

## 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 "Public Law" of the Trade Cooperative University of Moldova FOR 3 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 33.4 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:**

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| <b>Urmas Volens – Chair</b> | Head of SORAINEN Real Estate and Construction Team, Estonia                          |
| <b>Mihai Floroiu</b>        | Professor, "Dunarea de Jos", University of Galati, Romania                           |
| <b>Ingeborg Mottl</b>       | Associate Professor, University of Salzburg, Austria                                 |
| <b>René Värk</b>            | Associate Professor, Estonian National Defense College, University of Tartu, Estonia |
| <b>Joosep Raudsepp</b>      | Student, Tallinn University, Estonia   |

2. The Assessment Visit to the Trade Cooperative University of Moldova took place on May 22, 2015.
3. The Assessment Committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA on July 10, 2015. The Assessment Committee received the comments of the Trade Cooperative University of Moldova on July 24, 2015 and approved the final version of the component assessments on September 7, 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 September 24. 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:**

|  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>Study programme and its development</b> | Conforms to requirements           |
| <b>Teaching and learning</b>               | Partially conforms to requirements |
| <b>Teaching staff</b>                      | Partially conforms to requirements |
| <b>Students</b>                            | Partially conforms to requirements |
| <b>Resources</b>                           | Partially conforms to requirements |

6. The EKKA Quality Assessment Council discussed the assessment report along with the comments of Trade Cooperative University of Moldova and 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 "Public Law":

**6.1.**

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Study programme and its development</b> | <b>Conforms to requirements</b> |
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Strengths

- Development structure ensures sustainability and continuous development of the study programme.
- Graduates acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the labour market.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Taking into account that the main focus of the programme is on administrative law concerning trade and industry, it is recommended to consider focusing the title and the

substance of the program even more on national and international economic administrative law (e.g. Economic Administrative Law).

- In order to add some international dimension to the programme, it is advisable to include in the curriculum some disciplines dealing with International Economic Law.
- It is recommended to consider the possibility to increase the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum. It would provide more choices to students, but also increase the amount of credits that could be transferred after the end of academic mobility, and therefore make academic mobility more attractive to the students.
- In order to achieve the objectives of the study programme, it would be advisable for the faculty to make sure that all the topics of students’ final theses are consistent with the focus of the programme.
- TCUM should consider gathering feedback from the students more frequently than at the end of the academic year – e.g at the end of each study discipline. That would enable a more dynamic approach to study programme development. It is also advisable to adopt a more systematic/structural approach towards processing the feedback from the alumni and employers.
- It is advisable to pay more attention to developing the students English language skills and also offer the students some special course(s) on the methodology of legal research.

## 6.2.

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| <b>Teaching and learning</b> | <b>Partially conforms to requirements</b> |
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### Strengths

- Teaching staff is active in publishing teaching materials for their courses.
- Internship is well organised and the university guarantees the students a place of internship due to specific agreements and/or good cooperation with many companies.
- The ratio between master students and supervisors is favourable.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- A very limited number of foreign legal literature (journal articles and books) is used during the studies. Syllabi should include foreign legal literature in addition to literature in Romanian and Russian. Library should acquire some well-known textbooks on human rights, European Union law and international (trade) law in English or French.
- It would be advisable to adopt a more systematic approach towards gathering and processing the feedback regarding the teaching and learning process from the alumni and employers.
- It is recommended to include role play, e.g. moot court in the study process, to provide a realistic experience as a prosecutor, attorney, judge, etc.

- In order to achieve the necessary learning outcomes, all the internships should be conducted in the field of public law. Also, students should be provided with internship opportunities abroad.
- The documents presented to the committee demonstrated an unusually high average grade of the students. Here, a question might be raised whether the grading system is adequate in its current form for effectively measuring the performance of the students or should it be somewhat modified and improved in order to really support the development of the students.
- No evidence was found whether the students receive personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments in order to support student development. It is recommended to provide students with personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments in order to support student development.
- Although a necessary regulation is in place for the recognition of prior learning, it has not been implemented in practice. The recognition of prior learning and work experience needs to be applied, i.a. in order to make academic mobility more attractive.
- The involvement of students in research is insufficient. It is recommended to involve master students in broader research and development activities.

### 6.3.

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| <b>Teaching staff</b> | <b>Partially conforms to requirements</b> |
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#### Strengths

- The academic staff is experienced and well qualified.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Not all of the members of the teaching staff have attended methodological training and scientific events. The methodological training of the teaching staff should be continuous and more systematic. Teaching competence should be considered as one of the performance indicators of the staff.
- There is no real systematic and substantial participation of teaching staff in international academic networks.
- There is a lack of a broader staff development plan, including conducting systematic appraisal interviews with the staff and other methods of staff development. It is recommended to establish a comprehensive staff development system that includes all important elements of staff development.
- Only a limited number of staff has attended training sessions at foreign institutions, and most of them took place in Romania. Teaching staff should acquire international experience also outside Romania. In order to achieve that, it is advisable to promote academic mobility among the teaching staff and actively seek opportunities to participate in international cooperation.

- There are no visiting members within the teaching staff (except for one professor). More visiting teaching staff should be involved in teaching on the Public Law study programme.

#### 6.4.

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| <b>Students</b> | <b>Partially conforms to requirements</b> |
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##### Strengths

- Students' satisfaction with the study programme is high.
- Graduates are competitive and able to find specific jobs in the labour market.

##### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- There is a lack of awareness among the students regarding counselling services. TCUM should establish an effective study counselling system for the students, and also consider providing them with some kind of a psychological counselling service. Also, students should be better informed about the already existing counselling services TCUM is offering, and encouraged to take advantage of such possibilities.
- There are limited opportunities for internal mobility. TCUM should consider co-operation with other Moldovan universities, to offer students some optional subjects.
- The students' participation in international mobility programs is almost non-existent. The faculty should encourage their master students to participate in academic mobility and to focus on informing them about the mobility opportunities.
- There is a general lack of English language skills among the students. More attention should be paid to developing the students' English language proficiency.
- In order to promote internationalization processes, the University should consider updating and revising their webpage's content in English.
- The University should seek opportunities how to teach students about anti-plagiarism and academic ethics.
- The graduates can give valuable feedback and contacts to the faculty and therefore TCUM should be more proactive in regards of keeping in touch with their alumni. The faculty should seek ways how to strengthen and formalise their ties with graduates.
- The faculty should try to find a way to decrease the dropout rate of their students.

#### 6.5.

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| <b>Resources</b> | <b>Partially conforms to requirements</b> |
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##### Strengths

- The classrooms are equipped sufficiently and the equipment is renewed periodically.
- Widespread use of *Moodle* platform providing the students information regarding the courses online.

#### Areas of Improvement and recommendations

- The number of students has been relatively volatile. In order to make the study programme more attractive to students, a clearer focus of the programme is necessary.
  - There is almost no foreign literature at the library in the field of law. The books available are rather out-dated. The literature in the field is inadequate and needs fundamental strategic re-planning. The University should pay attention to the modern sources of information when replenishing the library, investing in international academic databases, training the librarians, teaching staff and students of being able and motivated to use the resources. The library needs major investment, especially regarding field specific legal literature in English, French or German.
  - The students and academic staff are not aware of international databases and therefore not motivated to use the few available. Also the librarians need training to give advice to the students on how to access electronic academic materials. It is recommended to increase the awareness of students and academic staff of international databases and motivate them to use the few available.
  - The existing ICT solutions should be further developed in order to guarantee the existing resources to be fully utilised and to take the usage of modern technologies to the next level.
7. According to section 33.4 of the document "Requirements and Procedure for Accreditation of Study Programmes in Moldova", if three or four of the component assessments by an assessment committee are "partially conforms to requirements", the Quality Assessment Council shall decide to make a proposal to the Minister of Education to accredit the study programme for a period of three years.
8. Taking into account the component assessments referred to in clause 5, as well as the strengths and areas of improvement of the study programme,

#### **the Council DECIDED**

**To make a proposal to the Minister of Education of the Republic of Moldova to accredit the Master's study programme "Public Law" of the Trade Cooperative University of Moldova for a period of three years.**

The decision was adopted by 9 votes in favour and 0 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**