



Expert Report about the On-Site Visit  
on June 19-21 and December 4-6, 2016

External Institutional Evaluation

Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad, Romania

(hereinafter "the University" or "VGWU")

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## **1 Introduction to the External Institutional Evaluation**

### **1.1 Basic information on the Evaluation process**

The main aim of the External Institutional Evaluation in higher education is to enhance the quality of teaching, research and services at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The evaluations emphasize the responsibility of the Universities for quality assurance of their study programs following the European understanding of institutional autonomy in higher education. Standardized procedures help to objectively assess the performances of the evaluated universities and facilitate international recognition of these Universities and their study programs.

The Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad, Romania has assigned to the AHPGS the execution of an External Institutional Evaluation, in order to assess the University's internal mechanisms and quality management processes. The proceedings of this evaluation conform to the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG). As agreed upon in the contract between AHPGS and Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad (signed on March 29, 2016), the proceedings for the External Institutional Evaluation are based on the "General Information on Institutional Audit and Quality Assurance Procedures" (Resolution of the Board of AHPGS of February 14, 2013).

The AHPGS is a member of international associations and networks, namely the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA), the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). The AHPGS is also listed in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

As an organization, the AHPGS is an independent body.

Any external evaluation criteria applied by the AHPGS are in accordance with criteria and requirements which are based on the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG) as established by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

**The criteria address general areas for evaluation when implementing external quality assurance procedures at HEIs. The central focus of the external evaluation procedure is the assessment of the following areas:**

**Area A. Profile, objectives and strategy of the institution**

**Area B. Quality assurance and quality management system**

**Area C. Institutional management and administration**

**Area D. Educational activities, including study programs**

**Area E. Infrastructure and functional resources**

**The External Institutional Evaluation is divided into the following steps:**

- 1.) **A self-evaluation report** was submitted by the University on April 29, 2016. It consists of the profile and strategy established by the University as well as explanations regarding the quality management system pointing out organizational structures and responsibilities within the higher education institution. The rectors’ managerial plan deals with the quality of the teaching process and the management of research, internationalization activity, entrepreneurship activity, quality management and financial management. The University Charter specifies the regulations concerning the structure, the functions,

the organization and the functioning of the Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad, hereinafter named the University. The Charter is issued according to the provisions of the Law no.1/ 2011 Law on the national education with subsequent amendments, and the legal acts subsequent to it, being positively endorsed by the Ministry of the National Education and of the Scientific Research by the Dispositions no. 49964/01.09.2011 and no. 29825/18.03.2016.

The following **documents** were provided by the University:

Self-evaluation report, The University Charter, Strategic Plan 2012-2016, Managerial Plan, Operational Plan 2015-2016, International Relations / Affiliations, Code of Ethics and Academic Professional Deontology, List with internal rules, National and International Projects (scientific research 2006-2016), The schedule of scientific and academic events 2015-2016, Mobility within the University, Report on graduates' insertion on the labor market (2014), Alumni questionnaire, Organization Chart, Strategy of development and diversification of scientific research (2012-2016), Draft of income and expenses budget, Code of Quality Assurance of Education, Quality Assurance Manual (structured according to SR ISO 10 013:2003), Procedures List: procedures of the quality assurance system S.R.A.C. SI IQ Net No 9983 CERTIFICATES, Romanian Law of National Education, Regulations on initiating, approving, monitoring the evaluation of the study programs, Regulation regarding ECTS, Regulation of organization and operation of the biobase, Institute of Life Science.

- 2.) The AHPGS has reviewed the presented documentation and its compliance with the University's strategies and objectives. The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS has nominated **the expert group**. In May 2016, the complete documentation submitted by the University was forwarded to the nominated expert group who has reviewed the documents based on the aforementioned criteria as well as substantive aspects. In June 2016, the expert group has produced a document-based written evaluation of the institution, to determine particular strengths and weaknesses, and to identify any open questions regarding the higher education institution in writing. The experts' statements based on these evaluations were used for the preparation of the first on-site visit at the University.
- 3.) **The first on-site visit** took place on June 19-21, 2016 according to a previously agreed-upon schedule (*see Annex 1*). Representatives from the central office of the AHPGS accompanied the expert group during the meeting. Prior to the meeting

with the University, the expert group met on June 20 for the initial discussion and briefing by the APHGS. They discussed the submitted application documents (self-evaluation report and appendix) and the results of the written evaluations, as well as any procedure-related questions and foreseeable issues. Furthermore, the group finalized the plan for the meeting with the University members. During the on-site visit, the experts had transparent, productive and in-depth discussions with the representatives of the University management, faculty representatives, program representatives, as well as with a group of 17 students currently enrolled at the University. Furthermore, the experts assessed the study facilities and the equipment in teaching laboratories. They discussed a comprehensive spectrum of education-related issues with representatives of the University. Moreover, the consistency of the submitted documentation was verified. Additional aspects were also reviewed, open questions were identified and additional information/documentation was requested from the University.

4.) Following the first visit, the University submitted the following **additional documents** by October 2016:

A reassurance about the financing mechanisms for at least five years; An overview of the strategic aims (Teaching, Research, Internationalization, Management) of the 4-year strategic plan with projects and an action plan along with a timeline; List of responsible persons in the management board and their function; List of faculties and departments and their connection; List of affiliated institutions (research centers etc.); Development of key figures in the past 3 years: number and titles of study programs (per faculty/department), their profile and type ; number of applications and first-year students per study program, also number of international students in each study program and number of places approved by the authority for each study program ; dropout rate per study program; normally scheduled time frame to complete a degree per study program and the deviation per study program, number of incoming and outgoing students and teachers per study program (duration / destination) ; number of students who have earned a doctorate per field of study; number of full-time teaching and research personnel (total, per faculty, per study program, number of positions approved by the authority for each study program, number of days for further education of teaching and administrative personnel; Percentages of teaching hours delivered by university staff.

The above-mentioned documents have been handed in by the University in October 2016. In November 2016, the expert group has again produced a document-based written evaluation of the institution considering the additional documentation that was provided. The experts' statements based on these evaluations were used for the preparation of the second on-site visit at the University.

5.) **The second on-site visit** took place on December 4-6, 2016 according to a previously agreed schedule (*see Annex 3*). Representatives from the central office of the AHPGS accompanied the expert group during the on-site visit. Prior to the meeting with the University, the expert group met on December 5 for the initial discussion and briefing by the APHGS. They discussed the submitted additional documents and the results of the written evaluations, as well as any procedure-related questions and foreseeable issues. Furthermore, the group finalized the plan for the meeting with the University members. This second on-site visit sought to **finalize the External Institutional Evaluation** and to conduct the procedure of program accreditation affiliated to the Faculty of Economics, Computer Science and Engineering, Department of Economics as well as to the Faculty of Social Sciences, Humanities, Physical Education and Sports, Department of Psycho-Socio-Humanities Sciences. In this way, the experts can **take samples from the program accreditation of Bachelor study programs** in order to get an impression of the study programs and hence the portfolio of the University. Moreover, the expert group has also **exemplarily visited the branch in Sebis**. That is why the expert group consists of experts responsible for the External Institutional Evaluation (EIE) as well as experts responsible for the Program Accreditation (PA). On these grounds, the experts can also examine more closely further aspects of the institution, such as planned and current study programs, infrastructure, organizational and management structure.

During the on-site visit, the experts had transparent, productive and in-depth discussions with the representatives of the University management, faculty representatives, program representatives, as well as with a group of 27 students currently enrolled at the University – this number also includes graduates. Furthermore, the experts visited the study facilities. During the on-site visit, the consistency of the submitted documentation was verified. Additional aspects, which might not be covered by the written documentation, were also reviewed and remaining open questions were discussed. Moreover, the ex-

pert group had talks with the president of the county council and the vice-mayor of the city of Arad, highlighting the status and collaborations of a community-based University as well as its strong links and the support between the University and community.

6.) Following the second visit, the expert group has produced an **expert report**; it sums up the key aspects and preliminary outcomes of the visits and the reviewed documents. The summary concludes the **strengths and weaknesses of the institution and also encompasses a list of recommendations** for further development of the University. The University has the opportunity to comment on the expert report.

## 1.2 Expert Group

The following experts who participated in the on-site visit were appointed by the accreditation commission of the AHPGS for the External Institutional Evaluation process:

### **Prof. Dr. Marion Halfmann**

Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Kleve, Germany; Vice President for Teaching, Learning and Further Education; Professor for Business Administration, Marketing and market-oriented management.

### **Dr. Rolf Heusser**

Director of National Institute for Cancer Epidemiology and Registration in Zürich, Switzerland; Former Chairman of the European Consortium of Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA).

## **Prof. Dr. Edgar Köslér**

Catholic University of Applied Science in Freiburg, Germany; Professor for Management and Formation; President and CEO

For a complete list of all experts involved in the different steps of the evaluation process, please see annex 4.

## **2 Expert Report**

### **2.1 On-site visits**

The on-site visits took place at the Vasile Goldis University of Arad, Romania. It is a private university which was founded in 1990 and accredited by the Romanian Law no. 240/2002.

The University currently offers 43 Bachelor degree programs, 24 Master degree programs and two doctoral schools for Biology and Medicine. The study programs are offered, in addition to the campus in Arad, in the cities of Sebis, Satu Mare, Baia Mare, Zalau and Marghita. There are branch managers at each campus who ensure the operative management of these branches. The branch manager and the responsible person for a program are in permanent contact with the University, Faculty and Department management bodies who participate in the management meeting in Arad. The curricula of study programs is consistent from location to location.

**During the first on-site visit on June 19-21, 2016**, the expert group had talks with the management of the University.

Topics were the governance of the University; its profile, strategy, staff, resources of the departments and faculties, the study programs and support offers.

The University prepared a brief presentation of the faculties mentioned below:

- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Economics, Information Technology and Engineering
- Faculty of Medicine  
Institute of Life Sciences
- Faculty of Pharmacy
- Faculty of Dentistry
- Faculty of Humanities, Physical Education and Sport  
Macea University Botanical Garden

The dean representatives of the Academic Senate, the Academic Assembly, and the Administrative Committee were present.

Topics were the strategy of the Faculty, leadership and organizational culture, conditions and resources for teaching as well as research and working conditions at the Faculty.

The expert group was given a tour of the faculties, e.g. working premises of students and staff, research conditions, library, cafeteria, offices, laboratories etc.

On the second day, the expert group had talks with the quality assurance staff (the Vice-Rector for Institutional strategy and Quality management, the Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance, the Department for Quality).

Topics were the significance and organization of quality assurance; quality assurance in teaching and learning at the Faculty and of the study programs; quality assurance in research at the Faculty and the documentation of results and implementation of measures.

Additionally, the expert group interviewed student representatives of each Faculty.

Topics were the experience of the students at the University, the Faculty and in the study programs. Additionally, they were asked about the academic demands, professional qualifications and personal development, availability of resources, means of support (tutorials, mentoring programs, advisory service, etc.) and their personal experiences with quality assurance procedures.

**During the second on-site visit on December 4-6, 2016**, the expert group had talks with the management of the University regarding the finalization of the External Institutional Evaluation. Furthermore, the expert group had talks with faculty representatives, program representatives, as well as with a group of 27 students and graduates regarding the program accreditation process.

During the on-site visit, the experts also gained an understanding of the branches, i.e. the external learning locations, doctoral schools/graduate programs, programs at the Faculty of Economics, Computer Science and Engineering and programs at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Humanities, Physical Education and Sports.

The branch in Sebis for instance was established in 1998/1999. Since the academic year 2002/2003, it has specialized in the Economy of Trade. The Bachelor study program "Economy of Trade, Tourism and Services" is solely offered in Sebis, and is the only program offered there, with a current enrollment of 43 students.

## 2.2 Assessment Areas

### **Area A. Profile, objectives and strategy of the institution**

The HEI has established a clear profile and its mission and strategy are congruent to it. It developed a corresponding strategic plan and formulated short, medium and long-term development plans. It set future-oriented goals and developed feasible strategies for implementing these. The objectives formulated by the HEI can be traced back to its overall strategy and development plans, which are internally and externally oriented. All personnel – teaching and non-teaching – and groups of students are actively involved in the HEI's strategy. They are aware of and work towards achieving the goals established by the HEI. External stakeholders also participate in the HEI's strategy. Institutional autonomy is a key value within the HEI. Academic freedom, diversity, research, teaching and corporate responsibility are encouraged within the institution.

### **Evaluation**

The Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad is a private, community based university with strong links to the local labor market and the local authorities. It is a modern University and has a coherent vision (as outlined in the “University Charter”) as well as a mission and strategy which are operationalized in action plans (outlined in a strategic, managerial and operational plan).

The general mission of the University is to contribute to the achievement of Romanian higher education through education and scientific research (outlined in “Strategy of development and diversification of scientific research”), in the purpose of generating and transferring knowledge to the society.

The objective of the University is quality assurance of education through a student-focused education. The strategic goals are achieved based on the strategic development plan of the University.

The strategy refers to teaching, research, internationalization and management. *From the experts' point of view, the University should rethink its strategy in light of recent changes in the legal and financial environment. Strategic priorities should be determined according to the strengths of the University. Educational provisions and research might be clustered around these strategic priorities. Internationalization should be enhanced in order to increase the attractiveness of Vasile Goldis University for an audience outside Romania (English study programs to be established, language courses for staff to be offered, increase of collaboration with international university partners, etc.). At the same time, the University shall maintain its strength to act as community rooted University with strong links to the local and regional stakeholders.*

The University has provided the expert group with a list of 172 of its partners. The expert group takes note of the partnership agreement between the University and the city hall of the municipality of Arad and the cooperation between the county council of Arad and the University. Based on these agreements, the parties give, for instance, assistance to students regarding their practical training and consequently their insertion into the labor market. *As a result, the experts look favorably upon the cooperations but point out that, although the institution is well connected in the Romanian area, its overall internationalization strategy still needs strengthening. Therefore, the experts suggest forming, for example, cooperations with enterprises and to regulate them more formally.*

In its four year strategy, the University emphasizes qualitative improvement and development. The participation of internal and external stakeholders in the strategy is perceptible. That means in this participatory approach that all personnel (teaching, non-teaching, students) are aware and work towards achieving the goals established by the HEI.

The University offers a sophisticated range of study programs. Staff, students and external stakeholders are actively involved in its strategic developments. The University has established a hierarchical system that guarantees systematic planning on the levels

of both the faculty and the whole institution. Therefore, strategies formulated regarding short, medium, and long-term development plans are systematically interlinked.

*In this regard, the experts recommend that the University revisit and prioritize the strategic goals and proposed actions with an eye on the key competence of the University stakeholders and the changing regional and financial environment. It should also be assured that the measures have been successfully implemented. The experts also acknowledge the role of the branches for the regional development; for example, the branch in Sebis is applicant-oriented. But it is indispensable, to clarify the role of the branches in the overall strategy and profile of the University. From the experts' point of view, the University should take the chance to increase the visibility of the quality assurance system in the branches, i.e. to make it clearer that it uses the same system as the University as a whole.*

Vasile Goldis University has a strong focus in the medical field, with local, national and international goals. After receiving additional information, it became clear for the experts how this profile interfaces with the domains of marketing and law. *Still, the experts opine that the number of study programs is quite high and their range is too diversified. Although the main target group of the University is visible in the profile, the experts deem it necessary to focus more on international students and programs taught in English (or another foreign language), respectively. Consequently, the portfolio should be streamlined according to an updated strategy regarding the new developments (decreasing student numbers, demographical shrinking etc.).*

From the experts' point of view, the research strategy contains good ideas such as forming doctoral schools. It is also evident that the modern life science center offers highest quality research. The research activities of Vasile Goldis University became clear during the visit on-site. *Nevertheless, the experts highlight that the University should also prioritize the research activities in its strategy.*

Vasile Goldis University complies with national regulations but assures also compatibility with the European Bologna area (e.g. ECTS, Diploma supplement, nomenclature of degrees, learning outcome driven curricula, etc.). From the experts' point of view,

institutional autonomy is a key value within this higher education institution. Regarding the aspect of academic freedom, the University has regulations, especially chapter III of the Internal Regulation of the University, the Code of Ethics and Academic Professional Deontology (Art. 5 etc.) and in Section 4 of the “University Charter” as well as in the “University Code of the Rights and the Obligations of the Students of Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad”.

The aspect of diversity and students’ rights regarding disabilities and chronic illnesses are also regulated by art. 5 of the “University Code of the Rights and the Obligations of the Students of Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad”. The University states that it supports students who come from unfavorable environments (such as foster homes) as well as students with disabilities and chronic illnesses by granting them educational scholarships, social scholarships and partially or totally waiving their tuition fees. Moreover, individual strategies for each particular case are adopted so that the implementation of student-centered learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.

**Area B. Quality assurance and quality management system**

The HEI develops a quality management system and has clearly-defined objectives. It implements policies and procedures for quality assurance and promotes a quality assurance culture. This follows a quality control loop (PDCA Cycle). Tasks are responsibly divided among the bodies and personnel at the HEI. The quality assurance mechanisms are designed to accomplish the set objectives. Effectiveness is constantly monitored and enhancement is sought. Internal quality assurance includes evaluation mechanisms that are run regularly and cover all areas of activity within the HEI. The evaluation results are documented and made public. Internal steering processes are identifiable and aim at sustained improvement. The HEI continuously develops plans for improving the quality management system, which is integrated into the HEI's strategic plan. It works at different organizational levels and involves all the HEI's staff.

**Evaluation**

The University has built up a rigorous internal quality assurance system with clearly defined objectives. The system has been implemented; structures, responsibilities and procedures are in place. Furthermore, the University has established a regulatory "Code of Quality Assurance of Education", with predilection on teaching and learning, learning environment, relevant links with research and innovation in the University. The term "quality assurance" in this code is used to describe all activities in the cycle of continuous improvement, so that the study programs and the services offered meet the expectations of beneficiaries (internal and external stakeholders). The IQM system respects the European standards and guidelines for quality assurance (ESG). Each faculty has an evaluation commission whose members have to be reapproved annually through the faculty council (*see Annex 2*). The University also has a Quality Assurance Department as required by Romanian law. Additionally, each faculty provides internal reports as requested per the Romanian National Standards.

Moreover, the University has a "Quality Assurance Manual" at its disposal which presents the quality policy and refers to the procedures of the quality assurance system. Moreover, it describes interactions between the processes of the system and presents the structure of documentation used within the quality management system. The Quality Manual is structured according to SR ISO 10 013:2003. Feedback loops are foreseen. A management information system is currently built up and profits from modern IT-structures.

The experts take note that the IQS of Vasile Goldis University is based on ISO norms and follows a Total-Quality-Management approach. The University also publishes evaluation results. On the longer run, this might be perceived as a disadvantage as it tends to lead to a quite bureaucratic system of internal control and regulation and might reduce flexibility. *The experts emphasize the importance of an IQS system to be as lean as possible to ensure long term acceptance and sustainability. With this in view the IQS System should be periodically reviewed and improved. Furthermore, the experts recommend the University to systematically close the QA-feedback loops to build up an encompassing Management Information System and to use the information for steering the University. In this regard, the University should also consistently use the results when adjusting the strategy. As a second step, the adjustment of the structure should follow. The quality assurance system should also be stressed in the branches.*

*The experts want to draw the University's attention to the development of key figures. Otherwise, the analysis of trends is hardly possible. As far as the experts can discern, there is need for action regarding several programs due to small numbers of participants. For example, in the Bachelor study program "Business Administration" there were only nine students enrolled in the two admission sessions in 2015, in stark contrast to a number of 50 approved vacancies. The same limitations (critical mass of students not reached) has also been reported from Master programs. Last but not least, there is only one study program offered in both the Sebis and Margarita branches, thus raising questions about these campuses' cost-benefit ratios.*

*Therefore, the expert panel suggests that the portfolio should not be expanded but instead streamlined and focused on subject areas in high demand. The experts take into account that 80% of the curriculum of a study program is nationally predetermined.*

*All the more, it is important to use any available opportunity to shape the remaining 20% in no uncertain terms to match the overarching goal of internationalization.*

*Moreover, the University should take action in case that the number of enrolled students in a study program remains continuously low, or in case the dropout rate in a study program is continuously high. A minimum number of students should be set for running a program.*

**Area C. Institutional management and administration**

The HEI's organizational structure demonstrates a clear and transparent division of responsibilities, duties and authorities. External stakeholders, students and other relevant parties are involved in the administrative and decision-making processes and the organizational structure responds to the strategy and objectives set by the HEI. The HEI regulates the division of tasks and responsibilities, which are unambiguous and transparent. Members of the HEI are aware of their tasks and responsibilities. Information systems are developed for monitoring and evaluating the effective management of the study programs and all other activities within the HEI. The qualification and experience of the personnel are adequate to ensure the proper operation of the HEI and the appropriateness of HEI employees.

**Evaluation**

The structures of the University have been established in a way that allows the University to reach its intended goals in education, research and services (outlined in the "Organizational Chart"). The various stakeholder groups (internal and external) participate in the decision making process (e.g. faculty councils including 25% students and 75% staff) (*see Annex 2*). Transparent regulations cover all steps of the educational process. Nonetheless, over-structuration appears to be a threat (many commissions and maybe redundancies).

*From the experts' point of view, the collaboration with other universities in Romania and abroad could be enhanced. The additional documentation provided by the University gave sufficient insight into existing cooperations (collaboration with corporations as well as with foreign partners). During the on-site visit, the experts explored the desirability and feasibility of establishing intra-university cooperations (e.g. interdisciplinary modules and study programs). The interaction between faculties should be improved and strengthened. In this regard the University is encouraged to develop and discuss concrete plans.*

*The academic organization of Vasile Goldis University is clearly defined on a hierarchical basis. Through an organizational chart and an overview of the board of directors, it was ascertained how the structure and the strategy of the University are coordinated and who has the final say. Nevertheless, the experts believe it is important to reshape the structures of VGWU (make them leaner) in lights of a more focused overall strategy of the university ("structure follows strategy").*

*Another topic that needed to be re-discussed during the on-site visit was how the search and selection procedure for professors works; this information also helped to determine the adequacy of the qualifications and experience of the personnel for ensuring the proper operation of the higher education institution.*

The experts point out that the management positions within the University are filled in a way that obeys the conditions stipulated in Chapter XI, Sections 1-2, Chapter XII, Sections 2-4 of the "Law of National Education" in Romania no. 1/2001. According to the legislation in force, for the term 2016-2020, the management positions were filled either by general elections or public contest, depending on the case. The students are represented with a 25% share in all management structures except the Board of Directors, according to the previously mentioned legal regulations. The President and the members of the Board of Directors, in case of private universities, are appointed by the founding members, according to Art. 211 of the "Law of National Education". Subsequently, appointing of the members of the Board of Directors is done in accordance with Art. 10 of the Foundation Statute.

**Area D. Educational activities, including study programs**

The HEI defines clear goals for each of its study programs, which correspond and relate to the HEI's profile and mission, thus corresponding to the desired qualification level and being thereto comparable on an educational level. Nevertheless, the study programs offered are recognized as unitary due to their particularities. The HEI develops quality management procedures for the planning of teaching and learning processes and the implementation of study programs. The results achieved are continuously monitored and documented. The HEI also provides additional educational programs to cover the continuous training of its personnel and the enhancement of student training in the form of workshops, conferences, internal training or further educational programs. The HEI provides adequate premises for implementing its study programs. The HEI has a library providing adequate learning resources for its study programs. Should the profiles of the study programs require it, the HEI holds additional premises available for practical activities (e.g. laboratories or computer rooms). Admission requirements and student evaluation methods are clear, manageable and publicized. The HEI has established mechanisms relating to student support and advice. The HEI promotes exchange programs and international mobility among its students and teaching personnel. The HEI promotes research and scientific activity. It has developed a strategy which sets corresponding goals. The study programs encompass research-related components, depending on the profile and final qualification. The HEI has sufficient material, spatial and financial resources to develop its current and planned research activities.

**Evaluation**

Goals of the various study programs are clearly defined and learning outcomes and performance indicators for assessing achieved learning outcomes are in place. The HEI develops quality management procedures for the planning of teaching and learning processes and the implementation of study programs. The results achieved are continuously monitored and documented. The students have expressed their full satisfaction with the study programs and learning environment.

Given the additional documentation such as a list of Bachelor and Master study programs and due to the self-evaluation reports for the periodical evaluation of Bachelor study programs (affiliated to the Faculty of Economics, Computer Science and Engineering, Department of Economics; the Faculty of Social Sciences, Humanities, Physical Education and Sports, Department of Psycho-Socio-Humanities Sciences) and a Master study program (affiliated to the Doctoral School of Biology) it was possible to assess that the study programs are in accordance with national regulations as well as the European Standard Guidelines. The programs are set up in a comparable way with those in the European Higher Education Area (ECTS, Diploma supplement etc.). They also encompass research-related components, depending on the profile and final qualification.

Various support mechanisms for students are in place. Moreover, extracurricular activities of students are excellent and can be rewarded with ECTS (outlined in a "Regulation regarding ECTS"). Student satisfaction is very good. Admission requirements and student evaluation methods are clear, the information is publicly available. The processes for planning the teaching/learning process are clearly described.

*During the on-site visit, the staff situation as well as the use of continuous education programs for staff were discussed. Information in this respect was also provided in an additional document addressing activities of lifelong training and personal development organized for the staff of the University. Regarding the continuous aspect of internationalization, the experts recommend making English language competence on a level of C1 according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages a requirement for professors teaching in English study programs. English language courses should be mandatory for all personnel who have not yet attained C1 English competence. Nevertheless, the University could also think about offering incentives to increase the motivation of the teaching staff to participate in courses for further development.*

*Furthermore, the University should invest in recruitment efforts – also abroad. This can be done, for instance, by building up more English courses and also by supporting and assisting the mobility of students and teachers. The University has provided the expert group with a report on ERASMUS mobility. The experts stress the point that the interpretation of numbers – for example "why are there often only short exchanges aside from the medicine program?" – is very important. Currently, a website in English is under*

*construction. The experts deem a website with information in English language about the study programs and the possibilities to join the University as indispensable for future development.*

*In this regard, the experts have also discussed the process for the recognition of externally achieved credit points. The University recognizes credits obtained in other universities if they comply with the regulations on students' professional activity, the equivalence of credits is evaluated by a credit recognition committee inside each faculty. From the experts point of view, the recognition of credits transferred from other universities (domestic and abroad) should be regulated according to the requirements of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, i.e. the responsibility to demonstrate that an application does not fulfil the relevant requirements lies with the body undertaking the assessment (Art. 3.3 (5)); Each Party shall recognize periods of study completed within the framework of a higher education program in another Party. This recognition shall comprise such periods of study towards the completion of a higher education program in the Party in which recognition is sought, unless substantial differences can be shown between the periods of study completed in another Party and the part of the higher education program which they would replace in the Party in which recognition is sought (Art. 5.1 (1)).*

*Also connected with this is the calculation of credit points. The University applies the ECTS system to calculate and rank students' individual performance as approved by the order of the Romanian Ministry of Education no. 3617/2005 on the generalized application of the European Credit Transfer System. The experts take note that at the national level, there is a certain flexibility regarding the number of hours allocated per credit point. Moreover, there are certain subjects which are allocated above the 180 credit points mandatory to graduate from a Bachelor program.*

*Still, to ensure fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study etc., as well as to ensure students' progress in their studies while promoting mobility, the amount of workload (in hours) for one credit point should be regulated and stipulated in an easily accessible way. The credit points awarded for writing the Bachelor thesis, for instance, constitute an important part of an academic study process and requires a considerable amount of effort and time investment from students. This input should*

*therefore be reflected appropriately in the workload of 180 credit points of the study program. This is a standard practice on the international level.*

An elaborated research strategy as well as a comprehensive quality management system is described. The quality management includes processes for the evaluation and development of study plans, learning processes, learning outcomes and the creation as well as closure of new study programs. *Regarding the aspect of research, the experts point out that a methodological foundation should be mandatory in the curriculum of Bachelor study programs.*

**Area E. Infrastructure and functional resources**

The HEI provides evidence that it has sufficient spatial, material and functional resources available to ensure the proper functioning of all teaching, learning, research and administrative activities. They are adequate in relation to the number of students enrolled and the number of teaching and administrative personnel. The HEI develops plans for constantly enhancing its resources. The HEI has a mechanism for recruiting personnel. There are corresponding regulations in force for recruiting teaching and administrative personnel, which are clear and transparent and promote equality and recognition based on qualification and experience. The duties and responsibilities of the personnel correspond to their qualifications and experience. The personnel is aware of their tasks and contribute to enhancing the HEI's strategy and activities. The number of personnel employed is adequate for developing all the HEI's current and planned activities. The HEI secures sufficient revenue and its budget is clearly and transparently planned and covers all incurred costs.

**Evaluation**

The University is financed on a private basis. Tuition fees cover a substantial part of the budget. The University has provided a Business Plan. The experts were able to determine that, at the moment, the HEI has sufficient material and spatial resources to develop its current and planned activities. The HEI has a library providing adequate learning resources concerning its study programs. The resources (human and financial) seem adequate for reaching the intended objectives of the University. Furthermore, the student-to-teacher ratio is excellent. The students' utter satisfaction regarding the services offered was visible. The University's infrastructure is excellent and has been modernized (including IT). Moreover, library access is granted. There are clear and rigorous rules on the selection of staff and there are good procedures in place in case vacancies occur.

*With a future outlook it is realistic to assume that student numbers will go down due to demographic changes. To compensate for the financial losses, new funding sources must be found. It is also necessary to optimize the tuition fees in a way that they guar-*

*antee a solid income. Having visited the branch of Sebis, the experts acknowledge the importance of this university branch for the local labor market. However, the cost-benefit ratio in this branch has been decreasing due to declining numbers of students enrolled in the study program. In the long term, it is desirable to operate the branches in a self-sustainable way without being financially dependent on the University's Arad campus in order to guarantee the responsibility and quality of the branches in the long term.*

*Moreover, the available equipment in the branches should be increased. For improvement, the experts suggest an electronic library especially for the branches. Furthermore, more international literature should be offered. In addition, the provision of a student career guide is a reasonable expectation for the branches.*

The higher education institution has a mechanism for recruiting personnel. There are corresponding regulations in force for recruiting teaching and administrative personnel, which are clear and transparent and promote equality and recognition based on qualification and experience. The duties and responsibilities of the personnel correspond to their qualifications and experience. Nevertheless, the number of full-time professors appears to be relatively low. There does not seem to be an adequate scope for development of a research culture. *This could also be facilitated by a more streamlined and focused research approach.*

## 2.3 Conclusion

In short, as a first step, this expert report gives a preliminary evaluation of the self-evaluation report submitted by the University and the talks between the University representatives and the experts with regard to pre-agreed upon assessment areas. The first on-site visit was aimed at pointing out strengths and weaknesses, and to reach a common level of discussion for further enhancement of the quality of teaching, learning and research within the University. The meeting was also organized with the objective of expediting the external evaluation process and clarifying open questions in order to be able to make a preliminary statement regarding strengths and weaknesses of the Higher Education Institution and to formulate recommendations for the next meeting.

As a second step, this expert report comes to a conclusion of the External Institutional Evaluation after a second on-site visit. It shows the collection of answers to the open questions and completion of all the information necessary in order to evaluate the University's internal mechanisms and quality management processes, coming to a final result in this expert report. As agreed upon, the proceedings of the External Institutional Evaluation conform to the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG) and the procedure is based on the "General Information on Institutional Audit and Quality Assurance Procedures" (Resolution of the Board of AHPGS of February 14, 2013). Accordingly, the expert report sums up the key aspects and preliminary outcomes of the visits and the reviewed documents, and the summary concludes the strengths and weaknesses of the institution. The central focus of the External Institutional Evaluation procedure is the assessment of the areas: A. Profile, objectives and strategy of the institution / Area B. Quality assurance and quality management system / Area C. Institutional management and administration / Area D. Educational activities, including study programs / Area E. Infrastructure and functional resources. The experts were able to assure themselves that the University fulfills the criteria as stipulated in the assessment areas A to E, thus verifying the quality standards of the Higher Education Institution. The criteria address general areas for evalua-

tion when implementing external quality assurance procedures at Higher Education Institutions. However, the assessment of the experts examines, aside from infrastructure and organizational/management structure, further aspects of the institution, such as planned and current study programs.

During their first on-site visit, the expert group had a favorable overall impression both from the University quality assurance system as well as from the people involved in the quality assurance process. The results achieved in the quality assurance process are continuously monitored and documented. The students expressed their full satisfaction with the study programs and learning environment. Additionally, the institutional autonomy is a key value within this Higher Education Institution. After the first on-site visit, the experts have identified open questions. Those open questions were considered to be answered after examination of the additional documents provided and the talks with the University during the second on-site visit.

**To sum up the External Institutional Evaluation**, the experts render a positive judgment regarding the institutional component of the University. Following the institutional evaluation, "Vasile Goldis" Western University of Arad attained the Confidence Degree of Rating for the period 2017-2022. There is coherence between vision, mission strategy and action plans of the University. Moreover, the University is fit for its prime purpose of acting as a community-based Higher Education Institution of high quality. This is supported and verified through the insight in the study programs, i.e. the inspection of samples regarding the study programs and also the branches where some of these programs are located, and the learning environment. VGWU clearly contributes to the development of the Romanian society through education and scientific research, with the purpose of generating and transferring knowledge to the society. Furthermore, the experts can confirm the positive overall impression they had during the first on-site visit both from the University's quality assurance system as well as from the people involved in the quality assurance process. As a community-based University, the institution is working fine. Again, students and graduates have expressed their full satisfaction with the study programs and learning environment.

In the opinion of the experts, Vasile Goldis Western University is a modern University and has a coherent vision (as outlined in the University Charter). The objective of the University is quality assurance of education through a student-focused education. The strategic development plan of the University refers to teaching, research, internationalization and management. The expert group has been convinced of the University's commitment – as an institution – to offering high quality education opportunities especially in the Romania area. It was asserted that the University and its study programs function within the Romanian legal framework and that the institution promotes academic integrity and freedom among its students. Moreover, the University regularly monitors its own activities. The University has developed a Quality Manual, which defines the objectives and the organizational structure of quality assurance procedures as well as units involved in it. Moreover, it should be emphasized that the University has an Institute for Life Sciences – a medical research unit constituting a part of the research platform of the Academy of Medical Sciences. Hence, the Institute of Life Sciences enables the members of the University to conduct research projects on a high scientific level.

Nevertheless, the experts are calling for actions due to the deterioration of the financial situation, decreasing enrollment numbers and rising competition with public universities. The experts have detected unused potential and want to support the University in its strategic plan, some aspects of which should be strengthened, namely internationalization. Furthermore, as a competitive forward-looking institution, it is imperative for the University to streamline its profile, to determine its unique selling points and to cluster education and research around these topics and domains. Structures including the IQS should be adapted to these streamlining processes and become as lean as possible.

The improvement process includes, for instance, a focus on key figures and their interpretation in order to operate in an efficient and economical way. At the same time, and instead of further differentiating its offer in study programs, the University should – for its own benefit – concentrate on the offer of study programs tailored for sustainable demand. Hence, there is need for action

regarding programs offered in the English language targeted at international students, which enrich academia and science in particular.

The experts underline the importance of an international orientation and they appreciate the willingness of the University in this regard as well as its cooperativeness for further development – one of the finest examples thereof being its readiness to initiate this institutional evaluation. Contextual factors make it necessary to act proactively and to set points and to cluster provisions around certain focuses.

The following recommendations are thus strongly proposed for the University's consideration in order to strengthen and make use of its existing assets, as well as to further enhance the quality of teaching, learning and research and to emphasize the responsibility of the University for quality assurance of its study programs following the European understanding of institutional autonomy in higher education:

#### **Area A**

- *The internationalization strategy of the university should be strengthened and collaboration with universities should be fostered and enhanced. There should be more cooperations with enterprises which should also be regulated in a more formally.*
- *The University should revisit and prioritize its strategic goals with an eye on the key competence of the University stakeholders and the changing regional and financial environment. It should also be assured that the measures have been successfully implemented. The role of the branches should be elucidated in the overall strategy and profile of the University. It should be made clearer that the University's quality assurance system is also applied in the branches.*

- *The range of study programs should be more focused on international students and programs taught in English (or another foreign language) respectively. Consequently, the portfolio should be streamlined according to an updated strategy regarding the new developments (decreasing student numbers, demographical shrinking etc.).*
- *The University should prioritize the research activities in its strategy.*

## **Area B**

- *An IQS system as lean as possible is important to ensure long term acceptance and sustainability. With this in view, the IQS System should be periodically reviewed and improved. Furthermore, the University should systematically close the QA-feedback loops, build up an encompassing Management Information System and use the information to steer of the University.*
- *The University should also put emphasis on the evaluation of research and on the implementation of strategic aims and their quality.*
- *The portfolio of study programs should not be expanded but instead streamlined and focused on subject areas in high demand. The experts take into account that 80% of the curriculum of a study program is nationally predetermined. All the more, it is important to use any available opportunity to shape the remaining 20% in no uncertain terms to match the overarching goal of internationalization.*
- *The University should take action in case that enrollment and dropout rates continue to be unacceptably low and high, respectively; thus, a minimum number of students should be set for running a program. In this regard, the development of key figures is indispensable for the analysis of trends.*

## **Area C**

- *Over-structuration appears to be a threat (leading to many commissions and redundancies). The University should reconsider this issue for further development. Leaner structures and a reduction of the number of study programs might be advantageous.*
- *The collaboration with other Universities in Romania and abroad could be enhanced. The experts stress desirability and feasibility of establishing intra-university cooperations (e.g. interdisciplinary study programs).*

#### **Area D**

- *English language competence on a level of C1 according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages should be a requirement for professors teaching in English study programs. English language courses should be mandatory for all personnel who have not yet attained C1 English competence. Nevertheless, the University could also think about offering incentives to increase the motivation of the teaching staff to participate in courses for further development.*
- *Recruitment efforts should be increased. This can be done, for instance, by building up more English courses and also by supporting and assisting the mobility of students and teachers. Also international cooperations could be extended.*
- *The recognition of credits transferred from other universities (domestic and abroad) should be regulated according to the requirements of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, i.e. the responsibility to demonstrate that an application does not fulfill the relevant requirements lies with the body undertaking the assessment (Art. 3.3 (5)); Each Party shall recognize periods of study completed within the framework of a higher education program in another Party. This recognition shall comprise such periods of study towards the completion of a higher education program in the Party in which recognition is sought, unless substantial differences can be shown between the periods of study completed in another Party and the part of the higher education program which they would replace in the Party in which recognition is sought (Art. 5.1 (1)).*
- *Regarding the aspect of research, a methodological foundation should be mandatory in the curriculum of all study programs.*

## Area E

- *New funding sources should be found; adding thereto, it is necessary to optimize the tuition fees in a way that they guarantee a solid income.*
- *The branches should be self-sustainable and not financially dependent on the Arad campus of the University. Still, they are part of the University and have to obey its quality management system.*
- *The equipment in the branches should be increased. For improvement, the experts suggest an electronic library especially for the branches. Also, the provision of a student career guide is a reasonable expectation for the branches.*

### 3 Annex 1 Tables: System for Quality Assurance and leading bodies within the University, described by AHPGS

#### a) System for Quality Assurance

Internal	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance (CEAC):                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It consists of three members of the teaching staff, one employer representative, one minority representative, one student representative and the rector.</li> <li>- It coordinates the monitoring and evaluation of study programs; annual internal report on quality assurance.</li> <li>- It is elected by the senate (rector and management team i.e. main legislative body)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Department for Quality Assurance (DAC):                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is run by a director.</li> <li>- Its members are the teaching staff.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Vice-rector for Institutional Strategy and Quality Management:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This person is appointed by the rector.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• CEAC faculties i.e. faculty council:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It consists of the faculty dean (president), three members of the teaching staff, one student representative and one employer representative.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Regular external quality assessments are carried out by the Romanian Association for Quality Assurance. They conclude with an external evaluation report. The external evaluation of the study programs at the institutional level is done periodically every 5 years.</p>

b) Leading bodies within the University<sup>1</sup>

At University level	
<p><b>The University Senate:</b> leading structure of academic decision and deliberation of the University, i.e. it approves and validates rules, agreements and plans for the institutional development (see University Charter, Art.89). The University Senate establishes specialized commissions which control the activity of the University executive management as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Commission for national and international relations</li> <li>- The Commission for scientific research</li> <li>- The Commission for curriculum, human resources, academic titles</li> <li>- The Commission for students' activity, relations with the alumni</li> <li>- The Commission for codes, rules and legal affairs</li> <li>- The Commission for University strategy and development</li> </ul> <p>The competencies, the attributions and the way of organization and functioning of the specialty commissions are established by own rules for organization and functioning, approved by the Senate.</p> <p>The monitoring and control reports issued by the specialized commission are regularly presented and discussed in the University Senate.</p> <p>The Senate is formed of the teaching and research staff (75%) and of the students' representatives (25%); formed of 31 – 35 persons.</p>	<p><b>The Board of Directors:</b> ensures the University operational management with exclusive decisional competencies on the University patrimony as well as organization, ruling, economic-financial, resources training and assignment of priorities, in order to fulfil the mission undertaken by the University; formed of 11-15 members, appointed by the Vasile Goldis University Foundation of Arad; run by the president of the Vasile Goldis University Foundation of Arad, who is the president of the University.</p> <p>The Board of Directors meets on a monthly basis and whenever needed, at the president's initiative or of at least 1/3 of the members.</p> <p>Leading positions: the rector, the president of the Board of Directors, the vice-rectors and the general administrative director.</p> <p><b>The rector</b> assures the University executive management on the academic activity, based on the management agreement and on the institutional agreement; concludes the managerial agreement with the president of the University Senate and the institutional agreement with the president of the Vasile Goldis University Foundation of Arad.</p> <p><b>The President of the Board of Directors</b> exerts the decisional and operative management of the University on the patrimony and the assurance of the terms required for guaranteeing the quality of education and research.</p>
At the level of functional structures	
<p><b>The Faculty Council:</b> chaired by the dean; formed of 7-15 members, 75% teaching and research staff and 25% students; meets on a three month basis and whenever neces-</p>	<p><b>The Department Council:</b> run by the director; formed of 3-5 members (1 student). Assesses the teaching and research staff's activity within the departments, based on the criteria and standards for regular assessment of the teaching and research staff; proposes to the Faculty Council the</p>

<sup>1</sup> Leading bodies within the University are consistent with the provisions of the Law no. 1/ 2011, with subsequent amendments, and with the legal acts subsequent to it, and to the University Charter, positively endorsed by the Ministry of the National Education and Scientific Research by the Dispositions no. 49964/01.09.2011 and no. 29825/18.03.2016.

<p>sary.</p> <p>Leading positions: deans and vice-deans.</p> <p>According to the University Charter, Art.96., the faculty council has the following attributions, e.g. it approves the structure, the organization and the functioning of the faculties; it approves the study programs managed by the faculty.</p>	<p>approval of the Scientific Research Strategy.</p> <p>Leading position: the department director.</p>
<p><b>At the level of the Institution Organizing Doctoral Studies – IODS</b></p>	
<p><b>Council for the academic doctoral studies:</b> formed of at least seven members.</p> <p>Leading position: director of the Council for academic doctoral studies, assimilated to the vice-rector position.</p>	<p><b>The Council of the Doctoral School:</b> formed of 50% PhD supervisors, 20% PhD candidates as well as members external to the Doctoral School selected among the scientific personalities.</p>

#### 4 Annex 2 Schedule first on-site visit: June 19-21, 2016

19 June 2016	Agenda	Participants
19:00-22:00	<b>Internal discussion of the expert group</b>	Expert group and representatives of the AHPGS
<b>20 June 2016</b>	<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Participants</b>
09:00-10:30	<b>Internal discussion of the expert group</b>	Expert group and representatives of the AHPGS
10:30-11:00	<b>Welcome speech by the Agency and kick-off</b> <b>Topics:</b> Getting to know the expert group, explanation of the procedure, preparation of discussions	Expert group and representatives of the AHPGS
11:00-12:30	<b>Talks with the management of the University</b> <b>Topics:</b> Governance of the University, profile and strategy of the University, staff, resources of the departments and faculties and the study programs, support offers, gender equality, concerns of disabled students	Prof. Aurel Ardelean Ph.D. – President of the University Prof. Coralia Adina Cotoraci Ph.D. – Rector Assoc. Prof. Sorin Baschir Ph.D. – President of the Senate Prof. Ioan Cuzman Ph.D. – Representative of the Council of Administration Prof. Aurel Darau Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for Institutional Strategy and Quality Management Prof. Anca Hermenean Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for Scientific Research and Doctoral Studies Assoc. Prof. Anghelina Andrei Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for the Human Resources Strategy, Administration and the Relation with the Social-Economic Environment Assoc. Prof. Cristian Bente Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for the Academic Strategy and the Study Programmes Prof. Harry Grossman Ph.D. – Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Physical Education and Sports Isabela Alic – Chief Administrative Officer Adriana Puscas – Director of Finance and Accounting Marta Ghilea – Jurist Flavius Sabau – General Secretary Translators: Erika Stan, Andrada Minea
12:30-13:30	<b>Lunch Break</b>	

<p>13:30-15:00 (15 min. each)</p>	<p><b>Brief presentation of the Faculties (Dean, Representatives of Academic Senate, Academic Assembly, Administrative Committee)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Law</li> <li>• Faculty of Economics, Information Technology and Engineering</li> <li>• Faculty of Medicine             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Institute of Life Sciences</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Faculty of Pharmacy</li> <li>• Faculty of Dentistry</li> <li>• Faculty of Humanities, Physical Education and Sport             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Macea University Botanical Garden</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Topics:</b> Strategy of the Faculty, leadership and organizational culture, conditions and resources for teaching, conditions and resources for research, working conditions at the Faculty</p>	<p>Assoc.Prof. Carmen Neamtu Ph.D. – Dean of the Faculty of Medicine            Prof. Claudia Toma Ph.D. – Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy            Assoc. Prof. Paul Freiman Ph.D. – Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry            Prof. Cristian Haiduc Ph.D. – Dean of the Faculty of Economic Sciences, Informatics and Engineering            Assoc. Prof. Cristian Maduta Ph.D. – Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Physical Education and Sports            Prof. Harry Grossman Ph.D. – Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Physical Education and Sports            Assoc. Prof. Daniel Berlingher Ph.D. – Dean of the Faculty of Law            Assoc. Prof. Georgeta Sabau Ph.D. – Member of the Academic Senate from the Faculty of Law            Assoc. Prof. Eugen Remes Ph.D. – Member of the Academic Senate from the Faculty of Economic Sciences, Informatics and Engineering            Assoc. Prof. Casiana Stanescu Ph.D. – Member of the Academic Senate from the Faculty of Medicine            Assist. Prof. Lile Ioana Ph.D. - Member of the Academic Senate from the Faculty of Dentistry            Assoc. Prof. Cristina Popescu Ph.D. – Member of the Academic Senate from the Institute of Life Sciences            Assoc. Prof. Speranta Milancovici Ph.D. – Member of the Academic Senate from the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Physical Education and Sports            Translators: Erika Stan, Andrada Minea</p>
<p>15:00-16:30</p>	<p><b>Tour of the Faculties</b>            E.g. working premises of students and staff, research conditions, library, cafeteria, offices, laboratories etc.</p>	<p>Dean of the Faculties, Vice-Deans of the Faculties, Head of the Departments, Academic Staff, Administrative Staff, students.            Translators: Erika Stan, Andrada Minea</p>
<p>16:30-19.00</p>	<p><b>Break</b></p>	
<p>19:00</p>	<p><b>Dinner</b></p>	<p>Expert group and representatives of the AHPGS            Representatives of the VGWU: Prof. Aurel Ardelean Ph.D. – President of the University, Prof. Coralia Adina Cotoraci Ph.D. – Rector, Assoc. Prof. Sorin Baschir Ph.D. – President of the Senate, Prof. Aurel Darau Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for Institutional Strategy and Quality Management, Prof. Anca Hermenean Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for Scientific Research and Doctoral Studies, Assoc.</p>

		Prof. Anghelina Andrei Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for the Human Resources Strategy, Administration and the Relation with the Social-Economic Environment, Assoc. Prof. Cristian Bente Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for the Academic Strategy and the Study Programmes, Prof. Harry Grossman Ph.D. – Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Physical Education and Sports
<b>21 June 2016</b>	<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Participants</b>
09:00-10.15	<p><b>Talks with the quality assurance staff (The Vice-Rector for Institutional strategy and Quality management, The Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance, The Department for Quality)</b></p> <p><b>Topics:</b> Significance and organization of quality assurance; quality assurance in teaching and learning at the Faculty and of the study programs; quality assurance in research at the Faculty, documentation of results and implementation of measures</p>	<p>Prof. Aurel Darau Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for Institutional Strategy and Quality Management</p> <p>Prof. Anca Hermenean Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for Scientific Research and Doctoral Studies</p> <p>Assoc. Prof. Andrei Anghelina Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for the Human Resources Strategy, Administration and the Relation with the Social-Economic Environment</p> <p>Prof. Corneliu Maior Ph.D. – Head of the Department of Quality Assurance</p> <p>Prof. Harry Grossman Ph.D. – Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Physical Education and Sports</p> <p>Assist. Prof. Alciona Sasu – Member of the Department of Quality Assurance</p> <p>Prof. Klaus Bruno Schebesch Ph.D. – Representative of the Commission for the Evaluation and Quality Assurance</p> <p>Assoc. Prof. Florin Dumiter Ph.D. - Representative of the Commission for the Evaluation and Quality Assurance</p> <p>Adrian Cotoraci – Manager ITA GOLDTECH</p> <p>Translators: Erika Stan, Andrada Minea</p>
10:15-10:30	<b>Break / Internal discussion</b>	Expert group and representatives of the AHPGS
10:30-11:15	<p><b>Interview with students</b></p> <p><b>Topics:</b> Experience of the students at the University, the Faculty and in the study programs, academic demands, professional qualifications and personal development; availability of resources; support (tutorials, mentoring programs, advisory service, etc.); experience with gender equality and disabled students, experience with quality assurance procedures</p>	<p>Student representatives of each Faculty</p> <p>+ Assit. Prof. Karol Wild Julien – Head of the Center of Counselling and Career Guidance</p> <p><u>1. Faculty of Medicine:</u> Jurje Adrian, Bojin Briana, Bota Viviane, Benmmoufok Aissa, Crîsnic Silviu Ioan, Nati Ionel, Prală Alexandra, Strona Giovanni, Țucudean Nicole, Altobelli Alexandra, Ujoc Florin, Blanc Audrey, Dancea Vlad</p> <p><u>2. Faculty of Pharmacy:</u> Jurcă Oana, Taranciu Cristina, Veselin Marina, Both Gyonghi</p> <p>Bozga Anca</p> <p><u>3. Faculty of Dentistry:</u> Barna Meteșan Doru Flaviu, Dronca Alexandra, Madear Mădălina Maria,</p>

		<p>Stoica Andrei, Hațegan Oltean Emeraldida Maria</p> <p><u>4. Faculty of Law:</u> Bozeșan Darius, Chepeșan Alina, Popa Oana, Tulea Bianca</p> <p><u>5. Faculty of Economic Sciences, Informatics and Engineering:</u> Ardelean Alexandra, Mercea Ioan, Branc Diana, Mădărasan Cristian, Duca Semida, Denuț Raul</p> <p><u>6. Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Physical Education and Sports:</u> Țig (Bogdan) Daniela Elena, Mangău (Hadded) Alina, Sablici Patricia Izabela, Gliguța Bogdan, Vida Paul</p>
11:15-11:30	<b>Break / Internal discussion</b>	Expert group and representatives of the AHPGS
11:30-12:00	<b>Debriefing with the University</b>	
ca. 12:00	<b>End</b>	
12:00	<b>Transfer to the Airport</b>	

## 5 Annex 3 Schedule second on-site visit: December 4-6, 2016

4 December 2016	Agenda		Participants
19:00-22:00	Internal discussion of the expert group		Expert group (EIE and PA) and representatives of the AHPGS
5 December 2016	Agenda		Participants
9:00-10:00	Internal discussion of the expert group		Expert group (EIE and PA) and representatives of the AHPGS
10:00	Expert group EIE: Transfer to the University (pick up at Hotel Continental Forum Arad, 79-81 Revolutiei Blvd.)*	<i>Expert group PA: Further internal discussions at the hotel</i>	Expert group EIE and representatives of the AHPGS
10:30-12:30	<p>Talks with the management of the University regarding open question about the External Institutional Evaluation</p> <p><b>Topics:</b> Open questions about external institutional evaluation, understanding of the branches, doctoral schools/graduate programs, programs at the Faculty of Economics, Computer Science and Engineering, programs at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Humanities, Physical Education and Sports</p>		<p>Prof. Aurel Ardelean Ph.D. – President of the University,            Prof. Coralia Adina Cotoraci Ph.D. – Rector of the University            Assoc. Prof. Sorin Baschir Ph.D. – President of the Senate            Prof. Aurel Darau Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for Institutional Strategy and Quality Management            Prof. Anca Hermenean Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for Scientific Research and Doctoral Studies            Assoc. Prof. Anghelina Andrei Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for the Human Resources Strategy, Administration and the Relation with the Social-Economic Environment            Assoc. Prof. Cristian Bente Ph.D. – Vice-Rector for the Academic Strategy and the Study Programmes            Isabela Alic – Chief Administrative Officer            Adriana Puscas – Director of Finance and Accounting            Marta Ghilea – Jurist            Flavius Sabau – General Secretary</p>
12:00		<i>12:00 Expert Group PA: Transfer to the University</i>	Expert group PA and representatives of the AHPGS
12:30-13:30	Welcome speech by the Agency / explanation of the process / Lunch Break		
13:30-14.30	Talks with representatives of the Bachelor study programs (Dean, Head of respective department)	<i>Expert group EIE: visit of facilities in</i>	<p>Expert group PA and representatives of the AHPGS</p> <p>Prof. Haiduc Cristian Ph.D. – Dean of the Faculty of Economics</p>

	<p>a. <b>Faculty of Economics, Computer Science and Engineering, Department of Economics</b></p> <p>b. <b>Faculty of Social Sciences, Humanities, Physical Education and Sports, Department of Psycho-Socio-Humanities Sciences</b></p> <p><b>Talks with Head of the Center of Counselling and Career Guidance</b></p> <p><i>Break 15 min.</i></p> <p><b>Topics:</b> Strategy of the Faculty, leadership and organizational culture, conditions and resources for teaching, conditions and resources for research, working conditions at the Faculty; experience with gender equality and disabled students</p>	<p><b>Arad and Sebis</b></p>	<p>Assoc. Prof. David Delia Ph.D. – Head of the Department of Economic Sciences</p> <p>Lect. Brad Mihai Ph.D. - Head of the Department of Engineering and Informatics</p> <p>Assoc. Prof. Cristian Maduta Ph.D. –Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences</p> <p>Assoc. Prof. Speranta Milancovici Ph.D. – Head of the Department of Psycho-Socio-Humanities Sciences</p> <p>Karol Julien Wild - Head of the Center of Counselling and Career Guidance</p>
<p>14:45-17:15 (30 min. each)</p>	<p><b>Talks with responsible persons of the Bachelor study programs (e.g. teachers)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14:45-15:15 Business Administration; Business Administration (in English)</li> <li>• 15:15-15:45 Accounting and Bookkeeping Information Systems (at Satu Mare)</li> <li>• 15:45-16:15 The Economics of Trade, Tourism and Services (at Sebis)</li> <li>• 16:15-16:45 Tourism Geography (at Baia Mare)</li> <li>• 16:45-17:15 Communication and public relations</li> </ul> <p><b>Topics:</b> Conditions and resources for teaching, conditions and resources for research, working conditions at the Faculty, experience with gender equality and disabled students, experience with quality assurance procedures</p>		<p>Business Administration, Business Administration (in English)</p> <p>Assoc. Prof. Remes Eugen Ph.D., Prof. Soim Horatiu Ph.D., Assoc. Prof. David Delia Ph.D., Assoc. Prof. Naaji Antoanela Ph.D., Prof. Schebesch Klaus Ph.D., Assist. Pribac Loredana Ph.D.</p> <p>Accounting and Bookkeeping Information Systems (at Satu Mare)</p> <p>Assoc. Prof. Teodoru Mircea Ph.D., Assoc. Prof. Lazar Vasile Ph.D., Assoc. Prof. Olimpia Neagu Ph.D., Assoc. Prof. Pop Radu Ph.D., Lect. Virag Nicolae Ph.D., Lect. Costea Ciprian Ph.D.</p> <p>The Economics of Trade, Tourism and Services (at Sebis)</p>

			<p>Assoc. Prof. Blaga Radu Ph.D.,                  Prof. Dumiter Florin Ph.D.,                  Prof. Dumescu Florin Ph.D.,                  Prof. Maior Corneliu Ph.D.,                  Lect. Dudas Lavinia Ph.D.,                  Lect. Deac Dan Ph.D.</p> <p>Tourism Geography (at Baia Mare)</p> <p>Lect. Faur Cornel Ph.D.,                  Assoc.Prof. Berlingher Vasile Ph.D.,                  Assoc.Prof. Boja Nicusor Ph.D.,                  Lect. Sanislai Daniel Ph.D.,                  Lect. Serban Ioan Ph.D.,                  Lect. Tofan Bogdan Ph.D.</p> <p>Communication and public relations</p> <p>Assoc.Prof. Ovidiu Toderici Ph.D.,                  Lect. Oana Matei Ph.D.,                  Lect. Mihaela Ozarchievisi Ph.D.,                  Lect. Maria Sinaci Ph.D.</p>
17:30	<b>Transfer to the Hotel</b>		Expert group (EIE and PA) and representatives of the AHPGS
19:00	<b>Dinner and internal discussion of the expert group</b>		Expert group (EIE and PA) and representatives of the AHPGS
<b>6 December 2016</b>	<b>Agenda</b>		<b>Participants</b>
08:30-10:30	<b>Talks with the president of the county council and the vice-mayor of the city of Arad</b>		Expert group (EIE and PA) and representatives of the AHPGS
10:30-11:30	<p><b>Talks with students</b></p> <p><b>Topics:</b>                  Experience of the students at the University, the Faculty and in the study programs, academic demands, professional qualifications and personal development; availability of resources; support (tutorials, mentoring programs, advisory service, etc.); experience with gender equality and disabled students, experience with quality</p>		27 student representatives as well as graduates of each Bachelor study program

	assurance procedures	
11:30-12:30	<b>Internal discussion of the expert group</b>	Expert group (EIE and PA) and representatives of the AHPGS
12:30-13:00	<b>Debriefing with the University</b>	
13:00-14:00	<b>Joint lunch</b>	
ca. 14:00	<b>Transfer to the Airport</b>	Expert group (EIE and PA) and representatives of the AHPGS

## 6 Annex 4 Complete list of experts involved in the different steps of the evaluation process

### First visit at Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad on June 19-21, 2016: External Institutional Evaluation

Expert group for the External Institutional Evaluation:<sup>2</sup>

*Prof. Dr. Marion Halfmann*

*Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Kleve, Germany*

*Vice President for Teaching, Learning and Further Education*

*Professor for Business Administration, Marketing and market-oriented management*

*Dr. Rolf Heusser*

*Director of National Institute for Cancer Epidemiology and Registration in Zürich,*

*Switzerland*

*Former Chairman of the European Consortium of Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA)*

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<sup>2</sup> The experts shown in italics have not online given a written evaluation but also participated in the on-site visit of the University.

*Prof. Dr. Edgar Kössler*

*Catholic University of Applied Science in Freiburg, Germany*

*Professor for Management and Formation, President and CEO*

**Second visit at Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad on December 4-6, 2016: External Institutional Evaluation and program accreditation:**

Faculty of Economics, Computer Science and Engineering, Department of Economics:

- "The Economics of Trade, Tourism and Services (at Sebis)",
- "Business Administration",
- "Business Administration in English",
- "Accounting and Bookkeeping Information Systems (at Satu Mare)",
- "Tourism Geography (at Baia Mare)".

Faculty of Social Sciences, Humanities, Physical Education and Sports, Department of Psycho-Socio-Humanities Sciences:

- "Communication and Public Relations".

Expert group for the External Institutional Evaluation:

*Prof. Dr. Marion Halfmann*

*Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Kleve, Germany*

*Vice President for Teaching, Learning and Further Education*

*Professor for Business Administration, Marketing and Market-Oriented Management*

*Dr. Rolf Heusser*

*Director of National Institute for Cancer Epidemiology and Registration in Zürich,*

*Switzerland*

*Former Chairman of the European Consortium of Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA)*

*Prof. Dr. Edgar Kössler*

*Catholic University of Applied Science in Freiburg, Germany*

*Professor for Management and Formation, President and CEO*

Expert group for the program accreditation process:

*Alexander Bordan*

*Student at the Albert-Ludwigs-University in Freiburg, Germany; Graduate of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Albert-Ludwigs-University in Freiburg, Germany; Member of the Student Union Committee for foreign students at Albert-Ludwigs-University in Freiburg, Germany.*

*Prof. Dr. Marion Halfmann*

*Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Kleve, Germany; Vice President for Teaching, Learning and Further Education; Professor for Business Administration, Marketing and Market-Oriented Management.*

*Prof. Dr. Axel Olaf Kern*

*Professor for Health Economics; Vice Dean of the University of Applied Sciences, Department of Social Work, Health and Nursing in Ravensburg-Weingarten, Germany.*

*Prof. Dr. Edgar Kössler*

*Catholic University of Applied Science in Freiburg, Germany; Professor for Management and Formation; President and CEO*

*Prof. Dr. Silke May-Landgrebe*

*Westphalian University of Applied Sciences in Bocholt, Germany; Professor for Business Administration and Tourism; Member of the Commission for Quality Improvement of the University of Applied Sciences; Founding member of the German Society for Tourism Science.*

*Prof. Dr. Björn Maier*

*Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University in Mannheim, Germany; Dean of Students; Professor for Business Administration; Director of Studies Health Care Management and Controlling.*

Prof. Dr. Sonja Munz

Munich University of Applied Sciences in Munich, Germany; Head of Department of Tourism.

Prof. Dr. Dirk Reiser

Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Kleve, Germany; Faculty of Society and Economics; Professor for Sustainable Tourism Management.

Prof. Dr. Franca Ruhwedel

Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Kamp-Lintfort, Germany; Faculty of Society and Economics; Professor for Finance and Controlling.

Prof. Dr. Philipp Schorn

Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Kleve, Germany; Faculty of Society and Economics, Professor for Business Administration with a focus on Accounting.

Expert group for the visit of the branch in Sebis on December 5, 2016:

*Prof. Dr. Marion Halfmann*

*Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Kleve, Germany*

*Vice President for Teaching, Learning and Further Education*

*Professor for Business Administration, Marketing and Market-Oriented Management*

*Dr. Rolf Heusser*

*Director of National Institute for Cancer Epidemiology and Registration in Zürich,*

*Switzerland*

*Former Chairman of the European Consortium of Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA)*

Expert group for the visit of the branches in Baia Mare and Satu Mare on January 26 and 27, 2017:

*Prof. Dr. Axel Olaf Kern*

*Professor for Health Economics; Vice Dean of the University of Applied Sciences; Department of Social Work, Health and Nursing in Ravensburg-Weingarten, Germany.*

*Prof. Dr. Björn Maier*

*Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University in Mannheim, Germany; Dean of Students; Professor for Business Administration; Director of Studies Health Care Management and Controlling.*