

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



Assessment Report

**for the Application of the „Andrei Saguna” University of Constanta,
Romania**

**for the Periodical Evaluation of the Study Program “Public Administration”,
Bachelor of Public Administration**

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Decision

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1 Introduction

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

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

The AHPGS Accreditation Agency was tasked with the periodical evaluation of study programs offered by “Andrei Saguna” University of Constanta, Romania in December 2022.

In February 2023, the relevant evaluation documents were forwarded to the experts in order for them to review the available information, to determine particular strengths and weaknesses as well as to identify open questions regarding the study programs in writing.

The site visit at the University took place on June 6-7, 2023. During the visit, experts conducted discussions with the University management, representatives of the faculties, the teaching staff of the programs as well as with students currently studying in the programs. Furthermore, they inspected the learning premises, such as lecture halls, seminar rooms, classrooms, computer classes and the library.

The following three study programs were subjects of the periodical evaluation procedure:

Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences:

- “Public Administration”, Bachelor of Public Administration,
- “Accounting and Management Informatics”, Bachelor of Accounting and Management
- “Management”, Bachelor of Management

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

As representatives of academic institutions:

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University of Konstanz, Germany

Student of Politics and Public Administration

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Fliedner University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf, Germany

Rector and managing director of the Fliedner University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf

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Head of study program and dean of studies in the faculty of business administration

Teaching: General Business Administration, (Strategic) Corporate Management (Integrative) Management Systems, Controlling, (Decision-oriented) Accounting, Service and Production, Health economics/management of health care enterprises

Prof. Dr. Jana Wolf Sussman
Aalen University, Germany

Professor at Aalen University, Department of Healthcare Management

Research in the field change management, international healthcare management, leadership in healthcare

Healthcare Economics fellow position with focus on pharmaceuticals (valuation, cost effectiveness studies)

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

The expert group surveyed the proper implementation of the criteria, standards and performance indicators, as specified in the above-mentioned legal texts as well as the compliance of the programs with the normative criteria, as stated in the "Methodology".

The documents submitted by the University, the experts' feedback to the documents, the observations made during the site visit, the results of discussions with the representatives of the University serve as the basis for the statements made in the expert report. Since the expert report investigates the fulfillment of the standards and criteria specified in the "Methodology", the structure of the expert report follows the logical succession of these criteria, as they are formulated in the document.

The following fields of activity pertaining to the programs and the University were assessed by the expert group with respect to the corresponding criteria and standards: (A) Institutional capacity, (B) Educational effectiveness, and (C) Quality management, each with the corresponding criteria and standards.

2 The study program to be accredited

The Bachelor's study program "Public Administration" is offered by "Andrei Saguna" University of Constanta, Romania, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences. The period of education is six semesters (three years). The form of studies is full-time.

The program is taught in Romanian. The main objective of the study program "Public Administration" is to equip students with an array of knowledge and functions: a training function on the basic knowledge and theoretical components, a scientific research function, a cultural-civic function to address cross-cutting issues and a cooperation function at regional and international level in the field of Public Administration.

180 credit points (CP), i.e., 30 CP per semester, according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) are required in order to graduate from the program. One CP is equivalent to 25 workload hours. The total workload of the program is 4,550 hours, which is divided into 1,860 contact hours, 120 hours of practical training and 2,670 hours of independent work.

The program consists of 41 modules, out of which 32 are obligatory, and nine modules are optional. There are at least 6 modules provided for each semester.

Admission requirements are centralized within the University. They include a Baccalaureate degree or equivalent diploma. Students are informed about the amount of the tuition fees in advance. The tuition fee is around 700 Euro per year.

Upon graduation, students are awarded a Bachelor graduation diploma (Diploma de Licenta, cf. Law of National Education no. 1 from 2011), as well as a Diploma Supplement, composed in both Romanian and English. Graduates of the Bachelor's study program "Public Administration" are awarded the academic degree "Bachelor of Public Administration".

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

The first cohort of the "Public Administration" study program was admitted in 2003.

In the academic year 2022/2023, the total number of students enrolled is 58. Annual admissions are organized in two sessions during July and September.

3 Expert Report

In February 2023, the application documents of the University were made available to the expert group for written evaluation. The expert group assessed the "Public Administration" study program based on the Romanian standards and regulations specified under Section 1. They have also examined the factual and other program-related aspects described in the documents. The results of this review were forwarded to the AHPGS in April 2023.

Based on the written evaluation of each expert and the site visit, the expert group jointly agreed upon an expert report.

A. Institutional Capacity

A.1. Institutional, administrative and management structures

The "Andrei Saguna" University of Constanta (ASU), Romania is a private institution of higher education and accredited as a legal entity of private law and public utility, part of the National Education System, by Law 116/2005. The University acquired legal status on May 15th, 1992.

Currently, the University has two faculties: the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences and the Faculty of Psychology, Legal and Behavioral Sciences.

The University offers six Bachelor programs, which include "Finance and Banks", "Accounting and Management Informatics", "Management", "Public Administration", "Law", and "Psychology".

Moreover, five Master's programs are offered: "Finance-Banking Management", "Financing and Business Management in Tourism Services", "Deviance and Delinquency", "Media Communication, Public Opinion and Information Management" and "Clinical Psychology".

In the academic year 2021/2022, the total number of enrolled students at the University is 843, of which 686 are at Bachelor level and 157 at Masters level. The overall number of students is increasing.

During the site visit, the expert group assessed the compatibility of the written documentation and the University's mission and objectives. Based on 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. The programs aim at meeting the needs of the Romanian labor market and comply with national and international standards of education. The experts discern that there is a good regional focus and strong ties to the local industry and businesses. Missions and objectives are clearly stated, and the institution supports the programs and staff in line with the aims and objectives of the program and common standards of integrity (e.g., see “University Charter”).

The mission and objectives of the programs are stated by the University. With a glance at the study programs currently offered at the University, it becomes clear that these formulated mission and objectives are coherent. The University’s portfolio of study programs is diverse. The experts asked the University about its strategic goal for the next years. According to the University, the number of students should increase further, and new study programs will be developed in a long term.

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, and students take an active part in management. Moreover, the needs of students with disabilities are taken into consideration (e.g., admission, exam requirements).

Internal assessment and audit processes take place in order to monitor the achievement of the objectives of the University. The experts have observed an active collaboration between the administrative and teaching structures. Moreover, they have 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.

According to the University, the two faculties are in a constant exchange regarding the study programs, staff or further developments. Yet, the experts recognize the possibilities for further development in the strategic alignment of the Faculty and the University in general.

With regard to the administrative structure concerning the collaboration between the Faculty, and University units, the experts encourage the University to look for common interests and to combine forces and resources. This will also help to facilitate the coordination of research activities.

Regarding the internationality, the experts took notice of the measures put in place by the University in order to pursue its international orientation. The University achieves mobility of its students by means of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) as well as taking part in Erasmus exchange programs. Furthermore, the University is part of the Black Sea Universities Network together with 81 other universities from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and Romania. According to the University, UAS also has strong ties to China since 1998 as part of the “Window of Shanghai” project. International mobility has been severely restricted in recent years due to the pandemic. Between 2020 and 2023, there were no outgoing students and three incoming students in total. During the pandemic, student mobility has decreased worldwide.

The experts recommend expanding its possibilities in going abroad through short-term stays. Shorter periods abroad, for example within the scope of an internship or summer school, could be more attractive and easier to finance for students. Furthermore, the experts recommend finding creative ways of internationalization, for example internationalization from home or online conferences, to include their students in the international scientific community.

In addition to the above-mentioned facts, the experts gave the University’s active involvement in the social structures of the region of Constanta and a positive assessment. It was clearly emphasized that the stakeholders of the University, recognize that the University plays an integral role in the development of the region. Therefore, they provide the University with a high amount of support and assistance.

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

A.2. Material resources and infrastructure

Overall, the experts notice that the University has sufficient material and financial resources regarding the study programs currently being offered. Facilities

are fully in possession of the University. According to the University, the institution possesses sufficient financial resources and equipment for the program.

Regarding the premises and resources available for the desired number of students in the study program “Public Administration” (100 places), the experts conclude that the University is able to offer this number of study places.

With respect to the library and lecture halls, the experts assess that the lecture halls and seminar rooms are sufficiently equipped for providing adequate teaching and learning processes (e.g., computers). Nevertheless, it became clear that there is a need for improvement in the long term regarding the program-specific literature. Therefore, the experts recommend the University to extend the library regarding both printed and electronic books, as well as databases. In this regard, the expert group encourages the University to establish more partnerships with similar national and international institutions (libraries, publishing houses) in order to provide students and teachers access to a wider range of databases as well as learning and scientific material.

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

B. Educational Effectiveness

B.1. Content of the study program

The study program “Public Administration” is offered at the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences. The study program’s mission, general and specific learning objectives, curriculum and outcome competences were presented in the written documentation. The curriculum description specifies the qualification objectives, competences (knowledge and understanding, explanation and interpretation etc.) and learning outcomes for each module. The experts point out that the structure of the study program includes a set of relevant topics.

The study program’s goal is to equip students with an array of knowledge and functions: a training function on the basic knowledge and theoretical components, like the understanding and use of fundamental concepts to central and local public administration processes; a scientific research function, a cultural-civic function to address cross-cutting issues and a cooperation function at regional and international level. Judging from the curriculum and module descriptions, students completing the program are fit for a professional position in Romania. According to COR (the Classification of Occupations in Romania) the University lists the following career opportunities for graduates: Public

Administrator, Public Administrator Specialist and Public Administrator Consultant. According to the University, there is a high demand for public administrators in Romania.

The experts agree with the above-mentioned qualification objectives. Moreover, the study program "Public Administration" also focuses on qualifying students for social responsibility and personal development throughout all modules. The experts conclude that graduates have good employment opportunities on the Romanian job market.

The curriculum of the study program "Public Administration" comprises compulsory and optional subjects. The program consists of 41 modules, out of which 32 are compulsory. Nine modules are optional.

The program includes a mix of lectures, seminars and practical workshops. Primarily, some methods are centered on a) teacher's activity and others on b) students' activity (i.e., problem-based learning, brainstorming). Practical activities include projects, lab and internships. Laboratory activities are carried out in groups; these include research training, statistical projects involving ICT labs.

Andrei Saguna University follows an interdisciplinary approach. Overall, 85% of the modules in the "Public Administration" program are in common with other study programs at the University; the breakdown is as follows:

- 13 modules shared with Law;
- 16 modules shared with Management;
- 5 modules shared with Psychology.

The experts especially appreciate the optional modules, which complete the offered courses very well. The program is also well-structured; modules are described in detail (e.g., with objectives, aimed competences, content and literature) and the program is relevant as the intended career is clear. According to the experts, the cooperation between the two faculties at the level of teaching is outstanding. The University uses its synergies very well.

The interdisciplinary nature of the program aims for students to be able to operate in several branches of public administration. All subjects in the curriculum are correlated with the Romanian Classification of Occupation (COR), in line with the European Qualifications Framework.

Alongside the theoretical curriculum, an internship focusing on practical training is mandatory. Students have to complete a total of 112 hours of internship in the second year of studies. The University has entered into 70 internship partnerships annually; 80% of these were with private companies. The experts take note of the cooperation agreements and come to the conclusion that the University carefully selects its cooperative partners. It became sufficiently clear that the University strives to offer the same quality of practical training for all students at various cooperation partners. The experts encourage the University to maintain and further deepen their collaboration with specialized institutions.

During the internship, students are assigned to tutors of the external partner which coordinates and delegates tasks to the students; the tutor will then carry out an evaluation process at the end of the internship including professional skills, organizational and communication skills. Furthermore, internship supervisors hold meetings at the internship site, with both the students and the tutors to assess the ongoing internship; the supervisors are members of the Public Administration program.

The expert group points out that research elements are integrated in some modules. Yet, the scientific research activity is mainly carried out by the teachers within the faculty. Findings of individual and collective scientific research of the teachers are presented in the seminar classes. In addition, students are involved in research activities conducted by teachers regarding the local economic environment (field research, applying questionnaires, data processing etc.). Also, the faculty hosts a research center named "Top Manager EGI" aiming to deepen research practices and train students' scientific skills. Nevertheless, the experts recommend integrating the students further in the research of their teachers and also systematically integrate the research into the curriculum of the study program.

The credit system applied in the "Public Administration" study program 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.

The study program "Public Administration" contains 180 ECTS credits. The Bachelor exam is credited with an additional 10 credits. The curriculum comprises 41 modules. Included is a module for the Bachelor's Exam Preparation Internship in semester six. The study program is offered on a full-time basis only

(six semesters/three years). The total workload of the program is 4,550 hours, which is divided into 1,860 contact hours, 120 practical hours and 2,670 hours of independent work.

In talks with the University, it became clear for the experts that there is a limited flexibility in the contents of the curriculum due to national regulations. However, the University is in a close exchange with local companies and local industry to identify the needs of the labor market. The experts encourage the University to use the flexibility to adapt the curriculum to current developments if necessary.

According to the students, the workload of the Public Administration program is feasible. From the experts' point of view, the student workload should continue to be evaluated regularly in order to make sure that students are not overloaded, e.g., with examinations. Besides, the implementation of evaluation results to improve the study programs should be clearly documented.

The 10 CP for the graduation examination are awarded on top of the 180 CP awarded for the study program upon successful completion of all compulsory modules. From the experts' point of view, the final exam is an obligatory part of the curriculum. Thus, the Bachelor exam should be part of the official workload of the study program. Nevertheless, the experts acknowledge that the addition is a singularity in Romania due to the National Law.

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 and capable of being accomplished within the envisaged period of time.

The study program is aimed primarily at the needs and the labor market of the Constanta region and the surrounding counties.

The admission procedures in the program are determined by the Admission Regulations at the University level. Based on that, the experts confirm that the University applies a transparent policy regarding the admission procedure. The admission average is made up of 50% of the overall average of the secondary school years and 50% of the baccalaureate average. Places in each field/program of study are filled based on average obtained in the entrance examination, in descending order, within the approved number of places.

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

The University recognizes studies undertaken at other universities under the ECTS equivalence procedure. Periods of temporary mobility under the Erasmus+ program are fully recognized in accordance with the Erasmus Regulation and the Study Recognition Regulation. The experts commend the University for providing credit at competence level.

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

B.2. Learning outcomes

From the experts' point of view, the study programs 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 programs correspond to the final academic degree to be awarded. The teaching and didactic methods are student-oriented.

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

The educational concept of the study programs 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 (e.g., lectures, seminars, practical work, tutorials) are employed.

Electronic/multimedia forms of instruction and learning (e.g., learning platform) are integrated into the methods of teaching (lectures, seminars, exercises, project work, study groups, work placement phases). Depending on the objectives of the subject, teachers use tools that provide individualized assistance through online interaction on learning platforms (Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams), communication platforms (zoom, Facebook). Furthermore, students and

teachers can access a learning platform (SaaS cloud platform) for course details, assessments and announcements.

The expert group thinks that employability is given for graduates of the programs. They conclude that this positive outcome and development stems on the one hand from the dedicated academic staff, and on the other hand, also from the open atmosphere and communication at the University.

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

B.3. Scientific research activity

The research activity within the faculty is diversified and reflects a wide range of scientific concerns and interests of the teachers. Scientific manifestations are organized regularly. Teachers also involve students, stimulating their participation in scientific sessions, as well as their involvement in organizing activities, giving them the opportunity to learn about the scientific rigors specific to these events. Nevertheless, the experts recommend expanding the research activities of the faculty and the study program.

The University is involved in webinars and international online conferences. The expert group was able to assert that there were sufficient financial and material resources for promoting research activity.

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

B.4. Financial activity

Currently, the University holds and receives revenue for running study programs. The University has diversified sources of income in addition to tuition fees, such as carrying out research projects for local companies.

The University has confirmed in a formal declaration that they are prepared and able to progressively ensure, for all years of study, the financial support necessary for the program to function in conditions that correspond to the standards of the Romanian program of studies.

Criterion B.4 is regarded as fulfilled.

C. Quality Management

C.1. Quality assurance strategies and procedures

The University has developed an elaborate quality assurance system, implemented by means of corresponding evaluation procedures. The University presented its quality assurance system in the written documents.

The University has implemented a quality management system since 2005, coordinated by the Quality Assessment and Assurance Commission (QAC). The University has a Quality Assurance Regulation and a Quality Manual to ensure the quality of teaching, research, and administrative-financial activities. The Faculty Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee oversees the implementation of quality activities at the faculty level.

Regarding the transparency of the quality assurance policies and developments, the University issues an annual report on internal quality evaluation. The reports of the commission are published on the official website of the University.

The evaluation of teaching staff by students is carried out on the basis of the "Regulations for the evaluation of the work of teaching staff by students/courses", approved by the University Senate, and the data collected is processed by the QAC. Evaluation of teachers is based on their self-evaluation reports, peer assessment by colleagues, and students' evaluation. This assessment of the teaching staff by students is implemented at the University as a quality assurance tool aimed at the improvement of the content and methods of teaching at the faculty.

Students are involved in the quality assurance and evaluation process through various levels, such as being included in the University Senate and Faculty Councils, auditing activities, and participating in the evaluation of teaching staff. The University has developed procedures and tools to optimize the design, organization, and delivery of study programs, aiming to comply with national regulations and quality assurance requirements in the European Higher Education Area.

The level of students' satisfaction with their studies and the relevance of the study program to its practical implementation are evaluated at the University by means of assessment questionnaires. On site, the students describe the effects

of their feedback, which is highly appreciated by the University. The University maintains communication with external stakeholders as well as its graduates.

The experts highlight that students as well as teaching staff evaluate the curriculum of the Bachelor study programs "Public Administration".

During the visit and the discussions with the responsible people, it became obvious that the University's quality assurance system involves both teaching staff and students in the assessment of the teaching process, continuous evaluation of the courses, and monitoring and mentoring of students within the faculty. According to the experts, the University is on track to establish a comprehensive quality assurance culture.

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

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 fulfilled.

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

The experts highlight that the quality management system is ensured by central and decentral commissions and a quality management department. The commissions act in accordance with the quality assurance strategy of the University. Moreover, a "Quality Manual" is approved by the Senate for each study year. Students assess all teaching staff regularly.

The University implements procedures of periodical revision and evaluation of the study programs offered. Hence, the teaching staff is required to conduct annual self-evaluations and peer-assessments; students evaluate the teaching process as well.

The experts conclude that the study program is evaluated by different stakeholders on a regular basis by means of rational and effective methods.

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

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

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

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

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

To qualify for the final examination of a module, students must have met all subject requirements, i.e., attendance, passing the ongoing assessments and practical work. These are presented to the students by the lecture coordinator in the first course lesson. There are 41 examinations in total: 35 written exams, 3 colloquiums and 3 practical evaluations.

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, for example, optional courses and are scheduled before the exam session.

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.

The experts sum up that criteria and regulations about grading are present (see B.1 for details). The forms of examinations generally fit the competence aimed for by the study program and the modules. The evaluation of learning outcomes is, thus, appropriate.

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

C.4. Periodical evaluation procedures of teaching staff quality

The University has provided an overview about the teaching staff of the study program.

The program "Public Administration" is part of the three departments of Law, Psychology and Economics. The program employs 17 tenured teachers; of which 5 are university professors and 10 are lecturers.

Under a Senate decision, the student to teacher ratio should not be higher than 10 students per teacher; in the program, the ratio is 1 teacher for every 3.6 students (17 staff members to 62 students).

The experts take note that all teaching positions are established in compliance with the requirements of legal norms and completed with tenured teaching staff in higher education in accordance with the Romanian law. The University states that selection of teaching staff is conducted according to the Law of National Education no.1/2011, and internal regulations, which are based on the principle of public contest.

Overall, the teaching and academic staff of the University shows a high level of commitment to the execution and further development of the study program. The expert group came to the conclusion that there is a strong corporate identity and positive group dynamics among the University and Faculty administrations.

Based on the written documentation and the observations during the site visit and rounds of talk, the experts concluded that the professional and academic qualifications are appropriate and sufficient for successful implementation of the program submitted for accreditation. Andrei Saguna University, as most universities in Romania, suffers from a lack of PhD holders in the country. They motivate their own students and graduates to go into teaching.

The teaching staff is periodically evaluated through both peer and anonymous student reviews. Student evaluations are performed at the end of each semester. 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 a member of the teaching staff receive an unsatisfactory evaluation result, a course of actions will be implemented in order to eliminate the existing problems. Hence, the results are carefully monitored and the improvements are continuously observed.

The peer evaluation is carried out on objective criteria, performance, but also human interaction and is coordinated by the quality assurance representative of the department.

The self-evaluation is done by each teacher based on the "Regulations on Teacher Self-Evaluation", which includes evaluation criteria and performance indicators. The multi-criteria evaluation takes into account all the components of the academic activity. i.e., didactic activity, research activity, auxiliary activities associated with the quality of teacher.

Within the University there is a Methodological and Human Resources Training Center whose main aim is to develop innovative and effective pedagogical technologies, which are presented to teachers during annual professional training courses. Regarding measures for human resources development and qualification and opportunities for university didactic continuing education for instructors the University states ongoing professional development programs according to the law.

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

C.5. Learning resources accessibility

During the 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 programs "Public Administration". Students have access to the University library and areas to meet and study together.

The University encourages students' learning processes by offering resources and opportunities for extracurricular activities. Moreover, the University offers various forms of academic support and counselling to students through the Department of Counselling and Career Guidance. The students also describe the "open door" policy during the site visit. The teachers have office hours available to students, yet the teachers are also available outside the office hours. The students described various measures of support and their high satisfaction with them.

Furthermore, it has to be acknowledged that there are clear procedures concerning teaching staff training ("Regulations on Teaching and Research Posts" and "Regulations on Teaching Assistants and Supervisors"). During the Covid-

19 pandemic, the University organized online courses and supported the teaching staff in their didactic activities.

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

C.6. Systematically updated database, regarding the internal quality assurance

The University has designed an internal quality assurance system and established structures for monitoring and developing the quality assurance concept. Parts of the internal quality assurance system are regular peer and students' reviews, as well as the feedback meetings organized for this purpose. A more detailed description can be found under criteria C.3. and C.4. A regular track of the evaluation and review results is maintained by the University. Strategies for improvement are designed therefrom. A corresponding electronic system is also implemented. The experts conclude that the data and information policy seem to be adequate at the University.

The expert group considers criterion C.6. as fulfilled.

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

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

Through its website, the University supplies relevant information concerning its programs and its structures to the public. There is currently no English version of the University's website. Thus, the University promotes its study programs online, through local printed media, and by running open days and workshops in high-schools and other institutions.

The experts conclude that the faculty provides information on qualifications, study programs, diplomas, teaching and research staff, student facilities and other aspects. It is recommended to create an English version of the website to attract international students and to improve the University's visibility.

All in all, the expert group considers criterion C.7 to be fulfilled.

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

The expert group was provided with an overview of the quality evaluation mechanisms and institutional structures. The Quality Assessment and Assurance

Commission regularly elaborates and reviews all corresponding policies and strategies, as well as operational procedures. The expert group is convinced of the validity of the information provided in the application documentation, and its accordance with the legal framework, as stated in the "Quality Manual". Quality assurance and evaluation for the currently running programs is well-developed at the University.

Structured processes and an evaluated organization underline the importance of the quality management at the University; the organization strives for continuous improvement. Central and decentral staff are involved in the quality assurance process. The experts conclude that the institutional structure for quality education seems to be adequate. Thus, criterion C.8 is considered to be fulfilled.

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

4 Evaluation Summary

The main task of the expert group during the peer review was to assess the running “Public Administration” study program and to verify its compliance with European and Romanian regulations (*see part 1 Introduction*).

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

The expert group acknowledges the high motivation and engagement of the students studying in the program. In addition, they are satisfied with the University and the commitment of their teachers.

The site visit, in addition to the documentation provided by the University, enabled the expert group to recommend the provisional authorization of the “Public Administration” study program offered by “Andrei Saguna” University of Constanta, 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 expert group recommends the accreditation of the “Public Administration” study program also by the Romanian Ministry of Education.

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

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

A) Institutional Capacity:

- The possibilities for further development in the strategic alignment of the Faculty and the University in general should be used. The experts encourage the University to look for common interests and to combine forces and resources.
- The possibilities of going abroad through short-term stays should be expanded, for example internship or summer school.

- Creative ways of internationalization should be found, for example internationalization from home or online conferences, to include their students in the international scientific community.
- University should extend the library regarding both printed and electronic resources.

B) Educational Effectiveness:

- The integration of research conducted by the teaching staff should be more transparent in the curriculum.
- Students should be further integrated in the research of their teachers.
- The University should use its available flexibility to adapt the curriculum to current developments.
- The Bachelor exam as a final qualification at the end of the study program should be part of the official workload.
- The implementation of evaluation results to improve the study programs should be clearly documented.
- Expanding the research activities of the Faculty and particularly the study program is recommended.
- Research evaluation should be clearly documented. Staff at the faculties should strive for more public, international, and, ideally, peer-reviewed methods for disseminating their results.

C) Quality Management:

- an English version of the website to attract international students and to improve the University's visibility should be created.

5 Decision of the accreditation commission

Decision of the accreditation commission December 8, 2023

This resolution of the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS is based on the University's application, as well as the expert review and the site visit covered in the Assessment Report. The Accreditation Commission has also taken the response opinion of the University regarding the study program into account.

The site visit of the University took place on June 6-7, 2023 according to the previously agreed-upon schedule.

The accreditation procedure is structured according to the Accreditation Criteria developed by the AHPGS. The Accreditation Criteria are developed by the AHPGS in close accordance with the existing criteria and requirements valid in the Federal Republic of Germany and based on the „Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area“ (ESG), established by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) as well as the Art. 150 of Romania's Law no. 1 of National Education 2011; the Quality Evaluation Activities Guide for University Study Programs and for Higher Education Institutions: Part 1 Study Programs Accreditation External Evaluation Guide, and the Methodology for External Evaluation, Standards, Standards of Reference, and List of Performance indicators of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education ("Methodology").

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS discussed the procedural documents and the vote of the expert group regarding the Assessment Report.

The Bachelor study program requires the obtainment of 180 credit points. The regulated study period in the program "Public Administration" is three years (six semesters). The study program comprises 41 modules, of which 32 are obligatory and nine modules are optional. The language of instruction is Romanian. The Bachelor study program "Public Administration" is completed with awarding of the academic degree "Bachelor of Public Administration". Admission takes place every fall semester. The first cohort of students was admitted to the study program in the academic year 2003.

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS considers that all Accreditation Criteria are fulfilled and adopts the following decision:

The Bachelor study program “Public Administration” is recommended for accreditation for the duration of five years until September 30, 2029.

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