

The Assessment Decision of the EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education

12/10/2015

A proposal to the Minister of Education
of the Republic of Moldova to

ACCREDIT
the Master's study programme "Criminal Law"
of the Comrat State University
FOR 5 YEARS

Acting in accordance with the authorization granted by the § 10 (4) of the Universities Act and sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.3 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA) and based on section 33.5 of the document "Requirements and Procedure for Accreditation of Study Programmes in Moldova", the EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education shall state the following.

1. On February 23, 2015, the Director of EKKA approved by her order the following composition of the

Assessment Committee:

Stephen C. Shute – Chair	Professor, School of Law, Politics and Sociology, University of Sussex; United Kingdom
Stela Buiuc	Deputy director, Centre of Legal Approximation, Ministry of Justice; Moldova
Mihai Floroiu	Professor, Faculty of Legal, Social and Political Sciences, "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati; Romania
Andres Parmas	Judge in the criminal chamber, Tallinn Circuit Court, PhD student; Estonia

2. The Assessment Visit to the Trade Cooperative University of Moldova took place on May 7, 2015.
3. The Assessment Committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA on June 19, 2015. The Assessment Committee received no comments from the State University of Comrat and approved the final version of the component assessments on July 20, 2015.
4. The Secretary of the Council forwarded the assessment report containing the component assessments to the members of the EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education on 24.09.2015. The assessment report forms an integral part of the assessment decision. The report will be made available on the EKKA website.
5. **The component assessments were as follows:**

Study programme and its development	Conforms to requirements
Teaching and learning	Conforms to requirements
Teaching staff	Partially conforms to requirements
Students	Conforms to requirements
Resources	Partially conforms to requirements

6. The EKKA Quality Assessment Council discussed the assessment report along with other relevant materials at its session on October 12, 2015 with the participation of 9 Council members. The Council decided to point out the following strengths and areas of improvement of the Master's study programme "Criminal Law":

6.1.

Study programme and its development	Conforms to requirements
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Strengths

- The departments of the Law faculty have good administrative capacity, existing documents, strategies and action plans.
- The employers are satisfied with the graduates' skills and offer them opportunities of employment after the internships.
- The students' feedback is systematically collected and analysed, and the results are presented in special reports.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The programme lacks specialized courses that would prepare the students better for the demands of the employers and allow a greater international comparability, such as

cybercrime, economical criminality, etc. In the future, it is recommended to include such courses touching also some niche disciplines into the curriculum.

- Only a few graduates of the master’s programme have pursued further education at doctoral level and obtained a PhD degree and the research skills of the students are quite limited. It is advisable to include a special course in the programme that would develop research skills for the students necessary for their work on the master thesis and their further doctoral studies.
- There is a lack of knowledge of Romanian language among the students, which is a requirement and a necessity for the jobs. It is therefore recommended that the faculty takes steps to improve the Romanian language skills of the students at both Bachelor and Master study levels.
- The teaching staff should be better informed about the objectives of the study programme and their role in it. The faculty is advised to undertake further measures to ensure that such an awareness exists.

6.2.

Teaching and learning	Conforms to requirements
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Strengths

- The University has managed to create a network of partner organisations, which serve both as a practice bases and employers for the students and graduates.
- The faculty hears and takes into consideration the feedback from the employing organisations in order to modernise its curriculum and to adapt it to the needs of the local labour market.
- There is a law clinic operating at the CSU.
- The level of satisfaction with the supervision among the students is high.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The teaching staff should be encouraged to further develop interactive and modern, internationally comparable teaching methods. In order to facilitate that, the classrooms would need investment in up to date IT and presentation equipment.
- There were only generic references to team-work or other group exercises made by the academic staff and students. The faculty, in order to better support achievement of analytic and synthetic learning outcomes, should revise the methods of teaching and assessment of knowledge, with a view of applying practical exercises, group-work, exams with open analytic questions and case solutions and with open materials.
- It is strongly advised to develop different methods of assessment that the classical ones, in which teaching staff could put some emphasis not on the students’ ability to memorize

parts of the course but really use the information and knowledge dispensed by teaching staff.

- The grading principles should be critically reviewed in order to guarantee that marks credited to students during assessment of their performance would in fact respond to the level of knowledge and skills obtained during respective courses.
- The practical professional skills of the graduates should be improved.

6.3.

Teaching staff	Partially conforms to requirements
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Strengths

- The staff possesses good qualifications and the faculty has good connections to the criminal law practitioners of the Republic of Moldova.
- The ratio of teachers to students is very good.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- As only 5 of the 6 full-time members of the teaching staff have PhD degrees, the number and qualification of full-time teaching staff does not comply with the requirements established by legislation. However, the lecturer without a PhD degree is in the process of completing his doctoral studies and has extensive practical experience as a prosecutor.
- It is recommended that younger professionals are attracted to ensure the sustainability of the programme in the long run.
- Not all members of teaching staff are active in terms of scientific research, which is also due to the limited language competences of the teaching staff. It is advisable to further develop their qualification in this respect – to get more active in scientific research projects and also attract grants or fellowships.
- Only a few lecturers have opportunities to participate in trainings and seminars that would help elevate their knowledge and skills. It is recommended that the University really puts into practice the staff development mechanisms designed in the respective strategies.
- There is no real participation in international networks in the area of law. It is therefore recommended that the members of teaching staff open more to international environment and become members of relevant professional networks. Also, members of teaching staff should be more involved in mobility that would allow them to develop their skills and also get involved in different networks.

6.4.

Students	Conforms to requirements
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Strengths

- There is a body responsible of counselling students in their career choices and of tracking their employment.
- The employment rate of graduates is high and has shown a positive trend over last years.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- There is no evidence of internal mobility opportunities being available to the students in the University. The external mobility opportunities and students’ participation in mobility programmes need to be further developed.’
- In order to achieve a better standard of graduates it is advisable that the CSU would revise its policies in grading that at the moment appears to be too generous.

6.5.

Resources	Partially conforms to requirements
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Strengths

- An important part of the budget is obtained from the University’s own resources alongside the State provided budget;
- The housing infrastructure is on a good level.
- The graduation rate of the students is high and the drop-off rate is low.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- In the CSU library, there is a considerable lack of up to date academic and professional (also foreign) literature or electronic materials available both for academic staff and students. Also, there is no access neither to international databases nor legal international journals. The University should invest in purchasing up-to-date resources for the library, with international relevance, as well as access to major legal international databases and subscriptions to most important international scientific magazines, relevant for the legal area.
- The Moodle platform is not used according to its full potential - it is basically taken only as a storage base for existing study materials. The IT solutions and equipment, including Moodle platform, should be used at their capacity. All communication portals available on the website should be really available in Romanian and English languages, as specified in the website’s menu.

7. According to section 33.5 of the document “Requirements and Procedure for Accreditation of Study Programmes in Moldova”, if one or two of the component assessments by an assessment committee are “partially conforms to requirements, the Quality Assessment

Council shall analyse the strengths and areas of improvement of the study programme to accredit the study programme for a period of five years or for a period of three years.

- 8.** The Council analyzed the strengths and areas of improvement of the study programme and taking into account that:
- The departments of the Law faculty have good administrative capacity, existing documents, strategies and action plans.
 - The employers are satisfied with the graduates' skills.
 - The students' feedback is systematically collected and analysed and the results are presented in special reports.
 - The University has managed to create a network of partner organisations, which serve both as a practice bases and employers for the students and graduates.
 - The faculty hears and takes into consideration the feedback from the employing organisations in order to modernise its curriculum and to adapt it to the needs of the local labour market.
 - There is a law clinic operating at the CSU.
 - The staff possesses good qualifications and the faculty has good connections to the criminal law practitioners of the Republic of Moldova.
 - There is a body responsible of counselling students in their career choices and of tracking their employment.
 - The graduation rate of the students is high.
 - The employment rate of graduates is high and has shown a positive trend over last years.

the Council **DECIDED**

To make a proposal to the Minister of Education of the Republic of Moldova to accredit the Master's study programme "Criminal Law" of the Comrat State University for a period of five years.

The decision was adopted by 6 votes in favour and 3 votes against.

9. Contestation:

- 9.1.** Evaluation proceedings conducted by EKKA may be disputed if the proceedings do not comply with the procedure provided for in this document. The challenge is filed with the Management Board of the Archimedes Foundation within 30 working days after the person filing the challenge became or should have become aware of the contested finding.

9.2. The assessment decision by the EKKA Quality Assessment Council may be disputed after adoption of the corresponding administrative decision by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova.

Tõnu Meidla
Chair of the Council

Hillar Bauman
Secretary of the Council