

Template for Assessment Report

**Accreditation of Study Programmes
Assessment Report**

Institution: COMRAT STATE UNIVERSITY (CSU)

Study programme(s): Criminal Law

Assessment committee:

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| Stephen C. Shute (chair) | Professor, School of Law, Politics and Sociology, University of Sussex; United Kingdom |
| Andres Parmas | Judge in the criminal chamber, Tallinn Circuit Court, PhD student; Estonia |
| 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 |

Coordinator: Birgit Vilgats

Dates of the assessment visit: 07.05.2015

Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: 19.06.2015

Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation: -

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

Date: 20.07.2015

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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 | |

Comments:

Comrat State University was established in 1991. It has 4 faculties: agro-technological, national culture, law and economics. Faculty of Law is second biggest unit with 391 students. CSU is developing dynamically as educational and scientific centre of continuing education, science and culture, whose main purpose is: education and training of highly qualified specialists and scientific personnel; realization of training, retraining and on the order of the Government of the Republic of Moldova on a contractual basis with the interested state institutions, economic entities and individuals in Moldova and ATU Gagauzia.

During the period 2008-2014 the Faculty of Law and profiling departments had graduates in following MA programmes: Law, Criminal Law, Civil Law, Corporate Law (SER p.6.)

Self-evaluation report (SER) is drafted without additional annexes but web-page links. Most of the available annexes on the CSU website are in Russian language. The web-page of the University is only available at certain times, whereas on several occasions, when tried to be reached, it was down.

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Commendations:

1. University with a specific local/regional role, taken into consideration the specificities of the autonomous region in which it functions.

Recommendations:

1. The University is strongly recommended to further extend the number of the courses of the MA programme taught in Romanian and to undertake effective measures to develop Romanian language skills for the students at both, the Bachelor and MA level.
2. The University shall take appropriate measures to ensure that the content of the MA programme follows closely the new legal developments and practice and that the students benefit from more specialized courses.
3. The University shall improve the research skills of the students and its academic staff and create more opportunities for participation in international trainings, conferences and research projects.
4. The University is strongly advised to acquire appropriate research resources (relevant and actual books for the library, access to specific international legal databases).
5. The University shall take appropriate measure in order to have an all-time available website, with all relevant information available, also in Romanian and English languages, in order to assure transparency.
6. The University shall encourage young professionals to become part of the academic staff, improve the used teaching methods and provide more resources for ensuring an interactive environment during the study process.

II Assessment areas and requirements

| 1. STUDY PROGRAMME AND ITS DEVELOPMENT | conforms to requirements | partially conforms to requirements | does not conform to requirements |
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| mark with 'X' | X | | |
| Collected evidence: Apart from the SER and its annexes the Evaluation Team (<i>hereinafter</i> ET) acquainted itself with strategic plans, action plans, documents regarding the study programme approvals, internship portfolios etc. | | | |
| General comments: The programme is in accordance to requirements and contributes to the achievement of the objectives of the study programme. Nevertheless, some improvements are to be made, in accordance to recommendations below | | | |

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| <p><u>Commendations:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good administrative capacity, existing documents, strategies, action plans etc. | |
| <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The programme should contain more specialized courses that would prepare even better the students for the demands of the labor market in the sense of touching also some niche disciplines (cybercrime, economical criminality etc); 2. The programme should contain a special course that would develop some research skills for the students; 3. Extend the number of disciplines taught in Romanian language. | |
| <p>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.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The University has a strategic development plan for the period 2011-2016, which is aiming at improving the quality of education, intensifying the research activities, supporting the members of the teaching staff, further development of the international cooperation, modernizing the infrastructure and increasing the financial sustainability of the university. In order to facilitate the University's activity, annual working plans are approved. The last one is for the period 2013-2014. The departments of the Law faculty have also action plans which are based on the individual plans for each member of their teaching staff.</p> | |
| <p>1.2.REQUIREMENT: A study programme is authorized and functions in accordance with the normative acts in force.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The study programme is organized in compliance with the requirements of the national legislation and was authorized by the Ministry of Education by Order no 383 of 30 May 2008.</p> | |
| <p>1.3.REQUIREMENT: The title of a study programme is consistent with its content.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The title of the study programme is consistent with its content. Nevertheless, the programme lacks specialized coursers that would prepare better the students for the demands of the employers, such as economic, cyber, terrorist offences, etc. Likewise, the programme does not contain a special course that would develop some research skills for the students necessary for their work on the master thesis and their further doctoral studies. The quality of the master thesis that were seen during the visit confirmed this conclusion.</p> | |
| <p>1.4.REQUIREMENT: The conduct of studies, including the student workload of independent work and internship, support</p> | |

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| <p>achievement of the objectives of the study programme.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> The conduct of studies contribute to achievement of the objectives of the study programme. Students' independent workload was considered as adequate both by students and alumni. Also from a formal point of view, the number of hours is adequate and in conformity to the Master Plan. Students have internship opportunities and some of those internships end in employment for some students. In order to achieve the objectives of the study programme, internship is monitored thoroughly, as mentioned below under point 2.4.</p> | |
| <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> The objectives and the learning outcomes are generally coherent with the EQF and the programme is internationally comparable to some extent. Nonetheless, the programme lacks specialist courses (such as on economic, cybercrimes, etc.) and a course that would help the students to develop research skills. It is therefore recommended that some specialize courses are included in the study programme, allowing thus students to benefit of up to date study disciplines, which would also allow a greater international comparability. Also, students should be taught on how to really prepare for scientific research</p> | |
| <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> The objectives, content and learning outcomes of the study programme are distinguishable from those of the Bachelor's programme. The ET could see that there are no repetitions between the two cycles, both in terms of name and content of disciplines taught, upon analysis of both BA and MA study plans and curricular support of the MA disciplines. Also, from the meeting with students they commended specific disciplines that further enhance the knowledge acquired at BA level, such as International standards in criminal proceedings, Juvenile crime and criminological aspects of juvenile delinquency, as well as the specific training organized within the Police Headquarters training facilities and forensic laboratory.</p> | |
| <p>1.7.REQUIREMENT: Study disciplines of the study programme are presented in a logical succession.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> The study disciplines are presented in a logical succession, as the first semester is dedicated to presenting general aspects regarding criminal law at national and international level (from the point of view of national constitution, comparative law some methodological aspects of legal science), in order to study in the second semester specific disciplines such as Special procedures in criminal proceedings, juvenile crime and criminological aspects of juvenile delinquency , Methodology for preparation of legal documents, Basis for combating of corruption</p> | |

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| 1.8.REQUIREMENT: Development of a study programme takes into consideration the needs of the labour market. | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> The University offers guidance to its students within the Career guidance center established for this purpose and most of the employers that the ET met confirmed that they are satisfied with the graduates' skills and offer them opportunities of employment after the internships. Nonetheless, employers claimed that only few of the graduates have opportunities of employment due to the lack of knowledge of Romanian language which is a requirement and a necessity for the jobs (police, prosecutor's office, courts, notary, etc.). It is therefore recommended that the faculty further extends the courses taught in Romanian pursuant to the suggestions and the needs of the labour market and improve the Romanian language skills of the students at the Bachelor level and/or establish some extra curriculum language courses for the master programme to support the students in this area. At this moment, only 4 of the disciplines of the study programme are taught in Romanian language.</p> | |
| 1.9.REQUIREMENT: Study programme development is a continuous process which, among others, involves feedback from students, employers and other relevant stakeholders. | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> The University has developed special questionnaires for students which covers aspects of the study programme related to the quality of the teaching staff, teaching methods used, the rate of meeting the expectations from the programme, difficulty of the courses, etc. and the students confirmed that they regularly give their opinion on this issues. The University presented as well evidences that the students' feedback is analysed and the results are presented in special reports. The ET also learned that the suggestions of the employers are also taken into consideration. One sound example relates to the introduction of four courses of the programme in Romanian at the proposals of the employers so that the students also develop some Romanian language legal terminology skills that would further help increase their chances of employment.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the University is further encouraged to extend the number of courses taught in Romanian pursuant to the suggestions and the needs of the labour market and improve the Romanian language skills of the students at the Bachelor level and/or establish some extra curriculum language courses for the master programme to support the students in this area. Likewise, it is recommended that programme is supplemented with some more specialized courses that would prepare better the students for the demands of the employers, such as on economic, cyber, terrorist offences, etc.</p> | |
| 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. | |
| <u>Comments:</u> | |

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| There was no clear understanding among the teaching staff that the ET met as to what are the objectives of the study programme and their role in it. That is why, the faculty is advised to undertake further measures to ensure that such an awareness exist. | |
| 1.11. REQUIREMENT: Study programme provides opportunities for further education at doctoral level. | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Though some of the alumni that the ET met on-site mentioned that they intend to pursue doctoral studies, only few graduates of the master programme pursued further education at doctoral level and obtained a PhD degree. The research skills of the students appeared to be quite limited witnessed by the quality of the master thesis (not updated materials used, few resources and footnotes, etc.) and the faculty is recommended to introduce in the programme a special course that would develop such skills useful for both, the master thesis and doctoral studies. Also, there is no doctoral school in Law at the university, but from the meetings with the Rector and the Dean, the ET learned that the institutions in trying to develop a doctoral school in law, as doctoral schools are being organized now in Moldova. Some of the part-time members of the teaching staff have the right to coordinate doctoral studies in law in other institutions of Moldova.</p> | |

| 2. TEACHING AND LEARNING | conforms to requirements | partially conforms to requirements | does not conform to requirements |
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| mark with 'X' | X | | |
| <p>Collected evidence:</p> <p>Apart from the SER and its annexes the ET acquainted itself with grade catalogues, master theses from last academic year, sample diploma supplements and explanatory notes to the master programme. The ET visited library facilities, the centre for career growth and the forensic centre at the Gagauzian police directorate to make observations on the actual conditions.</p> | | | |
| <p>General comments:</p> <p>The programme fulfils the requirements set below, as it respects both normative and technical criteria. The teaching methods and materials used could be somewhat more interactive and up to date, but generally they still enable to achieve the study outcomes of the programme.</p> | | | |
| <p><u>Commendations:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The CSU has managed to create a network of partner organisations, which serve both as a practice bases and employers for the CSU students and graduates. 2. There is a law clinic operating at the CSU. 3. The syllabi of courses and materials used during the course are made electronically available to students via Moodle platform. | | | |

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| <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The classrooms would need investment in up to date IT and presentation equipment in order to facilitate more interactive study methods to be used. 2. More interactive study methods should be encouraged to be used by academic staff 3. 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. 4. The literature used in study, has to be constantly renewed, titles from foreign authors should be introduced in the collection of materials. The CSU should make efforts in obtaining access to international electronic databases. 5. The practical professional skills of the graduates should be paid a constant attention. 6. The CSU should make efforts in raising the level of practical knowledge of Romanian language by its graduates in order to better meet the expectations on the labour market. 7. 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. | |
| <p>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.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The study programme functions according to specific regulations. Amongst them are respective decrees of the Ministry of Education and the study programme under evaluation was duly authorized by the Ministry of Education. There curriculum has been approved by the Council of the Faculty of Law of the University. The achievement of learning outcomes is supported by the study programme, which is in accordance to the Master Plan for Higher Education.</p> <p>The achievement of learning outcomes is supported both by the content and the teaching process of the study programme, which is in accordance to the Master Plan for Higher Education. Also, from the documents provided (the evaluated study programme), there are explanations provided regarding the study outcomes.</p> <p>As for the public availability on the institution's website, there are only mentions in Russian language, despite the fact that the menu is also available in Romanian and English, without any content inside.</p> <p>From the analysis of the curriculum and the Explanatory Note, one can state that the study programme allows students generally to achieve their learning outcomes and develop specific skills and competences in relation to the study domain.</p> <p>However, it was observed that the curriculum should be more up to date and offer also some courses on topics of contemporary concern such as e.g. cybercrime. Also the research skills and competences are not fully paid necessary attention to in the evaluated study programme.</p> | |

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| <p>Nevertheless, from discussions with students, alumni and employers, the ET learned that they were consulted about both the content of the programme and the teaching processes and some of their proposals were taken into consideration.</p> <p>The ET observed that the quality of teaching and learning is regularly monitored by the quality department, the feedback from students as well as employers is taken into account in developing the programme. Students have free access to the schedule of classes and exams, placed in the public domain on the website of CSU, which makes relevant information available in a timely manner. Students also have access to a password protected internet environment (Moodle platform), where more detailed course materials are available to them.</p> | |
| <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>In the SER it is stated that active and efficient teaching methods are used at the CSU. Also it was stated that Moodle environment is widely used. There was no documentation annexed in order to support these claims, however. The ET based on the interviews during the site visit has observed that some of the teachers prefer predominantly classical lecturing, using power-point presentations where facilities permit-it, where students remain mainly only as passive recipients of offered information. Also, another method considered to me modern is giving students' access to different documents though the Moodle platform.</p> <p>Such method of lecturing is especially discouraging interactivity considering the fact that mostly the classrooms are not equipped with up to date presentation facilities. At the same time several other lecturers are also using brainstorming method, group-discussions. It is a common practice at the CSU that students have to do written assignments (essays and reports). They are also involved in preparation of academic research papers.</p> <p>Moodle environment is indeed available to students at the CSU, but its potential is not fully used, as Moodle is basically taken only as a storage base for existing study materials.</p> <p>There were only generic references to team-work or other group exercises made by the academic staff and students during the visit.</p> <p>From the positive side, it has to be pointed out, that in cooperation with Gagauzian police force the forensic laboratory of local police directorate is used as a practice base during the studies. Some recommendations from the ET?</p> <p>Nonetheless, the ET recommends that Moodle environment is used according to its full potential and the team-work and group exercises should be materialized with published or publicly available results, in order to really develop students and graduates capability and competences and members of the teaching staff are encouraged to further develop interactive and modern, internationally comparable teaching methods.</p> | |
| <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>In the SER the CSU has stated that class-rooms are modern and well-equipped, the curricula are annually discussed, revised and supplemented</p> | |

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| <p>at the faculty and that the students show a high level of satisfaction with the study methods.</p> <p>The ET has observed from the presented syllabi and based on the interviews with academic staff, the students and the alumni that the study materials are constantly monitored by the teachers and regularly updated. In order to do that also the feedback from the students and the employers is taken into account. It was observed that some of the members of academic staff are publishing study literature (e.g. textbook on criminology by M. Birgau). At the same time several pieces presented as study materials created by the staff of the faculty (Appendix D.1, page 31 etc of the SER) have no obvious links to the curriculum under evaluation.</p> <p>However, it has to be noted that observations made in the CSU library show a considerable lack in up to date academic and professional literature or electronic materials available both for academic staff and students. This is a serious gap, which undermines the ability of academic staff to effectively follow modern trends and discussion in respective areas. Most of literature available in the CSU library is relatively old and mainly only in Russian language. The assertion of several members of academic staff during the site visit, that also the legislation and jurisprudence of other legal systems is widely used in studies, was not supported by any facts, as there were virtually no respective materials available in the library.</p> <p>It is strongly advised that CSU invests in purchasing relevant, up-to-date, academic literature, both from Moldova and from abroad. Also, access to international legal databases should be acquired and both teaching staff and students should start using them. Also, some training sessions on how to use those databases should be organized, in order for the academic community to really understand the importance of such instruments.</p> | |
| <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>There are clear regulations of the organisation of internship. Internship is organised according to a respective plan and it is clearly stipulated both in the curriculum and in the Diploma Supplement.</p> <p>The Faculty has agreements with several employers in the region in order to be able to offer internship placements for its students. Mostly, however, internship is undergone in respective work-places of students, as many students in the assessed MA programme are already working full time in the field of their studies. Each student has an internship portfolio, containing the internship programme, tasks and objectives, which are monitored by the internship supervisor at the level of the relevant institution.</p> <p>At the end of internship, each student gets a characterization and appreciation letter stating the exact content of the activities performed, drafted and signed by the internship supervisor and annexed to the internship portfolio</p> | |
| <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> | |

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| <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>There is a reliable circle of partner organisations for internships, as most public law institutions have entered into agreement with the CSU to provide internship placements (The General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Moldova, The Supreme Council of Magistracy of RM, The Executive Board of Gagauzia, The People's Assembly of Gagauzia, Centre for Human Rights of the Republic of Moldova, The public administration authorities, as well as some notaries public and other companies, organizations, institutions). 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.</p> | |
| <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> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The assessment procedure at the CSU is clearly regulated. In the SER it is stated that assessment is made according to the Ministry of Education normative acts regulating master studies (general regulation issued by the Ministry of Education in 2010). The ET was convinced during the site visit that such a procedure is actually working. It was also observed that there is an appeals procedure formally in place in case a student is not content with the assessment of his or her performance. However, the attitude on behalf of some of the Faculty staff showed that any complaints of the students would be discouraged.</p> <p>The evaluation methods were generally observed to support the study outcomes. However, as established from the interviews with the students and alumni during the site visit, the actual assessment of students' performance is based on classical fact-based examinations. Hence an all too common criterion for good performance is ability to memorise facts, as opposed to presentation of analytic and synthetic skills. During the site visit the ET observed from the grade catalogues that the grading process is perhaps rather generous: the vast majority of grades are 8, 9 or 10 with only some 7-s included, there are no overall failures, with a 100% success rate for the students that took the examinations.</p> <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <p>Despite the formal compliance, 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. Also, more thorough evaluations of exams and final thesis are needed.</p> | |
| <p>2.7.REQUIREMENT: The higher education institution recognizes prior learning and work experiences.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The CSU is respecting a general regulation issued by the Ministry of Education stipulating recognition of prior competencies in IT and linguistic areas. Prior learning is in theory recognized, as per point IV of the Regulation regarding the master studies, it is stipulated that graduates of other domains than law at BA level can be admitted to the master programmes of the CSU, provided they prove the existence of 30 ECTS for</p> | |

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| <p>compensating studies. There was no evidence however that any student had requested this. There was no proof of previous work experience considered as capable of being transformed into ECTS.</p> | |
| <p>2.8.REQUIREMENT: Systematic analysis of achievement of learning outcomes is performed and improvement measures are undertaken.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> In the SER it is stated that the entire study programme is annually systematically analysed, and modifications to it are made in accordance with the needs of the social environment. The ET was convinced that both the opinions of the feedback from employers as well as students are taken into account in that respect. The curriculum itself has been modified based on the feedback. However, the faculty did not explain if also the results of the exams are analysed with a view to understand lacunae in the skills and knowledge of the students and that study materials and methods are improved also based on such information. The overall leniency in the grading that was observed by the ET during the site visit, suggests that there is room for improvement in that area. Also, the feedback from the employers proved that the theoretical knowledge of graduates is good, but their practical skills in work should be better. This suggests too that the faculty should pay more attention in the practical juridical problem solving skills of the students and to develop its assessment methods accordingly.</p> | |
| <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> In the SER there are only general assertions made regarding the students involvement in RD activities, without specific references other than the fact that students are given the possibility to attend “scientific conferences and debates held at CSU”. During the site visit the above statements were corroborated by references to specific academic events having taken place at the CSU and by the assertions of students that those interested in research can participate in preparing the scientific reports and papers by the faculty members. Also, at the visit, students mentioned that they are actively involved in organising scientific undertakings (research circles) and such events are encouraged and supported by the University. However, the ET was not presented with any more concrete data on the University’s yearly expenditure on such enterprises or the concrete names or dates of any such events, and therefore there was no proof of any students’ scientific circles or similar enterprises being functional at the CSU, despite the mentions at the visit and in the SER. However, it was established that there is a law clinic and also a mock-Court room functioning at the University, where students can get acquainted with the practical juridical tasks. At the same time, as stated under point 1.9, the quality level of the master thesis could be further improved. The level of satisfaction with the supervision among the students was proven to be high during the site visit. Students should be made more aware about the importance of research and for this also teaching staff should be more involved in research</p> | |

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activities. Also, it is advised that the University goes beyond the simply formal fulfillment of criteria.

| 3. TEACHING STAFF | conforms to requirements | partially conforms to requirements | does not conform to requirements |
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| mark with 'X' | | X | |
| <p>Collected evidence: Apart from the SER and its annexes the ET acquainted itself with the publications edited/published by some of the teaching staff members, as well as with their teaching techniques and methods. Also, the ET could see the yearly reports analyzing the results of teaching staff research.</p> | | | |
| <p>General comments: Despite the fact that the staff has good qualifications and connections with the legal practice, there is a stringent need to bring in younger professionals at a full-time level, as well as for the existing staff members involved in the study programme to finalize the doctoral studies. Also, an increase of the research activities performed by the teaching staff is advisable and necessary, as well as an increase of the participation level of teaching staff at research activities.</p> <p><u>Commendations:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The staff possesses good qualifications and the faculty has good connections to the criminal law practitioners in RM; 2. The ratio of teachers to students is very good. <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is necessary to attract young professionals to the faculty; 2. It is also necessary to get more active in scientific research projects and to attract grants or fellowships. | | | |
| <p>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.</p> | | | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> 6 out of the total 9 members of the teaching staff have full-time positions (66,6%). However, only 5 members with full-time positions have a PhD degree and that makes the criteria unfulfilled. The ET learned that the lecturer without a PhD degree was in the process of doctoral studies and that he has extensive practical experience as a prosecutor with a high level position in the region.</p> | | | |
| <p>3.2.REQUIREMENT: Distribution of full-time teaching staff by age, and the percentage of young members of the teaching staff,</p> | | | |

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| <p>ensures the sustainability of studies in a higher education institution and a study programme.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> Only one member out of the 6 full time staff is aged between 30 and 40 years. The age of 4 members is between 40 and 50, 1 – between 50 and 60 and 1 member is 60 years old. As the average age of the staff is 45 years old, the distribution of full-time teaching staff by age does not fully ensure the sustainability of the education process and therefore it is recommended that younger professional are attracted to ensure the sustainability of the programme in the long run.</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> There are 9 lectures for 12 students enrolled in the study programme which is considered to be sufficient for the achievement of the objectives and the learning outcomes of the MA curricula. However, as not all members of teaching staff are very active in terms of scientific research, it is advisable to further develop their qualification in this respect, given the fact that in terms of professional qualification they are well known representatives of legal professions in the region.</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> All new members of the teaching staff must complete the 30 credits psycho-pedagogical module and in order to create appropriate skills to work with the Moodle platform, the University organized for the staff of the faculty a special training on this matter. There are some opportunities for the staff to participate in trainings and seminars (Ukraine, Italy, Slovenia, etc), both national and abroad, but they are quite limited, as only two members of the staff had participated, and they were not linked to issues of interest for the MA programme. The common understanding of the ET was that the academic staff mostly uses predominantly traditional teaching methods with little or no emphasis on interactive methods. The students also claimed during the interviews that they have to bring their own computers, projector, etc. in order to present their individual work and to make the seminars more interactive. It is therefore highly recommended that the University and the faculty is paying special attention to this matter by improving the teaching skills of the academic staff, encouraging the use of modern teaching methods and make available more resources that would allow an interactive environment during the study process.</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> The mandatory psycho-pedagogical module for the new members of the academic staff is a definitely positive aspect. However, it appears that only few lecturers have opportunities to participate in trainings and seminars that would help elevate their knowledge and skills. The level of</p> | |

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| <p>understanding of the purpose and outcomes of the international projects mentioned in the SER (TEMPUS, EUNEG) was ambiguous among the staff and therefore it cannot be concluded that their impact was tangible or effective.</p> <p>ET recommends that the University really puts into practice the staff development mechanisms designed in the respective strategies, even by organizing specific training sessions and seminars within the university, with specialized trainers, in order to overpass the language barrier problem.</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>The University undertakes measures to ensure that the education process takes full advantage of skills and knowledge of visiting lectors from Moldova (other universities and prominent practitioners with a PhD degree – 5 visiting members) and from USA (1 visiting lecturer who has a special course on <i>Judicial system of the USA: institute of a jury</i>). Nevertheless, the faculty is encouraged to further pursue and extend the possibilities of having visiting lecturers for credit bearing courses and lectures from foreign universities.</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>There are some opportunities for the staff to participate in trainings and seminars (Ukraine, Italy, Slovenia, etc), both national and abroad, but they are quite limited, as only two members of the staff had participated, and they were not linked to issues of interest for the MA programme. Therefore, it appears that only few lecturers have opportunities to participate in trainings and seminars that would help elevate their knowledge and skills. The academic staff that the ET met informed that predominantly internal conferences are organised and that the international scientific conferences became known only few years ago. The level of understanding of the purpose and outcomes of the international projects mentioned in the SER (TEMPUS, EUNEG) was ambiguous among the staff and therefore it cannot be concluded that their impact was tangible or effective and resulted with a helpful international network, despite the fact that there were some teaching mobility within those projects. Also, from the SER and the data gathered at the visit, ET learned that one member of the teaching staff (Vladlena Lisenco) also gave lectures as visiting professor at the James Madison University from USA and the fact that prof. Mihail Birgau gave some lectures in the past in some institutions in Ukraine. There were 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, given the fact that the University has several Erasmus agreements in force, 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.</p> | |
| <p>3.8.REQUIREMENT: Teaching staff are involved in national and international research projects and participate in forums, national and international scientific conferences.</p> | |

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| <p><u>Comments:</u> The academic staff that the ET met informed that predominantly internal conferences are organised and that the international scientific conferences became known only few years ago. In terms of the research activity of the academic staff, it appears that only some of the staff are quite active and have published a consistent amount of scientific articles and books and only one of them is a full-time employee. Therefore, the general conclusion is that this criteria is only partially met due to the limited involvement of the staff in international projects and conferences and limited scientific research activity of the full-time lecturers, due also to the limited language competences of the teaching staff, most of them only speaking Russian language</p> |
| <p>3.9.REQUIREMENT: Research activities of the teaching staff are planned and monitored efficiently.</p> |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> Based on the information obtained from the annual working plan of the university, it can be concluded that the research activity is planned and monitored on annual basis and is reflected in annual reports. The ET also learned and was presented during the site visit with the individual plans of the academic staff which covered as well the scientific activity. Nonetheless, the faculty is strongly advised to involve more members of the academic staff in research activities and to create more opportunities for participation at international research projects and conferences.</p> |

| 4. STUDENTS | conforms to requirements | partially conforms to requirements | does not conform to requirements | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|---|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|
| mark with 'X' | X | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Collected evidence: Apart from the SER and its annexes, the ET acquainted itself with grade catalogues, master theses from last academic year, sample diploma supplements and explanatory notes to the master programme. The ET visited library facilities, the centre for career growth and the forensic centre at the Gagauzian police directorate to make observations on the actual conditions.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>General comments: Generally, the requirements under this sector are met. The CSU follows all respective normative acts in force in Moldova. Technical measures necessary to fulfil these criteria are operational.</p> <p>Table from SER of CSU p.25 Number of students and graduates in the last 5 years</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;">2009-2011</th> <th style="width: 20%;">2010-2012</th> <th style="width: 20%;">2011-2013</th> <th style="width: 20%;">2012-2014</th> <th style="width: 20%;">2013-2015</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="height: 20px;"></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | | | 2009-2011 | 2010-2012 | 2011-2013 | 2012-2014 | 2013-2015 | | | | | |
| 2009-2011 | 2010-2012 | 2011-2013 | 2012-2014 | 2013-2015 | | | | | | | | | |
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|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----|
| the number of enrolled students | the number of graduates | % | the number of enrolled students | the number of graduates | % | the number of enrolled students | the number of graduates | % | the number of enrolled students | the number of graduates | % | the number of enrolled students | the number of graduates | % |
| 19 | 16 | 84,2 | 14 | 14 | 100 | 15 | 10 | 66,67 | 20 | 18 | 90 | 15 | 13 | 90 |

Commendations:

1. Existence of a body responsible of counselling students in their career choices and of tracking their employment;
2. Students are involved in the decision-making process both on faculty and university levels.

Recommendations:

1. The external mobility opportunities and students' participation in mobility programmes need to be further developed;
2. The level of knowledge of Romanian language has to be improved amongst graduates.

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:

Admission of students is regulated by a Regulation regarding the master studies (from 2008) and different other normative acts drafted by CSU in accordance to the applicable legislation. In order to be admitted, candidates need to have specific qualities in terms of ECTS obtained at BA level (240). The competition is generally 2-3 persons per study place in the assessed study programme. As the prerequisite to be enrolled into

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| <p>the programme is a BA in law, the ET is satisfied that the admission requirements are based on the qualities necessary for completing the programme.</p> | |
| <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> There is a Centre for career growth organised at the CSU according to the SER. The ET established during the site visit that the Centre is in fact up and running providing the students with information on job opportunities in their respective fields of study. Beside the Centre, the students are able to get counselling on matters related to their studies from the faculty staff. Every teacher has fixed hours for consultations with the students. These opportunities are well communicated to the students. No data has been presented to the ET in regard of existence of any opportunities for psychological counselling made available to the students.</p> | |
| <p>4.3.REQUIREMENT: Students are provided with internal and external mobility opportunities.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> CSU has provided some information about possible international mobility opportunities for students.. The external mobility opportunities presented by the CSU comprise several projects that are mainly aiming only to provide short-term visits, but no exchange opportunities for an extended stay (a semester or academic year). The information on utilising the international mobility opportunities provided by the CSU was generic in nature and did not enable to make any concrete conclusions on the question, if the requirement assessed is actually met. From the positive side it has to be noted that CSU has concluded cooperation agreements with 15 academic institutions in Europe and Asia. It was affirmed by the faculty management that ECTS-s got for courses taken in other academic institutions can be transferred. What concerns internal mobility, there was no information provided if CSU has any such opportunities available for their students. The external contacts of the CSU are strengthened by the fact that several ambassadors and other representatives of foreign countries have visited CSU and held lectures to the students. However, the ET stresses that it cannot agree with the view of the CSU management as if this practice would in any meaningful way confirm the CSU incentives for external mobility of students. The university is advised to further develop mobility mechanisms and really implement the agreements already concluded. Also, some incoming students in other programmes that could also be involved in this dissemination process.</p> | |
| <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> CSU has stated in SER that the number of students participating in external mobility programmes is stable. However, it was not revealed to the</p> | |

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| <p>ET even during the site visit, what the absolute number or the percentage of participating students is, from discussions with the Dean the ET learned that there are one or two students participating in these programmes. During the site visit the ET learned that the students are indeed aware of these opportunities, but it has to be noted that the students were not able to mention any mobility programmes specifically. However, participation in any such programs is severely hampered by poor financial situation of both the CSU and the students. Another factor hindering mobility is the fact that a big percentage of master students are already working full time and cannot therefore afford leaving for extended periods of time. The students themselves, when interviewed, expressed their interest in mobility opportunities, but also referred to financial and time constraints as major hindrances to that, not to mention the language difficulties, as most of them only speak Russian and/or Romanian.</p> <p>As the main problems are related to the facts that students are already working, it would be advisable that the University, in cooperation with the relevant institutions, find solutions for the students who are interested in participating at external mobility (leaves of absence for studies, co-financing by the university and employers etc.)</p> | |
| <p>4.5.REQUIREMENT: Students are involved in the decision-making process at different levels of the higher education institution.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> The students at the CSU are involved in the faculty, as well as university management. Students have their representatives in the Faculty Council and CSU Senate, but no representatives of specifically master students in law are represented there. Every study group has their spokesperson “elder”, who represents the interests of students on a current basis.</p> | |
| <p>4.6.REQUIREMENT: A system has been established for the detection and prevention of academic fraud.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> There are clear mechanisms in place at the CSU regarding academic fraud, including plagiarism. Should any student be caught plagiarising the master’s thesis, the CSU has a right to expel such a student without a possibility to resume his or her studies. Plagiarism has never been detected in any written assignments presented to the faculty by the students though. In order to avoid problems with referencing, there is an effective supervising system in place at the CSU. The supervisors follow the master’s theses closely on different steps of its evolution, which makes it unlikely already in the early stages of work that plagiarism could occur. In case cheating is detected in other written assignments or during examinations, the student will be removed from the respective examination or the written assignment will not be accepted. Such students can attempt to pass the exam or written assignment again. It was confirmed to the ET during the site visit that over last years no cases of plagiarism have been detected in written assignments, nor has anybody been caught cheating during examinations.</p> | |
| <p>4.7.REQUIREMENT: Higher education institution has a tracking mechanism of graduates’ employment and is monitoring the</p> | |

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| <p>evolution of graduates' career.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> CSU follows its graduates employment and career through the Centre for Career Growth. The Centre organises training for professional orientation of students. However what is the exact mechanism for gathering such data and what is respective statistics, was not made available to the ET. The faculty management note that tracking of employment and career of their graduates is hampered by the fact that not all employers across Moldova are feeding respective data to the CSU. The Faculty as well as representatives of local employers estimate that there would be employment for far more graduates in master's programmes of law than today.</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> The employment rate of graduates is high and has shown a positive trend over last years. Most graduates are employed in the field studied within reasonable time, as proven by the statistics provided by the CSU (From table provided at page 21 in the SER, 60% of the graduates of 2013, 90% of the graduates of 2014 and 87% of the graduates of 2015 were employed in their field of studies). The employers were content with the theoretical knowledge of the graduates, finding it to be respective to the requirements of the labour market. However, the employers pointed out during the site visit, that there exists a considerable fluctuation of personnel. Also the competitiveness of the graduates is affected by the fact that the knowledge of Romanian amongst them is poor. This makes it harder to compete for jobs outside the Gagauze region and might also exclude some job opportunities within the Autonomous Region itself. Finally the employers find that practical skills of CSU graduates in law should be better.</p> | |
| <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><u>Comments:</u> The ET observed from the statistics presented by the CSU that the dropout rate at the assessed master's programme has been constantly small. It was also established that academic progress of students is constantly and systematically monitored by the CSU. Students who drop out are enabled to resume their studies. However, the ET cannot but stress the importance of strict and objective grading of students. It was observed during the site visit that the grading of students exams as well as master theses is perhaps rather generous. Mostly the grades would fall between 7-10 points (on a scale of 1 to 10). No failed results were observed. In order to achieve a better standard of graduates it is advisable that the CSU would revise its policies in grading.</p> | |

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| 5. RESOURCES | conforms to requirements | partially conforms to requirements | does not conform to requirements |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| mark with 'X' | | X | |
| <p>Collected evidence: At the visit the ET had access to the University's budget, and got acquainted with the facilities. The ET saw different lecture rooms, IT platform and IT laboratories. Also it visited the medical facilities within the University and the library, as well as the European Documentation Center.</p> | | | |
| <p>General comments: Considering the fact that the budget is rather limited (around 1,1million euros) and some facilities should be improved (especially the library dotation and getting access to specific online legal databases and journals, as well as improvement of the IT infrastructure and wifi facilities), the general assumption is that this criterion is fulfilled only partially.</p> <p><u>Commendations:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Important part of the budget obtained from own resources of the University alongside the State provided budget; 2. Good housing infrastructure. <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acquire access to international databases and journals; 2. Improvement of books available in the library (both in terms of novelty and of Romanian language); 3. Improvement of IT facilities. | | | |
| <p>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.</p> | | | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> From the SER it appears that the CSU has adequate financial resources to conduct studies in a stable way, it's budget increasing each year, despite the limited amount (around 1.1 million euros). From the data provided by the CSU, the budget allocated for research and staff development increased more than 3 times between 2010 and 2014 (from 100.000 euros to almost 400.000 euros) – Table 1, page 23 in SER. At the same time from the SER and visit, the ET noticed the fact that CSU has adequate logistics, both in term of housing as in terms of equipment.</p> | | | |
| <p>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.</p> | | | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u></p> | | | |

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| <p>The number of students enrolled is between 15 to 20 for each cohort. Apparently the graduation rate is high and the drop-off rate is low. From a budgetary point of view one could say that there is some sustainability. Being a public institution, with a specific character given by its location, there should not be issues for concern.</p> | |
| <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> The SER states that there are such facilities, at the visit the ET being able to check the fact that there is adequate capacity for teaching and learning.</p> | |
| <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> Although the SER stipulates that IT technology and facilities are up-to-date, including the existence of a Moodle Platform, the website is only in Russian language, therefore it was impossible to assess this aspect from the distance. At the visit, the ET could see the real dotations that seemed to be at an adequate level. There is a wifi network available, that functioned partially during the visit. The IT solutions and equipment, including Moodle platform, should be used at their capacity. Also, all communication portals available on the website should be really available in Romanian and English languages, as specified in the website's menu.</p> | |
| <p>5.5.REQUIREMENT: The students are provided with dormitories and medical service.</p> | |
| <p><u>Comments:</u> The SER states that there are dormitories and medical service facilities. The ET could visit the infirmary that could be improved both in terms of space and dotations. The infirmary is a small room, with one consultation bed, benefiting from the services of a nurse who can offer general first aid and basic medical care. There are limited resources in terms of equipment and medical supplies (General patient treatment and care, Boiling and sterilising, Dressings, minor surgery and first aid, Eye care, Essential Drugs). In case of more severe cases, students are taken to the municipal hospital, located in the vicinity.</p> | |
| <p>5.6.REQUIREMENT: A library supports the conduct of studies ensuring that up-to-date information sources are available, and</p> | |

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provides students with the opportunities for independent work.

Comments:

The SER stipulates that the library is dotted with the necessary books for the students attending the study programme. At the same time, there are mentions of internet access to Russian legal resources as well as to the Ministry of Justice's legal information platform.

However, at the visit, the ET could see the fact that most of the books were in Russian language and the vast majority are not updated. At the same time, 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 (both from Romania, Russia and other countries).