

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 Pharmaceutical Sciences,  
for the Recommendation for Accreditation of the Study Program  
“Pharmacy”(Pharmacist)**

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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 “Pharmacy” (hereinafter, the Self-Evaluation Report) 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 22 October 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 21 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 “Pharmacy”. According to the University, the program “Pharmacy” was authorized beginning with the academic year 2005/2006 (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 “Pharmacy”:

<b>Annex</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>1</b>	Course description
<b>2</b>	Specific standards for pharmaceutical field determined by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS)
<b>3</b>	Data sheet of the study program “Pharmacy”
<b>4</b>	Professional competences of the program according to the Romanian National Qualifications Register in Higher Education (RNCIS)
<b>5</b>	Council Directive of 1985
<b>6</b>	General description of the program “Pharmacy”
<b>7 (1)</b>	Study plan of the program “Pharmacy”
<b>7 (2)</b>	Program curriculum for the years 2013-2-2018 and 2014-2019
<b>8</b>	Structure of the academic year 2013-2014

9	CV of the teaching staff
10	Situation of the teaching staff employment in the 2013/2014 academic year
11	The list of Pharmacist instructors
12	Bachelor and master programs offered at other faculties
13	Academic and social infrastructure of the University
14	Information about the "Tudor Arghezi" University Library
15	List of books and educational material written by the teaching staff of the Department of Pharmacy in the period 2008-2014
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17	Scientific meetings calendar in 2011
18	Data on research activities at the University
19	Research themes of the didactic teachers for the period 2008-2014
20	The themes of the scientific groups for the period 2008-2014
21	Labor market data
22	Data on the level of students' satisfaction with studied in the program

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
<b>K</b>	An extract from the University charter
<b>L</b>	Quality manual of the University
<b>M</b>	Regulation concerning the conduct of the examinations in the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry
<b>N</b>	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 Pharmaceutical Sciences
Title of the study program	"Pharmacy"
Degree awarded	Pharmacist
Form of studies	Full-time
Language of instruction	Romanian
Period of education	5 years (10 semesters)
Credit Points (CP) according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)	300 120 (Cycle I) + 180 (Cycle II)
Hours/CP	25 hours = 1 CP
Workload	Total: 7,500 hours Contact hours: 3,806 hours Individual work: 2,914 hours Practice: 780 hours
Beginning of the study program	2005

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 for admission	100
Number of enrolled students in 2013	150
Number of graduates In 2013	176
Particular enrollment Conditions	- high school diploma or equivalent with the minimum average grade not lower than 5 - entrance multiple-choice test - language competence certificate in Romanian language for foreign students
Tuition fees	1,598 EUR (7,140 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 2005/2006 as the time of authorization of the program "Pharmacy" (AOQ, 2). The didactic process of the study program is structured according to the requirements of the Bologna system in two cycles:

Cycle I – the fundamental cycle – encompasses the initial two years (years 1-2, or semesters 1-4) and requires acquisition of 120 ECTS credits in order to pass to the next cycle. This cycle contains predominantly obligatory and fundamental specialty subjects (Annex 6). As explained in the Self-Evaluation Report, section 1.1.5, and completion of the cycle I does not endow students with any professional qualifications.

Cycle II – the specialized cycle – encompasses the following three years (years 3-5, or semesters 5-10) and requires acquisition of 180 ECTS credits in order to complete the studies at the program "Pharmacy". This cycle comprises obligatory subjects of specialty and also complementary subjects. 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 three parts: a written test, two practical tests (the note is the mean of the two practical tests) and the presentation and defense of a bachelor thesis (see 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 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, pages 6-7). Hence, at the program "Pharmacy" students are only awarded credits for collecting and presenting the necessary material for writing the thesis, whereas the bachelor thesis itself is not credited additionally to the total of 300 CP.

According to the national law, the first and the second cycles constitute together the complete graduate level of pharmaceutical studies. The program comprises in total 5 years, or 10 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 120 CP in order 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. After they complete both cycles and pass the final bachelor examination, graduates receive the professional title of Pharmacist. The diploma awarded to students is issued by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Scientific Research.

In order to start working as pharmacists in Romania, graduates of the program must obtain registration in the national professional association of the College of Pharmacists (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.4.1). It is emphasized that only membership at the College of Pharmacists confers the right to practice as a Pharmacist in Romania. Besides, students can directly pursue Cycle III, meaning they can either do postgraduate residency training in Clinical Pharmacy or Pharmaceutical Laboratory, or doctoral studies (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.5.5).

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 objective of the "Pharmacy" program is to train specialists, who understand how the structure of substances used to manufacture drugs can influence the chemical or metabolic stability of a human body, to understand and know the mechanism of action of medicinal substances, their therapeutic and toxic effects, so that their recommendation and use may be done rationally. Graduates of the program are expected to know the methods for preparing drugs taking into account their physiochemical, biological and microbiological characteristics. Besides, students are taught to recognize and work with phototherapeutic products, cosmetics, medical devices, dietary supplements, and develop skills for their recommendation.

Furthermore, students learn during their studies to evaluate and systematize scientific data concerning drugs, in order to provide accurate and adequate information. The program envisages also introduction of students into legal requirements and aspects that must be complied with in order to exercise the profession of pharmacists and to perform activities related to the field of pharmaceutical sciences (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.3.2).

In Romania, the structure of qualifications, the national (Law no 95/2006, Directive CEE 85/432) and international recognition (Directive CEE 85/433, Directive 2005/36/CE), as well as compatibility of the study program, are also

found in the Romanian National Framework of Higher Education Qualifications (RNCIS). The detailed description of each skill is specified in the RNCIS matrix (Annex 4) and the description of the study program through professional and transversal competences (Annex 6).

The University provides the following list of professional competences to be acquired by graduates of the program (Annex 6):

- Designing formulating, preparing and conditioning drugs, dietary supplements, cosmetics and other health products;
- Storage, preservation and distribution of drugs, dietary supplements, cosmetics and other health products;
- Releasing drugs, dietary supplements, cosmetics, and other products for health and pharmaceutical assistance;
- Analysis and control of substances, drugs, dietary supplements, cosmetics and other health products; analysis in biochemistry, toxicology, food, and environmental hygiene laboratories;
- Management, marketing and administration in the sphere of health;
- Consultancy and expertise in drugs, dietary supplements, cosmetics and other health products.

Transversal competences of the program include the ability to identify objectives, available resources, work stages, time-frame required for the competition and associated risks, as well as professional ethics and norms and security rules, while performing a specific task or project. Moreover, students learn to identify roles and responsibilities in a team; they have to be able to apply effective working methods and perform role-specific tasks in a multidisciplinary team. Modernization of research infrastructure is stated as one of the main priorities of the University (the Self-Evaluation Report, 1.3.3).

As stated the Self-Evaluation Report, section 1.4.1, graduated of the program "Pharmacy" can work as pharmacists, resident pharmacists, specialized pharmacists, and heads of the pharmacy department laboratory, as well as scientific researcher in bacteriology, micro biochemistry, and pharmacology. Besides, graduates of the program can be employed in management of medico-pharmaceutical units as a manager or chief pharmacist. Furthermore, they can also pursue a career in teaching or research, work as medical representatives or find employment in administrative structures of the Ministry of Health, the National Agency for Drugs and Medical Devices, the National Health Insurance

Agency, the Departments of Public Health, the Institute of Public Health, etc. The University emphasizes, graduates are required to join the professional association of the College of Pharmacists of Romania in order to obtain the right of free practice.

Regarding the situation on the labor market, the University refers to the statistic data of World Health Organization (WHO), which shows that the number of pharmacists in Romania is 67.57% per 100,000 inhabitants. This number is below the European average of 76.5% for about 12% (Annex 21). The University refers also to the report of the Presidential Commission stating that over 50% of the Romanian population lives in rural areas, although only 30% of the total number of pharmacist registered in Romania work in these areas.

According to the information published by the National Institute of Statistics in 2013, the number of pharmacists per 100,000 inhabitants in Arad County and the Macro-region 4, to which Arad County pertains, is notably below the national average for 14.3% and 8, 24%, respectively (for details, see the Self-Evaluation Report, 1.4.2, page 29). The University of Arad seeks to eliminate the current shortage of pharmacists by implementing the study program "Pharmacy" and by encouraging its graduates to become members of the Romanian College of Pharmacists.

### **2.2.3 Modularization and exam system**

The program "Pharmacy" is structured in 2 cycles: the initial two years constitute the first cycle of basic training and fundamental subjects, whereas the other three years constitute the second cycle of specialized training and specific subjects. The regular study period of the program "Pharmacy" is defined to be 5 years, or 10 semesters. According to the University, the program comprises 44 subjects, out of which 39 are obligatory and 5 (out of 22 offered) are optional (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.1).

Optional subjects are designed to complement compulsory or specialized subjects, this means that optional subjects have to either repeat the content of core subjects in detail, or exceed the basic level of knowledge required for basic training in pharmacy (Annex 2, page 3). Each academic year, students have to choose 1 optional subject, which can be assigned a maximum of 2 ECTS credits. Besides, students have the opportunity to attend facultative

subjects, which can be specific or non-specific to the field of pharmacy and which are not assigned any credits.

Regarding the amount of ECTS CP, each student has to obtain the minimum of 30 CP per semester and 60 CP per year. The program is assigned 300 CP in total, of which 290 (96.67%) are acquired for compulsory subjects and 10 (3.33%) for optional subjects (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.1.5). Annually, students acquire 2 credits for compulsory summer training with the duration of 3 weeks from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> years, and 4 weeks in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of studies. The last 10<sup>th</sup> semester of the program is dedicated to specialized training in public or hospital-based drugstores and is awarded with 28 credits. Through Erasmus Placement Program, students can undertake summer training in drugstores abroad within the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> years of study. As for the final thesis, it is not credited additionally to the 300 compulsory credits.

Detailed description of each subject, including number of credit hours, language of instruction, goals, study content, list of competences, and the methods of examination, is available in Annex 1.

The study plan of the program includes the following subjects (Annex 7(1)):

Sem.	Title	ECTS
1	Pharmaceutical Botany	7
	General and Inorganic Chemistry	6
	Pharmaceutical Physics	5
	Informatics	4
	Mathematics and Biostatistics	4
	Modern Language (for all students) or Romanian Language (obligatory for foreign students)	2
	Physical Education (sports)	1
	Medical Terminology	1
<b>Total ECTS/semester</b>		<b>30</b>
2	Pharmaceutical Botany	6
	General and Inorganic Chemistry	6
	Analytical Chemistry	5
	Pharmaceutical Physics	4

	Modern Language (for all students) or Romanian Language (obligatory for foreign students)	2
	Specialized Summer Training	2
	Pharmaceutical Propaedeutic	2
	Optional classes (choose 1): History of Pharmacy Latin Mycology	2
	Physical Education (sports)	1
<b>Total ECTS/semester</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>3</b>	Analytical Chemistry and Instrumental Analysis	6
	Organic Chemistry	6
	Anatomy and Physiology	5
	Cellular and Molecular Biology	5
	Physical and Colloidal Chemistry	5
	Modern Language (for all students) or Romanian Language (obligatory for foreign students)	2
	Physical Education (sport)	1
<b>Total ECTS/semester</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>4</b>	Analytical Chemistry and Instrumental Analysis	5
	Physical and Colloidal Chemistry	5
	Organic Chemistry	5
	Microbiology, Virology, Parasitology	4
	Physiopathology	2
	Genetics	2
	Modern Language (for all students) or Romanian Language (obligatory for foreign students)	2
	Specialized Summer Training	2
	Optional classes (choose 1): Ethics Techno-medical Products Introduction to Research	2
	Physical Education (sport)	1



<b>Total ECTS/semester</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>5</b>	Pharmacognosy	8
	Pharmaceutical Biochemistry	7
	Pharmaceutical Chemistry	7
	Medical Pathology	5
	Scientific Research Methodology	3
<b>Total ECTS/semester</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>6</b>	Pharmacognosy	6
	Pharmaceutical Biochemistry	5
	Pharmaceutical Chemistry	5
	General Pharmacology	5
	Pharmaceutical Technology	5
	Specialized Summer Training	2
	Optional classes (choose 1) Commodity Science Dietary Supplements Communication with the Patient First Aid Measures Nutrition and Dietetics	2
<b>Total ECTS/semester</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>7</b>	Therapeutic Chemistry	6
	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapy	6
	Pharmaceutical Technology	6
	Toxicology	5
	Environmental Chemistry	4
	Immunology and Hematology	3
<b>Total ECTS/semester</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>8</b>	Therapeutic Chemistry	6
	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapy	6
	Pharmaceutical Technology	5
	Toxicology	5
	Pharmaceutical Legislation and Deontology	4

	Specialized Summer Training	2	
	Optional classes (choose 1) Toxic Plants Pharmacovigilance Biological Drugs Molecular Biology of Drugs Psychopedagogy	2	
<b>Total ECTS/semester</b>		<b>30</b>	
<b>9</b>	Drug Analysis and Control	6	
	Pharmaceutical Technology	5	
	Clinical Pharmacy	4	
	Drug Industry and Pharmaceutical Biotechnologies	4	
	Pharmaceutical Marketing and Management	4	
	Phytotherapy	3	
	Biopharmacy	2	
	Dermatopharmacy	2	
<b>Total ECTS/semester</b>		<b>30</b>	
<b>10</b>	Specialized (final) Training in Public or Hospital-based Drugstores	28	
	Optional classes (choose 1) Homeopathy Medical Emergencies Marketing Policies and Strategies Veterinary medicinal products Drug Addiction and Doping Notions of Gemmotherapy	2	
	<b>Total ECTS/semester</b>		<b>30</b>
	<b>Total ECTS for the whole program</b>		<b>300</b>

Table 4: Module overview

According to the University, all subjects in the curriculum of the program “Pharmacy” are specific. There are no joint subjects taught together with other study programs (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.2). Description of all modules, including their learning outcomes, subject content description, examinations, envisaged professional competences, and transversal competences, is provided in Annex 1.

Students of the program "Pharmacy" and of the Faculty in general, are said to have access to subjects in such complementary fields as European Languages (French, English, German, Italian and Spanish also, through the International Centre of Linguistic Testing), 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 arranges 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 co-operations with other institutions and organizations, Arad County Emergency Hospital serves as a clinical training center for students of the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Dentistry. Furthermore, the University has a close collaboration with the College of Pharmacists of Romania, which gives consultations with regard to summer training in the program "Pharmacy" (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.2).

Methods of instruction and didactic concepts, applied at the program "Pharmacy", are based on active involvement of students into the process of education through practical demonstrations, thematic debates, projects, case presentations, etc. It is claimed that the teaching and learning resources of the University are freely accessible and that both course and practical activities are conducted with the help of modern methods of multimedia, such as power point presentations, educational films, tables, and explanatory schemes. Theoretical knowledge is complemented through practical activity specific to each subject. In practical classes, teachers use direct methods of demonstration and training as well as indirect methods of instruction, such as preparation of summary reports, development of a research topic, etc. It is further ascertained that all laboratories have modern equipment, which allows research and practical teaching according to ARACIS standards (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.4).

Electronic forms of instruction and learning are used in lecture theatres, course and seminar rooms, and in most of the laboratories. Teachers and students of the program have access to the computer network of the University Computer Centre, University Library, and the University Campus computer laboratories. The University is planning to increase implementation of digital courses up to 35 within the period of 2014-2016 (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.5).

There is a larger amount of study hours envisaged for practical activity than theoretical classes in the program. Practical classes of the program "Pharmacy" are conducted in subject laboratories and are designed to give students an insight to the subfields of pharmacy. Annual summer trainings (3 weeks within the 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> years and 4 weeks in the 4<sup>th</sup> year) and the specialized training (28 weeks) at the end of the program are all performed in partner drugstores, with which the University has contracts. During these training periods, students are supervised by training pharmacists, who are members of the College of Pharmacists of Romania and who has an immaculate record of professional conduct (the Self-Evaluation Record, 1.2.6).

Regarding the aspect of correlation between the practical content and the intended objectives of the study program, the University states that summer trainings are conducted based on the annual training portfolios (Annex 16). These portfolios outline objectives, responsibilities, and methods of education, methods of assessing professional competencies, topics, a list of bibliography, and a list of competences, which are evaluated by the appointed supervisor. All the aspects included into portfolios are claimed to be consistent with the content and objectives of the subjects taken during the given year of studies (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.6).

During summer trainings and the final specialized training in partner drugstores, students are supervised by tutoring pharmacists. According to the University, academic and professional qualifications of these tutors are assured by the fact that, as members of the College of Pharmacists of Romania, they are required to take Good Pharmaceutical Practice courses. These courses are, in turn, conducted by evaluators from the College of Pharmacists and also by instructors from the study program "Pharmacy". Furthermore, legislation of the University allows students and other private persons to complete

their traineeship under the guidance and control of a pharmacist who holds the right of free practice (AOQ, 6).

The University ascertains that it meets the requirements set by the national Romanian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (ARACIS, Annex 2). The compatibility of the program with programs abroad is possible through the application of the European Credit Transfer System (see the regulations on the application of the ECTS in Annex B) and implementation of Erasmus exchange programs (see the Erasmus Guide in Annex F and the regulations on recognition of study periods in other institutions in Annex E).

In the academic year 2013/2014, the level of mobility is claimed to increase among the students of the program "Pharmacy", which has happened due to the increase of international partners and the active involvement of departmental coordinators. Another important contribution to mobility was the obtainment of the Extended Erasmus Charter, which enables student to do internship abroad. Thus, in 2013/2014, there were eight students who attended programs at partner Universities: five students at the University of Calabria, two students at the University of Bari and one student at the University of Milan. Besides, five students had the chance to complete their training abroad through the Erasmus Placement Program for summer practice (AOQ, 7).

Information about exchange opportunities is made available to students through the central institutional coordinator of the Office for Community Programs and the faculty level coordinators, as well as through the university and faculty website, brochures, and the Student's League.

Regarding the connection of the study program "Pharmacy" to the scientific research opportunities, the University claims that scientific research is carried out in didactic laboratories of the department. Student Science Clubs encourage students' interest in research and broaden their scientific horizons in the field of pharmacy (see the topics of scientific clubs in the period 2008-2014 in Annex 20). The Faculty is said to organize scientific conferences where the most valuable student papers are awarded. Interdisciplinary research is conducted in the following research centers of the University: The Institute for Life Sciences and the Centre for Pharmacognostic Research. In addition, the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Dentistry organizes schools of advanced studies, summer schools, and workshops focused on theoretical and practical training of students (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.7 and Annex 17).

According to the University, teachers and researchers of the faculty can publish their work in Vasile Goldiș University Press as well as other journals and international databases. Teachers of the program “Pharmacy” are members of research teams that take part in national and European funded activities (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.7). The program teachers’ research activity is complex and stretches from topics about the development of herbal or pharmaceutical preparations to pharmaceutical marketing and management studies (Annex 15). The achieved results are then reported in various scientific events. Since 2008 (until the moment of submission of the self-evaluation report), there were 40 articles published in the database of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) and 38 articles published in the International Database (IDB) (see Annex 18).

Students are informed about examination requirements and the time of examination by the subject coordinator at the 1<sup>st</sup> course session. Subject coordinators are also responsible for the establishment of exam topics based on the objectives and professional competences envisaged in the syllabus. Examinations take place throughout the semester in the following forms (Self-Evaluation Report 1.2.3.):

- ongoing assessment (20%), which ensures acquisition of the material throughout the semester by means of constant checking, summary report, etc.
- practical assessment (30%), which is conducted in laboratory hours and is compulsory to enter the final assessment for each subject
- summative-cumulative assessment (50%), which includes a computer-based multiple-choice and a descriptive tests covering the topics taught during the semester

In order to be admitted to the 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). Besides, students are only admitted to the final examination when their course attendance comprises at least 70% and their laboratory and clinical activity reaches 100% of attendance.

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 in some complementary subjects (such as Foreign Lan-

guages, Physical Education, and Medical Terminology) one week before the 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 (Annex 8):

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 1<sup>st</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> 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 (120 CP) (AOQ, 9).

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 (Annex A, Art.26-28).

Academic feasibility of examinations is assessed through the activity of faculty representatives in Quality Officers, whose function is to analyze the results of teaching evaluations and graduate surveys. Furthermore, regulations concerning the conduct of the examinations at the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Dentistry (Annex M) help maintain examination process according to the established standards. The University claims that examination results are assessed by the representatives of the Department, the Faculty and the Senate after each session. It is also stated that the final grade is calculated taking into account a student's activity during the whole semester and his/her grades in the ongoing and practical examinations.

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. As indicated in the Regulations on Students' Professional Activity (Annex A, Art.19), within 15 days of the starts of the academic year, each student of the University receives a student card; all grades obtained by a student, including failed examinations, are registered in this card and also in the examination sheet. Grades system applied at the Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad is the following (Annex B, 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's 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). There is a credit equivalence committee within the Faculty that is responsible for decisions on credit transfer. It establishes the compatibility of curricula, course descriptions, and credit systems, as well



as the equivalent number of credits per year, in order to validate studies at another institution (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.5.4).

#### **2.2.4 Admission requirements**

The University emphasizes that the admission examination provides equal opportunities to all candidates and takes place in conditions of transparency and equality (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.1.8). Admission requirements to for the program "Pharmacy" 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 questions on topics from a recommended bibliography: 30 questions on Botany, 15 on Inorganic Chemistry and 15 on Organic Chemistry (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 exams and the academic offer is distributed through flyers and posters, as well as through the activity of the Enrolment Centre. Admission results are displayed on the notice board at the University Campus and the University website (Annex D).

The admission process 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. The admission contest is also open for foreign citizens with a permanent right of residence in Romania. As the University explains, the program "Pharmacy" is not accredited, therefore only EU citizens with linguistic competences in Romanian may be enrolled in the program (AOQ, 10). All candidates that are not Romanian citizens or have already obtained a high-school degree in foreign countries, need the approval from the National Education Ministry – an "acceptance letter" – in order to study at the University, according to the national regula-

tions in force. Studying language is Romanian, admission is in Romanian, and the students that are foreign citizens have to take Romanian courses.

According to the rules of the University, the general admission average is calculated based on the results of the entrance test. In the academic year 2013/2014, admission of students to the program "Pharmacy" was performed according to its own admission methodology. Thus, candidates were ranked depending on their test results in Biology (66.67%), Inorganic Chemistry (16.67%) and Organic Chemistry (16.67%). 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 Botany 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 "Pharmacy" (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.

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 (Annex H). The amount of tuition fees for the academic years 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 are presented in the table below (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.1.9):

Years of study	2013/2014	2014/2015
I	1,338 EUR / 5,979 RON	1,700 EUR / 7,596 RON
II	1,338 EUR / 5,979 RON	1,429 EUR / 6,385 RON
III	1,427 EUR / 6,376 RON	1,553 EUR / 6,939 RON
IV	1,560 EUR / 6,971 RON	1,610 EUR / 7,194 RON
V	1,605 EUR / 7,172 RON	1,700 EUR / 7,596 RON

Table 7: Tuition fees

## 2.3 Study conditions and quality assurance

### 2.3.1 Human resources

The teaching staff of the program "Pharmacy" comprises for the academic year 2013-2014 in total 79 members, of whom 74 (93.67%) are tenured instructors employed on a full-time basis and 5 (6.33%) are adjunct instructors employed on a part-time basis. Among the full-time personnel, there are 27 (36.48%) tenured professors and associate professors, 15 (20.27%) tenured lecturers, and 32 (43.25%) tenured university assistants. Among the part-time personnel there are 5 (100%) professors and associate professors (Self-Evaluation Report, Table 12, 2.2.1).

In one academic year, the tenured teaching staff covers no more than three teaching workloads, whereas the associate teachers cover no more than one teaching load. The average of weekly teaching (contact) time equals to 27.5 hours, including the hours of specialized training in the second half of the fifth year (Self-Evaluation Report, Table 10, 2.2.1).

As stated in the Self-Evaluation Report, for the academic year 2013-2014 the current total number of students at the program (counting all students at their 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> year of studie) is 802 and the total numbers of full-time instructors is 74. Consequently, the student/teacher ratio is approximately 10.8/1, i.e. 5 students per 1 instructor. According to the ARACIS standards, the ratio students: didactic norms is 5:1 (8,5:1 in academic year 2013-2014). Over 73% of the teaching load is performed by the tenured teachers.

As claimed in the Self-Evaluation Report, section 2.1.2, selection of the teaching staff is based on the principle of public contest and is carried out in accordance with national regulations as well as internal regulations of the University outlined in Contest Methodology for Employment on Academic Positions at Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad (Annex N). There, it is

indicated that a contest for a vacant position can be organized only if that position is supported by financial resources of the University (Art.2), that rejuvenation and the succession of associate professors shall be considered (Art.4), and that any person who meets the conditions required for entering the contest can apply for it (Art.5). It is specified that University can organize a contest for employment on an academic or research position for an indefinite period after the position has been published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part III, by the Ministry of National Education (Annex N, Art.12).

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 degree in Medical Sciences and in Biology. Within the "Pharmacy" program, there are 19 assistant professors who are at the same time doctoral students (Self-Evaluation Report 2.2.3).

The University organizes regular scientific meetings, symposiums, conferences, schools of advanced studies, and roundtables to encourage the academic activity of the teaching staff. The University claims to support academic activity of its teaching personnel by rewarding published papers, offering discount from the annual fee for one national conference and international event, and by increasing teachers' salary based on their academic performance. A list of books and educational material written by the academic staff of the Pharmacy Department is presented in Annex 15.

Further human resources in the study program "Pharmacy", and in the Faculty in general, include the chief faculty secretary and the secretary for the study program, a coordinator of the office for foreign student affairs, several laboratory technicians, an IT manager, and the members of the Counselling and Career Guidance Center. In addition, there are training coordinators who are appointed for summer trainings and the specialized internship from the list of tenured teachers and pharmacists.

### **2.3.2 Facilities**

The Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry currently has three campuses that are all situated on the territory of the University. There are 4 course and seminar rooms, 23 laboratories, 2 computer rooms (after the Self-Evaluation Report has been submitted, the University has acquired other PCs

and equipped new computer rooms), and 3 reading rooms that serve the purpose of the program "Pharmacy". Laboratory are said to have subject-specific equipment, such as spectrophotometers, gas chromatographs, HPLC, refractometers, polarimeters, potentiometers, microscopes, and other (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2.4). This enables implementation of both teaching and research in practical classes (for the list of laboratories, see the Self-Evaluation Report, 2.4.1 and also Annex J).

Laboratories are provided with over 350 computers connected to the internet and the local net. Seminar and course rooms with the capacity of 60-80 seats are also said to be equipped with multimedia systems. The University contains a conference room with 95 seats, which is supplied with video conference system and the simultaneous viewing opportunities.

There are 6,821 volumes of scientific literature, 1,095 titles, and 55 periodicals at the disposal of the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry (Annex 14). Students have access to three libraries: the Central Library (Arghezi Complex), the Medical Library, and the European Library for Biomedical Sciences with the following working hours (Self-Evaluation Report, 2.4.2):

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 computerized examination server (Self-Evaluation Report, 2.4.3). Since 2002 the University has been subscribed to springerlink.com and since 2008 to CEEOL.

For the acquisition of new material for the libraries, the Board of Directors established a financial plan. The University affirms that it has sufficient internal financial resources as well as external funding sources to ensure maintenance and development of its educational and material equipment. 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 (Self-Evaluation Report, 2.4.4). The institution seeks to attract more external funding by founding, for instance, a university polyclinic, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 "Pharmacy" is realized by involving all teachers and students into the process (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 Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation 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 quality Assurance Committee of the Faculty submits 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 teachers' 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 questionnaires. The University states that over 80% of students express their contentment with the "Pharmacy" program. Regarding the situation of graduate students, over 80% of graduates are said to find employment within two years after the completion of studies: 64% in Romania and 34% abroad (Self-Evaluation Report 1.6.4). Among three generations of "Pharmacy" graduates, over 78% of them work as pharmacists in medico-pharmaceutical units (Self-Evaluation Report 1.6.4, Figure 3). The University appears to pay a particular attention to communication with its graduates, which is realized through the activity of the Alumni Association. Such communication helps maintain correlation between the objectives of the study program and the needs of employers.

Regarding the aspect of student workload, the University asserts that at least two thirds of it should consist of practical activities (practical laboratory works, clinical internship, training in institutions of the health system) to acquire clinical skills and competences, while the remaining third is allocated for theoretical activities.

As can be seen from the statistics on enrollment applications and number of graduates, the dropout average in the program constitutes 28-30% (Self-

Evaluation Report 1.6.6, Table 9). In the academic year 2013/2014 applicants the gender ratio was 3:1 (female: male).

All information about the program "Pharmacy" is said to be available on the University website (<http://www.uvvg.ro>), Regulations on Students' Professional Activities (Annex A), brochures, and flyers. Besides, teachers and coordinators have their individual office hours, as well as telephone and e-mail addresses, for students to contact them. 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).

To the issue of equal opportunities and gender equality, 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 (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, page 14). Students' guide for the academic year 2013-2014 is available on-line on the website of the University<sup>1</sup>.

## **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. 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

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



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. Regarding 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 is research and entrepreneurial centers, training bases, as well as venues for scientific and cultural events, spread along the County of Arad (see the more detailed description of academic and social infrastructure of the University in Annex 13). 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).

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 is equal 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 “Pharmacy” (Pharmacist<sup>2</sup>) 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, President of the Craniofacial Group of the International Association for Dental Research, Member of the Senate of the Witten/Herdecke University, Germany

**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

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<sup>2</sup> according to Law 95/2006, art. 554

**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 Scientific Advisory Board of the German Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices (BfArM)

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 “Pharmacy” offered by “Vasile Goldiș” Western University of Arad, Romania, Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry, covers the total of 300 ECTS credit points (CP). It is a full-time program taught in Romanian.

Upon graduation, students receive the title of “Pharmacist”, according to Law 95/2006, art. 554. The diploma is issued by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Scientific Research. The regular duration of the program is 5 years, i.e. 10 semesters. Admission requirements include a high school diploma or equivalent, an entrance multiple-choice test and a language competence certificate in Romanian for foreign students.

The study program is structured in two cycles: the fundamental and the specialized cycle. The fundamental cycle lasts for two years and covers 120 ECTS CP. The specialized cycle lasts for three years and covers 180 ECTS CP. 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.

In order to start working as pharmacists in Romania, graduates of the program must obtain registration in the national professional association of the College of Pharmacists. It is emphasized that only membership at the College of Pharmacists confers the right to practice as a Pharmacist in Romania. Apart from training, graduates can choose to pursue their academic career in order to obtain the Doctoral degree in the given field.

The program comprises 44 subjects, out of which 39 are obligatory and 5 (out of 22 offered) are optional. The total amount of students' workload in the program is 7.500 hours; 25 workload hours are equal to 1 CP.

The program has been offered in the current form since 2005. According to the university, over 80% of the University graduates are said to start practicing their profession within two years after the completion of their studies: 64% in Romania and 34% abroad. The average tuition fee for the academic year 2014/2015 constitutes 7,140 RON or 1,598 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 "Pharmacy" 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 the 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 talks between the experts and the University representatives.

## **A. Institutional capacity**

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

"Vasile Goldiș" 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 offered at "Vasile Goldiș" 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 offer high quality education opportunities. It was asserted that the University and its study programs function within the Romanian legal framework and that the institution promotes academic integrity and freedom among its students. Besides, the University regularly monitors its own activities.

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 Pharmacy 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, the faculty and the 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.

The program "Pharmacy" is currently offered only in Romanian language. At the moment the Faculty of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry hosts students from 18 countries within and outside of the European Union.

The number of pharmaceutical 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.

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 University's mission 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 for example 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. Hence, students of the program "Pharmacy" 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, similar effects can be achieved, by 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 should 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 "Pharmacy" in Romanian language.

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 for the program "Pharmacy". The laboratory premises are adapted to real life work placements and meet hygienic, sanitation, and safety norms.

There are 4 course and seminar rooms, 23 laboratories, 2 computer rooms and 3 reading rooms that serve the purpose of the program "Pharmacy". Laboratories have subject-specific equipment, such as spectrophotometers, gas chromatographs, HPLC, refractometers, polar meters, potentiometers, microscopes, and other. This enables implementation of both teaching and research in practical classes.

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 75 students per semester. 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 considers Criterion A.2 to be generally fulfilled.

With regard to the aspect of financing, the experts recognize that the University, whose main source of funding are 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.

In addition, the experts recommend the purchase of modern equipment for pharmaceutical technology such as tableting machines, coating pans, ampoule filling machines, etc. in order to provide the students with practical experience in the industrial manufacturing of pharmaceutical formulations. This would further qualify the graduates to work in the pharmaceutical industry in Romania as well as other European countries. In this context it also appears advisable to envision a full-time tenured professor in Pharmaceutical Technology and Biopharmacy in order to properly reflect the importance of this field within the pharmaceutical sciences.

## **B. Educational effectiveness**

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

The study program "Pharmacy" (Pharmacist) 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 pursues to combine acquisition of fundamental and clinical/practical knowledge with specific professional and transversal competences.

Graduates of the study program "Pharmacy" are trained to work as pharmacists, resident pharmacists, specialized pharmacists, and heads of the pharmacy department laboratory, as well as scientific researchers in bacteriology, micro biochemistry, and pharmacology. Graduates of the program can also be employed in medico-pharmaceutical units as a manager or chief pharmacist. Furthermore, they can pursue a career in teaching or research; they can work as medical representatives or find employment in administrative structures of

the Ministry of Health, the National Agency for Drugs and Medical Devices, the National Health Insurance Agency, the Departments of Public Health, the Institute of Public Health, etc.

With regard to the improvement of graduates' employment opportunities, the University emphasizes the importance of such factors as being in compliance with European norms of international recognition, 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 "Pharmacy" is aimed to train specialists, who understand how the structure of substances used to manufacture drugs can influence the chemical or metabolic stability within the human body, to understand and know the mechanism of action of medicinal substances, their therapeutic and toxic effects, so that their recommendation for a specific treatment and use may be done rationally. Graduates of the program are expected to know the methods for preparing drugs taking into account their chemical, physicochemical, biological and microbiological characteristics. Besides, students are taught to recognize and work with phototherapeutic products, cosmetics, medical devices, dietary supplements, and develop skills for their recommendation.

With regard to interpersonal competences, students acquire ethical principles related to health science aspects. Moreover, they are 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 library and digital information sources and communication facilities. The University emphasizes that the 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.

In the process of the curriculum review, the University should include a course/module partially or fully dedicated to quality assurance principles as these have become an integral part of industrial pharmacy. From the point of the experts, physical education and languages may be less important compared to pharmaceutical major subjects.

The credit system applied in the program "Pharmacy" 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 25 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 bachelor program "Pharmacy" covers 300 credits, of which 120 are obtained in the first and 180 in the second cycle of the program. The curriculum comprises 44 subjects, out of which 39 are obligatory and 5 (out of 22 offered) are optional. Bachelor thesis is not credited, except for 2 credits granted for submitting the material required for writing the thesis in the last semester. The program is offered on a full-time basis only (10 semesters/5 years). The total workload of the program is 7,500 hours, which is divided into 3,806 contact hours, 780 practical hours and 2,914 hours of independent work.

The amount of practical training hours is calculated in compliance with the weekly timetable of students. Practical classes of the program "Pharmacy" are conducted in subject laboratories and are designed to give students an insight into the field of pharmacy. Students conduct annual summer trainings between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> years of studies. In the last semester, they do a specialized training in public or hospital-based pharmacies.

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 "Pharmacy" is taught only in the Romanian language, apart from the optional foreign language courses.

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 the 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 Germany<sup>3</sup>, the student workload for writing a bachelor's thesis may be at least 6 ECTS CP and it may not exceed 12 ECTS CP. Crediting the bachelor thesis with CPs would increase the international competitiveness of the program.

As stated above and under A.2., increasingly teaching subjects in modern pharmaceutical technology, biopharmacy and quality assurance is advisable.

The expert group evaluates the fundamental structure of the study program to be coherent and reasonable. The course content and examinations are considered to be feasible to be accomplished within the envisaged period of time.

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 "Pharmacy" 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 European standards.

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<sup>3</sup> *Ländergemeinsame Strukturvorgaben für die Akkreditierung von Bachelor und Masterstudiengängen* (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 10.10.2003i.F.vom 04.02.2010)



Admission of a fixed limited number of students is important for planning the practical courses and ensuring a highly qualified education in the practical laboratory courses.

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 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 "Drug Industry and Pharmaceutical Biotechnologies" and "Biopharmacy" are focused on disciplinary aspects and abilities, where such a course as "Marketing Policies and Strategies" serves to impart interdisciplinary competences. Essential academic abilities and skills are taught in the last year of studies through courses like "Introduction to Research" and "Scientific Research Methodology".

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 pharmaceutical questions.

Such courses as "Communication with the Patient" or "First Aid Measures" serve to cultivate students' abilities of social commitment and also to encourage their personal development.

The educational concept of the study program is coherent and well-designed. The distribution of direct contact, indirect contact and individual study hours 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 experience. 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 of degree-specific topics and competences, and on the other hand, to offer an interdisciplinary perspective on the chosen specialization. This, meanwhile, could inspire students with new and original ideas for their thesis.

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 the students revealed an outstanding level of satisfaction with the University on their part. Among other aspects, they gave 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 thanks to the use of numerous equipment and modern technologies, ranging from blackboard/whiteboard to flipchart and video projectors.

The final qualification gained by students corresponds to the local, regional and national demands. As stated above, further strengthening the education and training in modern pharmaceutical technology, biopharmacy, pharmaceutical analysis and quality assurance will also meet the requirements of the production in pharmaceutical industry and increase the international competitiveness of the graduates.

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 underline 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 potential, the experts recommend to the University to promote research among students and the teaching staff, and also to issue a clear research development plan complying with the general strategy of the University for the coming years. This also includes an increase of pharmacy-specific post-graduate and Ph.D. programs in the pharmaceutical major subjects such as pharmaceutical chemistry, pharmaceutical analysis and pharmaceutical technology in addition to the currently established programs in pharmaceutical biology.

#### **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 interna-

tional 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 "Pharmacy" 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 former students through the Alumni Association, whose function, among other, is to distribute question-

naires 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 into account the above described facts, the expert group regards Criterion C.3 as fulfilled.

As it has already been mentioned under Criterion B.1, the experts recommend to the University to award credit points for research and 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**

The teaching staff of the program "Pharmacy" comprised for the academic year 2013/2014 the total of 79 members, including 74 (93.67%) tenured instructors employed on a full-time basis and 5 (6.33%) adjunct instructors employed on a part-time basis. Among the full-time personnel, there were 27 (36.48%) tenured professors and associate professors, 15 (20.27%) tenured lecturers, and 32 (43.25%) tenured university assistants. Among the part-time personnel there were 5 (100%) professors and associate 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.

Teacher performance evaluation is conducted 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 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.

Considering these facts, the expert group regards Criterion C.4 as 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.

Given the fact that the program is offered in Romanian, English and French, the experts emphasize that the University has to ensure whether the teaching staff has the necessary level of competences in respective languages.

The teaching staff is periodically evaluated by means of both peer and student reviews. Student evaluations are performed at the end of each semester. They are anonymous, which encourages an objective assessment. The results of

the reviews are discussed in the University Senate meetings. Following these meetings, students are informed about the results of the evaluations.

Should any member of the teaching staff receive an unsatisfactory evaluation result, a course of action will be implemented in order to eliminate the existing problems. Hence, the results are carefully monitored and the improvements are continuously observed. If there is no improvement after a maximum of 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 underline that the University might consider changing this rule with the goal of broadening the chance to find enough teaching personnel on the one hand and on the other to facilitate the academic advancement of students who are either in the process of obtaining or who are contemplating to commence their doctoral studies. These students could 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.

In this context, summer schools with invited internationally recognized professors on specific pharmaceutical topics that are currently not taught as major subjects may also contribute to the education of the students as well as the professional development of the teaching personnel of the University.

### **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 “Pharmacy”.

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 “Pharmacy” 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.

#### **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 accordance 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 "Pharmacy" (Pharmacist) 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' 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 "Pharmacy", offered by the "Vasile Goldiș" Western University of Arad, to 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 Romanian national quality assurance agency, the experts group recommends the accreditation of study program "Pharmacy" also by the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport.

At the same time, the experts attempt to provide constructive feedback and recommendation 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 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).
- 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**

- Given the fact that the writing and the oral defense of the bachelor thesis constitutes an important part of the final grade, the experts recommend to the University to 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 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 allow them 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).
- In the next revision of the curriculum, pharmacy-specific modules such as quality assurance should be implemented (B.1). Practical training of the students for handling manufacturing machines such as tablet presses or ampoule filling machines is recommended.

### **C) Facilities and Teaching staff**

- In order to reflect the importance of Pharmaceutical Technology and Biopharmacy, a tenured full-time professor should be hired for this major subject (A.2).
- The University should consider the possibility of employing on assistant positions without the mandatory requirement of a doctoral degree (C.4).
- Regarding the library, it is recommended 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 think about offering scholarships for Romanian students who cannot afford studies at a higher education institution (B.4).
- 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's information management system should be expanded 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 University should 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 "Pharmacy"**

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 "Pharmacy" is recommended to the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport for accreditation. The program is to be completed with the academic degree "Pharmacist". The program is offered in the full-time form in the Romanian language. It covers 300 credit points and has a foreseen duration of five academic years (ten semesters). 25 workload hours are equal to 1 CP.

There are 75 places available for enrollment per annum for the program. The initial beginning of the study program had been in the winter semester 2005/2006.

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.