute which was established already in 1945. The University has, in total, 4 Faculties: Faculty of Philology; Faculty of Exact, Economic and Environmental Sciences; Faculty of Educational Sciences, Psychology and Arts; and the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences. Studies are conducted at 3 levels of education: Bachelor’s (1st cycle), Master’s (2nd cycle) and Doctoral (3rd cycle).

In the field of law, studies are conducted on one programme at Bachelor’s level (Law) and two programmes at Master’s level (“Business law”, and “Criminal Sciences and Criminology”) in the Department of Law, Faculty of Law and Social Sciences.

The professional Master’s programme under evaluation – Criminal Sciences and Criminology – was initiated in 2008 and is conducted in the form of full-time studies with the duration of 1.5 years and the volume of 90 ECTS.

Comments:

The strategic planning of the development of the study programme is informal; the Committee has not been informed of new developments or restructuring of the programme since then. Or, if the University has, as was stated to the Committee in a response to the initial draft report, indeed changed the programme and at the time of the visit a new programme indeed was in force, the committee is unable to assess this new programme since it was not presented. The committee has found that the programme that was put to the committee and its title, content and learning outcomes of the study programme are not consistent. It is not clear according to which criteria the size of the courses (ECTS credits) are chosen. The study-load of the students is not more than 20 hours per week – being clearly too low – and this is not sufficient for a full-time programme. The labour market is in need of the graduates of this study programme, but there is no actual cooperation with the representatives of the labour market about the development of the study programme. The teaching staff is aware of the objectives of their own courses, but they have not been thinking how their courses contribute to the achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the whole study programme. In the MA thesis there is almost none of the content based on international literature other than that published in Romania and Russia.

Study management is regulated, but there is only limited access to the texts of the regulations on the website. The students give their feedback on courses electronically, which is seen as positive. Yet there is no general system for using feedback for the improvement of study management.

The use of modern and interactive teaching strategies is very limited; the teaching methods focus on improving the practical skills of the students.

The library of the University is lacking textbooks and appropriate legal literature. In writing their MA theses students use out-of-date materials. The organisation of internship is regulated, but the duration of internship is too short for 10 ECTS.

The average grades of the students are unreasonably high. The implementation of the grading system does not make it possible to distinguish the students according to their knowledge acquired. The recognition of prior learning and work experience has not been implemented.

The small size of the academic staff may pose risks in developing a full-fledged MA programme with so many diverse courses and disciplines. It has led the Committee to ask the question about the presence of the necessary master level expertise and research, which are necessary to teach a master programme. No visiting staff have been involved in teaching of this Master's programme, and the current academic staff involved have not visited other educational institutions abroad to develop their own didactical and other skills related to teaching-learning process. Also, there is lack of participation in international research projects and networks, one of the reasons being that staff needs to fully cover all related costs.

There are clear requirements for admission and the assessment of the academic progress, and admission requirements are adequate for students to complete their studies on the programme. The systems for career guidance of its students and career monitoring of the graduates,



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however, are not well-established and need to be improved. Possibilities for student mobility exist; yet, so far the MA students have mostly participated in mobility programmes that are not related to the Criminal Sciences and Criminology programme. At present time, plagiarism detection mechanisms have not been fully developed. The drop-out rates do not present a threat for the sustainability of the MA programme and the graduates are considered to be competitive, especially for the northern region of the country. The University has made good efforts to identify internship and eventual employment places for its students; it is still encouraged to better learn about the labour market of other parts of the country and ensure that its graduates are equally competitive outside the northern region.

The Committee has concluded that it is unable to find that the programme conforms to all requirements with respect to resources, since resources are too scarce to meet all requirements and make the necessary investments and bring the programme to the level of sufficient number of students, library facilities, well trained staff, and an upgrade of the courses.

In conclusion: The Committee has noted in that respect that the challenges posed by the programme are not what ought to be expected of a master programme and do not meet all substantial issues which must be expected from a criminal science programme. The study load is far below what must be expected; and the grading system is insufficient. International literature and perspectives are missing from the programme and so are to a sufficient degree international exchanges, collaboration and foreign staff teaching in the programme. This is also visible in the library and its stock. The University furthermore is not demanding enough in setting standards for programme development, career perspectives and career guidance, contacts with the labour market, seeking benchmarks from other institutions and similar programs in Moldova and abroad, and pushing international collaboration and exchanges. Furthermore we have noted that the University has taken quite a few initiatives, as we have indicated below, in setting structures and putting systems in place, however, without rigorously implementing them and incorporating them in Human resources and evaluating systems and structures.

Commendations:

- Clear and transparent admission requirements.
- Good cooperation relations and mobility opportunities with universities from Romania.
- The academic staff has taken an effort to build a tailor made programme, aimed at the region, and for which it has forged close contacts with the labour market, specifically with local law enforcement and courts. That is laudable and poses a particular strength. The downside is that the programme is very regionally oriented and ought to open up more to national law enforcement, other universities and international exchanges.
- The University possesses a nice campus which ought to allow for intensive academic interaction and exchanges.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to introduce measures that create a common understanding about the objectives of the study programme and awareness of their role in achieving these objectives among the teaching staff.
- Incorporate more courses focusing on criminal law and criminal procedure law in the programme and rephrase the title of the programme according to the objectives and learning outcomes.
- It is advisable to involve teaching staff, students and employers in the development of the study programme.
- Increase the study load of the students.
- Improve the foreign language skills of the staff and students.
- Encourage the teaching staff to use modern and interactive teaching methods and more up-to-date literature and learning materials.
- It is recommended to analyse the duration of the internships and the volume of work the students have to do during the internship and adjust these so that the weekly workload of the students would be reasonable and achievable.
- Analyse the implementation of the grading system and give the teaching staff instructions about correct implementation of the system.
- Make the recognition of prior learning and work experience a common practice.
- It appears to be necessary to strengthen the research component of the staff, so that the master programme is fully supported by high level research made by staff members in the domain of the programme. A master programme must be based upon academic research of its teachers.
- The promotion of staff participation in seminars and conferences to develop their skills, both locally and internationally, is vital. The role of the Chair in organising lecturers' scientific activities should be more active and financial costs of lecturers' participation in forums, national and international scientific conferences should be fully covered by the Faculty.
- Further encourage student mobility and develop cooperation relations with institutions from other EU countries
- Better learn about the labour market of other parts of the country and ensure that its graduates are equally competitive outside the northern region.
- Invest substantially in funding for the programme in all its requirements, including invest in the information systems and in the library with the purchase of up-to-date literature and foreign books and periodicals.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education:

- The Committee is of the opinion that the present Framework Plan adopted by the Ministry of Education is far too inflexible in terms of stipulating the volume of fundamental, specialised and optional courses, allowing the volumes of courses to be strictly 5/10/15 ECTS and subsequently one semester up to 6-2 courses/modules. It is strongly advisable to reconsider giving higher education institutions greater freedom to decide upon the volume of obligatory and optional courses in the programme, thereby expanding students' choices. Furthermore, institutions could be allowed to have courses with volumes bigger or smaller than 5 ECTS, depending on the content of the specific course, and not simply 5 ECTS in order to fulfil some formal requirements.
- The Committee is of the opinion that the requirement established by the state in terms of having a dormitory for *all* the students is superfluous and too expensive and should be revisited, since many students have their own abode. Instead of having its own dormitory, it could be considered to cooperate with other real-estate companies or proprietors offering accommodation. So is the requirement regarding the provision of medical service – it is outdated, too expensive, not efficient, and therefore too much a burden on small institutions and programmes with low funding.

II Assessment areas and requirements

1. STUDY PROGRAMME AND ITS DEVELOPMENT	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		x	
<p>Collected evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annex D7.1: Strategic Plan of the University 2013-2018 - Annex D.2: Strategic Plan of the Department of Law 2013-2018 - Annex D7.3: Plan of the Department of Law for the academic year 2014 – 2015 - Annex D 1.1: Master’s study programme “Criminal Sciences and Criminology” - Annex D2: Study plan for Bachelor’s programme in Law - Annex D3.1: Course descriptions of the “Criminal Sciences and Criminology” Master’s programme - Information obtained during the interviews - Information available in the Self-Evaluation Report 			
<p>General comments:</p> <p>The strategic planning of the development of the study programme is informal; there is no systematic implementation of the development plan and no system for using the experience of the previous periods for planning the next period. There has been no actual developing of the study programme since 2009.</p> <p>The title, content and learning outcomes of the study programme are not consistent. It is not clear according to which criteria the size of the courses (ECTS credits) are chosen.</p> <p>The study-load of the students is not more than 20 hours per week and this is not sufficient for a full-time programme. In other words, the programme does not meet the requirements of 60 ECTS per annum study load. That implies that students study substantially less and still receive, as we will indicate below, very high grades indeed. That is reason for doubt as to the content of the programme, its substance and content, and its full-fledged academic nature. The committee submits that, in combination with the other factors and aspects we noted in this category, a programme must meet the 60 ECTS per annum study load and must challenge students to the full.</p> <p>The labour market is in need the graduates of this study programme. Nevertheless, there is no actual cooperation with the representatives of the labour market about the development of the study programme.</p> <p>The teaching staff is aware of the objectives of their own courses, but they have not been thinking how their courses contribute to the achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the whole study programme.</p>			

In the MA thesis there is almost none of the content based on international literature other than that published in Romania and Russia.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to introduce measures that create a common understanding about the objectives of the study programme and awareness of their role in achieving these objectives among the teaching staff. The Committee recommends to define and align the necessary skills and plan when, where and how they are being taught and trained and assessed.
- It is advisable to clearly plan, implement and monitor the development of the study programme.
- Involve teaching staff, students and employers in the development of the study programme.
- Incorporate more courses focusing on criminal law and criminal procedure law in the programme and rephrase the title of the programme according to the objectives and learning outcomes.
- Increase the study load of the students in order to meet the 60 ECTS per annum study load and challenge students to the full.
- Improve the foreign language skills of the staff and students.
- It is recommended to set the requirements for the MA thesis to use at least some sources in the English or French languages as one of the main sources of the thesis.
- Build in the programme specific elements that are geared towards academic research and may entice students' interest in a pursuit of doctoral studies.

1.1. REQUIREMENT: A higher education institution regularly plans its development: the higher education institution has a development plan accompanied by an action plan to ensure sustainability both in the institution and in a given study programme. The implementation of the action plan is analysed and forms the basis for planning of the next development period.

Comments:

The University has adopted the documents connected to planning its development: a strategic development plan of the University for 2013-2018; the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences activity plan for the current academic year; the Department of Law strategic plan for 2013-2018 and an operational plan for 2014-2015.

The strategic plan includes a lot of statistical data about previous periods, the aim of which is not clear because it is not linked to the targets of the next period. The Department of Law has a strategic plan for 2013-2018 and the operational activity plan for 2014-2015. The strategic plan and the activity plan of the Department are quite specific, including among others some activities to improve the quality of the study programme of Criminal Sciences and Criminology. The activity plan includes deadlines and names of people responsible for specific actions. The

activity plan is more oriented towards describing the everyday activities, and not so much towards development. In the Self-Evaluation report it is said that the plans are implemented and the results are analysed, but it is not clear whether it is done systematically and how, and if this information is used for planning the next period at all.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended to concentrate on development issues in activity plans and to monitor the implementation of the strategic and action plans and use the gathered data for planning the next periods. Furthermore, a structural development and evaluation cycle of the plans has to be set up and regularly implemented.

1.2. REQUIREMENT: A study programme is authorized and functions in accordance with the normative acts in force.

Comments:

The MA programme “Criminal Sciences and Criminology” is authorised by the Order of the Ministry of Education no. 391 of May 30th, 2008. The Framework Plan for higher education approved by the Order no. 455 of the Ministry of Education issued on June 3, 2011, establishes requirements for the study plans at Master’s level. It is the requirement for the professional Master’s programmes (90 credits) to be structured in the following way: Master thesis (30 ECTS), Internship (10 ECTS), Fundamental disciplines (15-25 ECTS), and Specialized disciplines (25-35 ECTS) among which there should be up to 20% optional disciplines.

The structure of the programme “Criminal Sciences and Criminology” is built up as follows: Master thesis (30 ECTS), Internship (10 ECTS), Fundamental disciplines (25 ECTS), and Specialized disciplines (25 ECTS), out of which 40% are optional courses. Thus, the volume of optional courses exceeds the volume stipulated in the Framework Plan, but in the Committee’s opinion this is only positive. Additionally, the programme offers two free-choice disciplines.

The Committee is of the opinion that the present Framework Plan adopted by the Ministry of Education is far too inflexible in terms of stipulating the volume of fundamental, specialised and optional courses, allowing the volumes of courses to be strictly 5/10/15 ECTS and subsequently one semester up to 6-2 courses/modules. It is strongly advisable to reconsider giving higher education institutions greater freedom to decide upon the volume of obligatory and optional courses in the programme, thereby expanding students’ choices. Furthermore, institutions could be allowed to have courses with volumes bigger or smaller than 5 ECTS, depending on the content of the specific course, and not simply 5 ECTS in order to fulfil some formal requirements.

1.3. REQUIREMENT: The title of a study programme is consistent with its content.

Comments:

The title of the study programme “Criminal Sciences and Criminology” is somewhat confusing. According to the school mainly prevailing in the U.S.A., criminal science is the study of crime with a view to discovering the causes of criminality, devising the most effective methods of reducing crime, and perfecting the means for dealing with those who have committed crimes. The three main branches of criminal science are criminology, criminal policy, and criminal law.

The content of the study programme is dual, including courses on criminal law and procedure, but also courses on criminology and criminalistics. According to the content, the title of the study programme could be “Criminal Law and Criminology”. Whether it is reasonable to cover both of these disciplines within a 90 ECTS Master’s programme, is a different matter.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended to analyse, first of all, the objectives and learning outcomes of the MA programme and then set the title and content of the programme according to the objectives and learning outcomes.

1.4. REQUIREMENT: The conduct of studies, including the student workload of independent work and internship, support achievement of the objectives of the study programme.

Comments:

An internship at the end of both semesters is a very good opportunity to give the students a new perspective on their studies. Relating the internship with the MA thesis could add extra value. However, it is not clear how it is ensured that students are properly supervised and given tasks that really improve their skills during the internship. The aim of the MA thesis is to combine the application of the theoretical research results in some practical situations, which definitely supports the achievement of the objectives of the study programme.

The programme includes 1980 hours of independent work, which is almost 75% of the total content of the programme. According to the interviews with the teaching staff and students, the overall study load of the students is not more than 20 hours per week, which is half of what is required according to the study programme and the legal requirements – this being a reasonable expectation. The University should urgently addresses this issue, since it is the heart of the quality of the master programme.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that the management of the University very seriously address the issue of the hugely insufficient study load of the students and initiate discussions among the teaching staff to make them analyse the syllabuses and components of their courses and introduce new teaching strategies that make the students do substantially more independent work in reality. This will entail making the courses more challenging and the exams more probing.

<p>1.5. REQUIREMENT: The objectives and learning outcomes of a study programme are in coherence with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The structure and content of the study programme is internationally comparable.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The formal learning outcomes stated in the Education Plan are in coherence with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF level 7). On the other hand, there is an actual threat that the learning outcomes of this study programme are not achieved. The learning outcomes of the Criminal Sciences and Criminology MA programme focus mainly on the abilities to enforce criminal law and criminal procedure law, but the title of the study programme is much broader and the programme contains only 4 courses for, 20 ECTS in total, about criminal law and criminal procedure law: “Advanced Criminal Law”, “Advanced Criminal procedure Law”, “Institutions of European Criminal Law” and “Business Law (White-Collar Crime)”. This is less than 25% of the overall programme. The content of the study programme does not enable to achieve the learning outcomes stated in the Education Plan and those aimed at obtaining legal expertise. For instance, it also remains unclear, how the course “Penology/Re-Socialization of Offenders” contributes to achieving the learning outcomes of the programme.</p> <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended to analyse the objectives, title, learning outcomes and content of the course on the one hand and the needs of the labour market and the capacity of the University on the other and revise the study programme taking into account all these factors. • It is recommended to incorporate more courses focusing on criminal law and criminal procedure law in the present study programme. 	
<p>1.6. REQUIREMENT The objectives, content and learning outcomes of the Master’s study programme are clearly distinguishable from those of the Bachelor’s study programme.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The objectives, content and learning outcomes of the Criminal Sciences and Criminology MA programme are distinguishable from those of the Law BA programme.</p>	
<p>1.7. REQUIREMENT: Study disciplines of the study programme are presented in a logical succession.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The disciplines of the study programme are presented in a logical succession. Nevertheless, it is not clear according to which criteria the volumes of the courses are chosen. For instance, Decision Theory in Law, Legal Research Methodology and Judicial Ethics are very important disciplines in legal education, but to spend 1/5 of the volume of all subjects on these is too much, leaving not enough volume for the component of specialisation on criminal law and criminal procedure law.</p>	

<p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended to analyse the content of the programme from the point of view how all specific courses contribute to achieving the learning outcomes of the whole study programme. If necessary, the size of some courses could be adapted in order to facilitate the introduction of new courses. However, considering our finding about the low study load, the Committee opines that the programme allows for much more room to intensify the courses and their content. 	
<p>1.8. REQUIREMENT: Development of a study programme takes into consideration the needs of the labour market.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Taking into account the needs of the labour market, it the Self-Evaluation Report describes as follows: “The prospective integration of the Republic of Moldova into the European Union and the need to adjust the Moldovan legislation and the practice of political, economic and judicial bodies from our country to EU laws place the personality of the individual with all his/her attributes (life, dignity, freedom, health, privacy, property, etc.) in a new situation when they get, for various reasons, in the punitive perimeter of penalty.”</p> <p>The interview with the representatives of the labour market indicated that potential employers are very interested in employing the graduates of the Criminal Sciences and Criminology MA programme, but at the same time there is no continuous and well-planned cooperation between the University and employers in terms of developing the study programme.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended to periodically organise meetings with the representatives of the employers, systematically gather feedback from them about the study programme and use this feedback for further development the study programme. 	
<p>1.9. REQUIREMENT: Study programme development is a continuous process which, among others, involves feedback from students, employers and other relevant stakeholders.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>In the Self-Evaluation Report it is stated that the development of the study programme has been a continuous process and the programme has undergone different changes to meet the expectations of students and employers. However, the changes have been made only in the titles of some academic disciplines and in the distribution of hours for lectures. As a formal remark, it is notable that even the academic calendar in the education plan is from the academic year of 2009-2010.</p> <p>Feedback is gathered from the students and the results are analysed and presented to the teaching staff, but there is no system of considering</p>	

this feedback for developing the structure and components of the study programme. Each member of the teaching staff can use this information for developing his or her course, but the study programme development as a whole cannot be considered a continuous process, which among others involves feedback from students.

According to the interview with the Vice-Rector, feedback about the quality of education is gathered from the employers, the last survey being carried out in 2012. However, during their interview, none of the employers claimed that they had been involved in that survey. The employers mentioned that they could take part in study programme development if they are themselves also involved in teaching. There is no evidence of the substantial development of the study programme or even of any discussions about the need of development initiated as a result of the feedback of employers.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended to gather feedback about the Criminal Sciences and Criminology MA programme from the employers systematically and periodically and use this information together with the information gathered as a feedback from the students for developing and updating the study programme.

1.10. REQUIREMENT: The members of the teaching staff are aware of the objectives of a study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives.

Comments:

From what the representatives of the teaching staff told during the interview it can be said that they are aware of the objectives of their own courses, but they have not been thinking how their courses contribute to the achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the whole Criminal Sciences and Criminology MA programme. On the other hand, the Committee established an understanding that the teaching staff is in general aware of the objectives and learning outcomes of Criminal Sciences and Criminology MA programme. It is also noticeable that while the learning outcomes concentrate a lot on acquiring high-level theoretical skills, the teaching staff says that most emphasis is put on strengthening the practical skills of the students. The Committee has noted that there is an absence of coordination of skills over the various courses. It suggests to construct a skills plan, designing how and where to train skills, which skills and why.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to introduce measures that create a common understanding about the objectives of the study programme and awareness of their role in achieving these objectives among the teaching staff, i.e. draft the strategy of developing the Criminal Sciences and Criminology MA programme, prepare instructions about study programme development and organize discussions among the teaching staff.

- Specifically, the Committee recommends to define and align the necessary skills and plan when, where and how they are being taught and trained and assessed.

1.11. REQUIREMENT: Study programme provides opportunities for further education at doctoral level.

Comments:

The graduates of the MA programme have the qualification that enables access to doctoral education. In reality, it is not common to continue education at doctoral level after graduating the Master’s programme “Criminal Science and Criminology”. Only one graduate has been admitted to doctoral studies. One reason for that could be that Alecu Russo Balti State University does not have the programme of doctoral studies itself. But it is also notable that among the learning outcomes access to the doctoral studies is not stated as one of the goals. The structure of the education plan where the whole 3rd semester is dedicated to writing the MA thesis could provide good preparation for continuing towards research-oriented doctoral studies. A course on Legal Research Methodology is also incorporated in the programme. On the other hand, in the thesis there is almost none of the content based on international literature and because of that the students are not competitive, especially outside of Moldova.

The definition of the programme as a professional programme, the low study load and the consultation of the master thesis that were made available to the committee led the committee to believe that as such the programme does not really focus on guiding students towards a doctoral program.

Thus, formally the MA programme allows access to continuation of studies at PhD level, but learning outcomes should foresee the development of students’ research skills and orientation towards (international) research and literature.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to set the requirements for the MA thesis to use at least some sources in the English or French languages as one of the main sources of the thesis. At the same time, all measures should be taken to improve the foreign language skills of the staff and students.
- Build in the programme specific elements that are geared towards academic research and may entice students' interest in a pursuit of doctoral studies.

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING	conforms to	partially conforms to	does not conform to
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	requirements	requirements	requirements
mark with 'X'		x	
<p>Collected evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annex D 1.1: Master's study programme "Criminal Sciences and Criminology" - Annex D3.1: Course descriptions of the "Criminal Sciences and Criminology" Master's programme - Information obtained during the interviews - Information available in the Self-Evaluation Report 			
<p>General comments:</p> <p>Study management is regulated, but there is only limited access to the texts of the regulations on the website. The students give their feedback electronically; the University makes an electronic report to each professor about the feedback. There is no general system for using feedback for the improvement of study management.</p> <p>The use of modern and interactive teaching strategies is very limited; the teaching methods focus on improving the practical skills of the students.</p> <p>The library of the University is lacking textbooks and appropriate legal literature. In writing their MA theses students use out-of-date materials. The organisation of internship is regulated, but the duration of internship is too short for 10 ECTS.</p> <p>There is a functioning network of the employers offering students internship places, but all the institutions are from Balti region.</p> <p>The average grades of the students are unreasonably high. The implementation of the grading system does not make it possible to distinguish the students according to their knowledge acquired.</p> <p>The management and teaching staff are aware of the public legislation about recognition of prior learning experience, but it has not been implemented.</p> <p><u>Commendations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic feedback system. • Active cooperation with employers. <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish all the regulations about study management on the website. 			

- Encourage the teaching staff to use modern and interactive teaching methods.
- Encourage the students and staff to search for and use more up-to-date literature and learning materials.
- It is recommended to analyse the duration of the internship and the volume of work the students have to do during the internship and adjust them so that the weekly workload of the students would be reasonable and achievable.
- Analyse the implementation of the grading system and give the teaching staff instructions about correct implementation of the system.
- Make the recognition of prior learning and work experience a common practice.
- It is recommended to make the analysis of achievement of learning outcomes a systematic procedure and use those analysis as well as feedback gathered from the students and employers for building up the continuous process of developing the study programme.

2.1. REQUIREMENT: Study management is regulated, publicly available, and supports the achievement of learning outcomes. In course of study management development, the results of feedback surveys and the analysis of learning activities are taken into account.

Comments:

Study management is regulated, but there is only limited access to the texts of the regulations on the website of the University. According to the Head of the Unit of Quality Assurance, the feedback from the students is gathered at the end of each course. The students give their feedback electronically, after which the University makes an electronic report to each professor about the feedback given to his or her course. It is not sure whether this information is further generalised and used for the overall improvement of study management.

Commendation:

- It is commendable that an electronic feedback system has been developed, avoiding filling in questionnaires on paper. The electronic system helps to save time of both the students and staff, to better preserve and analyse the results of feedback and to make it more easily accessible to wider circle of counterparts.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended to publish all the regulations about study management adopted by the University on its website.

<p>2.2. REQUIREMENT: Within the education process of study programme, efficient teaching strategies are applied (modern, interactive, teamwork-based, etc.) and oriented towards active learning of the students.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report contains references to two websites where the academic staff can upload the courses, methodological guidelines, curricula, questionnaires, individual work tasks etc. However, the activity in these websites is quite low. The Moodle platform contains courses of different educational establishments of Balti and there are all together two courses in humanities and social sciences on MA level. Another website contains the materials about the courses of law only, all of them created and conducted by the same people and the latest activity is from April 29 and before that March 31.</p> <p>The students named seminars, lectures, debates over cases and comparative analyses of different countries as teaching methods that they have experienced. The teaching methods seem to focus more on improving the practical skills of students; case-studies, problem-based learning etc. are often used.</p> <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended to introduce a course on a regular basis for the teaching staff about modern and interactive teaching methods and to encourage them to use these in the teaching process. • Furthermore, it is recommended to send teachers abroad more extensively with the purpose to learn from foreign teaching experiences, to undergo foreign experiences and learn from IT and other didactical tools in University education. 	
<p>2.3. REQUIREMENT: Within the education process of study programme, up-to-date teaching materials are used.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The library of the University is lacking textbooks and appropriate legal literature, especially for the MA level programmes. Students mentioned that they miss up-to-date teaching materials.</p> <p>In writing their MA theses, students use outdated materials, the vast majority of the references are to the sources published more than 10 years ago and earlier. There are no references to the materials in the English language and other foreign languages besides Russian.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended to invest in improving the command of foreign languages of the staff and students and to introduce them the resources of electronic legal databases and to teach the students how and when to use them. 	

<p>2.4. REQUIREMENT: Organisation of internship is clearly regulated, the requirements for the completion of internship are determined, the instructions for conducting the internship are available and the supervision of students in work environment is ensured.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The organisation of internship is regulated. According to the Self-Evaluation Report, the students have got a supervisor from the University and from the institution where internship is carried out. Work practice on a legal position is recognised as internship without further assessment. Students make a report summarizing the internship and take an exam that verifies the objectives set by the internship coordinator. The duration of internship is 5 weeks, the students get 10 ECTS for the internship and are expected to work 300 hours for that. According to that the work load per one week is 60 hours. The period of internship is too short for 10 ECTS and should be revised.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended to analyse the duration of the internship and the volume of work the students have to do during the internship and adjust them so that the weekly workload of the students would be reasonable and achievable. 	
<p>2.5. REQUIREMENT: The higher education institution has a network of partner organisations offering internship opportunities for students and supporting the achievement of learning outcomes of study programmes.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The University has a network of partner organisations offering internship opportunities for the students of Master’s programme “Criminal Sciences and Criminology” on the basis of partnership agreements. According to the interview with the employers, the employers are very interested in having interns and employers from the MA programme “Criminal Sciences and Criminology” in their institution and the relations of the employers and the University are close. The list of the partner organisations is very much regionally orientated. All the partner organizations are from Balti.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended to expand the circle of partner organizations and sign agreements also with institutions outside of Balti to offer the students of Criminal Sciences and Criminology MA programme internships elsewhere. 	
<p>2.6. REQUIREMENT: Assessment of learning outcomes of students is performed in accordance with the existing requirements. Assessment methodology is consistent with learning outcomes and includes feedback supporting student development.</p>	

Comments:

The assessment of learning outcomes of students is regulated by the requirements adopted by the Senate of the University. The result of formative/summative evaluation constitutes 60% of the final grade of a course, and at the final examination of a course constitutes 40% of the grade. According to the Self-Evaluation Report, the students have the right to contest the result of the final assessment if they do not agree with the examiner's decision concerning the grade.

According to the Report, the average grade of the students of Criminal Sciences and Criminology MA programme was 9.19 for the exams passed in 2014 and 9.14 for the MA theses defended in 2015. Those grades are remarkably high, taking into account that the grading system used has "10" as the highest grade and "5" as the pass rate (lowest positive grade). It is also important to mention that the grading system does not even formally conform to the ECTS grading scale, where "A" is the highest positive grade and "E" marks the pass rate. During the interviews the staff could not give reasonable explanations about this situation and told that the grades are so high because the students are bright and experienced.

Recommendation:

- It is strongly advisable to analyse the present grading system and the practice of implementing this system and give the teaching staff instructions about its correct implementation. If the reason for high grades is really the outstanding performance of almost all of the students, the level of teaching at this MA programme is undoubtedly too low and should be revised.

2.7. REQUIREMENT: The higher education institution recognizes prior learning and work experiences.Comments:

According to the interviews conducted during the site visit, the management and teaching staff are aware of the public legislation about recognition of prior learning and work experience, but there is no system of implementing it in the University and no cases of actual recognition have been recorded.

Prior work experience is recognised as performing the internship. According to the Self-Evaluation Report and also the interviews with the management of the University, practical experience of at least 2 years in a field relevant to the specialisation of Criminal Sciences and Criminology is recognized as performing the internship without any further assessment of the outcomes of this experience. If the students present the copy of the Record of Employment, they are given 10 ECTS for performing the internship without any further questions.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to encourage the academic mobility and implement the national legislation by creating a transparent and

<p>internationally comparable system of recognizing prior learning experience acquired abroad or in other Moldovan universities as fulfilling parts of the study programmes at Alecu Russo Balti State University.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended to assess the actual achievement of the outcomes of the work student has done prior to his/her studies in the field on the basis of the list of tasks fulfilled at the working place, the characterization by the employer and the report completed by the student about his/her work experience. 	
<p>2.8. REQUIREMENT: Systematic analysis of achievement of learning outcomes is performed and improvement measures are undertaken.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>During the visit the staff could not convince the Committee that the analysis of learning outcomes is a systematic procedure and that there is a system for using the analysis for improving the achievement of learning outcomes. However, the assessment results are periodically analysed and measures have been taken to improve the success rate. Those measures have been successful as the examination success rate has improved dramatically, from 45% in 2013-2014 to 81% in winter examination period of 2014. In the interviews the teaching staff claimed that they analyse the achievement of each particular course and take measures to improve the achievement.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended to make the analysis of achievement of learning outcomes a systematic procedure and use those analysis as well as feedback gathered from the students and employers for building up the continuous process of developing the study programme. 	
<p>2.9. REQUIREMENT: Students are involved in research and development activities, the supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, applied projects, final thesis) is well organised and the satisfaction rate with the quality of supervision is high.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The students are not involved in research and development activities to a sufficient extent. The reason for that is said to be the lack of time of the students, as they have to combine their everyday work and studies. Nevertheless, this is a full-time study programme and the involvement of students on research and development activities is supposed to be part of fulfilling the programme, not as an additional activity. However, on the initiative of the visiting professor from Romania a first edition of the Journal of the Faculty of Law was published, containing articles written by MA students. The university has commented and has argued that this conclusion is partly true. It is not clear to the committee however why and to what extent it is not true, since specifics were not made clear.</p> <p>According to the interviews, the satisfaction of the students with the quality of supervision is not measured. In their interviews the students</p>	

claimed that they are very satisfied with the supervision.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to systematically gather feedback about the satisfaction with the quality of supervision from the students after they have defended their thesis and use this feedback for improving the skills of supervision of the teaching staff.
- It is recommended to invest into continuation of the initiative of publishing a journal which offers the MA students a good opportunity to practice writing articles. In that respect, an electronic version ought to be considered.

3. TEACHING STAFF	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		X	
<p>Collected evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annex D 1.1: Master’s study programme “Criminal Sciences and Criminology” - Annex D3.1: Course descriptions of the “Criminal Sciences and Criminology” Master’s programme - Annex 6: CVs of teaching staff - ANNEX O10.3: List of scientific conferences - Information obtained during the interviews - Information available in the Self-Evaluation Report 			
<p>General comments:</p> <p>The Committee has noted that the size of the academic staff teaching this full-fledged 90 ECTS programme (in total of 6 academic staff members) with so many diverse courses and disciplines, is rather small. It has led the Committee to ask the question about the presence of the necessary master level expertise and research, which are necessary to teach a master programme.</p> <p>It was confirmed that no visiting staff have been involved in teaching of this Master’s programme, and the current academic staff involved have not visited other educational institutions abroad to develop their own didactical and other skills related to teaching-learning process.</p> <p>Moreover, it was firmly established that there is lack of participation in international research projects and networks. One of the reasons for this</p>			

is the responsibility of staff to cover all expenses on their own, should they wish to take part in such activities. The proposals to participate in forums, national and international scientific conferences are coming not from the Faculty or the Chair, but rather from the lecturers themselves. It is positive, however, that the University has established a motivation system for the teaching staff according to which the performance indicators (of which 80% are related to research activities) are being applied and salaries raised accordingly. This will hopefully be a positive incentive to encourage participation in national and international research projects, in forums, and national and international scientific conferences.

Recommendations:

- It appears to be necessary to strengthen the research component of the staff, so that the master programme is fully supported by high level research made by staff members in the domain of the programme. A master programme must be based upon academic research of its teachers.
- It does appear necessary, as well, to build a clear and ambitious research goal and strategy of the Chair in order to enable the foregoing, i.e., high research level of the staff.
- For the quality and competitiveness of the programme it is necessary to invest in international staff mobility, based upon a clear strategy of aims and partners. Taking into account the content of the programme a much wider range of international partners is necessary to ensure quality of the programme.
- It could be considered to invite practitioners as guest lecturers to various courses of this MA programme.
- The role of the Chair in organising lecturers' scientific activities should be more active and financial costs of lecturers' participation in forums, national and international scientific conferences should be fully covered by the Faculty.

3.1. REQUIREMENT: The number and qualification of full-time teaching staff complies with the requirements established by legislation. At least 60% of the study programme is covered by full-time staff. 100% of full-time staff involved in the study programme have PhD degree or equal.

Comments:

The Self-Evaluation Report, the CVs of teaching staff and the interviews confirmed that the number and qualification of full-time teaching staff complies with the requirements established by legislation. The programme Criminal Sciences and Criminology is implemented by 6 teaching staff members; all of them have a doctoral degree in law. 4 lecturers are employed full time, and 2 lecturers are working part-time on hourly basis from within the University.

<p>3.2. REQUIREMENT: Distribution of full-time teaching staff by age, and the percentage of young members of the teaching staff, ensures the sustainability of studies in a higher education institution and a study programme.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report, the CVs of teaching staff and the interviews confirmed that the distribution of full-time teaching staff by age, and the percentage of young members of the teaching staff, ensures the sustainability of the study programme. There are 6 teaching staff members involved in professional training in Criminal Science and Criminology programme: 4 full-time lecturers at the Department of Law (66.66%) aged 30-40 years; 2 lecturers are employed part-time (33.33%) and are between ages 50-75.</p>	
<p>3.3. REQUIREMENT: The total number and qualification of teaching staff is – based on their responsibilities, workload and the number of supervised students – sufficient and adequate for achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programmes at MA level.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The overall size of the staff is small and minimally sufficient taking into account the wide scope of the programme and achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programmes at MA level. That aspect of size poses a sustainability issue and raises questions about the research viability of the programme. This is specifically a matter of concern considering the research component and basis. For the research related reasons and the many disciplines involved in the programme, it remains to be questioned whether the overall number of teachers (6 persons) is adequate to ensure high level research based teaching in this master programme. The lists of the themes of master theses and supervisors proves that number of supervised students for each lecturer is adequate, but interviews with the students showed that students' individual work is less than it is foreseen in the course programmes and required for 90 credits, which may be partially due to obvious problems with workload of teaching staff in organising and monitoring students individual work.</p>	
<p>3.4. REQUIREMENT: The members of the teaching staff have an adequate teaching competence and improve their teaching methods.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The interviews with students and teaching staff confirmed that lecturers have adequate teaching competences and are using various interactive teaching methods. According to the Self-Evaluation Report (p. 20): "... in 2013 - 2015, 4 lawyers participated in professional development seminars organized by the Union of Lawyers of the Republic of Moldova, the National Council of State Guaranteed Legal Assistance, Moldova Institute for Human Rights, 4 persons have completed the psycho-pedagogical module." Meeting with the teaching staff confirmed this information.</p>	

<p>3.5. REQUIREMENT: The staff development system is effective: the members of the teaching staff have opportunities for self-improvement, staff development methods are applied by the higher education institution.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report, the CVs of teaching staff and the interviews confirmed that the members of the teaching staff have opportunities for self-improvement and staff development methods are applied by the higher education institution. According to the Report (p. 20), “the employing institution provides access to self-improvement of teachers by organizing psycho-pedagogical training courses for non-pedagogical specialties attended by the employees of the Department of Law who participate in the Master’s degree professional training programme, cycle, II. In addition, foreign language courses are organized for the employees. However, full-time academic staff members involved in Master’s degree programmes under evaluation are excessively busy: the majority have a teaching load of 1.5, but for one academic from each Master’s programme and they are also practitioners, so their real-time volume for self-improvement is limited.” Meeting with the teaching staff confirmed this information and the fact that due to heavy work load they have time restrictions when it comes to self-development activities. This poses a problem from the perspective of academic development of staff and, as a result, the programme itself.</p>	
<p>3.6. REQUIREMENT: Visiting members of the teaching staff (including from foreign higher education institutions) are involved in teaching in a study programme.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>According to the Report (p. 21), “no external employee is hired for the Master’s degree programme in Criminal Science and Criminology specialization (90 credits). Academic staff members involved in this programme have not visited other educational institutions abroad during the period under evaluation.” During the meeting, students expressed willingness to have more visiting members of the teaching staff from foreign universities. It could also be considered to invite practitioners as guest lecturers to various courses of this study programme. Meeting with employers/practitioners revealed that such practice is not applied. The Self-Evaluation Report and the interviews confirmed that this requirement is not implemented.</p>	
<p>3.7. REQUIREMENT: The members of the full-time teaching staff of a higher education institution regularly develop their skills at foreign higher education institutions and participate in international networks.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>As stated already above, the academic staff members involved in this programme have not visited other educational institutions abroad during the period under evaluation. The CVs of lecturers and meetings with the teaching staff demonstrated that lecturers do not participate in international networks either. However, the University approved the motivation system for the teaching staff – the performance indicators</p>	

(both teaching and research related) of staff is related with the lecturers' salaries. These performance indicators should be treated as a very positive tool for ensuring that the staff members aim to regularly develop their skills at foreign higher education institutions and participate in international networks. It remains to be seen how this intention will materialise, however.

3.8. REQUIREMENT: Teaching staff are involved in national and international research projects and participate in forums, national and international scientific conferences.

Comments:

According to the Self-Evaluation Report, „during the evaluated period, the academics involved in Master's programmes under evaluation participated in over 50 national and international scientific conferences.” (ANNEX O10.3) The Annex provides information on the involvement of the teaching staff (2 lecturers) of the study programme in national and international scientific conferences. There is no information about the teaching staff involvement in international research projects and the meeting with the lecturers confirmed the lack of such projects.

The motivation system for the teaching staff – the performance indicators, of which 80% are related to research activities – can be treated a very positive tool to motivate lecturers to participate in national and international research projects and participate in forums, national and international scientific conferences.

During the meeting with lecturers it was stated that the financial burden of participation in international scientific conferences and publication of scientific articles is resting on the lecturers. The proposals to participate in forums, national and international scientific conferences are not coming from the Faculty or the Chair, but rather from the lecturers themselves. All this suggests that the role of the Chair in organising lecturers' scientific activities should be more active and financial costs of lecturers' participation in forums, national and international scientific conferences should be fully covered by the Faculty and/or the University.

3.9. REQUIREMENT: Research activities of the teaching staff are planned and monitored efficiently.

Comments:

Interviews confirmed that research activities of the teaching staff are planned and monitored efficiently. There are plans of the research activities of the Chair and also the plans of the individual teachers. The University also has a monitoring system and the motivation system for the teaching staff – the performance indicators – providing incentives for the lecturers to implement the plans.

4. STUDENTS	conforms to	partially conforms to	does not conform to
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	requirements	requirements	requirements
mark with 'X'		X	
Collected evidence:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulation on the admission process approved by the Senate on 28 of May 2014 for the year of study 2014-2015 (http://www.usarb.md/fileadmin/universitate/Admitere_2014/acte_normative/Reg_adm_USARB_2014_MASTER.pdf) - Information on the admission process (http://www.usarb.md/admitere/admitere-2014/masterat/) - Information regarding the dynamic of the admission process (http://www.usarb.md/admitere/admitere-2014/masterat/dinamica3/sdss0/2-08-m-dss/) - Cooperation agreements with foreign universities from Romania, Russia and Ukraine (available during the visit) - Cooperation agreements with other universities from Moldova: State University of Moldova, Free International University and Academy of Public Administration (available during the visit) - Information about the EMERGE mobility project (http://emerge.uaic.ro/partner-universities/partner-universities) - Regulation on the activity of Students' Senate (http://www.usarb.md/fileadmin/universitate/Senatul_studentesc/regulament_final_-_kopija.pdf) - Regulation on the activity of the Quality Council (http://www.usarb.md/fileadmin/universitate/Dep_calitatii/Regulamentul_CC_pentru_site.PDF) - Report on the assessment of the quality of the teaching and research activities of the Faculty of Law and Science (http://www.usarb.md/fileadmin/facultati/drept/Raport_FDSS.pdf) - Cooperation agreements with the representatives of the labour market: Anticorruption Center, Forensic and judicial expertise Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, National Social Insurance Agency, Territorial Labour Inspectorate, Probation Office, Institute for Criminal Reforms, National Council for legal assistance, about 10 agreements with private and lawyers' offices (available during the visit) - Information obtained during the interviews and available in the SR. 			
General comments:			
<p>There are clear requirements for admission and the assessment of the academic progress, and admission requirements are adequate for students to complete their studies on the programme. The University undertakes certain measures for career guidance of its students and career monitoring of the graduates, however the systems are not well-established and need to be improved. Possibilities for student mobility exist; yet, so far the MA students have mostly participated in mobility programmes that are not related to the Criminal Sciences and Criminology programme, and student mobility has only recently become a little more active. The University proved sufficient awareness with regard to the academic fraud phenomenon. Nevertheless, it still needs to develop its internal data-base and the anti-plagiarism soft-ware. The drop-out rates</p>			

do not present a threat for the sustainability of the MA programme and the graduates are considered to be competitive, especially for the northern region of the country. The University has made good efforts to identify internship and eventual employment places for its students; it is still encouraged to better learn about the labour market of other parts of the country and ensure that its graduates are equally competitive outside the northern region.

Commendations:

- Clear and transparent admission requirements.
- Good cooperation relations and mobility opportunities with universities from Romania.
- The academic staff has taken an effort to build a tailor made programme, aimed at the region, and for which it has forged close contacts with the labour market.

Recommendations:

- Ensure to have in place well-established systems for career guidance, psychological counselling and a tracking mechanism for monitoring the career development of the graduates.
- Further encourage student mobility and develop cooperation relations with institutions from other EU countries
- Improve the anti-plagiarism system and develop its own software.
- Better learn about the labour market of other parts of the country and ensure that its graduates are equally competitive outside the northern region.

4.1. REQUIREMENT: The admission requirements for student applicants are based on qualities necessary for completing the study programme. The admission of students is performed by procedures stipulated in the normative acts.

Comments:

The admission process is organised based on the provisions of the Government Decision no 1544 of 24.12.2007 on the organisation of the MA studies and internal regulations which are revised and approved annually. The last regulation on the admission process was approved by the Senate on 28 of May 2014 for the year of study 2014-2015.

(http://www.usarb.md/fileadmin/universitate/Admitere_2014/acte_normative/Reg_adm_USARB_2014_MASTER.pdf). The content of the national and internal legal framework establishes clear requirements for the applicants and impose additionally 30 mandatory ECTS for those applicants with a Bachelor degree in an unrelated field. Likewise, the regulation provides for a special procedure of recognition of the studies related to Law within a Bachelor programme in another field. The Education Plan for Criminal Sciences and Criminology master programme clearly stipulates the same admission requirements for candidates coming from other related fields of study. The admission contest for Criminal

<p>Sciences and Criminology is performed on the basis of a complex examination in main disciplines (based on questionnaires published on www.usarb.md, the <i>Admission</i> compartment). The requirements are adequate for completing studies on this master programme.</p> <p>The admission requirements are transparent and the web-page dedicated to the admission process contains detailed information: The Regulation on the admission process; the methodology for the organisation of the admission exams; list of necessary acts; the document for enrolment; the admission plan/offer; the subjects for the specialty exam; description of the dynamic of the admission process indicating the number of applications and available places; the results of the admission process indicating the list of the successful candidates and their marks; tuition fee, etc. (http://www.usarb.md/admitere/admitere-2014/masterat/).</p> <p>The table on page 27 of the Self-Evaluation Report indicates a declining number of enrolled students and a significantly higher number of students in the Criminal Science and Criminology MA programme than in the Business Law programme. Nevertheless, when analysing the applications the numbers are almost equal – 21 for Criminal Sciences and Criminology and 22 for Business Law (http://www.usarb.md/admitere/admitere-2014/masterat/dinamica3/sdss0/2-08-m-dss/). According to the Regulation on the organisation of the master studies, the minimum number of students for an academic group is 15. The Committee has noted that the programme does indeed meet the minimum requirements of the size of student groups, but more students do appear necessary for the long-term sustainability.</p> <p><u>Commendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and transparent admission requirements. 	
<p>4.2. REQUIREMENT: The counselling system of students (including study, career and psychological counselling) is planned/targeted and effective.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The management of the University informed that currently the University has no unit dealing with career guidance and psychological counselling, but there were recent discussions in the Senate regarding the plans to establish a career guidance centre and an alumni association. The Self-Evaluation report (p. 24) states that the University is trying to ensure some career guidance by offering specialised internship that would be connected with the research topic of the student. This was confirmed by the management of the University who informed about continuous efforts to cooperate with the labour market, a recent example being two cooperation agreements signed with regional subdivisions of law enforcement authorities. Nevertheless, currently there are no well-established, effective systems for students' counselling. The University is aware of the importance of this issue and the students stressed the need for such advice. Therefore, the University is encouraged to develop the necessary systems and implement its current plans.</p>	
<p>4.3. REQUIREMENT: Students are provided with internal and external mobility opportunities.</p>	

<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The University has established international mobility as one of the main strategic objectives of its development programme for 2013-2018 and makes efforts to offer mobility opportunities through mobility programmes such as Erasmus, CEEPUS, AUF, TEMPUS, UNESCO, DAAD, Fulbright, Pestalozzi, Edmund S. Muskie, etc. The students the Committee met confirmed that they have access to information, including the University's web-site and that they are regularly informed about the opportunities by the dean/staff. However, due to the fact that they are already employed and have families they are not interested to apply.</p> <p>The University has cooperation agreements with foreign universities from Romania, Russia and Ukraine. The Committee learned that there is a particularly strong cooperation with higher education institutions from Romania and a recent agreement with a University from Iasi (2014) enables student and teacher mobility, joint research activities, organisation of summers schools and conferences, as well as cooperation with regard to doctoral schools. The cooperation with other universities from Moldova include State University of Moldova, Free International University and Academy of Public Administration based on the concluded agreements.</p> <p>The University is recommended to implement the activities pursuant to the existing cooperation agreements with the universities from Romania and to seek ways to extend its cooperation relations with institutions from other EU countries.</p> <p><u>Commendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good cooperation relations and mobility opportunities with universities from Romania. 	
<p>4.4. REQUIREMENT: Students participate in international mobility programmes. The percentage of students participating in student mobility is stable or growing.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>There are 3 master students participating in mobility programmes, but they are not related to the Criminal Sciences and Criminology MA programme. At the same time, two Romanian students studied in the Criminal Sciences and Criminology MA programme within the academic mobility project EMERGE. This project is coordinated by a Romanian University and the University of Balti is one of the 9 partner universities from Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus (http://emerge.uaic.ro/partner-universities/partner-universities). The Self-Evaluation Report (p. 25) states that the above-mentioned international mobility programme became more popular among students since the academic year 2013-2014.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University is recommended to further encourage student mobility and develop cooperation relations with institutions from other EU countries. 	
<p>4.5. REQUIREMENT: Students are involved in the decision-making process at different levels of the higher education</p>	

<p>institution.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Students are involved in the decision-making process through their representatives in the Senate and the Faculty of Law Council. Students have a self-organised body – Students’ Senate. Its activity is regulated by an internal act on Students’ Senate. Par. 7 of the Regulation provides that students’ representation in the Senate and Faculty Council shall be in a proportion of at least ¼ and maximum 1/5 out of the total members. The representatives are elected and delegated by the Students’ Senate (http://www.usarb.md/fileadmin/universitate/Senatul_studentesc/regulament_final_-_kopija.pdf). Likewise, the Regulation on the activity of the Quality Council, art. 7, ensures that two representatives of the students delegated by the Students’ Senate are also members of the Council. (http://www.usarb.md/fileadmin/universitate/Dep_calitatii/Regulamentul_CC_pentru_site.PDF)</p>	
<p>4.6. REQUIREMENT: A system has been established for the detection and prevention of academic fraud.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The University has no specific anti-plagiarism software in place. The management of the University is aware of the importance of such a software and informed the Committee about current efforts being made to establish an internal data-base. For that purpose, each Master thesis is also submitted in electronic form (on CDs). Likewise, each master thesis must be accompanied by a Statement on the original content of the thesis which is signed by the student. As an intermediary solution, anti-plagiarism Romanian web-sites are used (for example, https://www.sistemantiplagiat.ro/pagina-principala). The representatives of the teaching staff met by the Committee were able to explain the strategies applied for preventing plagiarism: encourage students choosing their own topic of interest and motivate them to research it, explaining the Guidelines of the University on drafting the Master thesis, using anti-plagiarism Romanian web-sites for checking and encouraging students to perform their own checks, etc. The management of the University informed about several cases related to BA studies where about 6 theses were cancelled due to plagiarism, but no such cases happened in relation to Master theses. This was confirmed by the students who were aware of the existing rules and guidelines.</p> <p>According to the internal regulation no 9 approved by the Senate on 16.03.2011 on the evaluation of students’ academic results, the teachers are allowed to expel the student from the examination room in case of cheating or other breach of ethic or integrity rules. No such examples were presented to the Committee.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledging the current efforts to prevent academic fraud and plagiarism, the University is recommended to enhance its system and to use its own anti-plagiarism software, and to quickly put in place an effective anti-plagiarism programme for all written student work. 	
<p>4.7. REQUIREMENT: Higher education institution has a tracking mechanism of graduates’ employment and is monitoring the</p>	

<p>evolution of graduates' career.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>No well-established tracking mechanism of the graduates' employment and on their career evolution is in place currently. However, the University has certain information on the employment rate and working places of its graduates due to two studies prepared by the current or former academics of the University (the most recent one was carried out in 2013). Likewise, the University collects information on the number of graduates employed by various law enforcement bodies and courts (<i>letters requesting the number of employed graduates from the prosecutors' offices, ministry of internal affairs, courts – available during the visit</i>). This enables the institution to have a better understanding of the employability of the graduates of the MA programme in Criminal Sciences and Criminology, but not of those of the MA programme in Business Law. The Committee also learned about the meetings organised by the University with employers where the students can find about employment opportunities. Some statements of the employers' representatives confirmed these affirmations. The management of the University informed the Committee about the plans to establish a career guidance centre and an alumni association, which will deal with monitoring the career development of its graduates and help establishing better cooperation with the labour market. The University is recommended to implement these objectives and to establish a well-organised tracking mechanism.</p>	
<p>4.8.REQUIREMENT: The competitiveness of the graduates of a study programme is demonstrated by employment rate according to obtained qualification; unemployment rate; employment rate in other fields than the one studied within the programme.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The information obtained from the region-based authorities on the official requests of the University indicates a high employment rate and the University is of the opinion that this demonstrates the competitiveness of its graduates on the labour market in the region (<i>Self-Evaluation Report, pp. 26-27 and the letters and replies of the authorities available on-site</i>). The employers had a high opinion about the MA programme and its graduates, though the need for more practical skills of graduates was stressed during the meetings. The Self-Evaluation Report indicates an employment rate of 58.2% for the Criminal Sciences and Criminology programme (see: page 27). The Committee is not entirely convinced by the accuracy of this data. Nevertheless, it learned during the visit about the cooperation agreements between the University and various representatives of the labour market and about the pro-active approach of the University to identify internship and eventual employment places for its students, which demonstrate the efforts of the University in this respect. This leads to the conclusion that the graduates of the MA programme are competitive on the labour market of the northern region of the country. The University is still encouraged to better learn about the labour market of other parts of the country and ensure that its graduates are equally competitive outside the northern region.</p>	

<p>Commendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The academic staff has taken an effort to build a tailor made programme, aimed at the region, and for which it has forged close contacts with the labour market. 	
<p>4.9. REQUIREMENT: There is a system in place for monitoring academic progress. Graduation of students per each year meets the legal requirements. Effective measures are implemented to reduce the drop-out rates.</p>	
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Pursuant to the internal regulation on the evaluation of students' academic progress, approved by the Senate on 16.03.2011, there is a well-established mechanism for monitoring academic progress which can be performed at the levels of departments and faculties. The Report on the assessment of the quality of the teaching and research activities of the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences (p. 14) presents the results of the master thesis/exams for the 2014 year for all MA programmes: 39% out of the 105 students received 10; 33% - 9; 24% - 8 and 4% - 7. (http://www.usarb.md/fileadmin/facultati/drept/Raport_FDSS.pdf) Nevertheless, the results for the MA programme presented to the Committee during the visit indicated only grades above 8.</p> <p>The drop-out rates may vary between 12.5% and 14.5% (table on page 27 of the Self-Evaluation Report). The University claims that most of the students are usually re-enrolled in the subsequent academic years and the real number of drop-outs is insignificant. Among the measures for reducing the drop-outs the following were mentioned: organisation of two re-examination periods; a more flexible schedule if needed; organisation of classes on Saturdays, etc. The measures are considered to be sufficient and effective by the University.</p>	

5. RESOURCES	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		X	
<p>Collected evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annex D9 of the Self-Evaluation Report: Financial data about the University Annex O10.17: List of University library resources Annex O10.12: Distribution of classrooms at the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences Information obtained during the interviews 			

- Information available in the Self-Evaluation Report

General comments:

The Committee has concluded that it is unable to find that the programme conforms to all requirements with respect to resources, since resources are too scarce to meet all requirements and make the necessary investments and bring the programme to the level of sufficient number of students, library facilities, well trained staff, and an upgrade of the courses.

Commendation:

- The Criminal Sciences and Criminology programme is run on a small sized facility of a truly campus University. This has many benefits for an academic programme.

Recommendations:

- To invest substantially in funding for the programme in all its requirements. This is the more so necessary since in the domains of criminal science and criminology many developments take place with regard to criminal science and expertise. This requires access to literature, access to international scholarly publications and expertise and the necessity to have the expertise in house and available in staff and research facilities such as labs. It also necessitates access to expertise of many disciplines such as law, psychology, psychopathology, DNA, crime scene techniques, financial expertise and others. This poses a huge challenge for a truly University master programme.
- To invest in the information systems and make these information systems part of decision-making about programmes and courses, study load, careers and drop-out rates.
- To invest in the library with the purchase of up-to-date literature and foreign books and periodicals.

5.1. REQUIREMENT: The financial resources of a higher education institution are adequate for conducting studies, development activities related to studies and supporting the development of the teaching staff.

Comments:

The financial resources come mostly from the state budget and tuition fees, some revenue is received from various research projects. The operating income of the University from 2010 to 2014 has been rather stable (62 056 MDL in 2014). The management reported during the meeting that they started to raise the salaries of all staff members – by 20% last year and 15% this year – taking into account performance indicators annually (personal performance related to scientific and educational activity); the increase in staff costs reflected in the table with financial data (Annex D9) confirms this. Staff costs have risen from 41 891MDL in 2010 to 46 198 MDL in 2014 (increase by about 10%). The University has had a budget deficit during the last two years.

According to the information provided above, resources are not abundant, but the University has financial stability and no fear of bankruptcy.

5.2. REQUIREMENT: Trends in the number of students and graduates, and the budget of a higher education institution in the last three to five years indicate sustainability.

Comments:

The programme of Criminal Sciences and Criminology is a relatively small programme.

The numbers of enrolment and graduation (Report, p. 27) of the programme during the past 3 years have been the following:

2011 - 26; 2012 – 44; 2013 – 24.

Numbers of graduation: 2013-2014 – 41; 2014-2015 – 21 students. (Report, p. 29)

Although the programme fulfils the minimum requirements of size for a student group (15 students should be enrolled) and the student numbers for this programme are more sustainable than for the Business Law programme, the numbers have shown instability over the past 3 years, going up and down. Student numbers do also depend on government permission (the Ministry decides on the state budgeted places; the rest of the students pay tuition fees). Connections with the labour market and links with employers and a strategy concerning the need for criminal science trained people are crucial here.

The University has financial stability, but funds are nevertheless too scarce. This poses a challenge to be able to invest in staff expertise and sufficient specialists to cover all courses and connect these indispensable aspects with quality research. The programme can be considered to be running on the present level, however to be able to invest in tools and instruments in order to meet all requirements and to be able to structurally offer an academic level master programme, more resources are necessary. Without these the programme will struggle to meet the minimum standards if it at all can meet them.

To conclude: There is certain stability in number of students to be enrolled on the programme, on the one hand, but on the other hand the restricted budget of the institution merits improvement in order to establish a programme which can substantially and safely meet the minimum requirements and be fully sustainable.

<p>5.3. REQUIREMENT: Teaching and learning environments have been developed according to the teaching and learning objectives, include all facilities necessary for conducting studies in a given study programme and are of adequate capacity considering the number of students (auditoriums, seminar rooms, laboratories, rooms for students independent work and recreation, video projectors, internet etc.).</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The facilities have been visited and inspected. A relatively large university campus accommodates all the necessary facilities for teaching and learning process, including classrooms, computer classes, auditoriums, laboratories, the library, and canteen. These are considered sufficient and equipped adequately. But there is certainly room for upgrades and improvement. The University has made a contract with “Moldtelecom”, which provides internet service to the entire institution.</p> <p><u>Commendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Criminal Sciences and Criminology programme is run on a small sized facility of a truly campus University. This has many benefits for an academic programme. 	
<p>5.4. REQUIREMENT: Both the conduct of studies and other activities of a higher education institution are supported by up-to-date information technology solutions, including the study information system, e-learning opportunities, and communication portals for students and teaching staff.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Committee has observed that to a large extent these systems do exist (e.g., there are currently two e-learning platforms: Moodle and Mahara), however they also need to be improved and structurally incorporated in the processes of decision-making and feedback. Work has to be done to make them fully operational, specifically such systems as communication portals, E-learning facilities and information systems.</p>	
<p>5.5. REQUIREMENT: The students are provided with dormitories and medical service.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The University has currently five dormitories with 1150 places that are ready to accommodate students. One dormitory is used as a study building. Medical service is also available and meeting the demands and requirements.</p> <p>The Committee is of the opinion that the requirement established by the state in terms of having a dormitory for <u>all</u> the students is superfluous</p>	



and too expensive and should be revisited, since many students have their own abode. Instead of having its own dormitory, it could be considered to cooperate with other real-estate companies or proprietors offering accommodation. So is the requirement regarding the provision of medical service – it is outdated, too expensive, not efficient, and therefore too much a burden on small institutions and programmes with low funding.

5.6. REQUIREMENT: A library supports the conduct of studies ensuring that up-to-date information sources are available, and provides students with the opportunities for independent work.

Comments:

Indeed, an equipped library of some proportions does exist, which also has access to information systems and data bases. However, it must be expected for a full-fledged master programme that foreign literature will be more present. Furthermore, the students noted that there is a lack of up-to-date books and electronic resources.