The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

External Evaluation Report (REE) for the procedure for obtaining an accreditation* (AC) of a Doctoral Study Domain

Higher Education Institution/Education Provider Organization:	OVIDIUS UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTA
Doctoral School:	LAW
Doctoral Domain:	LAW
The objective of the external evaluation:	Accreditation* (AC)

Members of the ARACIS Evaluation Panel

No.	Last Name and First Name	Team role	Signature
1.	Ispas, Gabriel-Liviu	Expert evaluator	
2.	Oanta Oanta, Gabriela Alexandra	International Expert	
3.	Ionascu, Alina	PhD Student Evaluator	

I. Introduction

The external quality assessment report is elaborated following the request of Ovidius University of Constanta to establish and accredit a doctoral program in the field of legal sciences/ law.

The report was prepared by the committee appointed by the ARACIS Council, composed of conf. dr. habil. Gabriel Liviu Ispas, member of the Permanent Commission of Legal Sciences of ARACIS, Prof. Gabriela Alexandra Oanță, international evaluator, University of Corunna, Spain and Alina Ionașcu, PhD student, West University of Timișoara.

The evaluation visit took place on July 21-23, 2025, at the Ovidius University of Constanța, the evaluation team having access to the self-evaluation documents 25 days before the visit.

"Ovidius" University of Constanta is an institution established in 1961. The stated mission of the institution is advanced research and education. It is an educational institution organizing doctoral studies since 1990.

As a scientifically accredited doctoral degree organizing institution, "Ovidius" University of Constanta (IOSUD-UOC) currently has 9 doctoral schools, which organize 11 doctoral fields.

According to the institution's mission, scientific research, technological development and innovation is the second pillar of the UOC's mission. The University aims to keep its research priority areas permanently aligned with regional priorities and the latest trends in the development of knowledge at European level. This will be achieved by supporting research in priority areas and encouraging collaboration and interdisciplinarity. Another objective is to support excellence in research and innovation by strengthening competitive research nuclei, rewarding performance, stimulating innovation, involving students in research, development and innovation activities.

At IOSUD level, the situation of active PhD supervisors is as follows: 33 PhD supervisors in the PhD field Medicine, 5 PhD supervisors in the PhD field Mathematics, 16 PhD supervisors in the PhD field Humanities, 9 PhD supervisors in the PhD field Applied Sciences, 4 doctoral supervisors in the doctoral field of Dentistry and 12 doctoral supervisors in the doctoral field of Theology, 5 doctoral supervisors in the doctoral field of Sports Science and Physical Education, 3 doctoral supervisors in the doctoral field of Management, 3 doctoral supervisors in the field of Business Administration.In the field of Law, the University organizes undergraduate, full-time and part-time studies, as well as Master's programs. The bachelor and master programs are evaluated according to the legal regulations, and the external evaluation is carried out by ARACIS, at the intervals stipulated by the legal regulations.

II. Methods used

The external evaluation was carried out by studying the internal evaluation report prepared and submitted by the higher education institution, including the annexes. No documents were requested prior to the visit, and during the visit the documents also in the electronic file were checked. The management of the faculty also presented a number of results of scientific research, including in volumes published by Bruylant.

During the visit to the institution, meetings were organized with the heads of the institution, as detailed in the work program. A meeting was organized with the representatives of the socio-professional environment representative for the field of law, which was attended, among others,

by two heads of section of the Court of Appeal Constanța, the president of the Constanța Court of Appeal, the president of the Constanța Court of Appeal, the president of the Constanța Chamber of Notaries, the president of the branch of the Union of Executors, representatives of the Naval Authority and of the Chamber of Legal Advisors of Constanța County.

Visits were made to the research laboratories, library, study spaces and student facilities.

III.

Judgement on the extent to which the standards and performance indicators are fulfilled

DOMAIN A. Institutional capacity

Criterion A.1. Managerial and administrative structures and processes involving students and other stakeholders

Standard S.A.1.1. Organisational components and institutional processes The HEI has organisational components in its structure, which function based on adequate competences, responsibilities, processes, and implementation procedures, and ensure an effective management system.	
Indicator I.P.A.1.1.1	For delivering the study programme/domain, the HEI has adequate organisational components and an adequate management system, which operate based on methodologies, regulations and procedures that are periodically reviewed as required by law.

Pursuant to the Law on Higher Education No. 199/2023, the Code of Doctoral Studies adopted by Order of the Minister with No. 3020/2024 and the Framework Regulation on Doctoral Studies of January 8, 2024, the following documents were adopted:

- Institutional Regulations on the organization and functioning of the doctoral university study programs were adopted by the Senate Decision No. 576/25.07.2024.
- The methodology for the conduct of elections for the position of the Director of the Doctoral School Council (DSC), as well as the election by students of the representative in the DSC and evidence of their conduct.
- the methodology and evidence of the conduct of the elections of the Director of the Doctoral School Council (DSC) and of the election of the student representative to the DSC;

At IOSUD:

- there is the Operational Procedure on the organization of the examination for the completion of doctoral studies through the public defence of the doctoral thesis.
- there are mechanisms for recognizing the quality of doctoral supervisor and for the equivalence of doctorates obtained in other countries.
- there are functional management structures (Doctoral School Council), including proof of regularity in convening meetings.
- there is a doctoral studies contract.
- there are internal procedures for reviewing and approving proposals for the topics of the advanced doctoral program.

The Regulations of the Doctoral School of Law cover all the aspects specified in the Code of Doctoral Studies, namely:

a) the acceptance of new doctoral supervisor members, as well as regulations on how a doctoral supervisor's membership of the Doctoral School may be withdrawn.
b) the mechanisms by which decisions are taken on the appropriateness, structure and content of the doctoral program based on advanced graduate studies.
c) the procedures for changing the supervisor of a particular doctoral student and the procedures for conflict mediation.
d) the conditions under which the doctoral program may be interrupted.
e) how to prevent fraud in scientific research, including plagiarism.
f) ensuring access to research resources.
g) attendance obligations of doctoral students, according to a methodology developed by the Ministry of Education.

From the analysis of the data and the situations presented, we found that there is an implementation of methodologies and procedures by the institution, including by assuming measures in case of violation of quality standards of doctoral theses in other fields of science. The committee's assessment is that there are institutional procedures and mechanisms, stipulated by law, but also a commitment to the implementation of the assumed norms. We consider that the standard is met.

Recommendation:

- The institution should evaluate at least annually how the regulations for the organization of doctoral schools are implemented, especially regarding the verification of the quality of research activities.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

Standard S.A.1.2. Stakeholder engagement The HEI proves that it engages the relevant stakeholders in developing methodologies and regulations, as well as implementation procedures.	
Indicator I.P.A.1.2.1	The opinions of the faculty and department members, of the subsidiary or extension* and of other stakeholders are considered in the process of adopting and revising methodologies, regulations and implementation procedures.

The opinions of the doctoral supervisors, prospective members of the guidance committees, departmental and faculty management are taken into account in the process of elaboration, adoption and periodic review of the methodologies, regulations and procedures for the implementation of the Doctoral School.

Stakeholder participation is carried out through institutionalized mechanisms, including prior consultation within academic structures, the organization of thematic working meetings, and the solicitation of written views from academics, doctoral supervisors and doctoral candidates.

From the discussions held with representatives of the socio-professional environment, it emerged that they were consulted about the activities specific to the bachelor and master programs, but not about the curriculum or the organization of the doctoral field in law.

* The faculty, department, subsidiary, extension - hereinafter “organisational components”

We consider that the working environment at the faculty level is optimal, and the collaboration with the committees organized at the university level and with the holders of university-level positions is of very good quality.

We recommend that the socio-professional environment be regularly consulted for updating curricula or research topics.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

Criterion A.2. The material resources and optimisation of the use of the material resources

Standard S.A.2.1. Material resources The HEI owns adequate movable and immovable assets to enable it to carry out the study programme/domain.	
Indicator I.P.A.2.1.1	The HEI legally owns venues for the related education, research and administrative processes, as well as for services for students, doctoral students and trainees, thus providing an enabling environment for living and studying, including for disabled persons. Optimal venues are also provided for activities of the staff. Such venues are adequately equipped.

Regarding the presentation of the state of affairs, the institution offers evidence of active involvement by members of the academic community in research activities. This is demonstrated through the existence of two research centres within the Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences: the Centre for Studies and Research on Human Rights and Discrimination, and the Dobrogea Social Research Centre. Both centers are well-equipped with computers, video projectors, interactive whiteboards, internet access, and access to reputable scientific databases including Web of Science, Scopus, Elsevier, SpringerLink, and others. Their activities include organising conferences and seminars, conducting applied research, developing socially relevant projects, collaborating with public institutions and NGOS, publishing scientific papers, and editing thematic volumes. Additionally, the presence of specialised computer laboratories and the CALIOPE Institutional Digital Repository underpins the logistical and organisational support provided to future doctoral students, enabling their participation in institutional research and promoting the dissemination of results to the scientific and social community.

When analysing these elements in relation to the indicator' s requirements, it is evident that the institution genuinely involves its members and other interested parties in research activities. External collaborations with public institutions and NGOs demonstrate openness to external actors, while the dissemination of research results through conferences and publications highlights the applied character of these activities. Furthermore, digital resources and access to international databases facilitate the integration of the academic community into the global knowledge network. The archiving and open-access publication of works enhances transparency and visibility of the institution's activities.

A notable example of good practice is the use of the CALIOPE Institutional Digital Repository, which enables both open access to scientific works and secure, standardised archiving, thereby contributing to increased academic integrity.

Recommendations:

- To make the use of existing infrastructure more efficient, it is recommended to create a digital platform that allows for scheduling, booking, and monitoring the use of rooms, laboratories, and research spaces.

- It is advisable to establish shared academic workspaces equipped with advanced IT infrastructure to promote collaboration among doctoral students, teaching staff, and researchers from related fields.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

Standard S.A.2.2. Management of material resources The organisational components manage the movable and immovable assets used for the evaluated study programme/domain in an optimal, sustainable manner.	
Indicator I.P.A.2.2.1	The movable and immovable assets are properly maintained to ensure optimal conditions for studying, living and research, as well as for work.

Both the University as a whole and the Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences (FDSA) have a material base suitable for teaching, research and administrative activities, which is efficiently managed. The management of the material base is based on a periodic system of evaluation of the degree of wear and tear, functionality and adequacy of the facilities, with a view to continuous modernization of the infrastructure and ensuring an optimal educational environment.

The FDSA also seeks to continuously adapt its material base to the requirements of digital education and student-centred learning by investing in equipment, e-learning platforms and open educational resources in line with university policies and digitization strategies. All claims of the evaluated institution are supported by institutional documents, presented as annexes to the internal evaluation report.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

Criterion A.3. Adequate human resources and transparent staff recruiting procedures developed according to the law

Standard S.A.3.1. Human resources The HEI has the required human resources to organise and deliver the evaluated study programme/domain.	
Indicator I.P.A.3.1.1	The human resources of the organisational component are suitable to perform the activities pertaining to the evaluated study programme/domain. The teaching staff has the required qualifications and professional competences to teach the subject matters assigned to them in the job list.

Taking into account the Internal Evaluation Report and its Annexes, especially Annexes A.3.1.1, A.3.2.1.1.a-c, A.3.2.1.a-c, A.3.2.2.1.a-c, and A.3.2.2.a-c, the School for Doctoral Studies in Law of the OUC would have three doctoral supervisors, namely: Adrian Stoica-Constantin, Daniel Mihail Sandru, and Sorin Alamoreanu. Two of them are tenured as Professors with an employment contract for an indefinite period within the Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences at the OUC. The other doctoral supervisor is currently tenured as an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law within the Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca and has already presented a request to affiliate with the School for Doctoral Studies in Law of the OUC.

The three doctoral supervisors have an outstanding research activity. They have published extensively in legal (Romanian and foreign) journals with impact factor, which are indexed in SCOPUS, Web of Science and ERIH. They have edited/co-edited volumes on highly topical issues with leading Romanian and foreign publishing houses. They have also international visibility in their respective field of expertise, are members in scientific committees of international publications and conferences as well as of boards of international professional associations. They also count on having been invited for international conferences and seminars, both in Romania and abroad.

Based on the Internal Evaluation Report and above-mentioned annexes, it can also be assessed that the three doctoral supervisors, who would be part of the School for Doctoral Studies in Law of the OUC, have proved expertise in the fields of the study they teach.

It is recommended to the Faculty of Law at the OUC to support and give the opportunity to its associated professors to get the habilitation for supervising doctoral thesis as well as to contract affiliated doctoral supervisors, preferably from universities outside Romania's university system.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Standard S.A.3.2. Recruitment procedures Teaching staff recruitment procedures compliant with the provisions of the law.	
Indicator I.P.A.3.2.1	Recruitment procedures comply with the provisions of the law, and are established and carried out transparently.

The UOC and Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences (FDSA) teaching staff recruitment procedures comply with the legal provisions in force, the Higher Education Law no. 199/2023, the University Charter, the University's Internal Regulations and other relevant legislation. From the evaluation of the competition files, including the competition for a professor, PhD supervisor, it appears that the procedures met the standards of legality, impartiality and transparency.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

Criterion A.4. Digitalisation of institutional processes

Standard S.A.4.1. Digital transformation The digital transformation process in the organisational component seeks to achieve administrative simplification and improve the quality of the services provided to the members of its own community, as well as to third parties.	
Indicator I.P.A.4.1.1	The organisational component uses IT tools in its own procedures, to improve access and provide good quality services for the members of its own community and the indirect beneficiaries of education.

The OUC counts on and use of the Doctorate module of the UMS integrated student management system, which is provided by RedPoint and contains a tab – called "Doctorate Situation" – that is visible only for doctoral study cycles.

In addition, the IODUD-OUC already uses the Sistemantiplagiat.ro IT platform to verify similarities in doctoral theses, projects and research reports developed by doctoral students as well as to verify the percentage of similarity in all doctoral thesis and evaluate therefore the originality of the text. This is largely explained in the Internal Evaluation Report (see pp. 25-26) and the Procedure on anti-plagiarism checking of doctoral theses (available in Romanian at: https://www.univ-ovidius.ro/images/2022-2023/doctorat/reglementari/PO-13.pdf).

For all these reasons we argue that the IOSUD- OUC has the necessary IT tools in its own procedures to improve access and provide good quality services for the members of its own community and the indirect beneficiaries of education. It is expected that the Doctoral School of Law within the OUC will benefit of the existing background in this regard.

The indicator is fulfilled.

DOMAIN B. Educational efficacy

Criterion B.1. Content and relevance of study programmes

Standard S.B.1.1. Content of study programme/s* The study programme is based on a curriculum designed so that students can acquire the expected learning outcomes.	
Indicator I.P.B.1.1.1	The study programme is developed and structured according to the expected learning outcomes, and organised based on transferable study credits. It includes all learning, teaching, practical training, research and evaluation experiences, which, together, lead to a higher education qualification.

Taking into account the Internal Evaluation Report and its Annexes B.2.1 and B.2.1.3.1.a-h, it can be assessed that the School for Doctoral Studies in Law of the OUC counts on a study programme that is developed and structured according to the expected learning outcomes.
The duration of the doctoral studies will be four years. The doctoral programme is made up by nine subjects, namely: (1) Methodology of legal scientific research, (2) Ethics and academic integrity, (3) Management of research projects, (4) Management of research projects Institutions of contemporary civil law, (5) European Union's normative system, (6) Problems of forensic expertise, (7) Current trends in civil procedure, (8) Protection of fundamental rights in the European Union, and (9) Theory and method in forensic handwriting expertise.

The scientific training programme will be completed by the development of a project of scientific research, and a research project will be orally presented before the supervisor and the supervision commission.

In addition, the doctoral student has to demonstrate that he/she has published (as a unique author) at least three scientific publications that are related to the topic of his/her doctoral thesis, which fulfill all the following conditions: at least one of them has been presented (as a communication and not as a poster/resume) to an international scientific event, at least one of them had been presented (as a communication and not as a poster/resume) to a national

* The term "programmes" concerns the external quality evaluation for the study programmes contained in a master/doctoral domain. The term "programme" shall be used hereinafter.

scientific event, at least two of them have been published by prestigious scientific legal journals, and at least one of the publications had been published before the last year in which the doctoral studies were completed. The doctoral student may moreover present a maximum of one communication for the same scientific event.

Scientific articles from research activities, which are presented at international conferences in the field and proven by the conference program, will complete the scientific research programme of each doctoral student.

Doctoral students will get transferable study credits for all the subjects and research activities done during their doctoral studies. 240 ECTS will be got by each student during his/her doctoral studies. The doctoral degree in Law will be the higher education qualification at the end of the doctoral studies and after the doctoral thesis is defended.

It is recommended that doctoral students carry out research stays at foreign universities. In this regard, the bilateral agreements signed by the OUC under the Erasmus+ Programme can be the appropriate legal and academic framework for undertaking such activity.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.2. Alignment of the curriculum with the qualification

Standard S.B.2.1. Alignment with the qualification level and the intended competences In the curriculum design and development process, the organisational component seeks to ensure the qualification level, as well as correlation with the envisaged occupations.	
Indicator I.P.B.2.1.2	The expected learning outcomes are correlated with the competences required by those occupations, according to the occupational standards and/or the European Skills, Competences and Occupations (ESCO).

Regarding the presentation of the current situation, the institution emphasises a link between expected learning outcomes and the skills necessary for roles in the legal profession, in line with national and European occupational standards (ESCO). During curriculum development, the Doctoral School of Law utilises the National Qualifications Framework (CNC), the National Register of Higher Education Qualifications (RNCIS), and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), ensuring alignment among the programme objectives, disciplinary content, and anticipated results. The curriculum of the Law doctoral programme, created in accordance with ARACIS norms, includes disciplines that balance fundamental and specialised training, aiming to develop advanced research skills. Each course outline contains details about aims, learning outcomes, targeted professional and transversal skills, assessment methods, and recommended bibliography. Additionally, these outlines are approved by the Doctoral School Council and its director, reflecting a thorough and structured validation process.Analysing this information indicates that the institution essentially fulfils the requirements of the evaluated indicator, as the learning outcomes are systematically developed based on labour market needs, the expectations of the academic community, and socio-professional stakeholders in the legal field. The curriculum design adheres to modern principles of international comparability, facilitating the recognition of qualifications and helping graduates integrate into various professional environments. The curriculum structure and course details confirm that the programmes aim to develop relevant skills for research, critical analysis, and

practical application, aligning with the occupational profile of the field. This is further supported by the incorporation of interdisciplinary themes and contemporary methodological approaches that meet the current demands of academic and legal careers.

Recommendations:

- It is advised to periodically consult legal professionals (judges, lawyers, notaries, legal advisors, etc.) to verify that the skills acquired remain relevant to the actual demands of the professional environment.
- It is advisable to diversify the curriculum by including optional subjects that emphasise the development of advanced academic and research skills, such as scientometrics, research data management, or scientific communication).

The indicator is: fulfilled.

Criterion B.3. Student-centred learning, teaching and evaluation

Standard S.B.3.1 Principles The organisational component implements the principles of student-centred learning.	
Indicator I.P.B.3.1.1	The organisational component ensures implementation of the student-centred learning in the curriculum and through the teaching strategies used in the learning and teaching activities and experiences.

The Doctoral School of Law coherently and systematically integrates principles of student-centred learning in both its curriculum structure and teaching methods. The curriculum is designed to align with expected learning outcomes expressed as competences, according to the National Qualifications Framework, ensuring that the educational process is geared towards authentic professional training for doctoral students. The promoted teaching strategies — such as collaborative learning, problem-based learning, reflective portfolios, digital resources, and personalised feedback – actively foster student involvement, independence, and empowerment. Simultaneously, the school's organisational framework provides flexibility and adaptability to cater to individual student needs through methods like tutoring, counselling, access to online resources, and encouragement to participate in extracurricular and research activities. Notable good practices include the use of reflective portfolios, the integration of formal, non-formal, and informal learning, and the promotion of transversal skill development.

Recommendations:

- *Implementation of an internal digital platform for collaboration among doctoral students (forums, thematic groups, resource databases, and projects), which would promote informal and peer learning.*

The indicator is: fulfilled.

Criterion B.4. Accessibility and efficiency of the resources and support services, adequate for learning

Standard S.B.4.1. Access to resources and services The organisational component provides access to adequate resources and support services, according to the needs of the students.

Indicator I.P.B.4.1.1	The organisational component provides students, including those with special educational needs/disabilities, with access to resources and services designed to support the learning process, adequate for the individual learning needs, the study domain, the study cycle, and the form of organisation of the study programme.

Regarding the presentation of the state of affairs, the institution notes that within the Doctoral School of Law, the organisational component is designed to ensure equitable access to educational resources and services for all potential doctoral students, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Access is guaranteed by compliance with national legislation in force (Higher Education Law no. 199/2023 and the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), as well as by the institution's commitments regarding inclusion and equity. Institutional measures include adapting teaching resources, providing support through the university library for access to online scientific resources, offering academic, psychological, and career counselling services, and arranging educational and administrative spaces according to accessibility standards.Upon analysing the provided information, the institution has implemented a coherent set of measures supporting the achievement of the analysed indicator. Access to resources and services is secured through an integrated approach that combines physical, digital, and psycho-pedagogical support. The support offered to doctoral students is customised to the level of study (doctoral cycle), the field (law), and the individual needs of the beneficiaries, demonstrating good adaptation to the requirements of a student-centred higher education. Additionally, the availability of digital resources and infrastructure that facilitates online activities further enhances the flexibility of the educational process and promotes greater autonomy in learning, including for individuals with disabilities.

An example of good practice is integrating electronic platforms that are compatible with assistive technologies, along with offering comprehensive academic and psychological counselling services to help personalise the educational journey. Furthermore, ensuring physical spaces meet accessibility standards and encouraging participation through hybrid or online formats reflect the institution's dedication to genuine educational inclusion.

Recommendations:

Implementing an anonymous feedback channel that enables reporting of barriers faced, proposing solutions, and assessing the effectiveness of support services from the perspective of direct users.**The indicator is: fulfilled.**

Criterion B.5. Learning outcomes

Standard S.B.5.1. Definition and evaluation Learning outcomes are adequately defined and evaluated.	
Indicator I.P.B.5.1.1	Learning outcomes are adequately described, and they support understanding of the students' and teachers' expectations regarding the content of the subject matters in the curriculum.

Within the Doctoral School of Law, learning outcomes are formulated clearly, coherently and in accordance with national and European standards for higher level qualifications. They are integrated into the structure of the curriculum, subject descriptions and curricular

documents, helping to ensure a common understanding of the learning objectives, both on the part of the doctoral students and the teaching staff involved in the training process.

The learning outcomes are expressed in terms of professional and transversal competences and are linked to the requirements of in-depth knowledge, critical thinking, autonomy in research and capacity for innovation specific to the doctoral cycle. Each discipline in the curriculum includes a detailed description of:

- the competences pursued (cognitive, methodological, instrumental, value-based);
- expected learning outcomes, formulated according to the international classification (knowledge - know, skills - know how, responsibility/autonomy - be able to);
- correlation between subject content, teaching methods and forms of assessment.

The learning outcomes will be made known to doctoral students at the beginning of the study program and will be discussed during teaching activities, thus ensuring transparency and predictability of the formative process.

From the analysis carried out, we found that the institution operates with the concept of competences, without developing the learning outcomes component, as they are mentioned in the higher education law. In view of the situation where no learning outcomes were approved for the doctoral fields, given the timing of the submission of the evaluation dossier, we assess that the standard is met.

We recommend the institution to update the learning outcomes by reference to the approved learning outcomes for the bachelor's and master's degree respectively.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

Indicator I.P.B.5.1.2	Achievement of the learning outcomes is checked in ongoing examinations and study completion exams.

According to the Internal Evaluation Report (see especially pp. 26-27) and the information posted on the OUC's website (see https://www.univ-ovidius.ro/educatie/doctorat), the IOSUD – OUC counts with a system of rigorous and systematic system of verification of the achievement of the doctoral students' learning outcomes, which is taking place during the doctoral program and through the final evaluation of the doctoral thesis.

On the one hand, there is a mid-term evaluation that is carried out through exams in the nine subjects included in the Doctoral School Plan of studies, the development and defence of scientific papers, and the participation in various scientific activities, such as presentations, conferences, and scientific publications.

On the other hand, the final evaluation of doctoral studies consists of several steps, such as: the evaluation of the scientific contribution and the degree of adequacy to the standards of excellence of the field, the verification of the originality of the doctoral thesis, the obtaining of a favourable opinion from the guidance committee, and the public defence of the doctoral thesis, before a specialized committee. The information and summaries on the doctoral thesis already presented under the umbrella of the IOSUD – OUC are a very good example and contain relevant and useful information for the doctoral students; see: https://www.univ-ovidius.ro/sustinerea-publica-a-tezelor-de-doctorat

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.7. Procedures and practices regarding the admission competition, the journey, recognition and equivalence of studies, and result certification

Standard S.B.7.1. Admission The admission procedures and principles ensure access to higher education.	
Indicator I.P.B.7.1.1	The organisational component applies the admission procedures.

The proper methodology for organizing doctoral studies within IOSUD – OUC is regulated by an adequate normative framework, which details and explains the whole process on the admission of doctoral students and the completion of doctoral studies. For instance, the updated Regulation on the organization and conducting of admission process to doctoral studies at the OUC entered into force on 25 March 2025 (available at: https://www.univ-ovidius.ro/images/2024-2025/doctorat/admitere/Regulament%20admitere-doctorat_%202025_aprobat%20HS%20martie.pdf). See also the Internal Evaluation Report at p. 36.

There is plenty information on the website of the IOSUD – OUC on the admission for doctoral studied for the 2025-2026 academic year (see: https://www.univ-ovidius.ro/admitere-doctorat). For instance, there are details on the documents that accompany the application form, the criteria to be fulfilled to be admitted, the fees for the 2025-2026 academic year, the topics to be chosen for the research that are proposed by the doctoral supervisors, etc. There is a transparent information on the admission procedures and steps that have to be done by the new admitted doctoral students.

It is expected that the Doctoral School of Law within the OUC will benefit from this institutional framework should it be authorized to operate.

It is recommended that international co-supervision agreements be signed for doctoral students of the Doctoral School of Law within the OUC. If such agreements were formalised, they should be publicised accordingly on the OUC's website, namely at: https://www.univ-ovidius.ro/educatie/doctorat

The indicator is fulfilled.

Indicator I.P.B.7.1.2	Admission in higher education study programmes complies with the principles of fairness and equal opportunities, and with the establishing of support measures to ensure access of vulnerable groups at social and educational risk, including candidates with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Within IOSUD – Ovidius University of Constanța, the admission process to doctoral studies is governed by strict, transparent institutional mechanisms that align with both the national legal framework (Higher Education Law no. 199/2023) and the principles of equity, equal opportunities, and non-discrimination. In view of expanding the academic offering by establishing a doctoral programme in Law, already integrated at a conceptual level within the

IOSUD-UOC structure, it is apparent that the existing procedural framework provides a solid basis for meeting the requirements. Institutional methodologies set out eligibility criteria, the stages and assessments of the admission competition, as well as the participation conditions, while also offering concrete support measures for candidates from vulnerable groups.An example of good practice is the existence of specialised structures, such as the Inclusion and Accessibility Service, which offers personalised support to candidates with special needs.

Additionally, the flexibility in organising competition tests and the active promotion of diversity through communication campaigns denote an institutional culture oriented towards inclusion.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the annual admissions methodology include a specific section on support for candidates with special educational needs and those from vulnerable groups, with clear procedures, deadlines, and institutional responsibilities.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

Standard S.B.7.2. Academic journey of students The organisational component carries out actions supporting the students' academic journey.	
Indicator I.P.B.7.2.1	The organisational component applies the regulations concerning the students' professional activity.

The Doctoral School within (FDSA) provides a coherent and well-functioning organizational framework that can support the academic journey of doctoral students from the moment of admission to the completion of the doctoral thesis. This framework is regulated in accordance with the Higher Education Law no. 199/2023, the Code of Doctoral Studies and the institutional regulations in force.

The organizational component constantly seeks to monitor, mentor and support academic progress through the following specific mechanisms and actions, which will be implemented as the doctoral school is established:

- Assignment of a doctoral supervisor compatible with the proposed topic, as well as the constitution of a mentoring committee.
- Development and implementation of the individual scientific research plan.
- Regular organization of interim evaluation activities (scientific referees, progress reports, participation in scientific sessions), which allow to check the state of the research and to provide constructive feedback.
- Facilitating access to academic resources and scientific databases (through the university library and electronic platforms).
- Encouraging doctoral students to participate in scientific events, publications, conferences and research internships (including through Erasmus+ or other international partnerships).

The institution also implements mechanisms to assess the satisfaction and needs of doctoral students, adapting the support measures according to the feedback received.

Doctoral students in the Law program will have the opportunity to provide feedback by filling out a questionnaire to identify various aspects of their path at the doctoral school, namely: training

program, collaboration with the doctoral supervisor and other members of the guidance and academic integrity committee, facilities, access to resources, transparency in information, etc. The analysis and findings from the processing of the questionnaires will be included in reports that will be finalized with a SWOT analysis and a plan of measures that establish a series of internal recommendations for improvement of the situation analysed, but also for monitoring. Thus, within the Doctoral School, a plan of measures will be adopted covering important aspects relating to:

- maintaining a number of doctoral theses completed in relation to the number of doctoral students admitted.
- achieving and maintaining excellence in research activity.
- increasing the degree of internationalization of doctoral studies.
- streamlining the computerized system for keeping track of doctoral students and their academic progress.
- developing efficient mechanisms to facilitate internal and international communication.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

DOMAIN C. Quality management

Criterion C.3. Procedures for the initiation, monitoring and periodic review of the study programmes and domains and of the performed activities, involving students, employers and other stakeholders

Standard S.C.3.1. Procedures and implementation of procedures The HEI has procedures for initiating, monitoring, and periodically reviewing the study programmes and domains and the performed activities, and applies them systematically.	
Indicator I.P.C.3.1.1	The organisational component consistently applies the procedures, and proves their impact on quality assurance.

The University constantly and rigorously applies the institutional procedures on quality assurance and quality assessment of the educational and scientific research process, in accordance with the Law on Higher Education no. 199/2023, the Code of Doctoral Studies and ARACIS standards.

The procedures are regulated by the Rules of Organization and Functioning of the Doctoral School, complemented by specific methodologies on:

- admission of doctoral candidates.
- carrying out teaching and research activities.
- annual evaluation of doctoral candidates and supervisors.
- public defence of the thesis and award of the doctoral degree.
- preventing and sanctioning breaches of research ethics.

The impact of the application of these procedures is demonstrable through:

- Increased compliance of doctoral activities with legal requirements and international standards.
- improving the quality of doctoral theses and scientific output.
- ensuring a clear academic pathway and supporting the individual progress of doctoral candidates.
- Continuous monitoring of the work of teaching staff involved in conducting and evaluating research.

- developing an institutional culture centred on performance, ethics and continuous improvement.

The Commission considers that there is a good basis for the law doctoral school to fall in line with the good practices of good application of academic quality procedures, which IOSUD already implements.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

Indicator I.P.C.3.1.2	Members of its own community and other stakeholders are involved in the procedure implementation process.

Within IOSUD – Ovidius University of Constanța, there is an emphasis on the participatory implementation of institutional procedures, in accordance with the principles of good governance and the provisions of Law no. 199/2023 on Higher Education. In the context of the expansion of IOSUD-UOC through the establishment of the future Doctoral School of Law, already foreseen in the institutional structure, the existing model of involvement of members of the university community – teaching staff, doctoral supervisors, doctoral students – as well as other internal and external stakeholders, will constitute a functional and adaptable benchmark. The current practice within IOSUD involves consulting academic and administrative structures (Faculty Council, Doctoral School Council, Department Council) in the development and updating of procedures, the participation of doctoral student representatives in decision-making bodies and active collaboration with entities such as the Ethics Commission, CEAC, Legal Directorate and the University Library. These mechanisms contribute to ensuring the coherence and applicability of the procedures in response to the real needs of the academic community. The participation of doctoral students in consultative and decision-making processes, corroborated by institutional openness to feedback from the professional and social environment, reflects an organisational culture focused on continuous improvement and receptivity to the diversity of perspectives. From the standpoint of the future Doctoral School of Law, these practices provide a solid framework for strengthening stakeholder involvement in the implementation of procedures. In this regard, it is recommended to formalise consultations with external stakeholders further, by setting up permanent consultative groups or organising periodic thematic sessions, as well as publishing annual summaries on the involvement of institutional and external actors in the processes of development and procedural review, to ensure transparency and systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of participation.

Recommendations:

- The institution could introduce a digital platform (such as questionnaires, forums, or anonymous suggestions) to gather real-time feedback on the effectiveness and suitability of procedures, providing a valuable source of data for improvement.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

Criterion C.8. Participation in external evaluation processes, according to the law

Standard S.C.8.1. Compliance with the external evaluation obligation The HEI undergoes external quality evaluation as required by the law.

Indicator I.P.C.8.1.1	The organisational component carries out the procedures pertaining to the external quality evaluation process, aiming to organise the evaluated study programme as provided by the law.

The Internal Evaluation Report and the information on the OUC's website regarding the doctoral studies allow us to assess that the IOSUD – OUC complies with the external evaluation obligation as required by Romania's legislation in this field. It is considered that the Doctoral School of Law within the OUC will benefit of this background and will therefore comply with the external evaluation obligation, namely:

- It will develop and periodically update self-evaluation documents.
- It will cooperate with the internal structures responsible for university quality.
- It will provide the external evaluation committees with all requested documents.
- It will ensure access and logistical support necessary for conducting evaluation visits and interviews with the institutional actors involved.
- It will actively participate in the process of reviewing and improving the study program based on the recommendations made by external evaluation bodies.

The indicator is fulfilled.

IV. SWOT Analysis

Strengths: □ The three doctoral supervisors meet the minimum standards of CNATDCU and have a constant scientific publishing activity □ IOSUD has all well-founded and updated organizational documents, according to the Higher Education Law □ Partnerships with scientific organizations in the field and with other universities in the country and abroad. □ The existence of centers such as the Center for Studies and Research in Human Rights and Discrimination or the Dobrogea Social Research Center provides platforms for applied research and collaboration with public institutions.	INTERNAL FACTORS	**Weaknesses:** □ Relatively low number of doctoral supervisors affiliated with the doctoral school □ Low degree of internationalization □ Lack of WoS or Scopus indexed publications□ At present, the most part of the doctoral supervisors does not have extensive scientific research developed abroad or in collaboration with foreign research groups
SWOT analysis		
Opportunities: □ Access to reimbursable and non-reimbursable funding	EXTERNAL FACTORS	**Threats:** □ Lack of funding, as a result of the state's financial

resources; □ The possibility of expanding international partnerships, □ Involvement in interdisciplinary and collaborative projects that also target doctoral research □ Attracting international doctoral students □ Inviting prestigious researchers from the country and the European Union to committees and projects □ Geographic proximity to other European countries, whose inhabitants can consider attractive the doctoral study programme in Law within the IOSUD – OUC □ Integration into thematic European networks would improve the visibility of the doctoral school, attract international experts, and ease access to collaborative funding. □ Participation in international research and doctoral training consortia, such as Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and/or UNITA networks.		instability □ Migration of qualified human resources □ Limited financial resources to support doctoral students □ Low interest of candidates for fundamental research □ Neglect and self-sufficiency

V. Extent to which the standards and performance indicators are fulfilled, and recommendations

No.	Performance Indicator	Extent to which it was fulfilled (F/PF/UF)	Recommendations
DOMAIN A. Institutional capacity			
1.	I.P.A.1.1.1 For delivering the study programme/domain, the HEI has adequate organisational components and an adequate management system, which operate based on methodologies, regulations and procedures that are periodically reviewed as required by law.	F	The institution should evaluate at least annually how the regulations for the organization of doctoral schools are implemented, especially regarding the verification of the quality of research activities.
2.	I.P.A.1.2.1 The opinions of the faculty and department members, of the subsidiary or extension and of other stakeholders are considered in the process of adopting and	F	We recommend that the socio-professional environment be regularly consulted for updating curricula or research topics.

No.	Performance Indicator	Extent to which it was fulfilled (F/PF/UF)	Recommendations
	revising methodologies, regulations and implementation procedures.		
3.	I.P.A.2.1.1 The HEI legally owns venues for the related education, research and administrative processes, as well as for services for students, doctoral students and trainees, thus providing an enabling environment for living and studying, including for disabled persons. Optimal venues are also provided for activities of the staff. Such venues are adequately equipped.	F	To make the use of existing infrastructure more efficient, it is recommended to create a digital platform that allows for scheduling, booking, and monitoring the use of rooms, laboratories, and research spaces. It is advisable to establish shared academic workspaces equipped with advanced IT infrastructure to promote collaboration among doctoral students, teaching staff, and researchers from related fields.
4.	I.P.A.2.2.1 The movable and immovable assets are properly maintained to ensure optimal conditions for studying, living and research, as well as for work.	F	
5.	I.P.A.3.1.1 The human resources of the organisational component are suitable to perform the activities pertaining to the evaluated study programme/domain. The teaching staff has the required qualifications and professional competences to teach the subject matters assigned to them in the job list.	F	The Faculty of Law at the OUC to support and give the opportunity to its associated professors to get the habilitation for supervising doctoral thesis as well as to contract affiliated doctoral supervisors, preferably from universities outside Romania's university system
6.	I.P.A.3.2.1 Recruitment procedures comply with the provisions of the law, and are established and carried out transparently.	F	
7.	I.P.A.4.1.1 The organisational component uses IT tools in its own procedures, to improve access and provide good quality services for the members of its own community and the indirect beneficiaries of education.	F	
DOMAIN B. Educational efficacy			
8.	I.P.B.1.1.1 The study programme is developed and structured according to the expected learning outcomes, and organised based on transferable study credits. It includes all learning, teaching, practical training, research and evaluation experiences, which, together, lead to a higher education qualification.	F	Doctoral students to carry out research stays at foreign universities. In this regard, the bilateral agreements signed by the OUC under the Erasmus+ Programme can be the appropriate legal and academic framework for undertaking such activity.
9.	I.P.B.2.1.2 The expected learning outcomes are correlated with the competences required by those occupations, according to the occupational standards and/or the European Skills, Competences and Occupations (ESCO).	F	It is advised to periodically consult legal professionals (judges, lawyers, notaries, legal advisors, etc.) to verify that the skills acquired remain relevant to the actual demands of the professional environment. It is advisable to diversify the curriculum by including optional subjects that emphasise the development of advanced academic

No.	Performance Indicator	Extent to which it was fulfilled (F/PF/UF)	Recommendations
			and research skills, such as scientometrics, research data management, or scientific communication).
10.	I.P.B.3.1.1 The organisational component ensures implementation of the student-centred learning in the curriculum and through the teaching strategies used in the learning and teaching activities and experiences.	F	*Implementation of an internal digital platform for collaboration among doctoral students (forums, thematic groups, resource databases, and projects), which would promote informal and peer learning.*
11.	I.P.B.4.1.1 The organisational component provides students, including those with special educational needs/disabilities, with access to resources and services designed to support the learning process, adequate for the individual learning needs, the study domain, the study cycle, and the form of organisation of the study programme.	F	*Implementing an anonymous feedback channel that enables reporting of barriers faced, proposing solutions, and assessing the effectiveness of support services from the perspective of direct users.*
12.	I.P.B.5.1.1 Learning outcomes are adequately described, and they support understanding of the students' and teachers' expectations regarding the content of the subject matters in the curriculum.	F	We recommend the institution to update the learning outcomes by reference to the approved learning outcomes for the bachelor's and master's degree respectively.
13.	I.P.B.5.1.2 Achievement of the learning outcomes is checked in ongoing examinations and study completion exams.	F	
14.	I.P.B.7.1.1 The organisational component applies the admission procedures.	F	International co-supervision agreements to be signed for doctoral students of the Doctoral School of Law within the OUC. If such agreements were formalised, they should be publicised accordingly on the OUC's website, namely at: https://www.univ-ovidius.ro/educatie/doctorat
15.	I.P.B.7.1.2 Admission in higher education study programmes complies with the principles of fairness and equal opportunities, and with the establishing of support measures to ensure access of vulnerable groups at social and educational risk, including candidates with special educational needs and/or disabilities.	F	It is recommended that the annual admissions methodology include a specific section on support for candidates with special educational needs and those from vulnerable groups, with clear procedures, deadlines, and institutional responsibilities.
16.	I.P.B.7.2.1 The organisational component applies the regulations concerning the students' professional activity.	F	
DOMAIN C. Quality management			
17.	I.P.C.3.1.1 The organisational component consistently applies the procedures, and proves their impact on quality assurance.	F	

No.	Performance Indicator	Extent to which it was fulfilled (F/PF/UF)	Recommendations
18.	**I.P.C.3.1.2** Members of its own community and other stakeholders are involved in the procedure implementation process.	F	The institution could introduce a digital platform (such as questionnaires, forums, or anonymous suggestions) to gather real-time feedback on the effectiveness and suitability of procedures, providing a valuable source of data for improvement.
19.	**I.P.C.8.1.1** The organisational component carries out the procedures pertaining to the external quality evaluation process, aiming to organise the evaluated study programme as provided by the law.	F	

Summary Table of Performance Indicators – Degree of Fulfillment

Evaluation Domain	Number of Performance Indicators		
	Fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Unfulfilled
Domain A. Institutional capacity	7	0	0
Domain B. Educational efficacy	9	0	0
Domain C. Quality management	3	0	0
Total	19	0	0

Other, general recommendations that were not given within the analysis of a specific performance indicator can be presented here.
Sum up the number of analysed performance indicators, and specify how many were assessed as fulfilled, partially fulfilled, and unfulfilled, if any.

VI. Conclusions

The evaluation of the application for the establishment of the law doctorate field was a challenge for the institution, but also for the evaluation committee, as it is the first evaluation carried out using the new procedure. Even if some indicators could have been described in more detail, we appreciated that the evaluation report is well written, thorough and anchored in evidence, with each claim being followed by a link to prove what was claimed.
We appreciated the openness of the institution's management, the support they enjoy in implementing this approach, and the accuracy of the university documents and methodologies.
We emphasize the broad participation in the meeting with the professional environment and the support given for this program.
We emphasized, in the report, the elements of vulnerability that may appear in the future, especially regarding internationalization, the realization and visibility of research, but also the need to increase the quality of conferences and journals.
Propose and substantiate a decision.

Following the completion of the provisional authorisation to operate/accreditation[*] procedure, the decision of the evaluation panel shall be one of the following:

a) accreditation* (AC);
~~b) non-authorisation (NA)/non-accreditation* (NAC).~~

VII. Annexes

Enclose the schedule of the on-site visit, the list of the documents reviewed, as well as any other documents that are relevant for the evaluation procedure, which are referred to in the REE and cannot be accessed through links.

[*] When the external quality evaluation for accreditation is performed without undergoing the procedure for obtaining a provisional authorisation to operate.