

**EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S REPORT  
FOR ARACIS OF UNIVERSITY OF ORADEA  
2018**

Introduction

I was appointed as a Foreign External Evaluator for the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) and was consequently invited to join the evaluation team for the institutional evaluation process of University of Oradea (UO). The audit took place between Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October and Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

A huge evaluation team (31 members) took part in the accreditation process, as UO is a rather big university with 15 faculties, 47 teaching departments, 7 doctoral schools and approximately 18000 students.

The evaluation process began on Wednesday the 17<sup>th</sup> of October at 9 a.m. in Aula Magna with the welcoming speech of the rector. Prof. univ. dr. habil. Constantin BUNGĂU presented the leaders of faculties, the representatives of the students and those colleagues who were responsible for the different programmes. Then the mission director Prof. univ. dr. Radu Nicolaie OPREAN told the introductory statements of the mission and the coordinator of the experts evaluator Prof. univ. dr. ing. Călin Ioan ROȘCA introduced members of the evaluation team. This was followed by a tour at the main campus of the university to see the infrastructure of institution.

Between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. the group of experts was working on different aspects of the evaluation. In my role as foreign expert evaluator, I was responsible for establishing an overview of the whole university and was allowed to move freely, talking to members of staff, students of the university.

In the afternoon at 3 p.m. I visited Department of International Relations. At 4 p.m. we had an appointment with a group of 100 undergraduate students and at 5 p.m. there was a one hour meeting with a group of 40 former students. At 6 p.m. a meeting was organized with representatives of the employers.

The team continued the evaluation process on Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup> of October. I had appointments in the morning at 9:30 a.m. with the colleagues of the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, at 10:30 a.m. with the colleagues of Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Sciences and Communication Sciences and at 11:30 a.m. with the dean of Faculty of Geography, Tourism and Sport. In the afternoon, I visited the Faculty of Orthodox Theology "Bishop dr. Vasile Coman" and I had the occasion to meet with the representatives of the students.

The evaluation process was finished on Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> of October when the team of experts prepared the final report. The evaluation process was conducted in open and collegial manner.

### General Statements

University of Oradea operates according to the Constitution and the laws that govern the higher education system in Romania. UO is a state higher education and research public institution constituted as a legal entity.

UO functions according to the Bologna process, organising 15 faculties in Oradea. The faculties are conducting primarily teaching, scientific research and lifelong learning activities. The university has several bachelor (109 – 93 accredited and 16 temporarily authorized) and master (80) programs. In addition, the university is recognized as an institution with the right to organize doctoral studies (7 doctoral schools in 12 areas of doctoral research). All study programmes of the university have been accredited/authorized to operate.

The university has 18.096 enrolled students (31 December 2017), out of which 10.970 undergraduate students; 2.653 master's degree students; 379 doctoral students and 4094 in other educational programs. Approximately 5% of all students

are coming from a foreign country. Most of them are studying at the Faculty of Medicine.

### Managerial Structure

The leadership of the university is organised in accordance with its legal obligations, which are stated in the university's charter and the structure can be followed very clearly in the organogram of UO. In terms of structure, the university is led by a Rector, who is supported by five Vice-Rectors. The Rector's duties include the strategic leadership of the university and representing the university at judicial and public bodies. He has formulated the quality policy and objectives, which are known and applicable in the entire university.

The Senate is the main decision making body of the university which consists of the faculties representatives. Together with the president and the general chancellor, there are 76 persons in the Senate at UO (57 teaching staff and 19 students). Its activity is structured into eight commissions (Budget and Finance Commission; Education Commission; Evaluating and Ensuring Quality Commission; International and Internal Relations Commission; Scientific Research Commission; Commission for Social Problems and for Students; Commission for the Capitalization and Administration of Assets; Commission for Monitoring, Coordinating and Methodological Guidance of the Development of the Internal Managerial Control System).

The Administration Council of UO (consists of the rector, vice-rectors, director of the council for doctoral studies, the administrative director, deans, representative of the students) is the structure that ensures the operative management of the university and applies the strategic decisions of the Senate.

UO is divided into 15 faculties, which are further subdivided into departments. At the level of faculties, the management structure is the Faculty Council, which includes the dean, the vice-dean(s) and representatives of teachers and students.

Within the organization of UO counselling, monitoring, internal assessment structures and technical, administrative services also operate.

**Comment:** Vacant positions must be completed in the Senate. At the moment the representation of students is under 25%. I could not find the representative of the doctoral students.

UO has a coherent, integrated, transparent management system, based on an efficient and effective administration.

### Teaching Staff

The number of academic staff holding positions at the university was 903 last year.

The number of employees has decreased by nearly 30% in the last 10 years and also the number of students reduced at the same time. The number of students per member of the teaching staff is 15.5

The structure of the teaching staff seems to be balanced.

**Comment:** The quality of human resources and the scientific potential at UO is on a good level. The transparencies of the personal records are clear. The ratio of students to teaching staff is close to the OECD and European average level.

### Facilities

UO does not have a unified campus. Most of the faculties are situated in the buildings of the Main Campus. As I was informed UO has extra locations (Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy; Faculty of Constructions, Cadastre and Architecture; Faculty of Energy Engineering and Industrial Management; Faculty of Law; Faculty of Environment Protection) in the other part of the city. Unfortunately, I did not have the time to visit the other properties of UO.

I experienced that the condition of the buildings are on a very different level. The old buildings at the main campus were not designed for its current purposes. Most of them were military barracks or buildings used for military purposes. Although these buildings need reconstructions and take a lot of money from UO, the university made

good use of its facilities. The new buildings of UO are very impressive. There are also differences among the equipment's of the buildings.

UO also has a canteen and four dormitories, with 1.435 beds. UO has good sport facilities (7 sports halls and 12 sportsgrounds); probably only a swimming pool is missing. All these facilities provide a wide range of recreation and personal development activities for students, but they also should pay more attention to disabled students.

The Library updates its documents in all fields in order to achieve the performance indicators set by international standards. The structure of the book fund collections at UO provides complex information through its diversity: monographies, academic course works, periodicals, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, and collections of legal documents, both in traditional and digital formats.

The total amount of publications held in the library contains over 338,000 books, magazines, STAS, patents, CDs, DVDs which can be found in the traditional catalogue and OPAC computerized catalogue.

Oradea University Publishing House was founded in 1995 to ensure the printing of books, academic journals, lecture notes, textbooks and of the necessary documents for the implementation of the curricula.

A so-called "Master Plan" was drafted that integrates, modernizes and develops all functions of the university. It will be realized in the collaboration of Oradea City Hall and UO.

**Comment:** There is enough place for didactic and research activities but renovation and new investments are needed. Facilities are well used and most of the educational spaces, what I have seen, fulfil every requirement of the European standards. It can be seen that UO invested in its physical infrastructure a lot in the last few years. It is important to continue this procedure and modernize the old buildings. The "Master Plan" must be implemented which was approved by Oradea City Hall and Senate of the University of Oradea in June 2018. Without this development, the university will likely lose its competitiveness.

## Students

Each type of study program (BA/BSc, MA/MSc and PhD) is available for the candidates at UO. There is a decrease in the number of students if we compare the data with the last academic years.

At the appointment with the students and during my discussions with them, I found them very decent and open minded but critical. Not all the critics were relevant. I was surprised that the students I met did not know too much about the Erasmus+ programme.

In spite of the above-mentioned experience, UO is very active in Erasmus+ programme and international cooperation. The number of Erasmus+ agreements are over one thousand. The number of the students participating in Erasmus Program is high for the size of the university. There were 179 (84/95 ERASMUS Student Mobility for Studies/ERASMUS Student Mobility for Placements) outgoing and 133 (123/10 ERASMUS Student Mobility for Studies/ERASMUS Student Mobility for Placements) incoming students in the last academic year (2017-2018). In recent years, UO has become a partner in different networks within the CEEPUS Program.

**Comment:** The number of students (and the staff also) who take part in Erasmus Mobility Programme at UO is much more over the average than in other higher education institutes in Romania.

## Research

Research – Development – Innovation (RDI) activity is an essential component of UO activity. One of the vice-rectors is responsible for the research activity, who is also the president of C-RDI (Council for Research and Development – Innovation of the Board of Directors). At the level of the faculties, a vice-dean or a researcher does the administrative coordination.

Scientific research in the university is structured into research centres. There are 28 research centres at UO. In addition, an important part of the scientific research is carried out within the doctoral schools. At present, there are 12 accredited doctorate fields at UO (Electrical Engineering; Industrial Engineering; Energy Engineering; Engineering and Management; Economics; Medicine; Biology; History; Philology; Geography; Sociology; Agronomy).

Scientific research is continuously monitored and evaluated annually. The results of the scientific activities are valorised by means of publications in dedicated journals and UO has its own scientific periodicals (e.g. Eurolimes; Education and Applied Didactics etc.).

The ambition of UO in research activity is quite clear: the continuous improvement of the performance of research in the university, and increasing the visibility of UO in the European Research Space.

**Comment:** By creating different research centres at UO the conditions for an increase in the quality of scientific research have been created by providing a high-level infrastructure.

### Quality Management

UO pays a special attention to quality assurance. UO has structures, strategies, policies and procedures for quality assurance of the teaching and research processes. Currently a decentralized management system is operating at UO ensuring quality at departmental, faculty and university level, but it is integrated in the framework of TQM.

An approved “Quality Assurance Code” by the Senate sets the principles, the organization and the functioning of Evaluation and Quality Assurance System (EQAS).

Besides the transparent quality assurance structure of UO, the university concentrate on the different fields of the quality assurance e.g. the quality assurance for management processes, the quality assurance in teaching and scientific research etc.

**Comment:** In my opinion, the structure and the procedures of quality assurance at UO are well organized. There is also internal and external control of quality assurance. I am happy to declare my full and complete confidence in the quality assurance processes at UO, as well as the quality of its programs.

### Conclusion

I was satisfied what I have experienced, seen, read and heard at the university.

I hope that some of the comments, which I made, will help the university Management in the process of continual improvement.

I emphasize the following:

- To continue to invest in the physical infrastructure and facilities, as and when funds allow.
- To involve the student's representatives much more in the decision-making processes and into management.
- The location and the traditions of Oradea is a great opportunity for UO in the western part of Romania.
- I strongly suggest continuing internationalisation and develop more bachelor and master programmes conducted in English.
- To strengthen the good relations with employers for getting more information and feedback from the job market.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to the Rector, Vice Rectors, Deans and all the University staff for the pleasant atmosphere and the support during my stay in



Oradea. Also much gratitude to my colleagues from the evaluation team for the professional, open and gentle way in which the audit was conducted.

At least but not last special thanks to ARACIS for giving me the opportunity to participate in this evaluation process in Romania.

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