

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



Assessment Report

**for the Application of
Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad, Romania,
Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry,
Department of Dentistry,
for the Recommendation for Accreditation of the Study Program
“Dentistry”(Medic Dentist, D.D.)**

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1 Introduction

The Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences (AHPGS) is an interdisciplinary, multi-professional organization. Its mission is to carry out quality assurance procedures regarding study programs, as well as Higher Education Institutions, in the fields of health and social sciences and in related domains. By implementing quality assurance procedures, the AHPGS contributes to the improvement of the overall quality of teaching and learning.

Study programs in Romania require authorization for provisional functioning, as established by Law no. 87 from 2006 approving the Emergency Decree no. 75 from 2005. The authorization for provisional functioning of a study program is decided upon by the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport. According to the Law of National Education no.1 from 2011 (hereinafter "Law of National Education"), art. 150, par. 1, the decision for authorization takes place on the basis of the external evaluation and subsequent recommendation of a quality assurance agency registered in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

Starting from 2009, the AHPGS is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). Since 2004 the AHPGS has been a member of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). In 2006, the AHPGS also joined the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) and became a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) in 2009. Since 2012, the AHPGS has been a member of the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA).

After a positive decision for authorization for provisional functioning from the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, the applicant higher education institution may enroll students in the respective study program. Following the successful graduation of the three subsequent cohorts (approximately 5 years), 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 takes place from the part of a quality assurance agency, followed by the Government's decisions towards the accreditation of the study program.

The external evaluation regarding the authorization for provisional functioning takes place on the basis of the Romanian standards for such procedures, as stated in the afore-mentioned "Law of National Education" and in the "Methodology for external evaluation: standards, standards of reference, and list of performance indicators of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education", as approved by the Government Decision no. 1418 from 2006. Also considered are the "Quality evaluation activities guide for university study programs and for higher education institutions (approved by the ROAAHE Council during the meeting held on 17 November 2006) and "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area", as established by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

The external assessment procedure is carried out in four steps:

I. The University's application

The AHPGS verifies the sufficiency of the documents submitted by the University, namely the self-evaluation report and its corresponding annexes. These documents have to fulfil the assessment spheres as well as the AHPGS standards. As a result, the AHPGS produces a summary (see below), which is to be approved by the University and subsequently made available for the expert group, together with all other documentation.

II. On-site visit (Peer-review)

Alongside with preparing the documents, the AHPGS Accreditation Commission nominates highly experienced experts with professional experience in accreditation procedures as well as expertise in the specific academic area of the study program to be accredited.

The experts carry out an external on-site visit to the University. In the course of the visit, discussions with members of the University take place, starting with the University and department management to the degree program management, teachers and students. The experts' task during the on-site visit is verification and evaluation of the objectives of the program and its projected study results, structure, staff, material resources, course of studies and methods of assessment (selection of students, assessment of achievements, students' support, etc.), as well as of the program management (program administration and external assurance of study quality).

Following the on-site visit, an Expert Report is issued by the expert group. The report is based on the results of the visit and the documents submitted by the University. The Expert Report is made available to the University, in order for it to issue a response opinion. The Expert Report and the University's response opinion – together with the submitted documents – are submitted to the AHPGS Accreditation Commission.

III. The AHPGS recommendation regarding accreditation

The AHPGS Accreditation Commission examines the documentation provided, namely the University's self-evaluation report, its annexes, the summary comprised by the AHPGS, the Expert Report as well as the University's response opinion. These documents lay basis for the AHPGS Accreditation Commission's decision regarding the recommendation of the study program for accreditation. Consequently, this recommendation – together with all other documentation – is forwarded to the University.

2 Overview

2.1 Procedure-related documents

The Self-Evaluation Report of the study program “Dental Medicine” of Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad (hereinafter the University), Romania, was submitted to the Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Science (the AHPGS) in electronic format on 1 July 2014. The contract between the Vasile Goldiș Western University and the AHPGS was signed on 4 June 2014.

On 6 November 2014, the AHPGS forwarded the open questions and explanatory notes (hereinafter OQ) pertaining to the Self-Evaluation Report for the study program to the University. On 14 November 2014, the University submitted the answers to the open questions and explanatory notes (hereinafter AOQ) to the AHPGS in electronic format.

This document presents a summary of the AHPGS for the study program “Dentistry”. In the submitted documents, the University considers 2003 as the starting year of evaluation of the program.

The program has started in the year 1991. The University considers 2003 as the first year of studies in order to underline the last 5 graduate promotions (AOQ 2).

The Self-Evaluation Report submitted by the University follows the outline recommended by the AHPGS. Along with the Self-Evaluation Report, the University provided documents specific to the study program “Dentistry”:

Annex	Description
1	Module description (syllabus)
2	Specific standards for the medical field of dentistry determined by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS)
3	Data sheet of the study program “Dentistry”
4	Professional competences of the program according to the Romanian National Qualifications Register in Higher Education (RNCIS)
5	Profile and Competences for the European Dentist
6	Competences of a dentist doctor specified by the College of Dentists Doctors of Romania (since 2012)

7	Study plan of the program "Dentistry"
8	Structure of the 2013/2014 academic year
9	CV of the teaching staff
10	Chart of tuition fees (2009-2015)
11	Summer training portfolio
12	Collaboration contract regarding the annual practical training of students in medical institutions

Table 1: Documents specific to the study program

Alongside the study-program-specific documents, the following documents pertain to all study programs submitted for the external evaluation:

Annex	Description
A	Regulations on students' professional activities (2013/2014)
B	Regulations on the Application of the European Credit Transfer System at Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad
C	Regulations for admission to bachelor, master and doctoral studies at Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad in the 2013/2014 academic year
D	Methodology for the contest of admission to the bachelor study cycle at the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry
E	Regulation on the recognition of study periods completed in other institutions based on agreements, contracts or international programs
F	Internal regulations on mobility within Erasmus community program
G	Regulation on the examination and grading of bachelor/master students
H	Facilities for payment of the tuition fee in the 2013/2014 academic year
I	Code of ethics of Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad
J	List of premises and equipment in laboratories and course rooms of the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry
K	An extract from the University charter
L	Quality manual of the University
M	Regulation concerning the conduct of the examinations in the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry
N	Contest methodology for employment on academic positions at Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad

Table2. Documents common for all three study programs

The Self-Evaluation Report, the open questions (OQ) and the answers to the open questions (AOQ) as well as the additional documents build the basis for the present summary. The layout bears no significance, as it solely reflects the agreed standard within the University.

2.2 Study program

2.2.1 Structural data

University	Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad
Type	Institution of private law and public utility
Faculty/Department	Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry; Department of Dentistry
Title of the study program	"Dentistry"
Degree awarded	Medic Dentist (DD)
Form of studies	Full-time
Language of instruction	Romanian
Period of education	6 years (12 semesters)
Credit Points (CP) according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)	360 CP 180 (Cycle I) + 180(Cycle II)
Hours/CP	30 hours = 1 CP
Workload	Total: 9,000hours Theoretical activities: 1,960hours Practical activities: 3,684 hours Individual work: 3,356 hours
Beginning of the study program	2003
First accreditation of the University	The University achieved institutional establishment by the Law no. 240 of 20 April 2002. In April 2009, the University has been certified by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS)
Time of admission	Winter semester
Number of available places on the program	100
Number of enrolled stu-	100

dents in 2013	
Number of graduates In 2013	111
Particular enrollment Conditions	- high school diploma or equivalent - entrance multiple-choice test - language competence certificate in Romanian language for foreign students
Tuition fees	1,561 EUR (6,936 RON) is the average annual fee as seen from the payment list allocated for the year 2014/2015

Table 3: Structural data of the study program

Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad was founded as a Higher Education Institution, having a legal status as an Institution of private law and public utility, part of the national education system. The University was founded in 1990 and it achieved institutional establishment by the Law no. 240 of 20 April 2002 published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 291, part I, of 30 April 2002. The Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Dentistry was established in 1991.

One of the important current developments at the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry is the fact that the amount of study hours per week has been reduced to an average of 29 teaching hours in order to allow students to be more actively involved in research activities and also participate in other extracurricular activities. At the same time, the share of practical activities throughout the academic year has been increased (a minimum of 2 hours per week). Through these measures the Faculty wants to facilitate acquisition of vocational competences by students, to encourage their independent practical activity and develop their teamwork skills. Another change in the Faculty is the reduction of study weeks from 15 to 14 per semester, starting with the academic year 2013/2014.

In the submitted documents, the University considers the academic year 2003/2004 as the starting point of the program "Dentistry" in order to demonstrate the last five graduate promotions.

The didactic process of the study programs structured according to the requirements of the Bologna system in two cycles:

Cycle I – preclinical training stage – encompasses the initial three years (years 1-3) and presupposes teaching of fundamental subjects. As stated in the Self-Evaluation Report, section 1.5.5, completion of the first cycle does not offer any professional qualification in Romania. Students complete the preclinical stage and move to the next cycle when they have accumulated all compulsory 180 CP.

Cycle II– clinical training stage – encompasses the following three years (years 4-6) and also requires accumulation of 180 CP, which together with the previous level constitute 360 CP for the whole program. The clinical training stage envisages solidification of the acquired skills and optimization of further professional options. As indicated in the “Regulations on Students’ Professional Activities”, studies at the faculties of Western University of Arad are finalized by a bachelor examination, which consists of two parts: the first is a written test and the second is presentation and defense of a bachelor thesis (Annex A, Art.74, 75). Students complete their studies at the program when they pass these tests and successfully defend their bachelor thesis.

According to the national regulations applied at the University, assessment of the final thesis is not included to the total amount of credits, if the regular study period at this program is longer than 4 years (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.1.6, page 6). Hence, at the program “Dentistry” students are only awarded credits for collecting and presenting the necessary material for writing the thesis, whereas the bachelor thesis itself is not credited supplementary to the total of 360 CP.

According to the national laws, in University, the first and the second cycles constitute together the complete graduate level of medical studies in dentistry. The program comprises in total 6 years, or 12 semesters. In each cycle, students have to obtain 30 CP per semester and 60 CP per year. By the end of the first cycle, they have to acquire the total of 180 CP to be advance to the second cycle. There is no intermediate graduation examination. By the end of the second cycle, students have to acquire 180 CP as well. After they complete both cycles and pass the final licensing examination, graduates receive the professional title of “Medic Dentist” (DD, Bachelor in Dentistry). The diploma awarded to students is issued by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Scientific Research.

In order to start practicing dentistry in Romania, graduates of the program must obtain registration in the national professional association of the College of Dentists of Romania (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.4.1). Graduates can also directly pursue Cycle III, meaning they can undertake postgraduate residency training or doctoral studies. But Cycle III is not obligatory for them to start working as dentists.

Cycle III (postgraduate residency training and doctoral studies) is neither a part of the program, nor is it the object of the accreditation procedure.

2.2.2 Qualification objectives and employment opportunities

According to the University, the main objective of the program “Dentistry” is to train qualified specialists of the dentistry profession who will be able to integrate to the national and international labor market. The mission and objectives of the program are said to comply with the chart of qualification approved by the Romanian National Qualifications Register in Higher Education (RNCIS) (Annex 4), the ARACIS standards (Annex 2), and the European norms (Annex 5).

By the time of graduation, students have to be able to obtain and record a comprehensive history of patients’ oral and dental health. They must know how to carry out a physical examination of a patient and how to interpret obtained data. Furthermore, graduates must be competent to take decisions, draw clinical judgments, and establish diagnosis for treatment and prevention of dental diseases. A fully trained dentist has to be able to perform uncomplicated reparatory surgical procedures on hard and soft tissues, as well as teeth and roots extractions, using adequate pharmaceutical substances to control, for example, orofacial pain and distresses of physical and psychological nature (Annex 3).

With regard to interpersonal competences, the program students are required to know ethical principles related to dental medicine. Moreover, they must be acquainted with patients’ and their own duties and rights, with legal and administrative procedures related to dental services. In cases when there are several treatment options, graduates must be able to select and establish priority among them, which meets a patient’s needs and requirements best. To sum up, working as dentists, graduates of the program has to have a solid understanding of the fact that a patient is the central concern of a medical

care procedure they perform and that diagnosis, treatment planning, and treatment itself should focus on the interests of a patient. This is achieved by means of interpersonal communication and individual approach. Individual approach is similarly vital for the establishment of good professional relationships with co-workers and for the collaboration with specialists from other fields of medicine (Annex 3).

Taken in general, graduates of the program are expected to contribute to the improvement and maintenance of dental health of families and groups of all ages within a community. For successful organization and planning of their work in medical offices, graduates need to acquire managerial competences, basic IT abilities, and communication skills. This presupposes good level of speaking and writing skills in Romanian as well as in foreign languages. Furthermore, the program aims to develop students self-training capacities through independent study and to stimulate their activity in research (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.3.2).

The University assures that the qualifications and competences acquired in the program comply with national (Annex 4 and 6) and European (Annex 5) standards for dentists. National competences are determined by the decision professional organization of the Romanian National College of Dentists Doctors and admitted by the Ministry of Health (to see the list of national competences and therapeutic procedures, refer to Annex 6).

Regarding the aspect of career opportunities, the University informs that graduates of the program "Dentistry" can work as dentists, resident dentists, specialized dentists, researchers in dentistry, and research assistants in dentistry. In addition, they can find employment as counseling physicians, expert physicians, and specialty inspector physicians. Besides, graduates can choose to become teachers or medical representatives in administrative structures.

The University emphasizes, though, that graduates have to register in the College of Dentistry of Romania to have the right to practice dentistry in Romania (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.4.1). Graduates can become members of this association by submitting an application for registration, which includes documents ascertaining their academic degree, insurance, medical certificate and marital status as well as payment of a registration fee (for more details, refer to AOO, 6).

As indicated by the University, primary dental care is offered in Romania entirely in the private sector, thus graduates of the program need to integrate into the system of free market, which will ultimately define the success of their career. According to the Presidential Commission report on the analyses and development of public health policies in Romania of 2008, there is lack of human resources in the national health system, both quantitative and qualitative. Judging by the correlation between the number of dentists per 1,000 inhabitants, Romanian index is two to three times lower than the European average (AOQ, 7). Besides the low number of medical personnel nationwide, there are major geographic imbalances, when the human resources are concentrated in urban areas at the expense of rural and financially disadvantaged areas populated with specific groups that are most at risk (minority, poor, etc.). Taking into consideration the described situation in the labor market, the University sets its objective to train future dentists and thus meet the needs of the local society.

2.2.3 Structure of the study program and exam system

The program "Dentistry" is structured in 2 cycles: the initial three years comprise the 1st cycle of basic biomedical, morphological, and functional sciences, whereas the other three years consist of specialized training and specific subjects. The program has to be completed within 6 years or 12 semesters. According to the University, the program comprises 59 subjects, out of which 54 are obligatory and 5 (out of 12 offered) are optional (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.1).

Optional subjects are designed to complement compulsory or specialized ones, this means that they have to either repeat the content of core subjects in detail, or complete the basic level of knowledge required for basic training in dentistry (Annex 2, page 3). Each academic year, students have to choose 1 optional subject, which can be assigned a maximum of 2 ECTS CP. Besides, students can also choose facultative subjects offering development of communication skills in one or two international languages, axiological or valuing skills (necessary for active and responsible participation in society), and personal life management skills, and career development, which can broaden students' professional vision and career opportunities.

Students of the program have to obtain 30 CP per semester and 60 CP per year. The total number of ECTS CP for the whole program is 360, out of

which 350 (97.22%) are acquired for compulsory subjects and 10 CP (2.78%) for optional subjects (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.1). According to the regulations applied at the national level in the University, the study program with the duration of more than 4 year, final bachelor thesis is not credited additionally to the total amount of obligatory 360 CP, except for 5 CP that are granted for the collection of necessary material and preparation of the thesis, included in the 360 CP.

Detailed description of each subject, including number of credit hours, language of instruction, goals, study content, list of competences, and the methods of examinations available in Annex 1. Information about each subject is said to be recorded in an individual card, which is annually reviewed depending on scientific novelties of the given domain.

The study plan of the program includes the following subjects (Annex 7):

Sem.	Title	ECTS
1	Anatomy	6
	Cellular and Molecular Biology	5
	Biophysics and Medical Physics	5
	Chemistry	3
	Histology-Cytology	5
	Methodology of Medical Scientific Research	1
	Modern Language (for all students) or Romanian Language (obligatory for foreign students)	2
	Physical Education (sport)	1
	Optional classes (1): General and Medical Psychology Biostatistics	2
Total ECTS/semester		30
2	Anatomy	6
	Cellular and Molecular Biology	5
	Biochemistry of the Oral Cavity	4
	General Physiology	4
	Morphology and Semiology of the Stomatognathic System	6
	Modern Language (for all students) or	1

	Romanian Language (obligatory for foreign students)	
	Physical Education (sport)	1
	Practice of Specialty(Dentistry Preventive and Dental Materials)	3
Total ECTS/semester		30
3	Microbiology, Virusology, Parasitology	3
	Clinical and Topographic Anatomy	4
	Physiology of the Oro-Facial System	4
	Anatomy Pathology (Morpho-pathology)	4
	Genetics	3
	Modern Language (for all students) or Romanian Language (obligatory for foreign students)	2
	Physical Education (sport)	1
	Medical Informatics	1
	Bioethics	2
	Oro-Dental Diagnostic and Ergonomics	4
	Optional classes (1): Preventive Communitarian Dentistry Christian Moral	2
Total ECTS/semester		30
4	Microbiology, Virusology, Parasitology	3
	General Pathology (Physiopathology)	4
	Anatomy-Embryology	4
	Modern Language (for all students) or Romanian Language (obligatory for foreign students)	2
	Physical Education (sport)	1
	Pharmacology	3
	Behavior Sciences	1
	Dental Materials	5
	Oro-Dental Prevention	5
	Practice of Specialty (Dental Semiology and Mastication Function)	2
Total ECTS/semester		30

5	Technique of Confection of the Dental Prosthesis	5
	Anesthesiology and Sedation in Dentistry	4
	Normal Occlusion and the Mastication Function	4
	Oro-Dental Prevention	4
	Medical Semiology	4
	Surgery and General Anesthesiology	4
	Immunology	3
	Optional classes (1): Emergency Medicine and Pre-Hospital Emergencies Pharmacovigilance Vegetal Products used in the Dental Affections	2
Total ECTS/semester		30
6	Internal Medicine	5
	Technique of Confection of the Dental Prosthesis	6
	Conservative Odonto-Therapy	7
	Fixe Dental Prosthetics	7
	Practice of Specialty (Anesthesiology and Sedation in Dentistry)_	3
	Surgery and General Anesthesiology	2
Total ECTS/semester		30
7	Conservative Odonto-Therapy	6
	Fixe Dental Prosthetics	6
	General Radiology	2
	Deontology and Medical Ethics	2
	Endocrinology	2
	Pediatrics	2
	ORL	2
	Ophthalmology	2
	Neurology	2
	Psychiatrics	2
	Optional classes(1) Anthropology in Dentistry Allergology	2

	Sanitary Law	
Total ECTS/semester		30
8	Odontological Radiology	3
	Endodontition	7
	Pedodontition	7
	Surgery Dento-Alveolar	7
	Epidemiology and Dental Prophylaxis	2
	History of Dentistry	1
	Practice of Specialty(Conservative Dentistics, Pedodontition and Social Aspects of the Odontologic Practice)	3
Total ECTS/semester		30
9	Hygiene	2
	Endodontition	7
	Dento-Facial Aesthetics	4
	Oral and Maxillofacial (OMF) Surgery	6
	Pedodontition	7
	Dermato-Venerology	2
	Microsurgery and Reparatory Surgery	2
Total ECTS/semester		30
10	Mobile Dental Prosthetics	6
	Ortodontition	5
	Parodontology	6
	Maxilo-Facial Prosthesis	2
	Practice of Specialty (Odontostomatologic Clinic, Dental Prosthetics, Parodontology and Ortodontition)	2
	Documentation Diploma Paper	1
	Legal Medicine	2
	Sanitary Management	2
	Physiotherapy	2
	Optional classes(1): Social Medicine Psychopedagogy	2

Total ECTS/semester		30
11	Parodontology	6
	Prosthetics Dental Mobilisable Specialty	7
	Ortodontition	6
	Implantology and Prosthetic Rehabilitation on Implants	6
	Occlusal Dysfunctions	3
	Preparing the Diploma Paper	2
Total ECTS/semester		30
12	Oral and Maxillofacial (OMF)Surgery	6
	Oral Rehabilitation	6
	Oral Pathology	4
	Advanced Individual Training (AIT) and Emergencies in Dentistry	4
	Oral Health	4
	Gerontostomatology and Partial Prostheses Acrylic	4
	Preparing the Diploma Paper	2
Total ECTS/semester		30
Total ECTS for the whole program		360

Table 4: Module overview

According to the University, all subjects of the curriculum are specific to the "Dentistry" program. There are no joint subjects taught together with other study programs (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.2).

Students of the program "Dentistry" and of the Faculty in general, are said to have access to courses in such complementary fields as European Languages (French, English, German, Italian, and Spanish), professional techniques in marketing, management, informatics, communication and other, organized according to the norms and recommendations published by the European Union and European Council. This is possible due to the fact that Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad is a member of European Federation of Schools (FEDE), which is a non-governmental international organization, whose objective is to unite hundreds of European higher education institutions and thus create a single European university area. Furthermore, there is an International Centre of Linguistic Testing and Academic Counselling within the University,

which offers language courses and organizes international language examinations required for studying abroad. The Centre is accredited by Cambridge Assessment of Great Britain and the Educational Testing Service of the USA authorizing it to implement international tests (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.2).

Concerning the aspect of cooperation with other universities and institutions, the University collaborates with Arad County Clinical Emergency Hospital where students of the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry undergo their clinical preparation. Furthermore, the Department of Dentistry has contacts with the Arad branch of the National College of the Dentist Doctors, which contributes to the continuous development of the teaching personnel and doctors involved in the program (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.2).

Methods of teaching used in the program "Dentistry" are student-focused and are aimed at fulfillment of learning objectives and acquisition of competences specific for each subject (see module description in Annex 1). Teaching methods applied in both theoretical and practical classes are carried out with the help of modern methods of multimedia, such as power point presentations, tables and explanatory schemes, educational films and other. Most common instruction strategies are based on the principles of directness and interactivity and include practical demonstrations, thematic debates, projects, case presentations and other.

The University emphasizes that lecture theatres and seminar rooms have the necessary technical equipment, such as whiteboards, protection screens, video systems, and multimedia equipment that facilitates and increases the learning activity of students (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.5). There are actual library and virtual library resources as well as the e-learning platform Moodle available for students for their research and studies. It is claimed that teachers can broadcast live using a closed TV system. Students have the possibility to do computer-based testing and communicate with their peers and professors on the University web-platform: <http://examene.uvvg.ro>. The faculty is planning to introduce a digital mode of teaching in the years 2014-2016.

In theoretical classes like lectures and seminars students are given reading assignments and are provided with study material resources, like short lecture summaries, additional images or slides relevant to the lecture. Theoretical knowledge in fundamental subjects is complemented through practical activity in subject laboratories of the University under the supervision of tenured sub-

jects teachers and a demonstrator technician. This pre-clinical practical activity is conducted in such subjects as the morphology and stomatognathic system semiology, oro-dental and ergonomic diagnostic, dental materials, the technology for manufacturing dentures and other (AOQ, 5). Laboratory premises are said to be adapted to real life work placements and meet hygienic, sanitation, and safety norms.

Clinical practical activities take place in the second cycle of the program (4-6 years) and are conducted at the Arad County Clinical Emergency Hospital and at the Clinic of Dentistry 1 and the Clinic of Dentistry 2. These two clinics are designed in spaces owned by the University. Besides, the Emergency Hospital has made available another ortho-maxillofacial medical office for the use of the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry (Self-Evaluation Report, 2.3.1). In the course of clinical training, students are supervised by an instructor from the University and a nurse. Assistant professors, lecturers, associate professors, and professors in the required specialty and module field can be assigned as instructors. Clinical practice is conducted in such subjects as odontal therapy, endodontics, prosthodontics, oclusiology, orthodontics, pedodontics, periodontics, oral rehabilitation, implantology, oral health, and oral pathology (AOQ, 5).

Annual clinical training of students in a health care institution is conducted based on a *Collaboration Contract* (Annex 12), which is signed by three parts: medical institution, Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad, and the student. The cooperation protocol between the University and the Arad County Clinical Emergency Hospital was registered in 2005. It is renewed annually by addendum that takes into account the objectives of the education program and the internal regulations of the hospital. Clinical structures ensure the necessary conditions for clinical traineeship by providing over 1,200 beds, bandage rooms, demonstration rooms, modernly equipped course rooms and other. The University assures that all practical activities are carried out under the conditions corresponding to academic quality standards determined by ARACIS (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.6).

Apart from clinical practice, students have to do one-month summer training annually between the 1st and the 5th years of studies. Summer training can be conducted in medical institutions in Romania or abroad on the basis of the Training Portfolio specific for each year of study and the Practice Contract

signed by the Dean of the Faculty (for both see Annex 11). Upon completion of the period, a training coordinator has to fill in and submit an evaluation of a student's activity and behavior to the University. Summer training comprises 700 workload hours from the total of 2,428 hours of clinical training in the program (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.6.5).

Correlation of clinical practical activity to the objectives of the study program "Dentistry" is provided by the fact that students' professional competences are evaluated according to the profile requirements of relevant subjects (for the list of requirements, see the Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.6). Clinical training activities are said to follow the topics foreseen in subject descriptions whereas qualifications of practical instructors are examined by means of annual evaluations of the teaching staff, which takes into account their development in professional sphere and their activity in scientific research (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.6).

Concerning the aspect of internationality, the University informs that the envisaged competences and the curriculum offered by the program comply with European standards, which are fully described in the document *Profile and Competences for the European Dentist* (for more details, refer to Annex 5).

The University applies the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), implements Erasmus exchange programs, and follows the specific standards for dentistry field established on the national and the European levels. Thus, it ensures compatibility of its programs with the ones of other European educational institutions and enables students' exchange mobility within Europe (see the regulations on the recognition of study periods in other institutions in Annex 16). The program "Dentistry" is taught in Romanian; in order to learn specialized terminology in a foreign international language (English, French, Spanish, and German) Romanian students have to attend language courses during the initial two years. In the academic year 2013/2014, the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry had 12 Erasmus outgoing motilities for students (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.8).

The number of the medical students who attended other European educational institutions with the Erasmus program (Annex F), or did their internship abroad, is currently increasing (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.9). According to the University, there were 11 outgoing placement motilities for dentistry students in the previous years, whereas 25 exchange placements are planned for

the academic year 2014/ 2015 (AOQ, 9). Among its Erasmus partners, the University of Arad names the University of Calabria, the University of Bari, Italy and the University of Grenoble, France. Similar mobility opportunities are offered to the teaching staff; hence, in the year 2013/2014 members of the faculty visited Thomas More University in Belgium and later received a reciprocal visit. Promotion of exchange opportunities and attraction of students from abroad are organized on the faculty level by means of social network services, through the webpage of the Department of International Relations, and the activity of the Erasmus Office coordinators at the Department of International Relations located in the Main Office of the University (for details on the international contacts of the University and the Faculty, see the Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.9, pages 18-19).

Regarding research opportunities, the University claims that scientific research is carried out in didactic laboratories, pre-clinical and clinical research centers, such as the Centre for Applied Physiology and Molecular Biology, the Institute for Life Sciences, Centre for Research in Dental Medicine and Dental Technique, and other, which offer necessary facilities. On the faculty level, students can take part in the activities of science clubs managed by staff members and where topics are chosen by consulting students. The aim of such clubs is to stimulate interest and intellectual potential of students and, thus, to expand their vocational perspectives (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.7).

The examination and evaluation procedures on the program "Dentistry" are designed in accordance with the planned objectives of each subject. Each subject coordinator is responsible for structuring the examination system of their modules. Students are only admitted to the final subject examination when their course attendance comprises at least 70%, and their laboratory and clinical activity reaches 100% of attendance. Examinations take place throughout the semester in the following forms (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.2.):

- ongoing assessment, which assures the acquisition of covered topics during the semester at colloquiums and seminars; ongoing assessment comprises 20% of course requirements
- practical assessment, which is compulsory for each subject that entails practical activities, laboratory classes or clinical traineeships; practical assessment comprises 30% of course requirements

Both forms of examination are conducted in the presence of at least two teachers: the course coordinator and the practical training coordinator.

- summative-cumulative assessment, which is a computer-based multiple-choice test comprising 50% of course requirements

In order to be admitted to the third final examination on the subject, a student has to pass the ongoing and practical assessments with a minimum grade of 5 (grading scale being from 1 to 10).

The final form of assessment on each subject can be conducted in the form of a colloquium or an examination. Colloquiums are taken in optional subjects, practical activities, or other complementary subjects (such as Foreign Languages, Physical Education, and Medical Terminology) with lower individual workload, one week before the actual examination session. According to the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS), over 50% of student performance evaluations must be conducted in the form of examinations.

Examinations at the University are taken according to the schedule approved by the University Senate. In the academic year 2013/2014, examination sessions were scheduled for the following periods (Answers to OQ, table 5):

20 January – 7 February 2014	Winter exam session	3 weeks
02 June – 20 June 2014	Summer exam session	3 weeks
30 June – 11 July 2014	Retake session	2 weeks

Table 5: Examination sessions

Besides, with the conformation of the Senate the University has organized a one-week credit recovery session from the 1st to the 7th of September 2014. Credit recovery session is a period introduced on students' request and with the approval of the Senate and the Faculty Council. It enables students to complete credits required for the promotion to the next year of studies (a minimum of 45 out of mandatory 60 CP), or from Cycle I to Cycle II (180 CP).

Students are allowed to take the same exam two times a year, meaning that after the first examination they can try to pass it once more. These two initial attempts are free of charge. The third attempt at the re-examination session is possible only with the approval of the Senate and the payment of a certain fee established by the Board of Directors (see Annex A, Art.26).

Academic feasibility of examinations and of the program curriculum in general is maintained by the University Senate, Faculty Councils and departments. The University claims that learning outcomes are assessed at all of these levels after each session. It is also stated that there is a Quality Commission whose function is to analyze the results of teaching evaluations and graduate surveys (for details of the examination regulations, see Annex G).

Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad applies the ECTS system to calculate and rank students' individual performance, to enable their access to other higher education institutions, at home or abroad, and to validate their acquired knowledge and skills (Annex B). This evaluation system is approved by the order of the Romanian Ministry of Education no. 3617/2005 on the generalized application of the European Credit Transfer System. Students are promoted to a higher year of studies if they have accumulated the minimum amount of credits, which constitutes a minimum of 45 CP of 60 CP per year, or 180 CP for Cycle I to Cycle II.

Each student of the University receives a student card at the beginning of his or her studies. All grades obtained by a student, including failed examinations, are registered in this student card and also in the examination sheets. Grades system at the Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad is the following (see Annex 0B, page 10):

Romanian grading scale	Definition on scale intervals	Correlation bet. grade and credit
10	EXCELLENT-remarkable result, few minor deficiencies	The total number of credits is allocated
9	VERY GOOD-over-average result, but with a few temporary insufficiencies	
7-8	GOOD-generally good result, but with a large number of important insufficiencies	
6	FAIR-honest result, but with important shortcomings	
5	PASSABLE -result at the level of minimal criteria	
4	INSUFFICIENT-additional effort is required to obtain the credit	No credits are Allocated
1-3	INSUFFICIENT (completely unacceptable) – considerable additional effort is required	

Table 6: Grading System

The passing average for an examination test has to be at least 5 (five), whereas 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 6 (six) out of 10 on the grading scale (see Annex A, Art.75).

Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad recognizes credits obtained in other universities if they comply with regulations on students' professional activity (see Annex A, Articles 67-70). Faculty Committee is responsible for decisions on credit transfer. It establishes the compatibility of curricula and credit transfer systems, as well as the minimum number of credits accumulated per year, in order to validate studies at another institution.

2.2.4 Admission requirements

The University emphasizes that admission contest takes place in conditions of transparency and equality (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.1.8). Admission requirements to for the program "Dentistry" include:

- a high school diploma or equivalent with the minimum average grade not lower than 5
- a language competence certificate in Romanian for foreign students
- an entrance test consisting of 60 multiple-choice and descriptive questions on topics from a recommended bibliography (for more details see Annex D and Annex C, Art.4, 6, and 7)

The bibliography is posted on the University website six months before the admission exams and the academic offer is distributed through flyers and posters, as well as the activity of the Enrolment Centre. Admission results are displayed on the notice board at the University Campus and the University website (Annex C).

The admission session takes place before the beginning of winter semester in June-August and consists of three stages: registration of applicants, multiple-choice test, and the final display of admission results (Annex D). If there are vacant places left in the program, the second admission session is organized in September. Applications from the citizens of the European Union Member States, European Economic Area states and the Swiss Confederation are considered under the same conditions as of Romanian citizens. Applicants from third countries need a study visa issued by the Embassy of Romania in their home countries. All candidates that aren't Romanian citizens or have already

obtained a high-school degree in foreign countries, they need the approval from the National Education Ministry – an “acceptance letter” – in order to study at the University, according to the national regulations in force.

According to the rules of the University, the general admission average is calculated based on the results of the entrance test. If there are several applicants with the same results, they are selected based on, first, high school diploma average and, second, average grade obtained in Biology during the high school studies (Annex D, section IX).

Another requirement of the application file is a health certificate, which must include a general clinical examination as well as information on any chronic illnesses of the applicant. Health certificate has to be signed and stamped by the general practitioner/medical specialist who has examined the applicant, including the stamp of the healthcare unit that issued the medical document. When proven necessary, the University assures to organize special admission procedure in a room equipped with a video observation system in presence of three teachers from other faculties. So far, there has been no such case in the program “Dentistry” (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.5.2).

It is the Central Admission Panel who is responsible for the entire admission process. The Central Admission Panel consists of the Rector, vice-rectors, presidents of faculty-level admission panels and the University Registrar. The regular number of enrollment places at the program is 100. Until 2013, the University admitted a larger number of applicants in order to compensate for losses due to dropout students as well as those students who repeat an academic year or transfer to other education institutions within Romania and abroad (AOQ, 3).

According to the University, students are informed on how tuition fees are calculated through the student representatives, who attend meetings of the Faculty Council and the University Senate. Tuition fees constitute one of the financial resources of the University to purchase necessary equipment and support various short and medium term development projects. Furthermore, the University offers different discount options from 5 to 50% from the tuition fee to students who, for example, come from financially disadvantaged families or who are enrolled in a second study program within the University (for

details, see the Annex H). The amount of tuition fees for the academic years 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 are presented in the table below:

Years of study	2013/2014	2014/2015
I	1,338 EUR / 5,897 RON	1,588 EUR / 6,999 RON
II	1,249 EUR / 5,505 RON	1,429 EUR / 6,298 RON
III	1,338 EUR / 5,897RON	1,497 EUR / 6,598 RON
IV	1,472 EUR / 6,487 RON	1,542 EUR / 6,796 RON
V	1,516 EUR / 6,681 RON	1,610 EUR / 7,096 RON
VI	1,605 EUR / 7,074 RON	1,700 EUR / 7,492 RON

Table 7: Tuition fees

2.3 Study conditions and quality assurance

2.3.1 Human resources

In the academic year 2014/2015, the teaching staff of the program “Dentistry” comprises in total 77 members, of whom 12 (16%) are professors and associate professors, 14 (18%) lecturers, 51 (66%) assistant professors (AOQ, 10).

The amount of average teaching time per week equals to 29 hours. Besides, there are four hours a week for assisting the preparation of final theses in the 10th semester, and six hours for it in the last 11th and 12th semesters. The current total number of students at the program is 851 (Self-Evaluation Report, 2.3.1), which means that the student-teacher ratio is approximately 11:1, meaning that there are 11 students per 1 teacher.

The University states that selection of teaching staff is conducted according to the Law of National Education no.1/2011, and internal regulations (Annex N), which are based on the principle of public contest. Contest methodology applied at the University announces, that academic positions are created in compliance with strategic development plans and available financial resources and that any person who meets the requirements of a contest can apply and participate in it (Annex N, Art.1 and 5). Instructors must have obtained a PhD degree or be a PhD student in order to start teaching at the University. They can be promoted to higher academic degrees depending on the results of the annual evaluation of their teaching performance.

Regarding the question of continuous education opportunities, Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad is said to be the first private university in Romania

to be attested as an institution implementing doctoral degree studies. Students can acquire a PhD in Medical Sciences in the following specialties: Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Orthopedics, Traumatology, Urology, Radiology, Psychiatry, and Gastroenterology. Besides, the University claims to organize trainings of professional specialization, advanced studies schools, regular scientific meetings, symposiums, conferences, schools of advanced studies, and roundtables to encourage the academic activity of the teaching staff.

Further human resources of the Faculty include a secretarial office run by the chief secretary, the office for foreign student affairs coordinated by one instructor, laboratory assistants, the IT staff, and members of the Counselling and Career Guidance Center.

2.3.2 Facilities

The Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Dentistry has at the moment three campuses, of which Dental Clinic II serve exclusively the interests of the program "Dentistry". All premises are the estate of Western University of Arad. The University campuses are located in a convenient proximity to the Arad County Clinical Emergency Hospital where students conduct their clinical training. The campus Vasile Goldis contains a Conference room with the capacity of 95 seats and is equipped with a video system. There are 13 course and seminar rooms, 40 laboratories, 5 computer laboratories that serve the objectives of the program "Dentistry". Spaces for medical education, teaching and research laboratories are said to be all equipped according to national and internal standards. Technical equipment of each laboratory is said to be specific to each subject.

Arad County Clinical Emergency Hospital provides premises for the practical activity of program students, according to the contract between the University and the Hospital. There are over 27 clinics and clinical departments, and the total of 1,368 beds within the hospital. The Dental Clinics no.1 situated within the University Campus and the University Clinic no.2 also offer their premises for students' clinical practice activities (Self-Evaluation Report, 2.3.1).

There are 28,755 volumes of scientific literature, 1,917 titles, and 55 periodicals at the disposal of the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry. Students of the program "Dentistry" have access to three libraries: the Central

Library (Arghezi Complex), the Medical Library, and the European Library for Biomedical Sciences (Self-Evaluation Report, 2.3.2) with the following opening hours:

Libraries	Daily hours	Daily hours during the Examination session
The Central Library	Mon-Fri: 9:00-20:00 Sat: 9:00-12:00	Mon-Sat: 8:00-22:00 Sun: 8:00-18:00
The Medical Library	Mon-Fri: 9:00-20:00 Sat: 9:00-12:00	Mon-Sat: 8:00-22:00 Sun: 8:00-18:00
The European Library for Biomedical Sciences	Mon-Fri: 12:00-17:00	Mon-Sat: 12:00-17:00

Table 8: Library opening hours

The Faculty has its own computerized system of data collection, communication, procession, and analyses through the use of internet. Moreover, teachers and students of the medical faculty have access to the University Centre for Informatics, the University Library, and the computer Laboratories in the university campus. The electronic data processing (EDP) infrastructure of the University comprise the following components: web server, accounting and management server, student management server, online course server, and online exam server(see the Self-Evaluation Report, 2.3.3). Since 2002 the University has been subscribed to springerlink.com and since 2008 to CEEOL (Central and Eastern European Online Library).

For the acquisition of new material for the libraries, the Board of Directors establishes a financial plan. The University claims to allocate one third of its funds to various investments, such as acquisition and modernization of its buildings, purchase of equipment, computerization of services and other (see the Self-Evaluation Report, 2.3.4). The institution seeks to attract more external funding by founding, for instance, a university policlinic, which will provide work placement for the university staff and serve the interests of the local community.

2.3.3 Quality assurance

According to the Self-Evaluation Report, section 1.6.1, quality assurance system is sustained at the University by the activity of the following structural components: Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation (CQAE), Quality Assurance Committees from faculties, Vice-rector for Bachelor and Master Programs, Quality Assurance and Student Affairs, and Quality Assurance

Department (QAD). Members of the Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation and of the Quality Assurance Department are approved by the University Senate. The function of the QAD is to monitor the entire teaching activity of the program as well as of examination sessions. In 2013, the Department has prepared the 2nd edition of the Quality Manual for internal use (Annex L).

At the end of each academic year "Internal evaluation report of the quality of education and research" is presented to the Senate for its approval and then presented on the official website of the University. The University claims that the quality assurance and assessment system of the program "Dentistry" is realized by involving all teachers and students in to the process (see the Self-Evaluation Report, 1.6.2). Evaluation process of the teaching staff takes into account individual level of expertise, potential in scientific research, teaching skills and abilities, achieved professional prestige, and international recognition. Evaluation of teachers is based on their self-evaluation reports, peer assessment by colleagues, and students' evaluation. It is conducted annually, whereas students' feedback is done every six months. This assessment of the teaching staff by students is implemented at the University as a quality assurance tool aimed at the improvement the content and methods of teaching at the faculty. Apart from this, regular meetings of the Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee with students contribute to the improvement of communication between students and instructors.

Quality assurance within the faculty is a process that involves teachers and students in the assessment of the teaching process, ongoing monitoring of course attendance, monitoring and mentoring of students (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.6.3). The evaluations conducted within the faculty are aimed at the creation of a productive and effective working environment. The faculty level Quality Assurance Committee submits its conclusions of the internal audit report to the Faculty Council. Peer review, which is a summarized assessment of a teacher to be tenured, is also submitted to the Faculty Council. At the end of each year all the data for the given period, including evaluations of teaching performance, is gathered and further directed to the Senate for it to take corrective actions and issue the quality improvement plan.

The level of students' satisfaction with their studies and the relevance of the study program to its practical implementation are evaluated at the University

by means of assessment questionnaires. The University states that over 80% of students express their contentment with the program “Dentistry” (for details see the statistics of questionnaire responses on course, seminar, and laboratory activities in AOO, 8). The University maintains communication with external stakeholders (Order of Physicians, Employers Association of Family Physicians of Romania, etc.) as well as its graduates with the help of the Alumni Association. The Alumni Association organizes regular workshops and meetings in order to allow students to receive feedback on employers’ needs and interests (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.6.4). Regarding the aspect of student workload, the University asserts that recently the proportion of clinical activities has increased in order to give students to solidify acquired skills and competencies (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.6.5).

Information regarding the study program, its modular system, exam requirement and compensation measures, as well as the general information about the available support of students, is provided on the official website of the University, in the Regulations on Students’ Professional Activities (Annex A), brochures, and flyers. There are various organizations within the University, such as the Counselling and Career Guidance Centre, Medical Students Association Arad-ASMA whose main function is to support, help, and inform students in the aspects of career guidance, personal development, and learning optimization (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.6.8). Besides, teachers and tutors have their individual office hours when students can refer to them directly.

The University claims that the admission competition, studying and teaching processes offer equal opportunities for all candidates regardless of gender, origin or social class. The University ascertains its readiness to provide special conditions of admission and studies for students with restricted and low financial resources (see Annex H).

Concerning support and compensatory measures for students with disabilities and chronic illnesses, the University indicates that an applicant has to submit an official certificate about his or her health status. The University further states that there is a consultation program as well as a Centre for Career Counselling and Guidance which is expected to help students with learning

difficulties (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.3). Students' guide for the academic year 2013-2014 is available on-line on the website of the University¹.

2.4 Information about the university

Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad was established in June 1990. The identity of "Vasile Goldiș" Western University of Arad is conferred by Law no. 240/2002; the Law of national education no. 1/2011, as subsequently amended and supplemented – specific regulations for private higher education; the University Charter, approved by Education Ministry in 2011. It is emphasized in the Self-Evaluation Report, sections 3.1, that all founding members of the University are parts of local administration: the Prefecture, the County Council, the City Hall, the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, the Orthodox Diocese. Hence, Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad is a legal entity of private law and public utility. It is a nonprofit institution included by the Education Ministry in the national education system, though at the same time, maintaining its academic and financial autonomy.

The initial Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Marketing, Management and Informatics were established in 1990. They were followed by the Faculty of Stomatology and the College of Dental Technology in 1991, the Faculty of General Medicine in 1992, and the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports in 1993. The University has been acknowledged by the Magna Charta of European Universities and was also granted the "High Confidence" Certificate by the Commission for external institutional evaluation of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS). Besides, the University has obtained positive evaluation from the European University Association (EUA) in 2013 (Self-Evaluation Report, 3.1).

In the academic year 2013/2014, the total number of students at the University comprised 10,400 people. Currently, the University has six faculties: Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry; Economics; Humanities, Politics and Administrative Sciences; Law; Educational Sciences, Psychology, Physical Education and Sports; Natural Sciences, Engineering and Computer Science. There are 46 programs of bachelor's degree and 23 programs of master's degree. Finally, the University comprises also an Institution Organizing Doctoral Studies (IODS) with two doctoral schools of Biology and Medicine. Regard-

¹ See the link: <http://www.uvvg.ro/ro/docs/studenti/student%20guide.pdf>

ing the staff structure on the institutional level, there are 327 tenured faculty members, 237 of whom have a PhD title.

The main office, faculties, and various supporting facilities (libraries, dormitories, a sports complex, student policlinic etc.) of the University are distributed among 20 locations, either owned or rented, that are mainly situated within the city of Arad. Although most of the buildings are concentrated in the city center, there are research and entrepreneurial centers, training bases, as well as venues for scientific and cultural events, spread along the County of Arad. Among the facilities assigned for students' leisure and vocational training, the University mentions the central unit of the library comprising reading rooms with more than 300 places, the European Library of Biomedical Sciences, Museum of the University, ITA GOLDTECH Business and Technology Incubator, "Friedrich Schiller" Center for German Culture as well as Italian and French Cultural Centers, the students dormitory providing 492 accommodation places, UNIVEST sports complex and others (Self-Evaluation Report, 3.1.1, page 34-35).

The Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry was founded in 1991 and was integrated into, by then primarily humanitarian, profile of the University. The Faculty was assigned by the institutional accreditation of Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad, by Law no. 240 in 2002. The function of each member of the faculty management is established by the University Charter, the Internal Regulation of VGWU Arad, the Internal Regulation of the faculty, the Framework Regulation of the Departments and Framework Regulation of for the General Medicine Department.

The Faculty runs eight programs: Medicine, Medicine in French, Medicine in English, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Balneo-physio-kinesiotherapy and Medical Rehabilitation, Dental Technology, Nutrition and Dietetics. In the academic year 2014/2015, the total number of students at the Faculty amounted to 3,485 people.

3 Expert report

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3.1 Introduction

The Accreditation Agency AHPGS was assigned to carry out the assessment and accreditation of the bachelor study program “Dentistry” (Medic Dentist, D.D.) offered by “Vasile Goldiș” Western University of Arad, Romania. The on-site visit of the University took place on 17 and 18 April 2015.

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

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Arnold

Former Dean of the Faculty of Dental Medicine, Witten/Herdecke University, Germany, former President of the Craniofacial Group of the International Association for Dental Research, Head of the Department of biological and Material Sciences in Dentistry, Witten/Herdecke University

Prof. Dr. Peter Dieter

Former Dean of Medical Education, Faculty of Medicine Carl Gustav Carus, Dresden University of Technology, Germany, President of the Association of Medical Schools in Europe (AMSE), Member of the Executive Committee of the Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE)

Mr. Dr. Rolf Heusser

Director of the National Institute for Cancer Epidemiology and Registration, Zurich, Switzerland, Former Chairmen of the European Consortium of Accreditation in higher Education (ECA)

Mr. Dr. Dirk Häger

Head physician at the psychosomatic preventive clinic, Regenesa, Juist, Germany, Team physician at the German Red Cross Blood Donation, Service, Niedersachsen, Germany, Bologna expert with broad experience in the area of quality assurance in the higher education sector

Ms. Martha Hofmann

Student of Human Medicine at Witten/Herdecke University, Germany

Mr. Prof. Dr. Adrian Kasaj

Department of Operative Dentistry and Periodontology, University Medical Center of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany, Chairman of the New Working Group in Periodontology (NAGP)

Mr. Prof. Dr. Gerd Mikus

Deputy Medical Director of the Department of Clinical Pharmacology and Pharmacoepidemiology at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, Deputy head of the Ethics Committee of the Landesärztekammer Baden-Württemberg, Member of the Expert Committee of controlled substances of the Federal Ministry of Health, Germany

Mr. Prof. Dr. Gerhard Scriba

Professor of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, University of Jena, Germany, Former Managing Director, Institute of Pharmacy, Member of the German pharmaceutical society, Member of the „Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker“ (GDCh) Member of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists

The main task of the expert group during the on-site visit and the peer review was to assess the study program and verify its compliance with Romanian regulations. These regulations are determined in the *Methodology for External Evaluation, Standards, Standards of Reference and List of Performance Indicators of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (hereinafter, Methodology), as approved by the Government Decision No. 1418 of 2006, and according to the Law of National Education No. 1 of 2011 (hereinafter, Law of National Education).

Thus, the expert group surveyed the proper implementation of the criteria, standards and performance indicators as specified in the above mentioned legal acts, and the compliance of the program with the normative criteria, as stated in the Methodology.

The following Fields of Activity pertaining to the program and the University were assessed: (A) Institutional capacity, (B) Educational effectiveness, and (C) Quality management, each with the corresponding Criteria and Standards.

In addition to that, the expert group observed the implementation of the international criteria given in the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in*

the European Higher Education Area established by the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

The present 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.

3.2 The study program

The study program “Dentistry” offered by “Vasile Goldiș” Western University of Arad, Romania, Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry, covers the total of 360 ECTS credit points (CP). It is a full-time program taught in Romanian.

Upon graduation, students receive the title of “Medic Dentist”, abbreviated as “DD”. The diploma is issued by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Scientific Research. The regular duration of the program is 6 years, i.e. 12 semesters. Admission requirements include a high school diploma or equivalent, an entrance multiple-choice test and a language competence certificate in Romanian language for foreign students.

The program consists of the preclinical and the clinical training cycles, each lasting for 3 year and covering 180 CP. Completion of the first cycle does not offer students any professional qualification in Romania. By the end of the first cycle, they have to acquire the total of 180 CP to be advance to the second cycle. There is no intermediate graduation examination. Students complete their studies when they pass the final examinations and successfully defend their bachelor thesis. According to the regulations applied at the University, assessment of the final thesis is not included to the total amount of credits if the regular study period in the program is longer than 4 years.

The program curriculum consists of 59 courses, of which 54 are obligatory and 5 are optional. The total amount of students’ workload in the program is 9,000 hours; 30 workload hours are equal to 1 CP.

According to the national regulations, graduates of the program must obtain registration in the national professional association of the College of Dentists of Romania in order to be able to practice in Romania. Graduates can also

choose to undertake postgraduate residency training or to pursue doctoral studies, both of which are not considered in the following accreditation procedure.

The program has been offered in the current form since 2003. According to the University, over 80% of the program graduates have expressed their contentment with the education provided in the program "Dentistry". The average tuition fee for the academic year 2014/2015 has constituted 6,936 RON or 1,561 EUR.

3.3 Expert report

On 10 November 2014, the application documents of the University were made available to the expert group for written evaluation. The expert group assessed the program "Dentistry" 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 the review were forwarded to the AHPGS by 30 January 2015.

The on-site visit was carried out on 17 and 18 April 2015, according to the previously agreed schedule. The expert group was accompanied by representatives from the AHPGS.

In the course of the on-site visit, the experts conducted interviews with the University and the Faculty management, study program directors and teaching personnel, as well as a group of students currently enrolled in the study program in question. The following additional documents were made available to the expert group during the on-site visit: evaluation results and evaluation reports.

On the first day of the on-site visit, the experts inspected the learning premises and the facilities available at the University. The University library, seminar and course rooms, the department offices, as well as several clinics and laboratories were the subject of assessment on this stage of the visit. Furthermore, the University presented its mission, strategy and history to the group of experts.

In the evening following the preliminary meetings and the guided tour of the University, the experts exchanged their first impressions of the study program and of the University in general. They held extensive talks about the applica-

tion documents and also reviewed the results of the written evaluations. As a result of the first day, a number of initial questions became clear; at the same time, though, new issues and open questions arose. At the end of the evening discussions, the expert group agreed upon the plan for the next day of the on-site visit.

The second day of the on-site visit was dedicated to the interview with students and the final discussions between the experts and the University representatives.

A. Institutional capacity

A.1. Institutional, administrative and management structures

"Vasile Goldis" Western University of Arad achieved institutional establishment by the Law no. 240 of 20 April 2002. In April 2009, the University has been 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.

At present, the University offers bachelor study programs in 19 fields and 40 specializations, of which 4 are offered in foreign languages. The number of bachelor students is currently 7,054 people. About 1,300 of them are international students.

From the viewpoint of the University management, also master study programs play an important role in the study programs offer at "Vasile Goldis" Western University. Currently, the University offers 24 master study programs in 17 fields of which one is in a foreign language. The number of master students is 500.

During the on-site visit, the expert group assessed the correspondence between 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. Furthermore, the University strives to contribute to the social and cultural life

of the local community, and to facilitate the application of quality management mechanisms and thus increase the implementation of the educational act in Romania. In addition to that, the University aims at the development of a master and doctoral training system and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities and programs.

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. The scientific research strategy of the University covers three fundamental aspects: (1) basic and applied research (2) development (generating innovative prototype products and services through research) and (3) innovation (implementation of innovative services and products in the socio-economic environment).

The expert group has been convinced of the University's commitment – as an institution – to offering 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.

In addition to the above mentioned facts, the experts gave the University's active involvement in the social structures of the region of Arad and of other nearby areas a particularly positive assessment. It was clearly emphasized that the stakeholders of the University, particularly the city and the Archdiocese of Arad, recognize that the University plays an integral and essential role in the development of the whole region. Therefore, they provide the University with all sorts of support and assistance.

Internal assessment and audit processes take place in order to monitor the achievement of the above-mentioned objectives. The University developed a code of ethics, which is communicated to all members of the institution. 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. All members of the University are aware of the strategy of the institution and they actively contribute to the achievement of its goals.

The Department of Dentistry complies with the general regulations of the whole University and, at the same time, with the regulations applied on the

level of the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry. Hence, the Faculty defines its own set of admission and examination requirements and procedures specific to the field of medical care. The experts recognize a clear and well-functioning administrative structure behind the collaborations between the department, faculty and university units.

With regard to the aspect of internationality, the experts positively highlight the measures enforced by the University in order to pursue its international orientation. Thus, 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 specific for each medical field determined by the National Quality Assurance (ARACIS) and the Romanian Ministry of National Education, which allows students to practice their profession in other EU countries.

Thus, the University ensures the compatibility of its programs with the ones of other European educational institutions, and enables students' exchange mobility within Europe. At the moment the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry hosts students from 18 countries within and outside of the European Union.

The program "Dentistry" is offered in Romanian language only.

The number of dentistry students who attended other European educational institutions with the Erasmus program, or did their internship abroad, is currently increasing. Among its Erasmus partners, the University names such institutions as the University of Calabria and the University of Bari in Italy as well as the University of Grenoble in France. Similar mobility opportunities are offered to the teaching staff of the program.

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, the University could further promote its attractiveness and unique character differentiating it from other higher education institutions.

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

The experts discern the possibilities for further development in the strategic alignment of the Faculty and of the University in general.

The experts define the current teaching and research mission of the institution as rational and well defined. Furthermore, the University pursues clear and achievable objectives, in accordance with the legal norms and the requirements of the national qualifications framework. The mission of the University contains also elements that are specific for the region and, at the same time, relevant for the whole country.

For the realization of medium- and long-term strategies, the experts suggest that the University could use the tremendous support of the stakeholders to develop its faculties into innovation centers of the region. The Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry offers, for instance, a combination of diverse study programs, including general medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, balneo-physio-kinestotherapy, medical rehabilitation, dental technology and nutrition/dietetics. They focus on a range of specializations and areas of knowledge. In this regard, the experts recognize the opportunity of reforming the Faculty into the so-called 'Health Region' center based in and around the city of Arad.

Furthermore, the experts emphasize that the University should enable more active collaboration between the programs offered in the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry. They point out at the advantages of offering some of the modules in English for all students, independent of the instruction language in their respective programs. This way, students of the program "Dentistry" would have a chance to attend courses in foreign languages together with students from other medical departments. Such a synergy could create a productive atmosphere for students to work in teams and to obtain intercultural competences.

According to the experts, the University could consider offering interdisciplinary modules for all students of the Faculty on a common basis. For instance, modules on public health or modules focused on communication and personality development competences could be attended by students of different study programs. Thus, the University could provide students with an interdisciplinary approach towards their specialization, which is considered to be a particularly important skill in the field of health care sciences. Moreover, such organization of modules would also allow the University to save material and teaching resources. Finally, the experts consider these changes as an opportunity to enlarge the number of interdisciplinary modules offered to students.

To conclude, the strategic plan of the University and the Faculty could be further developed according to a clearly described plan of medium- and long-term actions.

A.2. Material resources and infrastructure

The University has sufficient material and financial resources to offer the bachelor program "Dentistry".

This was verified by the expert group during the on-site visit. The experts had a chance to see the Clinical Hospital of the Arad County as well as the facilities within the University, such as laboratories and lecture halls. The lecture halls and seminar rooms are well equipped for providing adequate teaching and learning processes. The laboratory premises are adapted to real life work placements and meet hygienic, sanitation, and safety norms.

The University has extensive resources enabling students and the teaching personnel to acquire broad experience in academic studies and work. It is also possible to use a library of the state university and an e-learning platform. The expert group encourages the University library 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.

The present study program is offered in the Romanian language for 100 students. From the experts' point of view, the resources of the University are sufficient with regard to the number of prospective students and the required teaching staff.

Taking into account the University's endeavor to enhance its infrastructure and to improve the teaching and learning settings, the expert group regards Criterion A.2 to be fulfilled.

With regard to the aspect of financing, the experts recognize that the University, whose main source of funding is students' tuition fees, is quite restricted in terms of finding new resources. 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 University to raise the amount of tuition fees for international students.

Nevertheless it is recommended to develop a fund raising system to generate external financial support for the students. This should include local industries and private persons as well as alumni.

B. Educational effectiveness

B.1. Content of the study program

The study program "Dentistry" (Medic Dentist, D.D.) is offered by the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry. The program's mission, its general and specific learning objectives, curriculum, and its outcome competences were presented in a clear and transparent manner. The curriculum description specifies the learning results expressed in the form of cognitive, professional and affective results achieved by the end of each course.

As its main mission and educational objective, the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry strives to combine the acquisition of fundamental and clinical/practical knowledge with specific professional and transversal competences.

The study program "Dentistry" is aimed at a wide range of employment positions, for instance as a dentists, resident dentists, specialized dentists, researchers in dentistry, and research assistants in dentistry. Besides, graduates can work as teachers or medical representatives in administrative structures.

With regard to the improvement of graduates' employment opportunities, the University emphasizes the importance of such factors as compliance with European norms of international recognition, realization of student-centered education, development of cooperation programs with other European countries, enhancement of students' and teachers' mobility, and provision of continuous education.

The program "Dentistry" is aimed at training qualified dentists who will be able to integrate into the national and international labor market. The mission and objectives of the program comply with the chart of qualifications approved by the Romanian National Qualifications Register in Higher Education (RNCIS) and European norms. Graduates have to be able to obtain and record a comprehensive history of patients' oral and dental health. They must know how to carry out a physical examination of a patient and how to interpret obtained data. Furthermore, graduates must be competent to take decisions,

draw clinical judgments, and establish diagnosis for treatment and prevention of dental diseases. As fully trained dentist, graduates are expected to perform uncomplicated restorative dental treatments and surgical procedures on hard and soft tissues, as well as tooth and root extraction, using adequate pharmaceutical substances to control, for example, orofacial pain and distresses of physical and psychological nature.

With regard to interpersonal competences, the program students are required to know ethical principles related to health science aspects. Moreover, they must be acquainted with patients' and their own duties and rights, with legal and administrative procedures related to their services. In cases when there are several treatment options, students are trained to select and establish priority among them in order to meet patients' needs and requirements in the best possible way.

With regard to academic competences, students are trained to conduct research projects and write scientific papers. Besides, they are encouraged to actively use different librarian and digital information sources and communication facilities. The University emphasizes that socio-professional integration of students and graduates is one of its main goals, which is implemented through the organized meetings between students and prospective employers.

The objectives of the program are considered to be reasonable and appropriate with regard to the structure and content of the curriculum.

The credit system applied in the program "Dentistry" 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. One ECTS credit point corresponds to 30 hours of studies. The program follows the ECTS framework and the Bologna requirements in an exemplary manner. The allocation of credit hours for 1 ECTS point is done in accordance with European requirements.

The program "Dentistry" covers 360 credits, of which 180 are obtained in the preclinical cycle and the rest of 180 in the clinical training cycle. The curriculum comprises 59 courses. Bachelor thesis is not credited, except for 5 credits granted for submitting the material required for writing the thesis in the last three semesters. The program is offered on a full-time basis only (12 semesters/6 years). The total workload of the program is 9,000 hours, which is

divided into 1,960 theoretical activities, 3,684 practical hours and 3,356 hours of independent work.

The amount of practical hours at the hospital is calculated in compliance with weekly timetable. Students have to complete a 4-week summer practice every year between the 1st and the 5th years of studies. Starting with the 4th year, students conduct clinical training at the Clinical Hospital of the Arad County. Clinical practice is conducted in such subjects as odontal therapy, endodontics, prosthodontics, oclusiology, orthodontics, pe-dodontics, periodontics, oral rehabilitation, implantology, oral health, and oral pathology. In the course of clinical trainings, students are supervised by an instructor from the University and the medical staff of the Hospital.

The type of examination and assessment for each course is based on the expected competences. For the evaluation of students' performance in the exams, the University applies a 10-point grading system, 1-3 being the lowest grade and 10 being the highest grade. The minimum pass grade is 5. The program "Dentistry" is taught only in Romanian.

Graduation examination consists of two parts: a written task and the presentation of the bachelor thesis. Students are given a cumulative grade based on their performance in both parts. Given the fact that the writing and the oral defense of the bachelor thesis constitutes an important part of students' final grade, the experts recommend to the University to award ECTS credit points for the final paper. According to structural guidelines for bachelor and master study programs applied in Germany², the student workload for writing a bachelor's thesis may be at least 6 ECTS CP and it may not exceed 12 ECTS CP.

With regard to the study plan of the program, the experts encourage the University to review and redesign the program curriculum with aim of making it more patient-centered. They specify that the program content should continuously evolve from general and basic courses and topics towards more complicated and specific ones. At the moment, the experts recognize certain inconsequent elements within the structure of the program.

Considering clinical training, the experts criticize the fact that the program students have very restricted opportunities to perform dental treatments on

² *Ländergemeinsame Strukturvorgaben für die Akkreditierung von Bachelor und Masterstudiengängen* (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 10.10.2003i.F.vom 04.02.2010)

patients due to the conditions of their insurance. It must be emphasized that clinical practice is an indispensable part of the program because it allows students to acquire skills and competences that are essential in their profession. Therefore, following the accreditation procedure, the University is planning to issue a resolution allowing treatment of patients by the program students under the supervision of dentists from the University. The experts support this decision and, at the same time they underline that the University should develop a more clear structure and the general institutional policy enabling students to perform clinical training. Furthermore it is international standard to train the clinical procedures of operative dentistry, prosthodontics and periodontology with dummies in phantom courses. The experts are missing the equipment for such dummy courses.

The study program is aimed primarily at the needs and the labor market of the Arad region and the surrounding counties. The regional demands are integrated into the curriculum content.

The admission procedures in the program are determined by the *Regulations for admission to bachelor, master and doctoral studies* applied on the University level and also by the *Methodology for the contest of admission to the bachelor study cycle* applied on the level of the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry. Based on these documents, the experts confirm that the University applies a transparent policy, which is based exclusively on the applicant's academic competences. The Admission requirements for the program "Dentistry" include a high school diploma or equivalent with the minimum average grade not lower than 5, a language competence certificate in Romanian for foreign students as well as an entrance test consisting of 60 multiple-choice and descriptive questions on topics from the recommended bibliography.

From the expert's point of view, the admission procedures of the program comply with the requirements of the University and Faculty as well as with the national standards.

Based on the described conclusions, the expert group considers Criterion B.1 to be fulfilled.

B.2. Learning results

From the expert's point of view, the study program can be successfully classified within the Romanian higher education system. The final qualification gained by its graduates responds to the demands of the national 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. For instance, courses such as "Oro-Dental Diagnostic and Ergonomics" and "Technique of Confection of the Dental Prosthesis" are focused on disciplinary aspects and abilities, where such a course as "Behavior Sciences" serves to impart interdisciplinary competences. Essential academic abilities and skills are taught in the last year of studies through courses like "Methodology of Medical Scientific Research" and "Preparation of the Diploma Paper".

The practical activities and clinical trainings, which have been described under the Criteria B.1, enable students to adapt to real life circumstances, to directly apply their theoretical knowledge and to gain experience in dealing with patients' oral and dental problems.

Such courses as "Physical Education" and "Behavioral Sciences" serve to cultivate students' abilities of social commitment and also to encourage their personal development.

As it has already been mentioned earlier, the experts agree that the University should introduce some improvements into the course structure of the program, and thus, solidify its educational concept in terms of content coherence.

The distribution of direct contact, indirect contact and individual study hours in the program "Dentistry" is well balanced. Within the modules, adequate

forms of teaching (lectures, practical sessions, seminars, practical work, tutorials and consultations) are employed.

In terms of further development opportunities, the experts recommend the program, as it was mentioned earlier, to offer a larger number of interdisciplinary modules/courses that can be attended by students from different programs. It would allow students of various specializations to learn from each other and, at the same time, provide the University with cost-saving options since several modules/courses will be combined into one.

Furthermore, the University could also consider the possibility of awarding ECTS credit points for extra-curricular and voluntary activities. Such a reward could effectively motivate students to participate in various projects, conferences, seminars and scientific experiences. Hence, they will be able to broaden their academic perspectives, learn about the latest developments in respective fields of health care, and meet other students and scholars with similar interests.

Along the same lines, the experts encourage the University to introduce a greater number of facultative courses/modules that could, on the one hand, provide students with more profound knowledge in degree-specific topics and competences, and on the other hand, to offer an interdisciplinary perspective to the chosen specialization. This, meanwhile, could inspire students with new and original ideas for writing their thesis about.

With regard to both voluntary activities and facultative courses/modules, the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry as well as the University in general might contemplate upon the development of a general framework of regulations and conditions according to which students' performance will be recognized and credited.

The discussions with a group of students revealed an outstanding level of satisfaction with the University on their part. Among other aspects, they gave a particularly high estimate to the intensive counselling they receive in the program and also to the approachability of the teaching staff. These advantages in academic guidance stem from the open atmosphere and communication ethics within the Faculty, as well as due to a well-balanced student-teacher ratio.

Regarding student support measures, members of the teaching staff have regular office hours when they can provide academic guidance to individual students. Moreover, the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry has 3 coordinators responsible for the respective departments; their responsibilities include support of outgoing Erasmus students, coordination of studies for incoming exchange students and assistance of students applying for training scholarships.

The program achieves its learning outcomes also thank to the use of numerous equipment and modern technologies, ranging from blackboard/whiteboard to flipchart and video projectors.

Among the reasons for having chosen the study program offered by “Vasile Goldiș” University, which were mentioned by the current students during the on-site visit discussion, the experts underlines a favorable correspondence between the “financially affordable” study programs and the high quality of teaching standards.

The University encourages its alumni to pursue postgraduate studies at the institution. It also supports their participation in international conferences and workshops, as well as publications in national and international journals.

B.3. Scientific research activity

During 2007 and 2014, the University has organized five international conferences and five international summer schools. It has obtained an international patent and has presented 24 scientific papers presented at international and national conferences.

From the expert’s point of view, the University develops and implements short-, mid- and long-term research programs, which include collaborations with international higher education institutions and participation in scientific conferences and workshops. The expert group was able to assert that there were sufficient financial and material resources for promoting research activity.

It should be emphasized that the University has established an Institute for Life Sciences. It is accredited by the Academy of Medical Sciences as 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 project on a high scientific level.

During the discussions of the on-site visit, the teaching personnel of the program revealed a high potential for producing qualitative research and academic work. The research activity is materially supported from the University resources which facilitate the release of conference papers and publications.

On the faculty level, students can take part in the activities of science clubs managed by staff members where topics are chosen by consulting students.

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

In terms of further development opportunities, the experts recommend the University to promote research among students and the teaching staff, and also issue a clear research development plan complying with the general strategy of the University for the coming years.

Presently there are only a few dental students involved actively in research project. The experts encourage the University to develop strategies to involve students in research.

B.4. Financial activity

The University holds and receives sufficient revenue for running the study program as well as the related activities. The expert group could see the results of the financial activity at the University. The experts determine the annual tuition fees for the program as appropriate given the non-profit status of the University.

Criterion B.4 is therefore regarded as fulfilled.

Nevertheless, as it has been mentioned under Criterion A.1, the experts recommend to the University to increase the amount of tuition fees for international students in order to be able to maintain a solid financial basis of the institution.

Furthermore, the experts suggest integration of the University's strategic considerations into one consistent business plan, where the financing options should be clarified in a transparent manner.

Although the University offers scholarships for Erasmus exchange programs, there are no such financial rewards or grants for bachelor students during their studies within Romania. From the experts' point of view, the University could,

for example, think about collaborations with regional companies for providing scholarships to Romanian students who cannot afford studies at a higher education institution.

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: Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation (CQAE), Quality Assurance Committees from faculties, Vice-rector for Bachelor and Master Programs, Quality Assurance and Student Affairs, and Quality Assurance Department (QAD). The members of the Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation and of the Quality Assurance Department are approved by the University Senate. The function of the QAD is to monitor the entire teaching activity of the program as well as the conduct of examination sessions. 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 of the quality of education and research". After approval by the University Senate, the report is published on the official website of the University at the end of each academic year.

During the visit and the discussions with the responsible people, it became obvious that the University's quality assurance system involves both teachers and students in the assessment of the teaching process, continuous evaluation of the courses, and monitoring and mentoring of students within the Faculty.

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, all 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 fulfill course evaluations and provide feedback to the teaching performance. The results are processed by the Quality Assurance Committee, who then integrates the final recommendation into its report.

The inspection of the facilities and premises designated for quality assurance was also part of the on-site visit.

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 successfully fulfilled.

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

The University implements procedures of periodical revision and evaluation of the study program "Dentistry" by the stakeholders involved. Hence, the teaching staff is required to conduct self-evaluations and peer assessments annually, whereas students evaluate teaching 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 University maintains communication with graduate students through the Alumni Association, whose function, among other, is to distribute questionnaires to graduates and, thus, to contribute to the correlation between the objectives of the study program and the needs of the labor market. The professional degree awarded to students at the end of studies corresponds to the set of competences and practical skills taught in the program.

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 program courses, 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

The evaluation and examination of students' performance is implemented according to the University's *Regulation on the Examination and Grading of Bachelor/Master Students*. During the discussions with the University management and teaching personnel, various student examination methods were explained.

Each coordinator is responsible for structuring the examination system of their courses. Examinations take place throughout the semester in the forms of ongoing assessment, which assures the acquisition of covered topics during the semester in colloquiums and seminars (ongoing assessments comprise 20% of the course requirements) and practical assessment, which is compulsory for each course that entails practical activities, laboratory classes or clinical traineeships (practical assessment comprises 30% of course requirements). Both forms of examination are conducted in the presence of at least two teachers: the course coordinator and the training coordinator.

The third examination is conducted in the form of summative-cumulative assessments, which are computer-based multiple-choice tests (50% of course requirements).

Students are admitted to the final examination when their course attendance comprises at least 70% and their laboratory and clinical activity reaches 100% of attendance. Furthermore, they must have passed the ongoing theoretical and practical assessments.

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, Physical Education, and Medical Terminology) with lower individual workload one week before the examination session.

The content of examinations remains at the discretion of the course instructors. Student examinations are performed in an impartial and transparent manner. 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.

As it has already been mentioned under Criterion B.1, the experts recommend to the University to award credit points for writing the final paper because it constitutes 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 and the credit register of the study program. In addition to that, recognition of the final paper in terms of awarded credits is a standard practice on the international level.

C.4. Periodical evaluation procedures of teaching staff quality

In the academic year 2014/2015, the teaching staff of the program "Dentistry" comprised in total 77 members: 12 (16%) professors and associate professors, 14 (18%) lecturers and 51 (66%) assistant professors.

Overall, the teaching and academic staff of Arad University shows a high level of commitment and potential for the execution as well as 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.

Teachers' performance is evaluated at the University of Arad 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 *Contest Methodology for Employment on Academic Positions* as well as by the Romanian legal requirements. 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 contest procedure. These procedures are transparent and available for potential candidates from the academic and work field. By means of such a transparent contest regulations,

the University seeks to strengthen its competitiveness as well as its national and international visibility.

Based on the written documentation and the observations during the on-site visit, the experts concluded that the professional and academic qualifications, as well as the amount of the teaching staff, are appropriate and sufficient for successful implementation of the program submitted for accreditation. The student-teacher ratio is to 5 to 1, which satisfies students' demand for academic support and guidance.

Based on these facts, the expert group considers Criterion C.4 to be fulfilled.

Regarding the question of continuous education opportunities for the teaching staff, Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad became the first private university in Romania to be attested as an institution implementing doctoral degree studies starting with the year 2005. In 2007, the University obtained the right to offer postgraduate specialty medical training in residency and also training in the second residency.

Although the program is currently offered only in the Romanian language, the experts emphasize that the University should ensure whether the teaching staff has the adequate level of competences in foreign languages, especially in English. This recommendation is based on the assumption that, in the coming years, it might be possible to offer new interdisciplinary courses/modules together with other study programs of the Faculty – or similar to “Studium generale” – with other programs of the University.

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 on 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 3 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 audit.

According to the University's Contest Methodology for Employment on Academic Positions at "Vasile Goldiș" Western University of Arad, candidates for assistant teacher positions are required to hold a doctoral degree. The experts suggest that the University might consider the doctoral degree as a non-obligatory condition. This will allow the University to increase its chances to find sufficient additional personnel and, at the same time, to facilitate the academic advancement of students who are either in the process of obtaining a doctoral degree or who are only starting their doctoral studies. Such students could receive a chance to enhance their didactic skills already during their doctoral studies.

From the experts' point of view, although the University has already achieved considerable progress in terms of teacher exchange opportunities, there is still some room for improvement. Hereby, the experts particularly underline the advancement of the internationalization strategy of the University by means of teaching experience exchange with other higher education institutions abroad.

C.5. Learning resources accessibility

During the on-site visit, the expert group had an opportunity to see the condition of study premises as well as learning resources. Overall, it was concluded that the University offers appropriate facilities in sufficient number and good quality for the execution of the study program "Dentistry".

The University campuses are located in a convenient proximity to the Arad County Clinical Emergency Hospital where students conduct their clinical training. The campus Vasile Goldiș contains a Conference room with the capacity of 95 seats and is equipped with a video system. There are 13 course and seminar rooms, 40 laboratories and 5 computer laboratories that serve the objectives of the program "Dentistry".

Laboratories, seminar and class rooms used for the education and practical training of program students are all provided with modern digital and technical

equipment. Laboratories are designed according to the specific nature and needs of courses taught and skills trained. Students of the program "Dentistry" have access to three libraries: the Central Library, the Medical Library that are available from 9:00 till 20:00, and the European Library for Biomedical Sciences that is available from 9:00 till 17:00. All libraries have longer opening hours during examination sessions.

The Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry, to which the program belongs, provides its students with 28, 755 volumes of scientific literature, 1,917 titles, and 55 periodicals. The library contains ample print and internet resources for academic research. Students can order books or find necessary scientific publications in the online library of the University. It is also worthwhile to mention the considerable number of high quality computer stations available for all students.

The material resources and the library funds are sufficient to provide students with an optimal learning environment. Additional facilities, such as Italian, French and German cultural centers, sport complex, a botanical garden and others are also available for students' personal development. The University encourages students' learning processes by offering resources and opportunities for extra-curricular activities.

Considering these facts, the expert group regards Criterion C.5 as fulfilled.

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

The expert group also addressed the question of access-friendly facilities for students with disabilities. The University demonstrated that nearly all classes are constructed and equipped in a way that allows students with physical restrictions to attend the courses without impediments. For example, seminars and courses are held on the ground floor of the building and special assistance is provided.

In this regard, the experts draw the University's attention to the possibility of developing a special approach or concept for representing the interests of students with disabilities in various institutional proceedings and decisions. Such a concept should establish the official status of the previously agreed measures and actions. The same document should determine the responsibilities of the people or administrative units representing disabled students and

staff members. By doing so, the University could acquire a prominent position with regard to the improvement of study conditions adapted to the needs of disabled people and, thus, become attractive for a larger group of applicants.

For further development of the program "Dentistry", the experts recommend increasing the number of model heads for students to practice on them. This recommendation is based on the fact that students' clinical training is quite restricted at the moment due to insurance conditions.

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

The University has designed and currently employs 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 peer and student reviews taking place on a regular basis, as well as 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, and strategies for the necessary improvement are designed. A corresponding electronic system and database are being implemented.

The expert group considers Criterion C.6 as fulfilled.

In terms of continuous development opportunities, the experts suggest to expand University's information management system so that it will be possible to save the large amount of data and the information collected in the course of quality assurance procedures, and then to apply this information in order to take strategic decisions on the institutional level. Thereby, the information management system of the University should facilitate the realization of the institutional strategy in general.

C.7. Transparency of public interest information concerning study programs and, if the case, the granted certificates, diplomas and qualifications

The faculty provides accurate and updated information on qualifications, study programs, diplomas, teaching and research staff, student facilities and any other aspects in a transparent manner.

The results of quality assurance activities are summarized in a report, which is annually published on the website of the University.

The University promotes its study program through the University's webpage, local printed media, and by running open days and workshops in high-schools and other institutions. The information provided is clearly formulated, transparent and accurate.

Criterion C.7 is, thus, considered by the expert group to be fulfilled.

Nevertheless, the experts recommend to the University to provide more details about the study program and its requirements online, and particularly in the English version of the University website.

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 assert the validity of the information provided in the application documentation, and its correspondence with the legal framework, as stated in the "Methodology".

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 "Vasile Goldiș" Western University, see also Criteria A.1, A.2 and C.1.

3.4 Summary of the evaluation

In the view of the expert group, the program "Dentistry" (Medic Dentist) successfully complies with Romanian standards and regulations, as specified in the "Methodology", as well as in the "Law of National Education". The study program complies with the Romanian standards, criteria and performance indicators, as well as with all legal normative requirements.

In general terms, the experts give a particularly positive evaluation to the University's active involvement in the social structures of the region of Arad and of other nearby areas. It has been clearly emphasized that the stakeholders of the University, particularly the city and the Archdiocese of Arad, recognize the University's integral and essential role in the development of the whole region and therefore, provide it with the necessary support.

The excellently comprised documentation and the favorable results of the on-site visit enable the expert group to recommend the accreditation of the study "Dentistry", offered at the "Vasile Goldiș" Western University of Arad, by the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS.

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

At the same time, the experts 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 Aspects

- For the realization of medium- and long-term strategies, the University could use the tremendous support of the stakeholders to develop its faculties into innovation centers of the region. In this regard, the experts recognize the opportunity of reforming the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry into the so-called 'Health Region' center based in and around the city of Arad (section A.1).
- The strategic plan of the University and the Faculty should be further developed according to a clearly described plan of medium- and long-term actions (section A.1).
- With regard to the aspect of financing, it is recommended to raise the amount of tuition fees for international students, in order to maintain a solid financial basis of the institution (section A.2 and B.4).

- The integration of the University's strategic considerations into one consistent business plan, where the financing options should be clarified in a transparent manner, is suggested (B.4).
- The University should present its internationalization measures in a more accessible 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 should further pursue its internationalization strategy by means of teaching experience exchange with other higher education institutions abroad (C.4).
- It is recommended to develop a fundraising system to generate external financial support for the students. This could include local industries and private persons as well as alumni (A.2).

B) Curriculum

- The University should enable more active collaboration between the programs offered within the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry. Such a synergy could create a productive atmosphere for students to work in teams and to obtain intercultural competences (section A.1).
- Given the fact that the writing and the oral defense of the bachelor thesis constitutes an important part of the final grade, the University should award ECTS credit points for the final paper. It requires a considerable amount of effort and time investment from students and, therefore, should be reflected in the workload and the credit register of the study program (B.1 and C.3)
- With regard to both voluntary activities and facultative courses/modules, the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry and the University might consider the development of a general framework of regulations and conditions according to which students' performance can be recognized and credited. (B.2)
- The University should review and redesign the program curriculum with aim of making it more patient-centered. The program content should con-

tinuously evolve from general and basic courses and topics towards more complicated and specific ones (B.1).

- The University might consider the review of the program's current curriculum with the aim of (B.2):
 - a) offering a greater number of facultative courses/modules that could, on the one hand, provide students with more profound knowledge of degree-specific topics and competences, and on the other hand, to offer an interdisciplinary perspective on the chosen specialization.
 - b) awarding ECTS credit points for extra-curricular and voluntary activities, which could effectively motivate students to broaden their academic perspectives, to learn about the latest developments in respective fields of health care, and to meet other students and scholars with similar interests.
- The University should promote research among students and the teaching staff, and also issue a clear research development plan complying with the general strategy of the University for the coming years (B.3).
- The University should develop a more clear structure and the general institutional policy enabling students to perform clinical training notwithstanding the insurance conditions (B.1).

C) Facilities and Teaching staff

- The University should provide facilities for dummies and introducing phantom courses for dental students (C.5).
- The University should consider the possibility of employing on assistant positions without the mandatory requirement of a doctoral degree (C.4).
- The University should ensure that the teaching staff has the adequate level of competences in foreign languages, especially in English. This recommendation is based on the assumption that, in the coming years, it might be possible to offer new interdisciplinary courses/modules together with other study programs of the Faculty – or similar to “Studium generale” – with other programs of the University (C.4).
- The University library 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 (A.2).

D) Quality Assurance

- The University should consider developing a special approach for representing the interests of students with disabilities in various institutional proceedings and decisions (C.5).
- The University should expand its information management system so that it will be possible to save the large amount of data and the information collected in the course of quality assurance procedures, and then to apply this information in order to take strategic decisions on the institutional level (C.6).
- The experts recommend to the University to provide more details about the study program and its requirements online, and particularly in the English version of the University website (C.7).

4 Decision on the recommendation for accreditation

Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad, Romania, Bachelor Study Program "Dentistry"

The decision is based on the "Law of National Education" no.1 from 2011 of Romania and the "Methodology for external evaluation, the standards, reference standards and the list with the performance indicators of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher education", as approved by the Government Decision no.1418 from 2006.

The decision of the Accreditation Commission is based on the University's Application documents, the Expert Report, which covers the expert reviews and the results of the on-site visit, as well as the University's response opinion send by the University at the 5 May 2015.

The on-site visit took place on the 17 and 18 March 2015 at the Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad, Romania.

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS has discussed the procedural documents and the vote of the expert group as well as the University's response opinion.

In the response opinion, several factual corrections have been made.

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS reached the following decision:

The Bachelor program "Dentistry" is recommended to the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport for accreditation. The program is to be completed with the academic degree "Medic Dentist" (D.D.). The program is offered in the full-time form in the Romanian language. It covers 360 credit points and has a foreseen duration of six academic years (twelve semesters). 25 workload hours are equal to 1 CP.

There are 100 places available for enrollment per annum. The initial beginning of the study program is foreseen for the winter semester 2003/2004.

The Accreditation Commission considers that the Romanian criteria, standards and performance indicators, as well as the normative requirements, as specified in the abovementioned legal documents, are fulfilled. The Accreditation Commission recommends the awarding of the accreditation for duration of five years. The recommendation proceeds with no further conditions.

The recommendations formulated by the experts in the expert report are to be considered.