

Akkreditierungsagentur  
im Bereich Gesundheit und Soziales  
Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Science



**Expert Report**

**on the evaluation of**

**the Bachelor Study Program**

**“Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery”**

**at Dimitrie Cantemir University,**  
**Targu Mures, Romania**

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## 1 Introduction

Study programs in Romania require authorization for provisional functioning, as established by Law no. 87 of 2006, which approved the Emergency Decree no. 75 of 2005. The Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport is responsible for authorizing provisional functioning of study programs. According to the Law of National Education no.1 of 2011 (here-inafter "Law of National Education") Art. 150, Par. 1, the decision of whether to grant authorization is contingent upon the evaluation and subsequent recommendation the study program by an external quality assurance agency registered in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

After authorization for provisional functioning has been granted by the Romanian Ministry the applicant higher education institution may enroll students in the respective study program. Following the successful graduation of three subsequent cohorts (taking approximately five years for three year study programs), the higher education institution must submit its application for accreditation. The accreditation procedure is similar to that for authorization for provisional functioning: an external evaluation by an EQAR-listed quality assurance agency, takes place on the basis of which the Government decides whether to accredit the study program.

The AHPGS Accreditation Agency was tasked with accrediting study programs offered by the Dimitrie Cantemir University, Targu Mures, Romania.

In January 2017, the relevant documents for the evaluation of the study programs were forwarded to the experts in order for them to review the available information, to determine particular strengths and weaknesses, and to identify any open questions regarding the study programs in writing.

The on-site visit of the University took place on February 10 and 11, 2017.

The following two bachelor study programs were the subjects of the procedure for the authorization for provisional functioning:

- Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery (Bachelor of Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery),
- Medical Dentistry (Bachelor of Medical Dentistry).

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS nominated the following experts to conduct the on-site visit:

***Franziska Jagoda***

*Master studies in Nursing Sciences at University Witten/Herdecke, Germany; Bachelor of Science in Nursing at FH Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences, Germany; Registered Nurse; Student Research Assistant at FH Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences.*

***Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Arnold<sup>1</sup>***

*Professor for Biological and Material Sciences in Dentistry, Department of Dentistry, Witten/Herdecke University; former Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry, former President of the Craniofacial Group of the International Association for Dental Research, former Head of the Department of Biological and Material Sciences in Dentistry.*

***Prof. Dr. Adrian Kasaj***

*Professor at the Department of Operative Dentistry and Periodontology, University Medical Center of the Johannes-Gutenberg-University Mainz; Chairman of the New Working Group in Periodontology (NAGP).*

***Prof. Dr. Johannes Keogh***

*Professor of Nursing Sciences; Responsible for international affairs of the Nursing Degree Programs at Fulda University of Applied Sciences; Nursing Science education at "University of the Free State", Bloemfontein, South Africa; Nurse educator; Qualification as nurse, midwife, community nurse and psychiatric patient care.*

***Prof. Dr. Beate Klemme***

*Professor of Physiotherapy, Department of Nursing and Health, Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences, Germany.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Experts noted in italics participated in the on-site visit*

**Prof. Dr. Katharina Scheel**

*Professor of Physiotherapy, Kiel University of Applied Sciences, Physiotherapy education, University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Hildesheim. History and development of Physiotherapy, theory formation in Physiotherapy, ethics and anthropology, academization and professionalization in the field of Physiotherapy.*

**Prof. Dr. Mieke Wasner**

Professor and Dean of Studies of Physical Therapy at SRH University of Applied Sciences, Heidelberg, Germany.

The proceedings of the Process of authorization for provisional functioning conform to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) as well as to the Art. 150 of Romania's Law no. 1 of National Education 2011; the Quality Evaluation Activities Guide for University Study Programs and for Higher Education Institutions: Part 1 Study Programs Accreditation External Evaluation Guide, and the Methodology for External Evaluation, Standards, Standards of Reference, and List of Performance Indicators of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education ("Methodology").

During the process of authorization for provisional functioning, the expert group surveyed the proper implementation of the criteria, standards and performance indicators, as specified in the above mentioned legal texts as well as the compliance of the program with the normative criteria, as stated in the "Methodology".

The following Expert Report summarizes the results of the on-site visit and the evaluation of the application documents. Since it investigates the fulfilment of the standards and criteria specified in the "Methodology", the structure of the Expert Report follows the logical succession of these criteria, as they are formulated in the document.

The following Fields of Activity pertaining to the program and the University were assessed by the expert group with respect to the corresponding criteria

and standards: (A) Institutional capacity, (B) Educational effectiveness, and (C) Quality management, each with the corresponding Criteria and Standards.

## 2 The study program to be evaluated

The bachelor study program “Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery” offered by Dimitrie Cantemir University of Targu Mures, Romania, Faculty of Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery, Department of Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery, is a full-time program taught in Romanian with a regular duration of three years/six semesters.

The main objective of the bachelor study program “Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery” is to train specialists in balneofiziokinetotherapy, acquiring scientific competence and practical skills. 180 credit points (CP) according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) are required in order to graduate from the program. One CP is equivalent to 30 workload hours. The total workload of the program constitutes 4,500 hours, of which 2,464 are contact hours, 420 hours of practical training/internship and 1,616 are independent study hours. However, the University explains that implementation of credit points is based on national legislation and thus, that the allocation of credit points for workload hours can vary.

The experts take note that the formal requirements of the study program are in accordance with the national requirements.

The program curriculum consists of 58 modules, out of which 51 are obligatory and seven are compulsory optional modules, i.e. there is a choice between modules each semester.

Admission requirements include a high school diploma or equivalent. Foreign students also have to provide a language competence certificate in Romanian due to the instruction language of the program. Students are informed about the amount of the tuition fees in advance.

Upon completion of the study program, students are awarded with the academic degree of “Bachelor of Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery” (Bachelor of Medicine), which is issued by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Scientific Research. Students complete their studies by fulfilling the course requirements, passing their final examination, i.e. license exam. According to the Romanian law, i.e. the Order of the Romanian Ministry of Education no.3617/2005, credit points can be added on top of the total amount of 180 credits.

Again, the experts take note that the formal requirements of the study program are in accordance with the national requirements.

The University plans to start the study program with 100 study places per year. The admission shall take place every winter semester.

Graduates will be trained both for career development in balenofiziokinetotherapy and recovery practice and for pursuing further specialization in masters or doctoral studies. With reference to a survey on the labor market for graduates, the University states that there is a growing demand for qualified personnel in the field of balenofiziokinetotherapy and recovery.

The University confirms in a formal declaration that the "Quality Evaluation Activities Guide for University Study Programs and for Higher Education Institutions: Part I Study Programs Accreditation External Evaluation Guide" has been respected, i.e. that, the "Compulsory Normative Requirements for Study Programs Accreditation" have been followed with regard to:

- the legal organization framework and functioning of the higher education institution as an education providing institution, its mission and objectives,
- the teaching staff,
- the educational process content,
- the students,
- scientific research and
- the material basis.



### **3 Expert Report**

In January 2017, the application documents of the University were made available to the expert group for written evaluation. The expert group assessed the program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" based on the Romanian standards and regulations specified under Section 1. They have also examined the factual and other program-related aspects described in the documents. The results of this review were forwarded to the AHPGS in February 2017.

The on-site visit was carried out on February 10 and 11 2017, according to the previously agreed schedule. The expert group was accompanied by a representative from AHPGS.

In the course of the on-site visit, the experts conducted interviews with University management, planned study program directors, teaching personnel, as well as a group of current University students from other study programs.

During the on-site visit, the experts inspected the learning premises and the facilities available at the University in Targu Mures: namely the University library, seminar and course rooms, the department offices and the new laboratories and rooms for Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery.

## **A. Institutional Capacity**

### **A.1. Institutional, administrative and management structures**

Dimitrie Cantemir University was founded in 1991 and functions as a private University accredited by Law no. 136/2005 published in the Official Gazette no. 434 2005 part I. In 2006, the University was certified by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS). Based on that, it is assured that the University meets the requirements set by the national Romanian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Currently, the University has four faculties: the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Economic Sciences, the Faculty of Geography and the Faculty of Psychology. Moreover, there is the Department of Continuous Training, the Department of International Relations and the Department of Practice to ensure the complementarity and the proper working of different activities within the University and the community. The other two faculties, Medical Dentistry and Balneofiziokinetotherapy are under authorization. There are six bachelor degree programs and seven master degree programs offered by the University. In total 904 students are currently enrolled at the University. Thereof, eight students currently are international students (Erasmus).

During the on-site visit, the expert group assessed the compatibility of the written documentation and the University's mission and objectives. Based on the information obtained during the on-site visit as well as the information provided in the written documentation, the experts have determined that the main objective of the University is to offer a variety of higher education study programs which meet the needs of the Romanian labor market and which are compatible with national and international standards of education.

The new program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" strives to contribute to the social and cultural life of the local community of Targu Mures, which is one of the main tasks of this University.

With a glance at the study programs currently offered at the University, it becomes clear that the formulated mission and objectives are coherent. However, with the two new programs offered (Dental Medicine and Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery), the portfolio of the University is expanding to health-related study programs, which is a new field for the University. From

the perspective of the experts, it is sensible to expand the existing fields of the University.

Another aspect of the University mission is to sustain and further intensify research activity among students, thus enabling them to contribute to the general advancement of knowledge in their respective fields. Research is an important aspect, especially in the field of health related study programs overall. However, with regard to the study program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery", it did not become clear how the enormous number of new students (100 students per year) could be involved in the research activities of the University.

The new to be established Faculty of Balneofiziokinetotherapy complies with the general regulations of the whole University.

From the expert's point of view, it became not sufficiently clear why the University, with about 900 students, currently consists of four faculties. It would be useful to combine faculties into larger units, in order to work in a resource-sparingly and efficient manner. With regard to the administrative structure concerning the collaboration between the department, faculty and University units, the experts encourage to look for common interests and to combine forces and resources. This will also help to facilitate the coordination of research activities.

The expert group has been convinced of the University's commitment – as an institution – to offer high quality education opportunities. 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. Besides, the University regularly monitors its own activities.

Internal assessment and audit processes take place in order to monitor the achievement of the objectives of the University. The experts have observed an active collaboration between the administrative and teaching structures, and have also identified a clear division of the hierarchical units and their functions in the University. The University has developed an ethical code, and its members are aware of this code.

Regarding the internationality, the experts positively noticed the measures put in place by the University in order to pursue its international orientation. The

University achieves mobility of its students by means of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and by taking part in Erasmus exchange programs. Furthermore, the University follows the standards for the field of Balneofizio-kinetotherapy and Recovery determined by the National Quality Assurance (ARACIS) and the Romanian Ministry of National Education.

From the experts' point of view, the University should present its internationalization measures in a more open and distinct manner so that, apart from maintaining its significant role in the region, it could further promote its attractiveness and unique character, which differentiates it from other higher education institutions.

The experts discern the possibilities for further development in the strategic alignment of the University in general. The University especially should think about its role in the local community of Targu Mures. In addition, the University should think about reducing its number of faculties, which in turn could save resources.

Taking these facts into account, the expert group regards Criterion A.1 as fulfilled.

## **A.2. Material resources and infrastructure**

Overall, the University has sufficient material and financial resources with regard to the study programs currently being offered. This was verified by the expert group during the on-site visit.

The experts group has had the opportunity to visit the premises planned for the new bachelor study program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery". Here, it became clear that the planned resources do not correspond to the desired number of students (100 per year). Currently, the University has some seminar rooms that have been adapted for physiotherapeutic purposes. There is only one massage bench available at the University which can be used for the program. In order to provide for good intensive practical training in all aspects of Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery, the experts strongly recommend enlarging the equipment for the practical training within the University to meet international standards. Moreover, it was not apparent which rooms could be used for the water applications of balneotherapy.

To summarize, from the expert's point of view, it is necessary to limit the number of places for the new program to 20 – 40 students per year.

Furthermore, the experts had a chance to see the library and lecture halls. On the one hand, the lecture halls and seminar rooms are equipped sufficiently for providing adequate teaching and learning processes.

On the other hand, it became clear that the program-specific literature still needs to be expanded. In this regard the University points out that they are currently discussion membership with ANELIS PLUS.

Therefore, the expert group encourages the University to establish partnerships with similar institutions (libraries, publishing houses) within the country and abroad, in order to provide students and teachers with access to a wider range of data bases as well as learning and scientific material, especially in specific areas like Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery.

Taking into account the University's endeavor to enhance its infrastructure and to improve the teaching and learning settings, the expert group considers Criterion A.2 to be partly fulfilled. It is necessary to limit the number of places for the new program to 20- 40 students per year and to further increase the material resources.

With regard to the aspect of financing, the experts recognize that the University, whose main source of funding is students' tuition fees (aside from EU-funded projects such as POCU and POR; free support for practice based on collaboration agreements with potential employers; paid internships (ERASMUS+; national research projects), is quite restricted in terms of finding new financial sources. This is caused by the declining number of students in the region, as a result of significant demographic changes in Romania. As a response to the current difficult situation, the experts recommend to the development a fundraising system in order to generate external financial support for the students. This system should include local industries, private donors and alumni.

## **B. Educational Effectiveness**

### **B.1. Content of the study program**

The new study program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" (Bachelor of Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery) will be affiliated to the Faculty of Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery.

The study program's mission, general and specific learning objectives, curriculum and outcome competences were presented at the on-site visit. The curriculum description specifies the learning results expressed in the form of cognitive, professional and affective results achieved by the end of each course.

The study program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" is aimed at a wide range of employment positions, for instance medical treatment facilities, polyclinics and hospitals, spas, practice offices and private rehabilitation and recovery services, in childcare institutions and social assistance.

The study program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" aims at establishing the kinesiotherapist as a public health promoter. Through the program's theoretical and practical training, the students shall learn how to approach and treat the patient with respect. Furthermore, the students shall acquire knowledge in socio-humanist subjects such as medical psychology, sociology, ethics and medical deontology.

The study program's goal is to train students to become qualified physio-kinesiotherapists, kinesiotherapists and physiotherapists. In this regard, the University states that graduates do not have to undergo further education to become a physiotherapist. Nevertheless, graduates of the program may also choose to apply for postgraduate Master and PhD study programs.

With regard to the improvement of graduates' employment opportunities, the University emphasizes the importance of such factors as being in compliance with European norms of international recognition, realizing student-centered education, developing cooperation programs with other European countries, enhancing students' and teachers' mobility, and advertising continuous education, i.e. Master and PhD studies. However, the experts found that the structure of the "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" study program does not fully meet European standards. Thus, the experts recommend to join the Romanian Physiotherapy Association which is a member of the World Congress of Physiotherapy (WCPT) – European Region. Furthermore, the standards of the WCPT should be used as a guideline to develop the curriculum and incorporate missing content such as clinical reasoning or physiotherapy diagnosis.

Alongside the theoretical curriculum an internship focusing on practical training is mandatory in the study program in the form of specialty practices (I-III). The "specialty practice" modules take place throughout the course of the

study program. Students may choose if they want to complete them at partner institutions of the University, or if they choose to find institutions on their own. The University assigns a teacher to supervise the internship and the institutions are primarily situated near or in Targu Mures.

The experts understand that the University outsources the internship to cooperative partners, however, with this approach enormous problems arise with regard to the content and the imparting of the competencies. On the one hand, the number of students foreseen to graduate from the University is to be mentioned again. From the experts' perspective, it does not seem possible to distribute 100 students per year (600 students in total) to the cooperative partners of the University. On the other hand, it became not sufficiently clear how the University can offer the same quality of practical training for all students at various cooperation partners.

As a result, the experts again conclude that the study program can only be carried out with a maximum of 20 - 40 students per year under the given structural conditions.

The credit system applied in the study program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" and at the University in general complies with the *Order of the Romanian Ministry of Education no.3617/2005* on the generalized application of the European Credit Transfer System. Nonetheless, the amount of workload (in hours) for one credit point should be regulated and stipulated in an easily accessible way. Moreover, some credit points for the mandatory modules are allocated above the 180 credit points which are necessary in order to graduate. According to the Romanian law, i.e. the Order of the Romanian Ministry of Education no.3617/2005, credit points can be added on top of the total amount of 180 credits.

The fact that no credits are awarded for the thesis is very critically discussed by the experts. Thus the thesis is obligatory part of the study. In the international context, the award of credits for the thesis is also standard.

In this regard, the experts 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 an internal credit recognition committee inside each faculty. From the experts point of view, the recog-

dition of credits transferred from other Universities (domestic and abroad) should be regulated according to the requirements of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, i.e. the burden of proof to demonstrate that an application does not fulfill the relevant requirements lies with the body undertaking the assessment<sup>2</sup>.

The study program “Balenofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery” contains 180 credits. The curriculum is comprised of 51 modules. The program is offered on a full-time basis only (six semesters/three years). The total workload of the program is 4,500 hours, which is divided into 2,464 contact hours, 420 hours of practical training and 1,616 hours of individual work.

The graduation examination consists of three parts: writing of the bachelor thesis in the sixth semester and passing the bachelor exam (written test and final presentation of the thesis) according to the *Order no 3545/2013* of MEC “the frame Methodology of organization and conduct of bachelor exams, diploma and dissertation” students are given a cumulative grade based on their performance in the three parts.

There are no credit points awarded for the graduation examination successful completion.

For the evaluation of the students’ performance in exams, the University applies a 10-point grading system, 1-3 being the lowest grade and 10 being the highest grade. The document *Regulation on students’ evaluation Methods* provides students with information on the general schedule and structure of writing and defending a bachelor thesis.

The minimum pass grade is five but the passing average for the final bachelor examination, which encompasses a written and a practical test as well as presentation and defense of a bachelor thesis, has to be at least six out of ten on the grading scale. According to the Regulation on student evaluation the number of re-examinations allowed for the current year is two. This does also apply to the bachelor thesis. By the Senate’s approval, a third re-examination is possible.

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<sup>2</sup> (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))



Due to the high number of modules (often credited with less than 5 CP) the workload for students seems to be relatively high. From the experts view, the student workload should be evaluated on a regular basis in order to make sure that students are not overloaded, for example, with examinations. Besides, the implementation of evaluation results to improve the study programs should be clearly documented. The experts also suggest combining smaller modules into larger units in order to reduce the student workload regarding examinations.

The admission procedures in the program are determined by the *Regulations for admission to University Cycles* applied on the University level. They are in accordance with the current Romanian legislation. The Admission requirements for the study program “Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery” include a high school diploma or equivalent (weighted average of the baccalaureate exam average grade and a language competence certificate in Romanian for foreign students. There is no subject specific test for applicants to the study program “Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery”.

From the expert’s point of view, the admission procedure of the program complies with the requirements of the University as well as with the national standards. The experts point out that the admission procedure provides equal opportunities to all applicants regardless of gender, origin or social class.

Based on the described conclusions, the expert group considers Criterion B.1 to be partly fulfilled. The recognition of credits transferred from other Universities (domestic and abroad) should be regulated according to the requirements of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

## **B.2. Learning outcomes**

From the expert’s point of view, the study program “Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery” can be successfully classified within the Romanian higher education system. The final qualification gained by its graduates corresponds to the demands of the Romanian labor market. The knowledge, competencies and abilities gained throughout the study program correspond to the final academic degree to be awarded. The teaching and didactic methods are student-oriented. Considering these facts – as observed from the application documents and during the on-site visit – the expert group sees Criterion B.2. as fulfilled.

According to the University, the main responsibility of each course instructor is to apply student-centered methods of teaching and to create a productive learning environment. Furthermore, course instructors are responsible for the development of students' degree specific as well as general competences, which are specified in the course descriptions provided by the University.

The University explains that the "Balenofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" study program has no shared courses. The first year of the study program mainly consist of fundamental subjects (60 CP), whereas the second and third year of studies contains subjects that are specific for the program (120 CP). Besides, the practical training is counted among the program-specific modules.

The practical activity, which has been described under Criterion B.1, enables students to adapt to real life circumstances and to directly apply their theoretical knowledge.

The discussions with a group of students from other programs revealed an outstanding level of satisfaction with the University on their part. Among other aspects, they valued the intensive counselling they receive as well as the approachability of the teaching staff particularly high. These advantages in academic guidance stem from the open atmosphere and communication ethics.

Regarding student support measures, members of the teaching staff have regular office hours where they can provide academic guidance to individual students. The University also encourages its alumni to pursue postgraduate studies in master programs at the institution. It also supports the participation in international conferences and workshops, as well as publications in national and international journals.

The expert group considers Criterion B.2 to be fulfilled.

### **B.3. Scientific research activity**

The University develops and implements short-, mid- and long-term research programs. It includes international collaborations within conferences and workshops.

The expert group was able to ascertain that there are currently financial and material resources for promoting research activity.

During the discussions with the teaching personnel a potential for producing qualitative research became evident. In terms of further development opportunities, the experts recommend to promote research among students and the teaching staff and to create a structured approach to integrate research activities in the curriculum of the study program. This includes the training of scientific working skills and relevant scientific research methods (e.g. methodological courses such as “scientific research methodology”) so that the research profile will become evident (see B.1). Moreover, the evaluation of research should be clearly documented.

The research activity is materially supported by the Dimitrie Cantemir publishing house, which facilitates the release of conference papers and publications.

Further aspects regarding the research, with a specific view on the Balenofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery program have been made under Criterion A.1.

Considering these observations, the expert group regards Criterion B.3. as fulfilled.

#### **B.4. Financial activity**

Currently, the University holds and receives revenue for running study programs.

In the course of the on-site visit, however, it became clear that the study program “Balenofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery” had been set up also to serve the financial sustainability of the University. This approach is understandable. Still, from the experts' point of view, it would have been more economical regarding the cost-benefit ratio, to set up study programs that do not require substantial investment. Moreover, it is considered to be reasonable to set up study programs in the area of social sciences, for example, which can be tailored to local and national needs in Romania.

Regarding the financial sustainability, the experts expect the submission of a detailed business plan for the study program. In addition to the usual information on the financing of the program, it should also include an analysis of the needs for the implementation of the study program in the Targu Mures area. When analyzing the needs, not only the Universities in the vicinity should be considered. Rather, the University should consider hospitals and practices in the Targu Mures area.

Moreover, it could also be helpful for a sustainable financing to look for other financial options besides the tuition fees of the students (e.g. sponsoring, research, further education).

Furthermore, the experts also recommend preparing a detailed business plan for the whole University. This business plan should be prepared on the basis of the University strategy.

Criterion B.4 is, thus, regarded as partly fulfilled. A detailed business plan for the program has to be submitted.

## **C. Quality Management**

### **C.1. Quality assurance strategies and procedures**

The University has developed a quality assurance system implemented by means of corresponding evaluation procedures. The University presented its quality assurance system in the written documents and also during the discussions of the on-site visit.

The quality assurance system of the University consists of the following units: the Senate of the Dimitrie Cantemir University, the Quality Management Commission (QMC) and the Quality Management Representative (QMR). The members of the QMC and of the Quality Assurance Department are approved by the University Senate. Department managers are in charge of monitoring the quality assurance at the faculty/department. 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. With regard to the transparency of the quality assurance policies and developments, the University annually issues an "Internal Evaluation Report". After approval by the University Senate, the report is published on the official website of the University at the end of each academic year.

The process of quality assurance can be described as follows: The Quality Assurance Committee from the faculty submits its conclusions regarding the internal audit report, along with the results of peer reviews, to the Faculty Council. At the end of each year, the data for the given period, including evaluations of teaching performance, is gathered and further directed to the Senate to take corrective actions and issue the quality improvement plan.

The University has an internal quality management system. Students take part in the quality management system; they are required to fill out course evaluations and provide feedback on the teaching performance. The results are processed by the Quality Assurance Committee, which then integrates the final recommendation into its report. Besides, the results of the teaching staff assessments are presented annually in the Senate where student representatives take part.

In the discussion with the students, however, it became clear that the feedback of the evaluation results to the students has not yet been given regularly. However, in the opinion of the experts, this is imperative for a functioning quality management system, as this is the only way to verify the measures taken by the students. Correspondingly, the University should optimize its system in such a way that the feedback of the results is done regularly.

With regard to the students' development of social responsibility and personal development in the course of studies, the University points out that it has its own University Ethics Code. The code lays down rules of conduct, ethics and deontology for all members of the academic community of the University.

For study programs in the health sector, it is essential that the quality assurance also reflects the link between the content conveyed at the University and the content conveyed in the internships at the different cooperation partners. Here, a corresponding system has to be developed and submitted also for the "Balenofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery " study program.

Considering the thorough implementation of the quality assurance system and the active participation of all University members in quality assurance procedures, the expert group concludes that Criterion C.1 is partly fulfilled. A system has to be developed and submitted, that focuses on the quality assurance between the content conveyed at the University and the content conveyed in the internships at the different cooperation partners.

## **C.2. Procedures on the periodical initiation, monitoring and revision of the programs and activities carried out**

The experts highlight that the quality management system is ensured by central and decentral commissions and a quality management department. The commissions act in accordance with the quality assurance strategy of the

University. Moreover, a *Quality Manual* is approved by the Senate each study year. Students assess all teaching staff regularly.

The University implements procedures of periodical revision and evaluation of the study programs offered. Hence, the teaching staff is required to conduct self-evaluations and peer-assessments annually, students evaluate the teaching process every six months.

Based on the information of the written documents and the observations from the on-site visit, the experts conclude that the study program is evaluated by different stakeholders on a regular basis by means of rational and effective methods.

The assessment of the teaching personnel is discussed in detail below, under Criterion C.4.

The experts underline that the quality assurance system of the University enables productive application of the obtained teaching and learning evaluation results. This refers to the introduction of necessary corrective measures and better organization of the programs, as well as the improvement of teaching methods, envisaged in coming academic years.

Considering these facts, the experts conclude that Criterion C.2 is fulfilled.

### **C.3. Objective and transparent procedures of learning results evaluation**

Based on students' evaluations, the teaching process and the learning outcomes undergo a constant optimization process. Additionally, the University has established clear examination rules and a structured process for dealing with exceptional cases. Furthermore, the form of examination is clearly specified for each module.

In order to qualify for the final examination of a module, students must have met all subject requirements: attendance, passing the ongoing assessments and practical works. These are presented to the students by the lecture coordinator in the first course lesson.

The final assessment in each course can be conducted in the form of a colloquium or an examination. Colloquiums are forms of examinations taken in optional courses, practical activities, or in some complementary courses (such as "Foreign Languages" or "Physical Education").

Students' actions in case of appeal and re-examinations are well defined and described in the regulations of the University. Hence, there are clear procedures established for the above-mentioned examinations and students are informed of these procedures in advance. The main function of examinations conducted in the program is to objectively evaluate students' achievement of the specific learning outcomes.

Taking the above described facts into account, the expert group concludes that Criterion C.3 is fulfilled.

#### **C.4. Periodical evaluation procedures of teaching staff quality**

For the beginning of the program in October 2017, 27 teachers are going to be employed in the program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery": five professors (18.5 %), seven associate professors (25.9 %), twelve lecturers (44.4 %) and three assistant professors (11.2%).

Overall, the teaching and academic staff of Dimitrie Cantemir University shows a high level of commitment and potential for the execution and further development of the study programs they are responsible for. The expert group came to the conclusion that there is a strong corporate identity and positive group dynamics among the University and faculty administrations.

The experts welcome the commitments made by teachers from various other Romanian Universities, who would support the teaching staff for the study program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" at the time of its inauguration.

During the on-site visit, it became clear that a professorship representing the study program has not yet been filled. In order to appropriately address the special topics of Balneo-Physio-Kinesiotherapy with research, the experts recommend a specific background and working experience in the area as a requirement for all future lecturers. Currently, the lecturers are predominantly coming from medical backgrounds (physicians).

The curriculum follows the Romanian requirements for a balneofiziokinetotherapy study program. The contents of the individual modules are also adequately described. However, there is no chair of the study program, which assesses the program in its entirety. In the experts' opinion, it is necessary that the University appoints a corresponding person, who is fully in charge, before the

start of the study program. The (future) chair of the study program should be integrated into the further development of the program.

In addition, the experts are not certain about the total number of staff available for the planned launch of the study program in October 2017. Even if this is always difficult to estimate before the launching of a new study program at a private University, the experts expect a confirmation of the employment of the above mentioned staff by the start of the program. The recommended number of 20 - 40 study places should be taken into account at this point.

Teachers' performance is evaluated at the University of Dimitrie Cantemir every year. Results of these annual evaluations serve as the basis for promotion proposals.

The selection and employment of teaching staff are based on the principle of public contest; these procedures are regulated by the University's *Methodology of contest for occupying the open didactic and research positions from "Dimitrie Cantemir" University from Targu Mures* as well as by the Romanian legal requirements (*Law of National Education no.1/2011, Government Decision no.457/2011, Government Decision no.36/2013, Order no.6560/20.12.2012, Order no. 4204/15.07.2013*).

According to these regulations, teaching and other positions are publicly announced and the University chooses candidates for these positions based on an open and independent procedure. These procedures are transparent and available for potential candidates from the academic and work field. By means of such transparent contest regulations, the University seeks to strengthen its competitiveness as well as its national and international visibility.

Regarding the measures for human development, the University has established the "Teaching Staff Training Department", which, according to the University, has a didactic and scientific research mission, in the area of the training of the didactic personnel. The "Teaching Staff Training Department" follows national level guidelines.

The teaching staff is periodically evaluated by means of both peer and student reviews. Student evaluations are performed at the end of each semester. They are anonymous, which encourages an objective assessment. The results of the reviews are discussed in the University Senate meetings. Following these meetings, students are informed about the results of the evaluations. Should



any member of the teaching staff receive an unsatisfactory evaluation result, a course of action will be implemented in order to eliminate the existing problems. Hence, the results are carefully monitored and the improvements are continuously observed. If there is no improvement after a maximum of three evaluation periods, the respective member of the teaching staff will be dismissed.

Peer evaluations are also performed regularly. They are based on the criteria of performance and human interaction. These procedures are monitored by the quality assurance unit of the department, in which the assessed person is tenured. Further on, peer evaluation results are analyzed and summarized by the head of the department; afterwards, they are presented to the Faculty Council as part of the quality assurance unit.

Based on these facts, the expert group considers Criterion C.4 to be partly fulfilled. A confirmation of the employment of staff at the beginning of the program has to be submitted. A chair representing the study program has to be appointed before the start of the program.

#### **C.5. Learning resources accessibility**

Overall, the experts conclude that the University offers appropriate facilities in sufficient number and good quality for the execution of its currently running study programs.

Specific information regarding the learning resources for the new study program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" can be found under A.2. With regard to the learning resources it became clear that these are sufficient for 20 – 40 students per year. This means the final expansion up to 120 students over the three years of study. An expansion of the number of students enrolled annually should only be undertaken with a corresponding expansion of the learning resources specific for the Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery program.

Seminar and class rooms used for the education of students are all equipped with modern digital and technical equipment. The students have access to the main University Library. The opening hours are: Monday to Friday 08:00-20:00 during the regular semester. During the exam session there are additional opening hours Saturdays from 9:00-16:00.

The University encourages students' learning processes by offering resources and opportunities for extra-curricular activities.

The University offers various forms of academic supporting and counselling to students: consultations, tutorials and therapy.

The expert group considers Criterion C.5. as fulfilled.

**C.6. Systematically updated data base, with regard to the internal quality assurance**

The University has designed an internal quality assurance system, which was also surveyed during the on-site visit. The University has established structures for monitoring and developing the quality assurance concept. Parts of the internal quality assurance system are regular peer and students reviews, as well as the feedback meetings organized for this purpose. A more detailed description can be found under Criteria C.3. and C.4. A regular track of the evaluation and review results is maintained by the University, and strategies for improvement are designed therefrom. A corresponding electronic system and database are also implemented. The expert group considers Criterion C.6. as fulfilled.

The program incorporates several internships, which increase the employability of the program graduates. The aforementioned aspects with regard to the quality assurance as well as the equipment of the internships have to be taken into account.

Admission criteria are well documented and adequate.

**C.7. Transparency of public interest information concerning study programs**

The results of quality assurance activities are summarized in a report, in order to improve the programs quality.

The University promotes its study programs through the University's webpage, local printed media, and by running open days and workshops in high-schools and other institutions. The information is also available through a printed Student Guide. There is also published information concerning the compensation regulations for students with disabilities.

The experts conclude that the faculty provides accurate and updated information on qualifications, study programs, diplomas, teaching and research staff, student facilities and any other aspects.

Thus, the expert group considers criterion C.7 to be fulfilled.

#### **C.8. Functionality of education quality assurance structures, according to the law**

During the interviews with the University management, the board of the University and the representative of the units responsible for the quality assurance activities, the expert group was provided with an overview of the quality evaluation mechanisms and institutional structures.

The Quality Management Commission regularly elaborates and reviews all corresponding policies and strategies as well as operational procedures.

The expert group was able to ascertain the validity of the information provided in the application documentation, and its accordance with the legal framework, as stated in the *Quality Manual*. Quality assurance and evaluation for the current running programs is well developed at the University.

Structured processes and an evaluated organization underline the importance of the quality management at the University; the organization strives for continuous improvement. Central and decentral staff is involved in the quality assurance process.

Thus, Criterion C.8 is considered to be fulfilled.

For more details on the structure, functioning and members involved in the Quality assurance procedures at the University see also Criteria A.1, A.2 and C.1.

## 4 Evaluation Summary

The main task of the expert group during the on-site visit and the peer review was to assess the planned study program “Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery” and verify its compliance with European and Romanian regulations (*see part 1 Introduction*).

In the view of the expert group, the program “Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery” (Bachelor of Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery) complies with Romanian regulations, as specified in the “Methodology” and the “Law of National Education”. Hence, the study program complies with the pertinent Romanian conventions, as well as with all legal normative requirements.

It must be highlighted that it became more than obvious during the students’ discussion session that the students’ satisfaction level with their studies and the University is very good. Almost all students chose Dimitrie Cantemir University because of its good reputation in areas such as local accessibility, study conditions and especially student-teacher communication and learning support.

The documentation provided by the University and the results of the on-site visit enable the expert group to recommend the accreditation of the study program “Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery” offered by Dimitrie Cantemir University of Targu Mures, to the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS, provided that the number of students admitted per year is not higher than 40 in view of the given learning and material resources.

Given the fact that the program meets all normative requirements and standards listed in the performance indicators determined by the Romanian national quality assurance agency, the expert group recommends the accreditation of study program “Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery” also by the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport.

Again, the experts point out that the maximum number of students enrolled per year should not exceed 40 students under the current conditions in regard to the equipment (Criterion A.2.).

The experts also outline the following conditions:

- The recognition of credits transferred from other universities (domestic and abroad) has to be regulated according to the requirements of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. (B.1)
- A detailed business plan for the program has to be submitted. (B.4)
- A system has to be developed and submitted, that focuses on the quality assurance between the content conveyed at the University and the content conveyed in the internships at the different cooperation partners. (C.1)
- A confirmation of the employment of staff by the beginning of the program has to be submitted. (C.4)
- A chair representing the study program has to be filled before the start of the program. (C.4)

At the same time, the experts attempt to provide constructive feedback and recommendations for further improvement regarding the concept, structure and content of the program.

The following recommendations are thus proposed for the University's consideration:

**A) Institutional Capacity:**

- The experts discern the possibilities for further development in the strategic alignment of the University in general. The University should think about its role in the local community of Targu Mures. In addition, the University should think about reducing its number of faculties, which in turn could save resources. (A.1)
- The University could present its internationalization measures in a more open and distinct manner so that, apart from maintaining its significant role in the region, the University could further promote its attractiveness and unique character differentiating it from other higher education institutions. (A.1)
- The University library could establish partnerships with similar institutions (libraries, publishing houses) within the country and abroad, in order to provide students and teachers with access to a wider range of IT

resources, data bases as well as learning and scientific material, especially for the new programs. (A.2)

- The University could develop a fundraising system to generate external financial support for the students. This could include local industries, private donors and alumni. (A.2)

#### **B) Educational Effectiveness:**

- The student workload should be evaluated on a regular basis in order to make sure that students are not overloaded, e.g. with examinations. Besides, the implementation of evaluation results to improve the study programs should be clearly documented. The experts also suggest combining the smaller modules into larger units in order to reduce the student workload regarding examinations. (B.1)
- Obligatory credits to be awarded for the final thesis should be part of the workload of the study program. (B.1)
- The University should promote research among students and the teaching staff and create a structured approach to integrate research activities in the curriculum of the study program. This includes the training of scientific working skills and relevant scientific research methods so that the research profile will become evident. Moreover, the evaluation of research should be documented. (B.3)
- A detailed business plan for the whole University should be developed. This business plan should be prepared on the basis of the University strategy. (B.4)

#### **C) Quality Management:**

- Feedback of the results of the quality management procedures should be given regularly to the students. (C.1)
- The University should provide the "Balenofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" students with increased access to e-journals, e-books and international literature in the field of Balenofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery. (A.2 and C.5)

## **5 Decision of the accreditation commission**

### **Decision of the accreditation commission of the 14 March 2017**

This proposed resolution of the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS is based on the University's application, as well as the expert review and the on-site visit covered in the Expert Report. Moreover, the Accreditation Commission takes into account the response opinion of the University regarding the study program.

The on-site visit of the University took place on 10-11 February 2017 according to the previously agreed-upon schedule.

The accreditation decision is based on the Accreditation Criteria developed by the AHPGS in close accordance with the existing criteria and requirements valid in the Federal Republic of Germany, which are based on the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG), established by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

The Expert Report, i.e. the proceedings of the Program Accreditation Process conform to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) as well as to the Law no. 1 of National Education of Romania, 2011, Art.150; the Quality Evaluation Activities Guide for University Study Programs and for Higher Education Institutions: Part 1 Study Programs Accreditation External Evaluation Guide and the Methodology for External Evaluation, Standards, Standards of Reference, and List of Performance Indicators of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS discussed the procedural documents, the vote of the expert group and the response opinion of the University regarding the Expert Report.

In the response opinion, the University points out that based on marketing research studies in Mures County and the neighboring counties, the University identified the need for Balneofiziokinetotherapy training, i.e. graduates who have received a professional academic education. The University assures that laboratories required for the practical activity part in this program for an entire study cycle (three years) do exist. The University also highlights that there are

six massage tables available in the kinetotherapy room and one is available in the massotherapy room.

The Accreditation Commission takes note of this explanation and the additional documents provided by the University.

Besides, the University declares that once the program has started, they will undertake the necessary steps to join the Romanian Physiotherapy Association which is a member of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT). Also, as suggested by the expert group, the University states that they have already incorporated in the curriculum two modules that provide psychotherapy diagnosis (Osteoarticular and Muscular Evaluation and Motric and Semato-functional Measuring and Evaluation), thus, developing the curriculum according to the experts' suggestions. The University has provided the updated curriculum.

The Accreditation Commission welcomes the plans of the University and thanks the University for the enclosed investment plan (business plan) for the medicine programs in the period 2017 to 2020.

With regard to the recognition of credits transferred from other Universities, the University has provided a table that shows the correlation between the Romanian grading scale and the ECTS grading scale.

The Accreditation Commission acknowledges this basic concept for recognition – however the legal grounds are still undisclosed.

With respect to the quality assurance between the content conveyed at the University and the content conveyed in the internships by the different cooperation partners, the University points out that the course coordinator instructs (updating the professional skills of partner staff assigned to carry out tutoring activities for practical training) the teaching staff responsible for coordinating practical activities, so that the students receive coherent training in accordance with the description in the curriculum. Moreover, the methods which must be used and acquired are explained in detail in the practical training books which each student must fill in at the end of every practical internship and which are overseen by the responsible teacher assigned by the course coordinator.

The Accreditation Commission takes note of this explanation.



With regarding to a chair representing the study program, the University informs that this position has been filled by the Dean of the Faculty of Balneofiziokinetotherapy who is an associate professor employed at the University. Currently, there are 16 teachers (thereof 8 associate teachers) who will teach in this study program. The University assures that as soon as the vacant positions are filled a confirmation of the employment of staff will be provided. The current list of teachers including information about their denomination has been provided.

The Accreditation Commission takes note of this information.

The regulated study period in the full-time program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" is three years: six semesters. The study program comprises 58 modules of which 51 are mandatory and 7 are compulsory optional modules, i.e. there is a choice between these modules. The Bachelor study program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" is completed with the conferral of the academic degree "Bachelor of Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery".

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS considers that most of the Criteria (according to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) as well as to the Art. 150 of Romania's Law no. 1 of National Education 2011; the Quality Evaluation Activities Guide for University Study Programs and for Higher Education Institutions: Part 1 Study Programs Accreditation External Evaluation Guide, and the Methodology for External Evaluation, Standards, Standards of Reference, and List of Performance Indicators of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education ("Methodology")) are fulfilled and adopts the following decision:

The study program "Balneofiziokinetotherapy and Recovery" is recommended for accreditation.

Based on the Expert Report, the Accreditation Commission outlines the following conditions:

- The recognition of credits transferred from other universities (domestic and abroad) has to be regulated according to the requirements of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. (B.1)

- A confirmation of the employment of staff by the beginning of the program has to be submitted. (C.4)

The Accreditation Commission also supports the vote of the expert group that initially the maximum number of students enrolled per year should not exceed 40 students.

For further development and enhancement of the study program, as well as of the University as a whole, the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS supports the recommendation articulated in the Expert Report.