



Assessment Report about the On-Site Visit

on September 29th and 30th, 2022

External Institutional Evaluation

Dimitrie Cantemir University of Târgu Mureş

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1 Introduction to the External Institutional Evaluation

1.1 Basic information on the Evaluation process

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

The Dimitrie Cantemir University of Târgu Mureş has assigned to the AHPGS the execution of an External Institutional Evaluation, in order to assess the University's internal mechanisms and quality management processes. The proceedings of this evaluation conform to the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG). As agreed upon in the contract between AHPGS and Dimitrie Cantemir University of Târgu Mureş (signed on March 30th, 2022), the proceedings for the External Institutional Evaluation are based on the "General Information on Institutional Audit and Quality Assurance Procedures" (Resolution of the Board of AHPGS of February 14, 2013).

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

As an organization, the AHPGS is an independent body.

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

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

Area A. Profile, objectives and strategy of the institution

Area B. Quality assurance and quality management system

Area C. Institutional management and administration

Area D. Educational activities, including study programs

Area E. Infrastructure and functional resources

The External Institutional Evaluation is divided into the following steps:

- **A self-evaluation report (SER)** was submitted by the University on March 31st, 2022.
- In addition to the SER, the following documents were provided by the University:

Annex	Description
Annex 01	University Charter
Annex 02	Regulations on Admissions
Annex 03	Operational Procedures of Admissions
Annex 04	Quality Manual
Annex 05	University Code of Ethics
Annex 06	Operational Procedures of Examinations
Annex 07	Regulation on Credit Allocation
Annex 08	Regulation on Internships (Practices)
Annex 09	Regulation On student ´s Activities
Annex 10	Procedure on the Evaluation of Teaching Staff by Students
Annex 11	Regulation for Students with Disabilities
Annex 12	Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Counseling, Psychotherapy and Professional Guidance Center

Annex 13	The Commission's Procedures and Regulations for Quality Evaluation and Assurance
Annex 14	Regulation on mentoring and tutoring activities
Annex 15	Regulation on Scholarships and Student merit
Annex 16	Selection and promotion of teaching Staff
Annex 17	Compulsory and minimum Standards for Selection and promotion for the teaching staff
Annex 18	Regulation on the organization and functioning of the training department of teaching staff
Annex 19	Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Continuous Professional Training and Operational Programmes Department
Annex 20	Regulation on the organisation and functioning of Serafim Duicu Library
Annex 21	regulation on the Practice of the Dental Medicine facility
Annex 22	Methodology on the organization of Undergraduate Exams and Dissertations
Annex 23	Erasmus Policy
Annex 24	Regulation on the organization and functioning of the department of international relations and Erasmus + office
Annex 25	Regulation on the organization and operation of the Integrated Centre of Dental medicine (ICDM)
Annex 26	University Code of Student ´s Rights and Obligations
Annex 27	Strategic plan of "Dimitrie Cantemir" University of Târgu Mureş for the period 2020-2024

- The AHPGS has reviewed the presented documentation and its compliance with the University's strategies and objectives. The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS has nominated **the expert group**. In August 2022, the complete documentation submitted by the University was forwarded to the nominated expert group who has reviewed the documents based on the aforementioned criteria as well as substantive aspects. In September 2022, the expert group has produced a document-based written evaluation of the institution, to determine particular strengths and weaknesses, and to identify any open questions regarding the

higher education institution in writing. The experts' statements based on these evaluations were used for the preparation of the on-site visit at the University.

- **The on-site visit** took place on September 29th and 30th, 2022 according to a previously agreed-upon schedule (*see Annex 1*). Representatives from the central office of the AHPGS accompanied the expert group during the meeting. Prior to the meeting with the University, the expert group met on September 26th, 2022 for the initial discussion and briefing by the APHGS. They discussed the submitted application documents (self-evaluation report and appendix) and the results of the written evaluations, as well as any procedure-related questions and foreseeable issues. Furthermore, the group finalized the plan for the meeting with the University members. During the on-site visit, the experts had transparent, productive and in-depth discussions with the representatives of the University management, faculty representatives, program representatives, as well as with a group of students currently enrolled at the University. Furthermore, the experts assessed the study facilities and the equipment in teaching laboratories. They discussed a comprehensive spectrum of education-related issues with representatives of the University. Moreover, the consistency of the submitted documentation was verified. Additional aspects were also reviewed, open questions were identified and additional information/documentation was requested from the University.
- Following the visit, the University submitted the following **additional document** by October 26th, 2022:
 - Strategic plan.
- During the on-site visit, the experts had transparent, productive and in-depth discussions with the representatives of the University management, faculty representatives, program representatives, as well as with a group of students currently enrolled at the University – this number also includes graduates. Furthermore, the experts visited the study facilities. During the on-site visit, the consistency of the submitted documentation was verified. Additional aspects, which might not be covered by the written documentation, were also reviewed and remaining open questions were discussed.
- Following the visit, the expert group has produced an **expert report**; it sums up the key aspects and preliminary outcomes of the visits and the reviewed documents. The summary concludes the **strengths and weaknesses of the institution and also encompasses a list of recommendations** for further development of the University. The University has the opportunity to comment on the expert report.

1.2 Expert Group

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

Mr. Silvio Christoffel

University of Konstanz, Germany

Student of Politics and Public Administration

Prof. Dr. Marion Halfmann

Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences, Moenchengladbach, Germany

Professor of Business Administration Marketing and Sales

Internationalisation Officer

Formerly: Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, Kleve, Germany

Vice President for Teaching, Learning and Further Education

Prof. Dr. Edgar Koesler

Catholic University of Applied Science Freiburg, Germany

Formerly: Professor for Management and Formation

President and CEO

Prof. Dr. Bjoern Maier

Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University Mannheim, Germany

Dean of Students, Professor for Business Administration, Director of Studies

Health Care Management and Controlling

2 Expert Report

2.1 On-site visit

The on-site visits took place at Dimitrie Cantemir University of Târgu Mureş. The Dimitrie Cantemir University of Târgu-Mureş was established as a private university in 1991 (accredited by Law 136/2005), when the Faculty of Law was founded, to become the first private University in Transylvania, Romania. Later, four more faculties were added: the Faculty of Economic Sciences, the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, the Faculty of Geography and the Faculty of Medicine.

The University currently offers eight Bachelor degree programs and seven Master degree programs.

During the on-site visit on September 29th and 30th, 2022, the expert group had talks with the management of the University.

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

In addition to the University management, the quality assurance staff, the deans and Erasmus Representative were present.

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

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

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

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

2.2 Assessment Areas

Area A. Profile, objectives and strategy of the institution

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

Evaluation

Dimitrie Cantemir University of Târgu Mureş is a private, community-based university with strong links to the local labor market and the local authorities.

The mission of the Dimitrie Cantemir University of Târgu-Mureş is to “significantly contribute to the development of our society through competitive education at local, national and European level thus stimulating the intellectual and personal development as well as the scientific research and service brought to our community”.

The University Senate is the academic governing body and represents the University's community, guarantees academic freedom and University autonomy. According to the University, 25 % of the Senate members are students. It is not specified how actively the University's teaching staff, students, and external stakeholders participate in the development of the University's strategy. The experts recommend integrating both the students and the staff into the University's strategy development process.

In discussions with the university management on-site, the experts conclude that the strategy of the university needs to be further elaborated. The experts are on one hand interested in the challenges of the University and on the other hand in the strategic plan for the next five years. During the on-site visit, the experts asked for a more condensed strategic plan, including clearer indicators, followed in the development of the

University within the allocated deadline, based on well-founded market analysis with its opportunities and risks, as well as internal strengths and weaknesses. It shall include strategic objectives formulated in a measurable manner with key performance indicators and derivative action plans. The University has submitted this document.

The basis for the strategic plan should also be a well-founded market analysis, which includes the dynamics of the supply and demand market, the assessment of market potentials for individual study programs, as well as a competition and competitor analysis. Opportunities and threats as well as internal strengths and weaknesses should be considered. Strategic priorities should be articulated as clearly as possible and accompanied by key performance indicators to be measurable. Prioritized goals should be accompanied by action plans. The strategic objectives also should be linked to the quality objectives.

Furthermore, the experts recommend to involve external stakeholders into the process. Internationalization is a clear priority and should be used in order to increase the attractiveness of the Dimitrie Cantemir University of Târgu Mureş for an audience outside of Romania. With regard to this, the experts emphatically recommend that the University establishes English study programs and offers language courses for staff and students. Moreover, the experts advise the University to increase collaborations with international university partners. At the same time, the University shall maintain its strength to act as a community-rooted University with strong links to the local and regional stakeholders. As a result, the experts look favorably upon the cooperations but point out that, although the institution is well connected in the Romanian area, its overall internationalization strategy still needs strengthening. Therefore, the experts suggest forming, for example, cooperations with enterprises and to regulate them more formally.

In its current strategy, the University places an emphasis on qualitative improvement and expansion. The participation of internal and external stakeholders as described in the strategy, is perceptible. The University pursues a participatory approach in which all personnel (teaching, non-teaching, students) are aware of and work towards achieving the goals established by the University.

The University offers a wide range of study programs. Staff and students and external stakeholders, such as potential employers for graduates, are actively involved in the current strategic developments. The University has established a hierarchical system that guarantees systematic planning both on the level of the faculties as well as on the institutional level as a whole. Still, the experts opine that the number of study programs

is quite high and their range is too diversified. Although the main target group of the University is visible in the profile, the experts deem it necessary to focus more on international students and programs taught in English (or another foreign language), respectively. Consequently, the portfolio should be streamlined according to an updated strategy regarding the new developments (decreasing student numbers, demographical shrinking etc.).

In general, the experts acknowledge the University's research plan. They urge the University, however, to ensure the implementation of the research strategies. From the experts' point of view, improving the national and international visibility is a necessary step as stipulated in the research strategy. However, it remains unclear at this stage what the priorities in the overall goals of the University and in research are.

From the experts' point of view, institutional autonomy is a core value within this higher education institution. A "University Code of Ethics" was established. The aspect of diversity and students' rights regarding disabilities and chronic illnesses are also regulated by the "Regulation for Students with Disabilities". The University states that students with physical disabilities are ensured access to all university premises. In addition, the University provides space tailored to their needs so they can carry out academic, social, and cultural activities.

The University complies with national regulations while assuring also compatibility with the European Bologna area (e.g. Diploma supplement, nomenclature of degrees, learning outcome driven curricula etc.). Nevertheless, it became evident, that the University is still trying to improve the implementation and use of ECTS points regarding student mobility and recognition of credits between institutions in the country and abroad. It should be evaluated how the ECTS grading system can be strengthened within the University and assured that the Lisbon Recognition Convention is sufficiently considered.

Area B. Quality assurance and quality management system

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

Evaluation

The University has built a complex, structurally differentiated quality assurance and quality management system. The system has been implemented; structures, responsibilities and procedures are in place. The internationally recognized quality management system according to ISO 9001:2000, also fulfils national requirements and includes a quality control loop (PDCA cycle).

The concept of the system is elaborately described in the Quality Manual. Quality objectives alongside with indicators and time perspectives for implementation are defined for the enhancement of the University's performance as well as efficiency in teaching, research and quality management. The University has developed a working quality management system based on policy, strategic objectives, quality criteria and standards of educational and related services.

The quality management system is based on university policy and quality objectives established by the Rector, on concrete strategies and processes designed to ensure quality and continuous improvement. The Quality Assessment and Assurance Commission has been established in accordance with GEO no. 75/2005 (approved by Law 87/2006). The Quality Assessment and Assurance Commission communicates the strategy and regulations to the University President, who approves the strategy and the

regulation for the organization and functioning of the Commission and supervises the implementation of strategies and policies for quality assurance in line with the vision, mission and University policy and national dynamics, as well as European and international standards.

The Commission also coordinates the implementation of procedures and evaluation activities of quality assurance, and develops an annual internal evaluation report on the quality of education in the University. The report is made available to all beneficiaries by posting it on the University website.

The organizational structure of the Quality Assessment and Assurance Commission was approved by the University Senate and includes: the President of the Administration Council, Scientific, Didactic and IT development, Vice-rectors, quality management representative, one teacher representative from each faculty and one student.

The experts want to draw the University's attention to the development of key figures. Otherwise, the analysis of trends is hardly possible. As far as the experts can discern, there is need for action regarding several programs due to small numbers of students. The same limitations (critical mass of students not reached) have also been reported from Master programs.

Therefore, the expert panel suggests that the portfolio should not be expanded. Instead, it should be streamlined and focused on subject areas in high demand. Moreover, the University's unique characteristic should find expression in the study programs. In order to match the overarching goal of internationalization and increase the number of students, English study programs should be implemented and collaborations with international universities should be developed. In addition, the experts recommend that the University conduct market analyses that target students' expectations with regard to e.g. study content or employment opportunities in order to incorporate the results into the development of the curricula.

The University should take action in case that the number of enrolled students in a study program remains continuously low, or in case the dropout rate in a study program is continuously high. The Board of Directors establishes the minimum number of students for the functioning of the bachelor and master's degree programs. The decision of the Board of Directors is validated by the Senate.

Area C. Institutional management and administration

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

Evaluation

Dimitrie Cantemir University of Targu Mures functions within the valid legal framework in accordance with the principles of the University Charter and of the Quality Management System based on academic autonomy. The structures of the University have been established in a way that allows the University to reach its intended goals in education, research and services (outlined in the "University Charter").

The governing bodies of the University are the Administration Council, the Senate and the Rector. The Administration Council is appointed by the founder and includes the President, Managing Director, and the Rector. The members are equal in terms of hierarchy. The Rector is appointed by general election and is responsible for the representation of the University in relation to third parties. The Senate is the academic governing body of the University. Furthermore, the Senate is composed of 75 % teaching and research staff and of 25 % of student representatives. The various stakeholder groups (internal and external) participate in the decision-making process.

Transparent regulations apply to all steps of the educational process. Nonetheless, over-structuring appears to be a threat, thus from the experts' point of view, the responsibilities and tasks of the different bodies should be more visible.

The academic organization of the Dimitrie Cantemir University is clearly defined on a hierarchical basis. However, it should be made clear how the structure and strategy of the University are coordinated and who has the final say (also in the academic area).

On-site, discussions with the experts raised the question of who is responsible and who has the opportunity for the development of new study programs. Unfortunately, this issue remained unclear. According to the University, the initiative to develop new study programs is welcomed, especially from members of the teaching staff. Yet, it remains unclear how the process is organized and who is responsible for the decision-making. Therefore, it seems to be reasonable to revisit the structure in light of a leaner strategic structure. Furthermore, the expert group recommends reconsidering the frequency of Senate meetings in order to be as sufficient as possible for the high amount of tasks and competences.

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

An evaluation and controlling system has been established. A particular department coordinates international cooperation based on the Erasmus programs and implements strategic objectives. Duties, responsibilities and authorities are clearly structured and documented. On the whole, the University has transparent organizational structures and well documented regulations.

Area D. Educational activities, including study programs

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

Evaluation

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

The University has five faculties (Law, Economic Sciences, Geography, Psychology and Educational Sciences and Medicine) currently offering eight Bachelor study programs (Finances and Banks; Economy of Trade, Tourism and Services; Law; Psychology; Tourism Geography; Medical Dentistry, Balneophysiotherapy and Recuperation, Dental Prophylaxis Assistance). All programs are either already accredited or are in the process of accreditation. Furthermore, the University has established a Department of Master Studies that organizes and implements seven Master programs (Banks and Capital Markets Within European Context; Financial Management of Businesses; Legal Procedure and Liberal Professions; Touristic Resources and Environment Protection; Quality Insurance in Education; Clinical Psychology and Intervention Techniques Through Counseling and Psychotherapy; Management of Human Resources).

On the basis of additional documentation, such as a list of Bachelor and Master study programs, the study programs were assessed according to the national regulations as well as the European Standard Guidelines. The programs are set up in a comparable way with those in the European Higher Education Area (ECTS, Diploma supplement etc.). They also include research-related components, depending on the profile and final qualification of the study program. A research strategy is described. However, the experts recommend that the research conducted by the teaching staff is integrated more thoroughly into the study programs.

The University has a library which provides learning resources for the study programs. As a possible improvement, the experts suggest the expansion of the electronic library. Also, more international literature should be offered.

Various support mechanisms for students are in place. Student satisfaction seems to be very high. Admission requirements and student evaluation methods are clear, the information is publicly available.

In this regard, the experts have also discussed the process for the recognition of externally achieved credit points. The University recognizes credits obtained in other universities if they comply with the regulations on students' professional activity, the equivalence of credits is evaluated by a credit recognition committee inside each faculty. From the experts' point of view, the recognition of credits transferred from other universities (domestic and abroad) should be regulated according to the requirements of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, i.e. the responsibility to demonstrate that an application does not fulfil the relevant requirements lies with the body undertaking the assessment (Art. 3.3 (5)); Each Party shall recognize periods of study completed within

the framework of a higher education program in another Party. This recognition shall comprise such periods of study towards the completion of a higher education program in the Party in which recognition is sought, unless substantial differences can be shown between the periods of study completed in another Party and the part of the higher education program which they would replace in the Party in which recognition is sought (Art. 5.1 (1)).

To ensure fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study etc., as well as to ensure students' progress in their studies while promoting mobility, the amount of workload (in hours) for one credit point should be regulated and stipulated in an easily accessible way. The credit points awarded for writing the Bachelor thesis, for instance, constitute an important part of an academic study process and requires a considerable amount of effort and time investment from students. This input should therefore be reflected appropriately in the workload of 180 credit points of the study program. This is a standard practice on the international level.

The experts recommend to improve the visibility of the study programs by underlining unique features, such as the connection to the local labor market and opportunities for the graduates. For future development and better visibility of the study programs, the experts deem indispensable to update the English website with information about the study programs and the possibilities to join the University.

The quality management includes processes for the evaluation and development of study plans, learning processes and learning outcomes. The creation process of new study programs is not clear and should be outlined in more detail. Moreover, before the backdrop of the legal possibilities and concerning the study programs, interfaculty and interdisciplinary approaches should be devised.

Area E. Infrastructure and functional resources

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

Evaluation

The University is financed on a private basis. Tuition fees cover a substantial part of the budget.

As part of the on-site visit, the buildings and premises of the University campus were inspected. During the tour around the library, seminar and lecture halls and employees' offices, the expert group could visualize available material and space resources of the University. Based on the Self-Evaluation Report, provided by the University, and the tour, the experts established that the University currently has sufficient material and spatial resources to develop its present and future activities. The experts compliment the investment in the modern equipment in the new building, which is mainly used for dentistry. The University's infrastructure and equipment is qualitatively heterogeneous. The University has a library providing learning resources for the offered study programs. Both human and financial resources are adequate for reaching the intended objectives of the University.

Furthermore, the student-to-teacher ratio is excellent. The students' satisfaction regarding the services offered was visible. Students report a family atmosphere and great support in different matters at the University.

Due to the demographic changes in Romania, the number of students will probably decrease further in the next years. To compensate the lower number of students and therefore the financial losses, new means of funding should be sought. Since the University mostly depends financially on tuition fees, the experts recommend to search for additional sources of financial income. Examples could be joint research projects, a more active involvement on a communal level, such as the provision of paid services, or the implementation of entrepreneurial activities of the staff.

The University has a structured mechanism for recruiting personnel. There are clear and rigorous rules on the selection of staff and there are good procedures in place when vacancies occur. There are corresponding regulations in force for recruiting teaching and administrative personnel, which are clear and transparent and promote equality as well as recognition based on qualification and experience. The duties and responsibilities of the personnel correspond to their qualifications and experience.

2.3 Conclusion

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

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

organizational/management structure, further aspects of the institution, such as planned and current study programs.

To sum up the External Institutional Evaluation, the experts render a generally positive judgement regarding the institutional component of the University. The experts acknowledge the University's mission and vision. However, from the experts' perspective, the basis for the strategic plan should be a well-founded market analysis including opportunities and risks as well as internal strengths and weaknesses. The strategic plan should include measurably formulated strategic goals with key performance indicators with derived action plans. The strategic objectives should be linked to the quality objectives, which should be accompanied by key performance indicators. Furthermore, the experts recommend to involve external stakeholders into the process.

Likewise, the experts recommend a sharpening of the University's profile in order to highlight the University's unique characteristics, like the connection to the local labor market. With a focus on sustainability, the University's study programs would stick out of the masses, which would make them and the University as a whole more attractive for internal and external stakeholders.

In the experts' assessment of the University's quality assurance system, they found that structures are in place and procedures apparent. The university conducts evaluations in education and research. Additionally, results should not merely be used to control but also to steer the University in a direction that is in accordance with the strategic goals.

Both the institutional management and administration are transparently depicted in the University Charter. The experts also welcome the participation of students in the process. However, responsibilities and tasks of the various bodies can be illustrated more comprehensively.

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

European understanding of institutional autonomy in higher education. 24 months after the decision was issued by the Accreditation Commission, AHPGS will ask the University for a written update describing how the proposed recommendations were taken up by the University.

Area A

- The experts strongly recommend to create a strategic plan on the basis of well-founded market analysis including opportunities and risks as well as internal strengths and weaknesses. The strategic plan should include measurably formulated strategic goals with key performance indicators with derived action plans. The strategic objectives should be linked to the quality objectives.
- The experts recommend integrating both the students and the staff into the University's strategy development process.
- The University's internationalization strategy still needs strengthening. Therefore, the experts suggest forming, for example, cooperations with enterprises and to regulate them more formally.
- the University's portfolio should be streamlined according to an updated strategy regarding the new developments
- the experts recommend to ensure the implementation of the research strategies. Improving the national and international visibility is a necessary step as stipulated in the research strategy.

Area B

- The experts want to draw the University's attention to the development of key figures. There is need for action regarding several programs due to small numbers of students.
- the expert panel suggests that the portfolio should not be expanded. Instead, it should be streamlined and focused on subject areas in high demand.
- the University's unique characteristic should find expression in the study programs
- In order to match the goal of internationalization and increase the amount of students, English study programs should be implemented and collaborations with international universities should be developed.

- the experts recommend that the University conduct market analyses that target students' expectations with regard to e.g. study content or employment opportunities in order to incorporate the results into the development of the curricula.
- The University should take action in case that the number of enrolled students in a study program remains continuously low, or in case the dropout rate in a study program is continuously high. A minimum number of students should be set for running a program.

Area C

- the responsibilities and tasks of the various bodies should be made more visible
- it should be made clear how the structure and strategy of the University are coordinated and who has the final say (also in the academic area). The question of who is responsible and who has the opportunity for the development of new study programs remained unanswered
- the collaboration with other universities in Romania and abroad can be enhanced.
- the interaction between faculties should be improved and strengthened. In this regard, the University is encouraged to develop and discuss plans

Area D

- research conducted by the teaching staff should be integrated more thoroughly into the study programs
- As a possible improvement to the library, the expansion of the electronic library is suggested. Also, more international literature should be offered
- Within the realm of legal frameworks, interfaculty and interdisciplinary approaches should be established
- An update the University's website in English is advisable in order to increase the visibility of the University and its services
- the creation process for new study programs should be made clear

Area E

- Since the University mostly depends financially on tuition fees, the experts recommend to search for additional sources of financial income. Examples could be joint research projects, a more active involvement on a communal level, such as the provision of paid services, or the implementation of entrepreneurial activities of the staff.

3 Annex 1 Schedule on-site visit: September 29th and 30th, 2022

September, 26 th	Agenda	Participants
08:00	Initial discussion and briefing by the AHPGS	Expert group and representatives of the AHPGS
September, 29 th	Agenda	Participants
17:05	Arrival at Cluj Airport	Expert group and representatives of the AHPGS
19:30	Dinner / Internal discussion Topics: Getting to know the expert group, explanation of the procedure, preparation of discussions	
September, 29 th	Agenda	Participants
08:30-09:00	Transfer to the University	Expert group and representatives of the AHPGS
	Welcome speech by the Agency and kick-off	
09:00-09:45	Talks with the management of the University Topics: Governance of the University, profile and strategy of the University, staff, resources of the departments and faculties and the study programs, support offers, gender equality, concerns of disabled students	Murgu A.B. - president of CA, Simionescu M. - Rector, Ratiu R.F. - Didactic Vice-rector, Ciotea V.F. IT Vice-rector, David D. Scientific Vice-rector, Catana L. - Senate`s President Representative
09:45-10:00	Break / Internal discussion	
10:00-10:45	Interview with quality assurance staff Topics: Significance and organization of quality assurance; quality assurance in teaching and learning at the University, the department/faculty, and of the study programs; documentation of results and implementation of measures	Pascu T. – QMR Avram L. - CEAC Member Bucur S. - CEAC Member Nemes A. - CEAC Member Nagy O. - CEAC Member
10:45-11:00	Break / Internal discussion	
11:00-11:45	Interview with program directors and teaching staff Topics: Strategy of the University, working conditions at the University, resources for teaching and research activities, facilities, staff development, leadership and organizational culture	Avram L. - Erasmus Representative Oroian M. - Tourism Geography Faculty Dean Gorea B. - Law Dean Feier Ramona - Medicine Dean Rus I. - Ec. Sciences Faculty Dean Stanciu C. - Faculty Dean Tomuletiu A. - TTD Coordinator

11:45-12:00	Break / Internal discussion	
12:00-12:45	<p>Interview with students</p> <p>Topics: Experience of the students at the University and in the study programs, academic demands, professional qualifications, and personal development; availability of resources; support (tutorials, mentoring programs, advisory service, etc.); experience with gender equality and disabled students</p>	<p>Law Faculty: Druga Alexandra, Rus Doriană, Curticeanu Codin</p> <p>Geography Faculty: Baldean Bogda, Avram Cristian, Mihailescu Elena</p> <p>Medicine Faculty: Georgiu Miriam, Badiu Alexandra, Lechintan Ruxandra, Musteata Elena</p> <p>Ec. Sciences Faculty: Chiorean Luminița, Olar Andrei, Robson Kristofer, Chirilesc Emanuel, Zsold Aliz, Kalo Sidonia Brigitta, Festeu Chirila Anamaria, Gheorghe Alina</p> <p>Psychology: Pogacean Adrian, Bungardean Diana, Szabo Bernadette</p>
12:45-13:45	Lunch / Internal discussion	
13:45-14:30	<p>Tour of the Institution</p> <p>E.g. working premises of students and staff, library, cafeteria, offices</p>	
14:30	Debriefing with the University	<p>Murgu A.B. - president of CA</p> <p>Simionescu M. – Rector</p> <p>Ratiu R.F. - Didactic Vice-rector</p> <p>Ciotea V.F. IT Vice-rector</p> <p>David D. Scientific Vice-rector</p> <p>Catana L. - Senate`s President Representative</p>
	Transfer to Cluj Airport	

4 Annex 2 Complete list of experts involved in the different steps of the evaluation process

Mr. Silvio Christoffel

University of Konstanz, Germany

Student of Politics and Public Administration

Prof. Dr. Marion Halfmann

Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences, Moenchengladbach, Germany

Professor of Business Administration Marketing and Sales

Internationalisation Officer

Formerly: Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, Kleve, Germany

Vice President for Teaching, Learning and Further Education

Prof. Dr. Edgar Koesler

Catholic University of Applied Science Freiburg, Germany

Formerly: Professor for Management and Formation

President and CEO

Prof. Dr. Bjoern Maier

Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University Mannheim, Germany

Dean of Students, Professor for Business Administration, Director of Studies

Health Care Management and Controlling