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:	Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu
Doctoral School:	Social Science
Doctoral Domain:	Social Work
The objective of the external evaluation:	Accreditation* (AC)

Members of the ARACIS Evaluation Panel

No.	Last Name and First Name	Team role	Signature
1.	Conf.dr. Bogdan NADOLU	Expert evaluator	
2.	Prof.dr. Tatiana SPĂTARU	International Expert	
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I. Introduction

The external evaluation for the accreditation of the doctoral university studies in Social Work, within the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, was carried out between June 29-30, 2026 by a team of evaluators appointed by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) consisting of Prof. Dr. Tatiana Spătaru (State University of Moldova) – international expert, student Alice Marin (University of Bucharest) and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bogdan Nadolu (West University of Timișoara) – coordinator.

The origins of ULBS can be found in 1976, when, by Decree of the Council of State no. 203/30.06.1976, the Institute of Higher Education of Sibiu was created, with an initial structure consisting of: the Faculty of Philology and History, the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Law, and the Faculty of Mechanics. Since 1990, ULBS has been continuously developing as a multidisciplinary university institution, integrated into the European higher education space.

ULBS is a comprehensive university, comprising 9 faculties (2 faculties with an engineering profile, engineering, and 7 faculties with various profiles: humanities, sciences, economics, law, medicine, theology, etc.), 24 teaching departments, 6 doctoral schools and a Distance Learning Center. In the academic year 2025–2026, ULBS has 15,534 students enrolled, of which 11,311 are undergraduate students (programs in Romanian and foreign languages), 2,845 master's students (programs in Romanian and foreign languages) and 465 doctoral students in 16 doctoral programs (in Romanian and foreign languages). The university also trains resident doctors, who work in the clinical departments of hospitals in Sibiu

The Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, as the Organizing Institution for Doctoral University Studies (IOSUD), has full institutional capacity to carry out teaching activities at all three study cycles (bachelor's, master's and doctoral), in compliance with all specific quality standards. IOSUD activities are organized by the Council for Doctoral University Studies (CSUD) and are carried out within the Doctoral Schools of the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu.

The Doctoral School of Social Sciences (SDSS) within ULBS, resulting from the reorganization of the Interdisciplinary Doctoral School, according to the ULBS Senate Decision no. 1211 of 31.03.2021, currently includes 6 fields of doctoral studies - cybernetics and statistics, law, economics, finance, management and sociology -, to which the field of social assistance is to be added. SDSS-ULBS was reconfigured in this form upon the recommendation of ARACIS following the visit for the evaluation of IOSUD and the fields of doctoral studies in 2021, when ULBS received the verdict to maintain accreditation (according to OM 5498/27.10.2021 published in MO Part I, no. 1062/5.11.2021). The Doctoral School of Social Sciences is coordinated by the Council of the Doctoral School of Social Sciences (CSDSS) consisting of 4 members, namely: SDSS director, a doctoral supervisor from IOSUD-ULBS, a scientific personality from outside IOSUD-ULBS and a representative of the doctoral students. The regulation for the organization and conduct of doctoral studies at the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu as well as the specific methodologies and procedures are approved by the Senate and are posted on the institution's website (senat.ulbsibiu.ro/activitate/hotararea-senatului-nr-3957-din-30-09-2022/).

The mission of the Doctoral School of Social Sciences within IOSUD ULBS (SDSS-ULBS) is to train researchers and specialists (doctors), capable of working at the highest levels both in scientific research and in practical professional activity, ensuring the insertion into the labor market of a human resource competent in carrying out scientific research and with rich professional experience, accumulated by granting the doctorate, in all 6 fields of study.

Currently, a number of 25 doctoral coordinators are active in SDSS-ULBS, to which 3 new coordinators in the field of social assistance will be added. In the academic year 2025-2026, a number of 84 doctoral students were enrolled at the SDSS level. Within DSUD Social Assistance, 3 doctoral coordinators will be active, qualified in the Field of Social Assistance: Associate Professor Dr. Anca Mioara Bejenaru (holder of ULBS), Associate Professor Dr. Georgeta Sorian Corman (ULBS title) and Prof. Dr. Gabriela Dima (ULBS affiliate).

The doctoral program is conducted under the coordination of a doctoral supervisor and includes: a training program based on advanced university studies within the doctoral school and an individual scientific research program. Within the training program based on advanced university studies, the doctoral student participates in the first year of doctoral studies in the activities within 4 doctoral study disciplines: Ethics and academic integrity, Social research methodology: methods and techniques, Theoretical models and empirical research in social work and Professional development laboratory in social work.

IOSUD and SDSS periodically organize courses, workshops and other activities for doctoral students, doctoral supervisors and ULBS teaching staff to develop professional and transversal skills. Within the individual scientific research or artistic creation program, the doctoral student benefits from the advice of a guidance committee composed of the doctoral supervisor and 3 other members, specialists in the research direction proposed by the doctoral thesis.

At the level of the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, the Center for Social Research (CCS) is accredited, being organized for the conduct of fundamental and applied research. The Center for Social Research is a distinct research unit, with a structure and activities corresponding to international standards in the field.

II. Methods used

The analysis and evaluation of the doctoral field of Social Work within IOSUD – Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu involved the analysis of the Internal Evaluation Report of the evaluated doctoral field of study and its annexes, the analysis of the documents, data and information available on the IOSUD/Doctoral School of Social Sciences website, the visit to the premises of the institution where the activities of the evaluated program will be carried out, meetings with members of the management of the Doctoral School (CSD director) in which the DSUD Social Work will operate, with the doctoral supervisors, with representatives of the various structures of IOSUD: Department for Quality Management, Ethics Commission, representatives of research centers. Throughout the evaluation, the representatives of the institution showed openness to the requests received from the evaluation committee, the teaching staff, the administrative staff and the management structures of the University, offering full support in this regard.

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.

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

The analysis of the institutional documentation, the Internal Evaluation Report prepared for the accreditation process, and the information published on the University's official websites (https://www.ulbsibiu.ro/en/; https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/en/) demonstrates that Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu (ULBS) has a clearly defined organizational structure and well-established institutional processes, integrated into a functional institutional management system. This framework ensures the organization and delivery of doctoral studies in compliance with the national legislative framework and the University's internal regulations.

The organizational structure is presented through the University's organizational chart, the internal organizational framework (https://www.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/despre/organizare/), and the internal regulations governing the organization and operation of the institution (https://www.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/despre/organizare/regulamente-de-organizare-si-functionare/). Within ULBS, the Institute for Doctoral and Postdoctoral Studies (IOSUD) operates as the institutional structure responsible for the management of doctoral studies. It has been established in accordance with the applicable legal provisions and the University Charter, with clearly defined responsibilities and competences. The composition of the Council for Doctoral Studies (CSUD) for the 2024–2029 mandate, the members of the doctoral school councils, and the doctoral student representatives for each doctoral school are publicly available (https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/csud/).

Institutional processes are regulated through dedicated procedures (https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/legislatie/), which are implemented, systematically monitored, and periodically reviewed. These institutional processes encompass doctoral admission procedures (https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/documente/); the habilitation and appointment of doctoral supervisors (https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/abilitari/abilitari-2025/); monitoring the academic progress of doctoral students; the organization of public doctoral thesis defenses; the annual evaluation of doctoral schools; and the quality assurance of doctoral study programmes (https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/wp-content/uploads/Raport-privind-activitatea-la-nivelul-IOSUD_ULBS-2025.pdf).

The expert assessment confirms the existence of a coherent institutional framework in which both the organizational components and the institutional processes are clearly defined and implemented in accordance with the University's internal regulations and the applicable legal provisions.

✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

The analysis of the institutional documentation and the information collected during the site visit indicates that the responsibilities of the organizational structures are clearly defined through institutional regulations and implemented by means of operational and managerial procedures. This demonstrates the existence of a coherent institutional governance system for doctoral studies.

The organizational structures involved in the administration of the doctoral study domain operate on the basis of clearly defined roles and responsibilities, facilitating effective coordination among the IOSUD management, the leadership of the doctoral schools, doctoral supervisors, and doctoral students. Institutional regulations and procedures are periodically updated to ensure alignment with legislative amendments, quality assurance standards, and the University's strategic objectives.

ULBS and IOSUD-ULBS promote the principles of transparency, accountability, and academic integrity through the systematic publication of relevant information on the institution's official website.

Based on the documents examined and the information obtained during the evaluation process, it can be concluded that the institution fully complies with the requirements of Performance Indicator I.P.A.1.1.1.

✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples

The existence of a comprehensive institutional regulatory framework governing the organization and operation of doctoral study programmes. Clearly defined competences, responsibilities, and decision-making mechanisms for the institutional governance structures involved in doctoral education.

The periodic revision and updating of internal regulations to ensure compliance with legislative amendments and quality assurance standards.

Effective collaboration between the management of IOSUD and the Councils of the Doctoral Schools in the governance and coordination of doctoral study programmes.

The integration of mechanisms for the promotion and monitoring of academic integrity into both managerial and academic processes.

✓ Recommendations

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.

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

The analysis of the institutional documentation confirms that IOSUD-ULBS has established functional institutional mechanisms that ensure the active involvement of stakeholders in the development, adoption, and periodic revision of the methodologies, regulations, and procedures governing the organization and delivery of doctoral programmes.

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

Stakeholder involvement is supported by a well-structured institutional framework comprising the University Charter, the Regulation on the Organization and Functioning of ULBS, the Regulations governing the operation of the University Senate, Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Board of Directors, the Regulation on the Organization and Conduct of Doctoral Studies within IOSUD-ULBS, the Institutional Development Strategy, the Rector's Annual Report, and the Annual reports on the activities of IOSUD-ULBS.

The reviewed documentation demonstrates that doctoral students, doctoral supervisors, members of the supervisory committees, members of the academic integrity committees, members of the public doctoral thesis defence committees, doctoral graduates, employers, and socio-economic partners are actively involved through both formal governance structures and complementary consultation mechanisms. Their views and recommendations are systematically collected, analysed, and taken into account in the development and revision of institutional regulations, methodologies, and procedures, in accordance with the applicable legislative framework.

The evidence reviewed further indicates that stakeholder involvement is reflected in the definition of doctoral research priorities and in the proposal of doctoral research topics for the annual admission competition to doctoral programmes.

- ✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

Stakeholder involvement is effectively integrated into the governance and internal quality assurance system of IOSUD-ULBS. Internal stakeholders actively participate in the decision-making process through their representation in the academic governance structures and through the institutional consultation mechanisms established by the University.

The analysis of the institutional documentation demonstrates that the views expressed by doctoral students, doctoral supervisors, and other members of the academic community are systematically taken into account in the process of reviewing institutional regulations and procedures. This participatory approach contributes to strengthening institutional transparency, shared responsibility, and effective academic governance, while ensuring that the regulatory framework remains aligned with legislative developments and the University's strategic objectives.

The documentation reviewed and the information obtained during the evaluation indicate that the participation of external stakeholders contributes to defining doctoral research priorities and doctoral research topics, thereby enhancing the relevance of doctoral programmes in relation to societal needs and labour market expectations. Although the existing consultation mechanisms are functional and effective, the process of collecting, analysing, and using feedback from external stakeholders could be further strengthened through the systematic use of standardised institutional instruments, such as thematic consultations and focus groups.

The evidence reviewed demonstrates that stakeholder consultation constitutes an integral component of the institutional governance system and contributes to the continuous enhancement of the quality of doctoral programmes.

Based on the documents reviewed, the publicly available information, and the findings of the external evaluation, it is concluded that IOSUD-ULBS fully complies with the requirements of Performance Indicator I.P.A.1.2.1.

- ✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples

The implementation of a participatory governance model that actively involves doctoral students, doctoral supervisors, and academic staff in the institutional decision-making process.

The integration of stakeholder consultation into the internal quality assurance system and the process of reviewing institutional regulations.

The active involvement of both internal and external stakeholders in defining doctoral research priorities and research directions.

The promotion of transparent decision-making through the complementary use of formal institutional governance structures and consultation mechanisms.

The alignment of doctoral research topics with societal needs and labour market expectations through continuous dialogue with external partners.

The participation of doctoral student representatives in the Council for Doctoral Studies (CSUD) and the Councils of the Doctoral Schools, with an active role in the decision-making processes concerning the organization and delivery of doctoral programmes.

✓ Recommendations

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.

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

The site visit and the evaluation of the documentation made available to the evaluation panel demonstrate that IOSUD-ULBS has an adequate physical infrastructure to support the teaching, research, and administrative activities associated with doctoral programmes.

The majority of the facilities used for academic activities (90.86%) are owned by ULBS, contributing to the stable management of the University's infrastructure and the long-term development of its physical resources. The documentation reviewed includes records relating to the University's assets, the inventory of facilities designated for teaching, research, social, sports, and cultural activities, equipment inventories for the educational and research facilities, as well as documentation concerning learning resources, including the University Library, library collections, access to international scientific databases, and specialised software platforms.

The University has 300 lecture and seminar rooms, 267 teaching, research, and computer laboratories, 14 library facilities, and additional administrative premises. The size and diversity of the infrastructure enable the simultaneous delivery of teaching and research activities across all study cycles, including doctoral programmes (Internal Evaluation Report prepared for accreditation, pp. 20–21).

For the doctoral study domain of Social Work, academic and research activities are planned to be conducted within the premises of the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences and the Centre for Social Research, which provides a modern research infrastructure, access to relevant international scientific databases, and the information technology resources required for doctoral research (Annex 6). During the site visit, the evaluation panel confirmed that the facilities allocated to the evaluated doctoral study domain are appropriate for doctoral research activities and provide access to the infrastructure necessary for the development of high-quality research projects.

✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

Based on the documentation reviewed and the findings resulting from the evaluation of the physical infrastructure, the evaluation panel considers that the material resources of IOSUD-ULBS are adequate for the delivery of doctoral programmes and meet the requirements for ensuring a high-quality educational and research environment. The equipment available in lecture rooms, laboratories, and research facilities supports the effective delivery of educational activities and scientific research in accordance with current higher education standards.

The University Library, through its access to international scientific databases, electronic publications, and extensive bibliographic resources, provides effective support for doctoral research activities, including those related to the doctoral study domain of Social Work currently undergoing the accreditation process.

The availability of facilities designed for persons with disabilities demonstrates the institution's commitment to ensuring equal opportunities and equitable access to educational resources.

The evaluation panel positively acknowledges the University's strategic commitment to the continuous modernisation of its infrastructure, the digitalisation of academic services, and the further development of facilities supporting hybrid learning. These strategic directions contribute to strengthening the institution's sustainability and competitiveness. The available infrastructure and material resources provide appropriate support for the teaching, research, and administrative activities associated with the doctoral study domain currently undergoing accreditation.

Based on the site visit, the evaluation of the physical infrastructure, the documentation reviewed, the publicly available information, and the findings of the external evaluation, the evaluation panel concludes that the requirements of Performance Indicator I.P.A.2.1.1 are fully met.

✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples

An extensive institutional asset base that ensures the stability and autonomy of academic activities.

Modern research infrastructure, including the Centre for Social Research, which provides appropriate conditions for the development of high-quality doctoral research.

Institutional access to digital libraries, international scientific databases, and specialised information technology resources that effectively support doctoral education and research.

The availability of facilities designed to promote accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities. The implementation of a digital infrastructure that enables the effective delivery of teaching and research activities in a hybrid learning environment.

✓ Recommendations

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.

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

The site visit, the evaluation of institutional documents, and the information provided indicate that the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences has institutional mechanisms in place for the administration and maintenance of the assets used for the Social Work doctoral study domain. The management of the material

resources related to the Doctoral School of Social Sciences and, implicitly, to the doctoral study domain of Social Work is carried out through the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, in accordance with institutional policies regarding asset management and the efficient use of resources.

The documents analysed include the University's financial statements (balance sheet and annual revenue and expenditure budget), the institutional development strategy and investment plans, as well as documents related to the maintenance, modernisation, and use of the university infrastructure (https://www.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/interes-public/bilanturi-contabile/; https://senat.ulbsibiu.ro/wp-content/uploads/281124/2_Planul%20strategic_Senat_noiem2024.pdf). These documents demonstrate the existence of financial planning and resource allocation mechanisms aimed at maintaining and further developing the material infrastructure.

The spaces dedicated to teaching, research, and administrative activities are maintained through periodic maintenance, sanitation, and modernisation works, while the infrastructure used for doctoral studies is adapted to the current requirements of research and the educational process.

- ✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

Based on the documents reviewed and the findings formulated during the evaluation, the evaluation panel considers that IOSUD-ULBS applies an adequate management system for its material resources, grounded in the principles of efficiency, sustainability, and responsible use of institutional resources.

The management of the University's assets is supported by institutionalised processes for investment planning and financial resource allocation, which ensure the maintenance of the infrastructure in conditions appropriate for the delivery of academic and research activities. Periodic maintenance and modernisation works contribute to ensuring a safe, functional, and adequate environment for doctoral students, academic staff, researchers, and administrative personnel.

The infrastructure of the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences and the Centre for Social Research provides favourable conditions for the development of doctoral research in the field of Social Work, through the availability of functional spaces, appropriate equipment, and access to relevant academic resources.

The evaluation panel positively acknowledges the institution's strategic orientation towards the continuous modernisation of infrastructure, the digitalisation of asset management and monitoring processes, as well as its commitment to improving energy efficiency and enhancing building accessibility. Furthermore, the involvement of doctoral students and doctoral supervisors in identifying infrastructure development needs represents an approach that contributes to the continuous improvement of the academic environment. The results of the site visit and the evidence analysed demonstrate that immovable and movable assets are properly managed and maintained, ensuring adequate conditions for the delivery of teaching, research, and university management activities.

Based on the site visit regarding the management of material resources, the publicly available information, and the findings of the external evaluation, it is concluded that the requirements of Performance Indicator I.P.A.2.2.1 are fully met.

- ✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples

The existence of a strategic planning framework for investments and infrastructure maintenance, aligned with the institutional development strategy.

The periodic implementation of maintenance, modernisation, and sanitation works across university facilities. The use of the Centre for Social Research as a supporting infrastructure for the development of doctoral research activities.

The integration of sustainability principles and energy efficiency considerations into infrastructure development planning. The consultation of doctoral students and doctoral supervisors in the process of identifying priorities for the development and modernisation of material resources.

✓ Recommendations

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.

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

The analysis of institutional documents and the information made available to the evaluation panel indicates that IOSUD-ULBS benefits from qualified and adequate human resources for the organisation and delivery of doctoral studies in the field of Social Work (Annex 4).

Doctoral supervisors affiliated with the Social Work doctoral study domain hold the title of doctor and are habilitated in Social Work and/or in the field of Sociology. They meet the quality standards and affiliation criteria established by the Regulation on the Organisation and Conduct of Doctoral Studies and by the Regulation of the Doctoral School of Social Sciences. They also comply with the minimum CNATDCU standards, as confirmed by the attached verification sheets (Annex 5).

The verification sheets confirm that all doctoral supervisors meet the applicable CNATDCU minimum standards for the field, a fact also reflected in their individual scientific and academic performance (Bejenaru Anca-Mioara, ULBS full-time staff, score 426.383 (O.M.E.C. No. 7016 of 22.12.2025); Corman Georgeta-Sorina, ULBS full-time staff, score 366.83 (O.M.E.C. 2026); Dima Gabriela, affiliated member, score 618.23 (O.M.E.C. No. 3617 of 26.03.2025)) (Annex 5).

The doctoral training programme in Social Work is supported by academic staff and doctoral supervisors with relevant experience, who ensure the delivery of core disciplines such as: Social Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques; Ethics and Academic Integrity; Theoretical Models and Empirical Research in Social Work; and Professional Development Laboratory in Social Work (Internal Evaluation Report prepared for accreditation, p. 23).

The data presented regarding doctoral supervisors in the field of Social Work highlight compliance with CNATDCU standards, supporting the conclusion regarding the academic capacity of the human resources involved in coordinating the doctoral programme.

The analysis of the composition of the doctoral supervisory staff demonstrates the existence of a stable human resource base capable of ensuring the continuity of doctoral supervision activities and the sustainable development of the doctoral study domain in Social Work.

✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

Based on discussions with doctoral supervisors and the documentation reviewed, the evaluation panel notes that the human resources of IOSUD-ULBS for the Social Work doctoral study domain are adequate, qualified, and comply with the standards required for the delivery of doctoral activities within the accreditation process.

The body of doctoral supervisors demonstrates a high level of academic and scientific competence, validated through compliance with CNATDCU standards and through relevant experience in the field of Social Work and sociological sciences. This contributes to strengthening the institutional capacity to organise and coordinate high-quality doctoral programmes.

The structure of the doctoral study programme reflects an appropriate alignment between the competencies of academic staff and the disciplines taught, ensuring curricular coherence and coverage of the fundamental areas of doctoral training. The involvement of a supervisory committee with a mixed composition (internal and external members) represents an important element of quality assurance and academic openness. The existence of transparent institutional procedures for obtaining the habilitation certificate contributes to maintaining academic standards and ensuring a competitive body of doctoral supervisors. The documentation reviewed highlights the institution's commitment to the development of academic human resources and to the consolidation of the doctoral supervisory staff.

Based on discussions with doctoral supervisors and academic staff delivering core disciplines, the publicly available information, and the findings of the external evaluation, it is concluded that Performance Indicator I.P.A.3.1.1 is fully met.

✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples

A body of doctoral supervisors with high qualifications and academic performance validated through CNATDCU standards.
The involvement of a supervisory committee with an interdisciplinary and inter-institutional composition.
The appropriate alignment between the competencies of academic staff and the disciplines included in the doctoral programme.
An institutional openness towards continuous professional development and the internationalisation of academic human resources.

✓ Recommendations

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.

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

The analysis of institutional documentation and the information made available to the evaluation panel indicates that ULBS implements recruitment and selection procedures for teaching and research staff, including doctoral supervisors, in accordance with the national legal framework and the University's internal regulations. These procedures are governed by institutional regulations and methodologies that ensure transparency, competitiveness, and compliance with the principles of academic fairness.

The main documents underpinning the recruitment process include: the Framework Methodology for Filling Teaching and Research Positions in Higher Education; the Competition Methodology for Filling Teaching and Research Positions on a fixed-term and indefinite basis at ULBS; the Regulation on the Organisation and Conduct of Doctoral Studies at ULBS; the Regulation of the Doctoral School of Social Sciences; and the Methodology for the Awarding of the Habilitation Certificate at ULBS, all in accordance with the applicable national regulations.

In the case of the recruitment of doctoral supervisors, the process of obtaining the habilitation certificate is conducted in a transparent manner, based on the evaluation of candidates' application files, in compliance with CNATDCU standards and institutional criteria. The habilitation procedure includes the

verification of compliance with the minimum applicable standards, the assessment of academic performance and research activity, and the validation of scientific competences in accordance with legal provisions. The filling of teaching and research positions is carried out through public competition, in compliance with the principles of transparency, legality, and meritocracy, as provided by the applicable legislation. Information regarding the organisation of competitions, evaluation criteria, and results is officially published, ensuring open access to information for all interested candidates.

✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

Based on the documentation reviewed, the evaluation panel notes that the recruitment procedures implemented by IOSUD-ULBS are compliant with the legal regulations, institutionally formalised, and characterised by transparency and predictability.

The application of institutional methodologies and the national legal framework ensures a selection process based on professional competence, academic performance, and compliance with CNATDCU standards, thereby contributing to the maintenance of the quality of human resources involved in doctoral activities. The transparency of the process is ensured through the publication of calls for applications, evaluation criteria, and results, which supports equal access to opportunities and reduces the risk of decision-making opacity. Furthermore, the alignment between the national methodology and internal regulations ensures coherence and predictability in the recruitment process.

The documents analysed highlight the use of electronic means for publishing information regarding competitions and their results, contributing to increased transparency in the recruitment process.

Based on the documentation reviewed, the publicly available information, and the findings of the external evaluation, it is concluded that IOSUD-ULBS fully meets the requirements of Performance Indicator I.P.A.3.2.1.

✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples

Alignment of recruitment procedures with national legislation and CNATDCU standards.
The public and transparent organisation of competitions for academic positions.
The use of clear institutional methodologies for the selection of academic staff.
The objective evaluation of candidates based on academic performance criteria.
The systematic publication of information regarding competitions and their results on institutional platforms, ensuring transparency of the recruitment process.

✓ Recommendations

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.

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

The analysis of institutional documentation highlights that IOSUD-ULBS, together with the Doctoral School of Social Sciences, uses IT tools designed to support the digitalisation of administrative and academic processes, thereby contributing to the improvement of efficiency and the quality of services provided to the university community.

The institutional digital infrastructure includes integrated systems (https://ccom.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/servicii.htm) that facilitate access for members of the academic community to services, documents, and administrative resources. Dedicated software applications are used for the management of student records, payroll processes, accounting, and asset administration (accounts.ulbsibiu.ro/myaccount-provider/module.php/core; and /ccom.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/activitati.htm).

At the level of IOSUD-ULBS, these IT tools are employed for the management of processes specific to doctoral studies, including the administration of academic documents, institutional communication, monitoring of doctoral progress, and the evaluation of related activities.

The institution uses electronic forms for the collection of data, information, and feedback from doctoral students and doctoral supervisors. The results of these consultations are used within the internal quality assurance system and serve as a basis for managerial decision-making.

Information systems for the detection of textual similarity are implemented to verify scientific works, including doctoral theses, through the use of specialised anti-plagiarism platforms, thereby ensuring compliance with academic ethics and integrity principles (https://www.sistemantiplagiat.ro/educatie).

- ✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

Based on the documentation reviewed, the evaluation panel notes that IOSUD-ULBS has implemented an adequate level of digitalisation of institutional processes, using relevant IT tools to support academic, administrative, and quality assurance activities.

The use of integrated information systems contributes to the simplification of administrative procedures, increased transparency, and improved efficiency of internal and external communication. At the same time, the digitalisation of feedback collection processes and the management of doctoral student data supports evidence-based decision-making.

The implementation of systems for the detection of textual similarity in academic works represents an important element in strengthening the culture of academic integrity and ensuring the quality of doctoral research.

The analysis highlights the existence of an adequate level of digitalisation, with opportunities for further development in the direction of full integration of platforms and interoperability of information systems. The evaluation panel positively acknowledges the institution's strategic orientation towards expanding digitalisation, including through the interconnection of existing platforms and the progressive automation of administrative and academic processes.

Based on the documentation reviewed, the information obtained during the site visit, and the findings formulated by the evaluation panel, it is concluded that IOSUD-ULBS fully meets the requirements of Performance Indicator I.P.A.4.1.1 regarding the use of IT tools and the digitalisation of institutional processes.

- ✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples

The use of integrated Intranet/Internet-based information systems for access to institutional services and information.

The implementation of digital applications for the management of students, human resources, and financial-accounting processes.

The use of electronic platforms for collecting feedback from doctoral students and doctoral supervisors.

The implementation of similarity detection systems to ensure academic integrity.

The strategic orientation towards the digitalisation and automation of institutional processes.

✓ Recommendations

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.

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

The doctoral study programme in the field of Social Work is designed on the basis of a coherent curriculum aimed at developing discipline-specific competencies and achieving the intended learning outcomes, in accordance with national and European standards. The programme is organised under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), in compliance with Order No. 6,768/2023, the ULBS Doctoral Student Guide, and the ULBS Regulations on Students' Academic Activity. Its structure is detailed in the curriculum (Annex 1) and the course descriptions, including the intended learning outcomes (Annex 2), with the competencies aligned to both the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Romanian National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The programme consists of two components. The advanced university studies programme comprises 30 ECTS credits and 900 hours, delivered during the first semester of the first year through four courses: Social Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques, Ethics and Academic Integrity, Theoretical Models and Empirical Research in Social Work, and Professional Development Laboratory in Social Work. The individual scientific research programme comprises 210 ECTS credits and 6,300 hours and is structured around research activities, dissemination of research results, and the preparation of the doctoral thesis, as well as three research reports completed progressively over the four years of doctoral study.

✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

The analysis of the supporting documentation indicates that the programme meets the requirements of this indicator. The curriculum is explicitly designed around the intended learning outcomes and is organised according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), ensuring the coherent integration of teaching, learning, research, and assessment activities. The allocation of credits (30 ECTS for the advanced study programme and 210 ECTS for the individual research programme, totalling 240 ECTS) corresponds to a Level 8 qualification within both the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Romanian National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Furthermore, the combination of specialised courses with research methodology and academic ethics ensures the development of both discipline-

* 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.

specific professional competencies and the transversal competencies expected at doctoral level. Curricular flexibility is supported through elective course packages aligned with the research topics announced for doctoral student positions. In addition, the alignment with the ECTS framework and the European and National Qualifications Frameworks (EQF and NQF) ensures transparency, comparability, and compatibility within the European Higher Education Area. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that Indicator I.P.B.1.1.1 is fulfilled. The doctoral study programme is supported by a well-structured curriculum that is aligned with national and international standards and effectively oriented towards the intended educational and research objectives.

✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples

The explicit alignment of the course descriptions with the intended learning outcomes, together with the system of elective courses linked to the research topics announced for doctoral student positions, represents a good practice in the individualisation of the doctoral learning pathway.

✓ Recommendations

It is recommended that the course title "Professional Development Laboratory in Social Work" be revised to "Academic and Professional Competencies for Doctoral Research in Social Work", in order to enhance its alignment with the terminology and academic profile of comparable European doctoral programmes.

It is recommended that the range of elective credit-bearing activities within the individual doctoral training plan be expanded in order to increase the flexibility of the doctoral programme. This could be achieved by introducing differentiated credit allocations for national and international activities (such as publications, summer schools, and conference participation) and by including additional forms of academic and professional development, such as participation in workshops, complementary training courses, volunteering activities, and involvement in administrative or institutional activities within ULBS.

It is recommended to develop curricular content by deepening the topics regarding public policies in the social field, with an emphasis on the methodology for their elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

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).

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

The doctoral study programme in Social Work leads to the acquisition of a Level 8 qualification within both the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Romanian National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Its primary objective is to prepare highly qualified graduates with advanced scientific research competencies and the ability to pursue careers in highly skilled sectors of the labour market. The intended learning outcomes are defined in the course descriptions (Annex 2) and are aligned with the discipline-specific professional and transversal competencies required in the field of Social Work. The competencies developed through the programme—including advanced knowledge of social work, proficiency in advanced research methodologies, data analysis using specialised software (STATA, SPSS, and NVivo),

scientific writing, and the application of research ethics principles—are essential for occupations such as Social Work Researcher, University Lecturer, and Social Work Specialist, as defined in the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) classification.

- ✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

The analysis of the course descriptions and the curriculum demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are explicitly aligned with the competencies required for occupations corresponding to EQF Level 8, as defined in the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) classification. The curriculum, structured around advanced academic training and applied research components, has been designed to meet the requirements of the targeted professional profiles, thereby facilitating graduates' integration into the highly qualified labour market. The clear alignment between the programme's intended competencies, the European and National Qualifications Frameworks (EQF and NQF), and the relevant ESCO occupational profiles supports the conclusion that this indicator is fulfilled. The doctoral study programme ensures a coherent correspondence between doctoral education and the occupational standards applicable to Level 8 qualifications.

- ✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples
- ✓ Recommendations

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.

- ✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

Doctoral studies incorporate the principles of student-centred learning through the very structure of the curriculum. The curriculum, course descriptions, and individual research programmes reflect active approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment that are tailored to the individual needs, interests, and pace of development of doctoral students. The student-centred approach is embedded from the admission stage onwards, as doctoral candidates are admitted on the basis of specific research topics, ensuring an early alignment between their research interests and the expertise of their doctoral supervisors.

- ✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

The implementation of these principles is supported by institutional documents such as the ULBS Charter, the Code of Students' Rights and Obligations, the ULBS Doctoral Student Guide, the ULBS Strategic Plan 2024–2029, and the ULBS Strategy 2025–2034. The individual research programme, developed around each doctoral student's research topic and objectives, further demonstrates that the educational process is organised to address individual learning needs and research interests. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that this indicator is fulfilled. The principles of student-centred learning are consistently reflected in the curriculum structure, the teaching and learning strategies, and the organisation of individual research activities throughout the doctoral programme.

- ✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples
- ✓ Recommendations

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.

- ✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

The Doctoral School within IOSUD-ULBS ensures that all students, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, have access to learning resources and support services tailored to their individual needs, as appropriate to the field and level of study. This commitment is supported by the Regulations on the Organisation and Functioning of the Integrated Student Services Centre (SmartHub), the ULBS Charter, the Code of Ethics and University Deontology, as well as the University's strategies promoting equity and inclusion. The doctoral programme in Social Work will be delivered within the facilities of the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences and the Centre for Social Research, which provide modern infrastructure, unrestricted access to international scientific databases, specialised software, and the electronic resources of the Central University Library. Students also benefit from counselling services, adapted educational materials, assistive technologies, and specialised tutoring, ensuring an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

- ✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

The supporting documentation—including the institutional accessibility policy, the procedures for curriculum adaptation, the ULBS Digital Transformation Strategy 2022–2027, and the statistical data on students with special educational needs—demonstrates that the learning resources and support services are appropriate to the field of study, the study cycle, and the mode of programme delivery, while also ensuring accessibility for students with disabilities. Considering the available infrastructure and the existing support mechanisms, it can be concluded that this indicator is fulfilled. IOSUD-ULBS provides an accessible, inclusive, and equitable learning environment that effectively supports the educational process for all doctoral students.

- ✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples

The centralisation of student support services through the Integrated Student Services Centre (SmartHub) represents a good practice, providing students with a single, coordinated point of access to counselling services, academic support, and reasonable accommodations.

✓ Recommendations

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.

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

Within the Social Work doctoral programme, the intended learning outcomes are formulated in a clear and coherent manner and are structured around discipline-specific competencies, transversal competencies, and expected learning outcomes. These are explicitly described in the course descriptions (Annex 2), the curriculum (Annex 1), and the Doctoral Student Guide. Their definition and periodic revision are governed by institutional regulations and internal procedures that ensure continuous alignment with developments in both academia and professional practice. The intended learning outcomes are aligned with Level 8 of the Romanian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and are organised into three complementary dimensions: knowledge (advanced disciplinary knowledge, including research methodology and research ethics), skills (the ability to design and conduct original research, communicate scientific findings, and work both independently and collaboratively), and responsibility and autonomy (advancing knowledge in the field, mentoring, and upholding the principles of academic integrity). As an illustrative example, the course description for Professional Development Laboratory in Social Work specifies concrete intended learning outcomes for each of these three categories.

✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

The analysis of the course descriptions demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are appropriately defined and provide a shared understanding for both doctoral students and academic staff regarding the objectives and content of each course. Their organisation according to the three dimensions of NQF Level 8—knowledge, skills, and responsibility and autonomy—ensures clarity, consistency, and comparability, while the inclusion of concrete examples confirms the operational nature of the learning outcomes. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that this indicator is fulfilled. The intended learning outcomes are formulated in a rigorous manner and are fully aligned with the standards of the Romanian National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples
✓ Recommendations

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.

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is assessed systematically throughout the doctoral programme as well as upon its completion, in accordance with the Regulations on the Organisation and Conduct of Doctoral Studies, the Operational Procedure for the Completion of Doctoral Studies, the doctoral study agreements, and the curriculum. Within the advanced study programme, each course concludes with an assessment graded using a qualification scale, and the successful completion of all courses, amounting to 30 ECTS credits, is mandatory. Within the individual scientific research programme, doctoral students are required to defend their research proposal and at least three research reports during Years II–IV, each of which is assessed using a qualification scale and formally recorded in official minutes. In the event of an unsatisfactory result, students are granted the opportunity to resubmit and defend the report a second time. The doctoral programme is completed through the public defence of the doctoral thesis before an examination committee, which awards one of the official qualifications ranging from "Excellent" to "Unsatisfactory."

✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

The assessment mechanisms described—including course examinations, the periodic defence of research reports at intervals of no more than 12 months, reassessment procedures, and the final public defence of the doctoral thesis—demonstrate a rigorous and progressive system for verifying the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. This system is fully aligned with the ECTS framework and with the principles of academic integrity. In light of the coherence and systematic nature of these assessment procedures, it can be concluded that this indicator is fulfilled. The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is verified through both ongoing assessments during the doctoral programme and the final examination represented by the public defence of the doctoral thesis.

✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples
✓ Recommendations

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..

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

Through the Council for Doctoral Studies (CSUD) and its doctoral schools, IOSUD-ULBS develops and consistently implements the procedures governing admission to doctoral studies, in full compliance with the principles of equity, transparency, and equal access. Admission-related information is made publicly available through the dedicated doctoral studies website (https://doctorate.ulbsibiu.ro/ro/admitere/) and

other institutional communication channels, while the admission regulations and annual timetable are subject to formal internal approval and validation each year.

- ✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

The supporting documentation—including the Admission Regulations, the Ministry of Education's Framework Methodology as adapted by ULBS, public admission announcements, and the allocation of available doctoral positions together with the list of doctoral supervisors and research topics—confirms that the admission procedures are implemented transparently and in full compliance with the applicable legal framework. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that this indicator is fulfilled. The organisational structures responsible for doctoral studies consistently and transparently implement the admission procedures in accordance with institutional regulations and national requirements.

- ✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples

The publication of the full list of research topics together with the list of doctoral supervisors as part of the admission announcement represents a good practice in ensuring transparency and providing prospective candidates with comprehensive information prior to the admission process.

- ✓ Recommendations

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.

- ✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

Admission to the Social Work doctoral programme is conducted in accordance with the principles of equity, equal opportunities, and social inclusion, in line with the applicable national regulations and the University's institutional policies. The Doctoral School promotes an accessible and inclusive admission process that accommodates the needs of applicants from vulnerable groups, including individuals at social or educational risk, as well as applicants with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- ✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

This framework is supported by the Admission Regulations, the University's institutional policy on inclusion and equal opportunities, as well as specific procedures such as the Methodology for the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and the Methodology for the Organisation of the Career Counselling and Guidance Office. These institutional documents establish concrete measures to facilitate access for applicants from vulnerable and underrepresented groups. Considering both the existence and the effective implementation of these measures, it can be concluded that this indicator is fulfilled. The admission process complies with the principles of equity and equal opportunities while ensuring appropriate support for disadvantaged and vulnerable applicants.

- ✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples
- ✓ Recommendations

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.

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

The Doctoral School of Social Sciences provides continuous support throughout the academic journey of doctoral students by implementing the University's institutional regulations governing doctoral studies. The programme is conducted in accordance with the Regulations on the Organisation and Conduct of Doctoral Studies, the Operational Procedure for the Completion of Doctoral Studies, the doctoral study agreements, the curriculum, and the Code of Ethics and Academic Conduct. Doctoral students' academic progress is continuously monitored and documented by the Doctoral, Postdoctoral and Habilitation Studies Office, which maintains comprehensive records of academic status, progression, and individual performance throughout the duration of the doctoral programme. This monitoring encompasses both academic and research achievements, as well as compliance with the University's ethical standards and rules of academic conduct.

✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

The existence of clear regulations governing academic assessment, progression, reassessment, and the completion of doctoral studies, together with the systematic monitoring carried out by the Doctoral, Postdoctoral and Habilitation Studies Office, demonstrates the consistent implementation of the institutional regulations governing doctoral students' academic activity. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that this indicator is fulfilled. The organisational structures responsible for doctoral studies consistently apply the regulations governing the academic pathway and actively support doctoral students throughout their studies.

✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples
✓ Recommendations

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.

✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

IOSUD-ULBS has approved procedures in place, in accordance with the legislation currently in force, regulating the initiation, monitoring, and review of doctoral study programmes and fields, as well as their related activities. These procedures are applied systematically and reviewed periodically on the basis of institutional regulations, namely the regulations and procedures concerning the initiation, monitoring, and review of study programmes and fields, the Regulation on the functioning of the Commission for Quality Evaluation and Assurance (CEAC),

the regulations of the technical-administrative and support structures involved in quality assurance, as well as the decisions of the University Senate through which these documents were approved. The application of these procedures is reflected in relevant institutional documents, such as the CEAC Report, the SCEAC Report, and the decisions of the CSUD.

- ✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

The consistent application of these procedures demonstrates the existence of a coherent and functional institutional framework for ensuring the quality of doctoral study programmes and of the activities carried out within IOSUD-ULBS. The monitoring, evaluation, and review mechanisms contribute to improving the quality of doctoral study fields through the involvement of the responsible structures and the use of reporting and decision-making documents. At the same time, the future directions undertaken by IOSUD-ULBS, such as the digitalisation of processes, the intensification of consultations with stakeholders, and the integration of feedback into the review of doctoral fields, indicate a commitment to updating research topics and adapting programmes to the requirements of the academic and socio-professional environment.

- ✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples
- ✓ Recommendations

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.

- ✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

In the process of implementing the procedures regarding the initiation, monitoring, and periodic review of study programmes and fields, members of the academic community from the Doctoral School of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, as well as other relevant stakeholders, are actively involved. This process is supported by institutional regulations and procedures, including those concerning the initiation, monitoring, and review of study programmes and fields, the Regulation on the functioning of the Commission for Quality Evaluation and Assurance (CEAC), and the regulations of the technical-administrative and support structures involved in quality assurance. These procedures are approved in accordance with the law and periodically updated through decisions of the University Senate, including those regarding CEAC, the support structures involved in quality assurance, and the procedure for evaluating students' satisfaction with the ULBS environment. The involvement of doctoral supervisors and doctoral students is further supported by the ULBS Doctoral Student Guide, decisions of the CSUD and of the Council of the Doctoral School of Social Sciences, study plans, and course syllabi. External partners are also involved in the doctoral pathway through guidance and academic integrity committees, doctoral thesis defence committees, invited conferences, and courses organised for doctoral students.

- ✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

The active involvement of the academic community, doctoral supervisors, doctoral students, and external stakeholders indicates the existence of a participatory and structured framework for the implementation of quality assurance procedures within the Doctoral School of Social Sciences. The use of institutional regulations, Senate decisions, CSUD decisions, study plans, and course syllabi contributes to the transparency, coherence, and consistency of the processes related to doctoral education. At the same time, the participation of external partners in guidance committees, thesis defence committees, invited conferences, and doctoral courses strengthens the connection between doctoral training, academic standards, and the broader socio-professional environment. The future commitment of the Doctoral School of Social Sciences to expand periodic consultations,

diversify feedback collection tools, and systematically integrate stakeholders' proposals into the review of doctoral fields, the finalisation of doctoral theses, and the dissemination and valorisation of research results reflects a clear orientation towards continuous improvement and increased relevance of doctoral studies.

- ✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples
- ✓ Recommendations

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.

- ✓ Presentation of the state of facts, supported by documents and data (documents preferably included through links in the body of the IER)

IOSUD-ULBS, through the Doctoral School of Social Sciences, which will coordinate the doctoral study field of Social Work, ensures the implementation of the procedures required for the external quality evaluation process, in accordance with the legislation currently in force. These procedures are carried out on the basis of relevant documents, such as the procedures and regulations of ARACIS or of other external quality assurance agencies in education, as well as the institutional self-evaluation report prepared by IOSUD-ULBS in anticipation of the external evaluation process. At the same time, according to the applicable legal regulations, the completion of doctoral studies, through the public defence of the doctoral thesis, is included in the external quality evaluation process.

- ✓ Analysis of the state of facts, in relation with the state of facts acknowledged from documents and considering the analysed performance indicator, to justify judgement on the extent to which the indicator was fulfilled

The existence and implementation of procedures related to external quality evaluation indicate IOSUD-ULBS's commitment to ensuring an institutional framework that is compliant, transparent, and aligned with legal and methodological requirements. The use of ARACIS procedures and regulations, or those of other external evaluation agencies, together with the preparation of the institutional self-evaluation report, contributes to the substantiation of the evaluation process and highlights the institution's capacity to manage the doctoral study field of Social Work. Furthermore, the inclusion of the public defence of the doctoral thesis within the external quality evaluation process strengthens the rigorous character of the completion of doctoral studies. The future direction assumed by IOSUD-ULBS, regarding the continuous updating of documentation and the proactive implementation of recommendations issued by accredited agencies, reflects the institution's orientation towards continuous quality improvement and the consolidation of its mechanisms for preparing for external evaluations.

- ✓ Aspects that constitute best practice examples
- ✓ Recommendations

The indicator is: fulfilled

IV. SWOT Analysis

Strengths:		Weaknesses:
✓ Functioning of the Master's Program in Social Work: Social Work of Vulnerable Groups. Policies and Intervention Strategies. ✓ Experience in managing doctoral studies through the Institute for the Organization of Doctoral and Postdoctoral Studies and the Doctoral School in Social Sciences; ✓ Existence of three doctoral supervisors with academic qualifications, validated by CNATDCU standards in the field of Social Work. ✓ Adequate correlation between the competences of teaching staff and the fundamental disciplines of the doctoral program. ✓ Adequate research infrastructure, including access to research centers, digital libraries and international databases. ✓ Existence of functional quality assurance mechanisms, including monitoring of doctoral progress and periodic evaluations. ✓ Integration of the principles of ethics and academic integrity, supported by institutional procedures and anti-plagiarism	INTERNAL FACTORS	✓ The existence of a small number of places funded by the ministry for doctoral programs at ULBS. ✓ Relatively low degree of internationalization of some doctoral research activities (mobilities, co-supervision, systematic international collaborations); ✓ Insufficient use of digital platforms for the complete management of the doctoral path. ✓ The need to involve doctoral supervisors in international research projects. ✓ The need to strengthen formal mechanisms for systematically collecting feedback from future doctoral students in Social Work, doctoral supervisors and potential employers.

systems. ✓ Active involvement of doctoral students in research activities and in academic governance structures. ✓ Providing funding grants worth 15,000 RON from ULBS to support specific activities for doctoral students.		
SWOT analysis		
Opportunities: ✓ The comprehensive nature of ULBS ensures support for the development of interdisciplinary doctorates in the field of Social Work ✓ Development of international cooperation through doctoral co-supervision agreements and Erasmus+ type programs. ✓ Increasing funding for research through competitive national and European projects (Horizon Europe). ✓ Expanding collaboration with international organizations, governmental and private international funds in the field of social assistance. ✓ Expanding collaboration with national public institutions, NGOs and the socio-economic environment in the field of	EXTERNAL FACTORS	**Threats:** ✓ Structural underfunding of social science research at the national level. ✓ Migration of young researchers to universities abroad. ✓ High workload for doctoral supervisors, with impact on research activity. ✓ Dependence on external funding projects to support doctoral research activities. ✓ Differences between the level of internationalization of doctoral programs in Romania and the standards of universities in the EU space.

social assistance. ✓ Complete digitalization of doctoral processes (admission, monitoring, evaluation). ✓ Increasing the international visibility of doctoral research through indexed publications and international conferences. ✓ Possibility of developing a national network of doctoral schools in social assistance. ✓ Possibility of generating social policies with impact in the community.		

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	
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 revising methodologies, regulations and implementation procedures.	F	
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	F	

No.	Performance Indicator	Extent to which it was fulfilled (F/PF/UF)	Recommendations
	provided for activities of the staff. Such venues are adequately equipped.		
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	
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	It is recommended that the course title "Professional Development Laboratory in Social Work" be revised to "Academic and Professional Competencies for Doctoral Research in Social Work", in order to enhance its alignment with the terminology and academic profile of comparable European doctoral programmes. It is recommended that the range of elective credit-bearing activities within the individual doctoral training plan be expanded in order to increase the flexibility of the doctoral programme. This could be achieved by introducing differentiated credit allocations for national and international activities (such as publications, summer schools, and conference participation) and by including additional forms of academic and professional development, such

No.	Performance Indicator	Extent to which it was fulfilled (F/PF/UF)	Recommendations
			as participation in workshops, complementary training courses, volunteering activities, and involvement in administrative or institutional activities within ULBS. It is recommended to develop curricular content by deepening the topics regarding public policies in the social field, with an emphasis on the methodology for their elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
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	
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	
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	
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	
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	
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	

No.	Performance Indicator	Extent to which it was fulfilled (F/PF/UF)	Recommendations
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	
18.	**I.P.C.3.1.2** Members of its own community and other stakeholders are involved in the procedure implementation process.	F	
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		
Domain B. Educational efficacy	9		
Domain C. Quality management	3		
Total	19		

Following the visit and analyzing the related documents, the commission considered that all 19 indicators included in the EER are met.

VI. Conclusions

*Following the analysis of the EIR, the attached documents, as well as the visit to the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, the external evaluation committee ARACIS unanimously proposed **the accreditation of the doctoral field of Social Work**. The decision is based on the fact that all 19 indicators were assessed as fulfilled and all the necessary conditions are ensured for the new doctoral field (regulations, coordinators, material base, research activities, etc.).*

a) accreditation* (AC);

VII. Annexes

1. The schedule of the on-site visit

2. Meeting minutes

3. The agreement of the ULBS with the REE